



MINUG

MODELO INTERUNIVERSITARIO DE NACIONES UNIDAS DE GUATEMALA



COMMITTEE GUIDE: SECURITY COUNCIL

“SEAMOS EL CAMBIO QUE QUEREMOS VER EN EL MUNDO”

WELCOME LETTER BY THE DIAS

Honourable delegations,

It is with great joy that we welcome you to the Fifth Edition of the Modelo Interuniversitario de Naciones Unidas de Guatemala (MINUG). We want to extend our sincerest congratulations to you as you have chosen to join the esteemed Security Council. We are truly excited to have each and every one of you here, as your presence and contributions are vital in the mission of maintaining global peace and security. As delegates, your expertise and dedication are invaluable assets for addressing the pressing international issues that we face today. Your unique perspectives and insights will play a crucial role in shaping the future of our world.

Throughout your experience as delegates, you will have the opportunity to engage in debates, negotiations, and discussions regarding the following topics: 1. The ethical and legal implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) in modern warfare, and 2. Strategies for the proper management of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. These exchanges of ideas and perspectives are what make the Security Council such a dynamic and impactful platform. We encourage you all to embrace the diversity of opinions and experiences within this council. By listening to one another and seeking common ground, you will be able to find innovative and effective solutions to the challenges we face. Please know that you are not alone in this journey. We are here to support and empower you every step of the way.

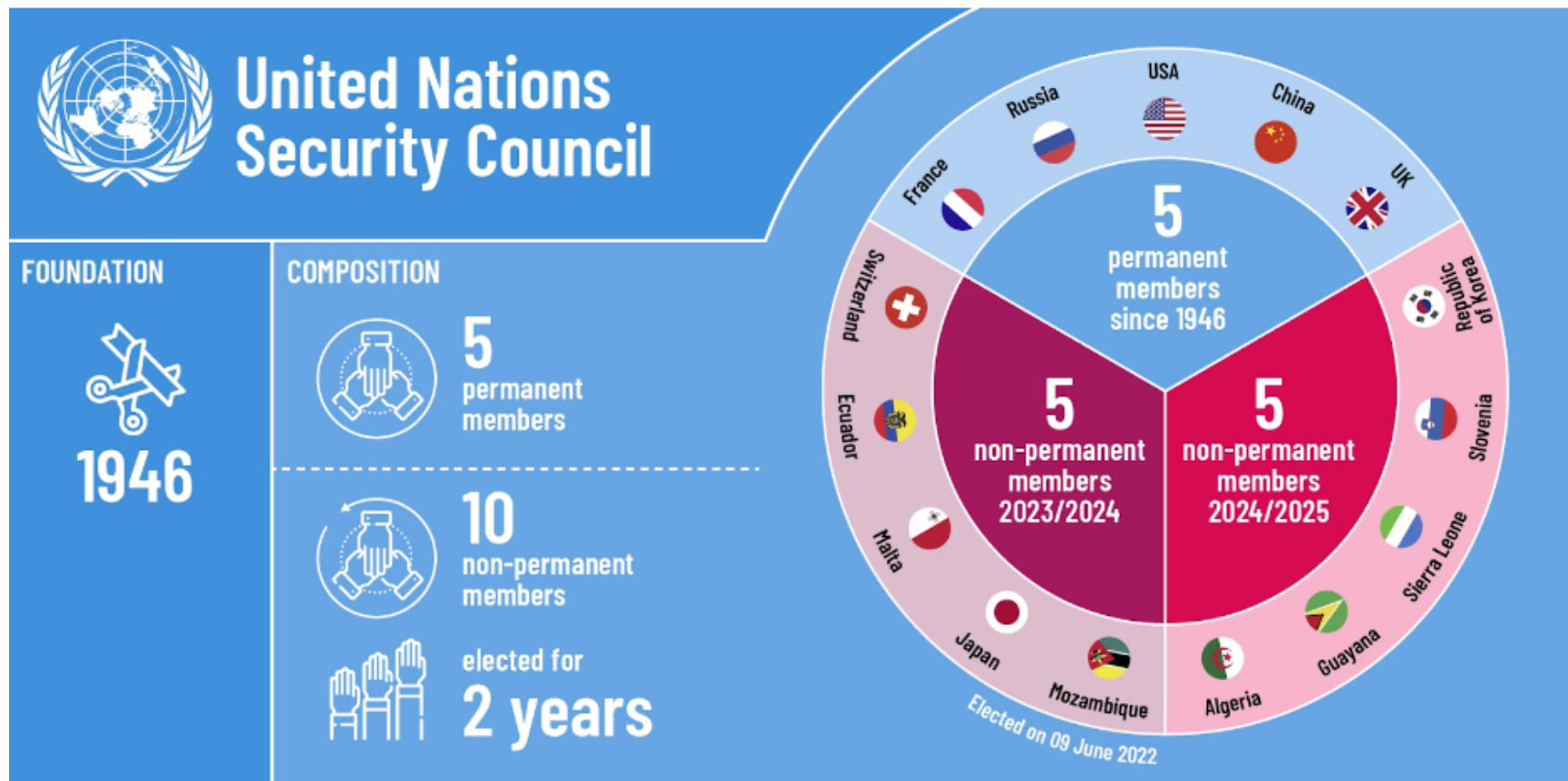
If you ever need assistance, guidance, or simply a friendly ear, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you succeed and achieve the goals set for this simulation. Once again, welcome to the Security Council! Let us embark on this journey together, united in our commitment to peace, security, and a brighter future for all.

Warmest regards,



SECTION 2

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



SECTION 4

COMMITTEE PERSPECTIVE

The Security Council is the UN Organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. In accordance with the provisions of Article 23 of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the Security Council is composed of a total of fifteen Members of the United Nations, five of these correspond to the Permanent Members of the Council (China, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation), who have the possibility of using veto power in substantive votes if they deem it appropriate (Security Council, s.f.-e). The remaining ten correspond to the Non-Permanent Members of the Security Council, who are elected by the United Nations General Assembly according to a certain number of representatives from each region for a maximum period of two years (Security Council, s.f.-e). The specific positions for Non-Permanents correspond to: five from among the States of Africa and Asia; one from the Eastern European States; two from among the States of Latin America and the Caribbean; and two from among Western European States and other States (Security Council, n.d.-f).

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to international peace or acts of aggression. It calls upon the parties involved in a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and makes recommendations of methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

MEMBER STATES

Permanent Members:

- United States of America
- Russian Federation
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- French Republic
- People's Republic of China

Non-Permanent Members (indicating the year in which their term ends):

- Algeria (2025)
- Ecuador (2024)
- Guyana (2025)
- Japan (2024)
- Malta (2024)
- Mozambique (2024)
- Republic of Korea (2025)
- Sierra Leone (2025)
- Slovenia (2025)
- Switzerland (2024)

MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS

As provided in the Fundamental Charter, the United Nations has four main purposes: maintaining international peace and security; promoting friendly relations between nations; cooperating in the solution of international problems and in the development of respect for human rights; and serving as a center that harmonizes the efforts of nations in attaining common ends. Being the fulfillment of the first purpose of the United Nations, the mandate given to the Security Council, due to the level of complexity that international peace and security entail, Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations (1945) grants the deliberations of the Security Council a mandatory nature, stipulating that "All Members of the United Nations undertake to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council" (UN, 1945). Standing out from other United Nations bodies, which, due to their advisory nature, can only make recommendations to Member States.

CREATION OF THE COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEES

Article XIX of the Charter of the United Nations

The Charter of the United Nations (UN, 1945) empowers the Security Council to establish such subsidiary organs as it deems necessary for the performance of its functions. All existing committees and working groups are made up of representatives of the fifteen members of the Council. The mandate of subsidiary bodies, whether committees or working groups, may range from dealing with procedural matters (e.g. documentation and procedures, meetings held away from Headquarters) to addressing substantive issues (e.g. sanctions regimes, combating counterterrorism, peacekeeping operations) (Security Council, n.d.-d).

Therefore, there is a number of Committees, Subcommittees, Working Groups, and Special Bodies, all of which are described below:

The Subcommittees Structure

- **Subdivision of Security Council**

- The Security Council Subdivision Branch collaborates closely with the members of the Security Council, especially with its rotary presidency, to assist in planning and scheduling official and informal meetings, and other activities. As part of its duties in this area, the Division coordinates the program of daily and monthly work of the Council, provides advice on procedural and logistics issues, and plans and organizes field missions deployed in different countries and regions around the globe. (Council of Security, s.f.-d)

- **Counter-Terrorism Committee**

- The Counter-Terrorism Committee aims to strengthen the capacities of United Nations Member States to prevent and combat terrorist activities both within its borders and across all regions. Established in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America, The Committee is assisted by the Executive Directorate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which is responsible for implementing the political decisions of the Committee, carrying out expert evaluations of each of the Member States and providing countries with technical assistance in the fight against terrorism. (Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, nd).

- **Non-Proliferation Committee**

- The United Nations Security Council, acting under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations, unanimously adopted resolution S/RES/1540 (2004), which declared that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitute a threat to international peace and security (International Security Council, nd). Security Council, nd). In addition, and in accordance with Article 28 of Regulation S/96/Rev.7, the members of the Security Council agreed on the establishment of a Committee focused on safeguarding nuclear non-proliferation; which, although initially established for a period of not more than 2 years, got an extended mandate by the Council for other three years. Such extension was agreed by the Council on other three different occasions, being the end date of the committee's mandate, April 25, 2021. (Security Council 1540 Committee, n.d.)

- **Sanctions Committee**

- The purpose of mandatory sanctions is to exert pressure on a State or entity to respect the objectives set by the Security Council without the need to resort to the use of force. The Security Council's sanctions represent a significant instrument when it comes to enforcing compliance with their decisions. Due to the Character Universal of the United Nations, the Council has been established as the suitable organ to establish and monitor compliance with measures of this type. (Security Council, s.f.-b) It should be noted that the Security Council has made use of mandatory sanctions in situations where peace has been endangered and diplomatic channels have failed. Regarding the types of sanctions, there are general, economic, and commercial sanctions, and other more specific such as arms embargoes, travel bans, and financial or diplomatic restrictions. (Security Council, s.f.- b)

- **International Residual Mechanism of Criminal Courts**

- Established by the Security Council, through its resolution S/RES/1966 (2010), the mission of this mechanism is to continue carrying out the various essential functions previously performed by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). (International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Courts, n.d.)

- **Peacekeeping Operations and Political Missions**

- Military, civil, and police personnel participate in Peacekeeping Operations. Since their creation, the Peacekeeping Operations have been intended to maintain peace and security, but in the last two decades, they have taken different forms, acquiring a multidimensional character. Now, they are also deployed to facilitate political processes, protect the civilian population in conflict areas, provide assistance for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, support the organization of electoral processes, protect and promote human rights, and help restore the rule of law. (Security Council, n.d.-b)
- Political missions are part of the entire United Nations Peace Operations. Their actions are developed in different stages of the cycle of conflicts. Political missions, supervised by the Department of Political Affairs, are replaced by peacekeeping missions following the signing of a peace agreement. In other cases, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations have given way to special political missions that lead longer-term peacebuilding activities. (Security Council, n.d.-b)

- To date, the Commission has paid about 50.3 billion dollars in awards to selected claimants. Only one claim remains that has not been paid in full, with an outstanding balance of around 2.1 billion dollars, relating to lost production and sales as a result of damage to Kuwait oil field assets, a figure that, to date, represents the largest compensation granted by the Board of Directors of the Commission. (United Nations Compensation Commission, s.f)
- **Working Group established pursuant to Resolution S/RES/1566 (2004)**
 - In accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10 of resolution S/RES/1566 (2004), the Working Group is tasked with a) examining practical measures to be imposed against persons, groups, and entities involved in terrorists activities or that are associated with them (in addition to those already announced by the Sanctions Committee against Al-Qaida and the Taliban); and b) the possibility of establishing an international fund to compensate victims of acts of terrorism and their families. (Council of Security, s.f.- c)
- **Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**
 - The Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict was established pursuant to resolution S/RES/1612 (2005). Its tasks include examining reports on crimes committed against children in situations of armed conflict, making recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, and directing requests, as appropriate, to other bodies of the United Nations System to take measures to support the implementation of the aforementioned resolution. (Security Council, n.d.-c)
- **Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa**
 - The Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa has its origins in the declaration S/PRST/2002/2, in which the Security Council recognized the need to take appropriate measures to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa. (Security Council, n.d.-c)
 - Likewise, the intention was expressed to consider establishing a specialized working group, in charge of supervising the recommendations made in Presidential statements. (Security Council, s.f.- c) The mandate of the Working Group was finally agreed on March 1, 2002, and the body has been in operation since then. (Security Council, n.d.-c)
- **Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters**
 - The Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters, established in June 1993, aims to improve and rationalize the methods used by the Security Council to address matters related to documentation and other procedural matters. (Security Council , s.f.-c)
 - It should be noted that the Informal Working Group has prepared a series of documents related to the working methods of the Security Council and new measures to improve efficiency, transparency, and interactivity, which have been approved in various notes from the Presidency. (Security Council, s.f.-c)
 - The Working Group only meets when agreed upon by the members of the Security Council, these being the instances in which it formulates recommendations, proposals, and suggestions regarding the Council's documentation and other matters of procedure. (Security Council, s.f.-c)

- Likewise, the Division of Security Council Affairs (DACs) is present, focused on providing assistance to the Council and its 15 members in carrying out their critical responsibilities. (Security Council, n.d.-d)
- **Division of Security Council Affairs (DACs)**
 - The Security Council Affairs Division, under the Department of Political Affairs (DAP), provides the Council with both general staff support, on an ongoing basis, and a variety of specific services, including advice on procedural matters, forward planning, data reporting and research, and assistance in the administration of the Security Council's sanctions regimes. (Security Council, s.f.-d). Within the DACs, it is possible to find 4 subdivisions focused on the support, resolution, and organization of specific issues regarding the mandate of the Security Council.
- **Investigations Branch on Security Council Practices and the Charter**
 - It is the advisory and investigative body of the Security Council Affairs Division in the Department of Political Affairs. It provides guidance to Member States and the Secretariat on Council practices and procedures upon request, substantive servicing of the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Matters, and familiarization of new Council members with the practices and procedures of the Council. (Security Council, n.d.- d)

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Security Council, in accordance with Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations, has the autonomy to dictate its own regulations, which include establishing the method of electing its President. Therefore, Article 18 of regulation S/96/Rev.7, establishes that the Presidency of the Security Council falls in turns in alphabetical order in English, and that the President will remain in office for a period of one calendar month. (Security Council, 1983)

Article 27 of the Charter establishes that each member of the Security Council has one vote, and that decisions at the procedural level will be taken by the affirmative vote of nine members, while decisions on all other issues require the same number of affirmative votes, with the exception that these nine votes must include the votes of all five permanent members. Permanent members have the right to veto, therefore, if one of the five permanent members does not agree with the decision to consider a draft resolution, he has the power to exercise his veto right. (UN, 1945)

Among the obligations stipulated in the Charter, specifically in Article 24, the Security Council is in charge of presenting annual reports to the General Assembly and, when necessary, special reports. Additionally, Article 28 instructs the Security Council to hold at least two periodic meetings in the places that they deem most appropriate. These meetings are ordinarily held at the headquarters of the United Nations. However, the President of the Security Council may call extraordinary meetings when he considers it necessary or at the request of a member of the Security Council. These meetings may be held where the Security Council deems appropriate. (Security Council, 1983) Although the Security Council is the only United Nations body whose decisions are binding, the Council uses these as a last resort since it will urge the parties involved in a conflict to a peaceful settlement whenever it is possible.

CONCLUSION

The United Nations Security Council plays a vital role in maintaining international peace and security. As the principal organ responsible for addressing threats to international peace and security, the Security Council has the power to authorize military action, impose sanctions, and facilitate diplomatic negotiations. Its decisions and actions have far-reaching implications for global stability and for the well-being of nations. By promoting dialogue, cooperation, and collective action, the Security Council serves as a crucial platform for addressing conflicts, preventing wars, and fostering international cooperation. Its importance lies in its ability to bring together nations, regardless of their differences, to work towards a safer and more peaceful world.

SECTION 5

The ethical and legal implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) in modern warfare

INTRODUCTION/GENERAL BACKGROUND

On July 3, 1988, Iran Air Flight 655 was shot down by the U.S. warship USS Vincennes, equipped with the AEGIS system for defense against aerial attacks. Its radar had detected the plane and identified it as an Iranian F-14, despite many crew members expressing that it was a civilian flight. Ultimately, the radar's identification was deemed correct, as the machine had been designed to identify such planes. Therefore, the plane was fired upon, resulting in 290 civilian casualties. Ever since, several discussions have resulted on the risks of developing a "Playstation mentality" in those operating these weapons, as this could dehumanize the process.

The Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) of the United States (US) defines LAWS as a "weapon system that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human operator." An autonomous weapon system is a broad overarching term which encompasses a group of systems that can be further characterized according to the level of human supervision involved: human-on-the-loop or human-out-of-the-loop.

This definition underscores the autonomy of lethal autonomous systems, emphasizing their ability to identify and attack targets without continuous human supervision. It also summarizes the idea that, once activated, these weapons have the ability to select and attack targets without the need for human intervention.

Despite the fact that weaponized military robots such as armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are now a reality and have been used in recent armed conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Libya. Few in-service weapons today fall under this definition of LAWS; this is the case because armed UAVs require direct human involvement to operate and apply lethal force. However, advances in artificial intelligence (AI) in the last decade have increased the possibility that LAWS could soon emerge and be deployed in nearly every warfighting domain, dramatically changing how future wars are waged.

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

In a letter released on July 28, 2015, more than 1,000 AI/robotics researchers and 15,000 other endorsers called for a global ban on LAWS, noting that AI technology has reached a point where LAWS will be practically in every war. They also pointed out that autonomous weapons can be described as the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear arms.

The international context of LAWS encompasses a global scenario where advanced technologies and autonomy in weaponry are generating significant debates. These systems, capable of making decisions and taking action without continuous human intervention, raise critical issues in the military, political, legal, and ethical domains.

Ethical and Legal Debates: The international community is immersed in ethical and legal debates regarding the use of LAWS. Ethical concerns include the lack of human control in lethal decisions, while legal discussions explore the adequacy of existing international laws to regulate these technologies.

International Security: The proliferation of LAWS poses challenges to international security. The possibility of these systems falling into the wrong hands or being used irresponsibly has led to calls for regulation and the establishment of international standards.

Disarmament Debate: Some voices advocate for international disarmament treaties that ban the development and deployment of LAWS. This debate reflects the concern to prevent a new arms race and ensure global stability and security.

States Positioning: Different countries have diverse stances on LAWS. Some advocate for their development and use, citing strategic benefits, while others express concerns about associated risks and call for stricter restrictions.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Several NGOs and human rights advocates are involved in promoting ethical and legal standards for LAWS. They have emphasized the importance of maintaining human control in critical decisions and have advocated for transparency and accountability.

International Forums: International bodies, such as the United Nations, are important scenarios for the debate and formulation of standards on LAWS. There have been calls for the creation of international treaties that either prohibit or strictly regulate these systems.

INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

Military forces are considering significant investments in AI technology. Autonomous weapons offer potential advantages in effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and strategy. They can handle missions in remote or hazardous zones, lessening risks to human soldiers and decreasing casualties in perilous operations. Advocates suggest these systems could disarm bombs, clear mined areas, conduct intricate rescue missions, explore caves, and penetrate enemy territories deeply. Moreover, the expenses associated with these systems tend to be lower.

However, without proper regulation, fully autonomous weapons will advance in complexity. These smart weapons, embedded with advanced AI, might increase unpredictability because they strictly adhere to pre-programmed instructions, lacking adaptability in dynamic situations. Their rapid response could potentially trigger unintended conflicts, triggered by false alarms, errors, or unforeseen incidents.

Nowadays, the most common types of LAWS are some parts of military antivehicle and antipersonnel mines, drones, missiles, swarm robots, and unmanned ground and maritime vehicles. It is essential to take into account that not all autonomous weapons rely on AI to perform tasks. Some systems operate through preset actions or sequences based on specific conditions. In contrast, others use AI to analyze data and enable independent decision-making or adaptive behavior in response to varying situations.

ACTUAL SITUATION

The development of lethal autonomous weapons has a relevant role in the military system nowadays. A number of countries have been investing heavily in military applications of artificial intelligence in autonomous guns, including the United States, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, China, Israel, India, Iran, Turkey, South Korea, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

For instance, the weapons that have been developed are US Phalanx Close In Weapon System (CIWS), the Israeli HARPY loitering munition (LM) and Iron Dome, Russian Arena, and the German AMAP Active Defence System (ADS).

In modern warfare, Israel has been involved in the use of LAWS because, in addition to using invasive surveillance technologies in Palestinian space, it has also developed and deployed drones, loitering munitions, and remotely controlled weapon turrets, such as the Smart Shooter recently installed in Hebron and Bethlehem.

Since 2018, the UN Secretary-General has expressed his concern about the possible destabilization of security and peace. In fact, on October 5, 2023, He and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross called on political leaders to establish, by 2026, new rules related to autonomous weapons to protect humanity. These regulations are based on the idea of reducing the signs of conflicts and violence at the international level. The limits need to be clear, imposing restrictions on the deployment locations, time frames, and durations of use. It also needs to define the specific targets it engages in, regulate the level of force applied, and guarantee the capability for prompt human intervention and deactivation as required.

The first alarm related to the legal, ethical, and moral implications of these types of guns was presented in 2013, in a report by the Human Rights Council of the UN, indicating extrajudicial or arbitrary executions. Furthermore, other independent United Nations experts and scientists have expressed the same point of view, reiterating the great danger that these could present to humanity.

CONCLUSIONS

The international context of Lethal Autonomous Systems is complex and dynamic, with actors from various sectors contributing to forming regulations and policies that address the challenges and risks associated with this advanced military technology. Regardless of a country's official stance, there is an active international debate on the need for regulations and guidelines for the development and use of LAWS. Many countries are participating in discussions in international forums to address the ethical, legal, and security challenges associated with these systems.

Nowadays, many autonomous weapons have been developed by several countries and used in wars as Israel does, incorporating AI into its military force deployed in the Palestinian territory.

The position of the UN Secretary-General has been based on morality, rejecting any system with algorithms without judgment, and increasing the risk of massive death; that is why, since 2018, there have been reiterated calls to regulate all types of autonomous weapons, aimed to create a binding instrument by 2026.

REFERENCES

Aboeid, S. (2023, June 6). *Palestinian Forum Highlights Threats of Autonomous Weapons*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/06/palestinian-forum-highlights-threats-autonomous-weapons>

First Committee Approves New Resolution on Lethal Autonomous Weapons, as Speaker Warns 'An Algorithm Must Not Be in Full Control of Decisions Involving Killing' | UN Press. (2023, November 1). UN Press. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://press.un.org/en/2023/gadis3731.doc.htm>

Garcia, E. V. (2019, August 21). *AI & Global Governance: When Autonomous Weapons Meet Diplomacy*. United Nations University. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://unu.edu/cpr/blog-post/ai-global-governance-when-autonomous-weapons-meet-diplomacy>

Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) – UNODA. (n.d.). UNODA. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/>

MICHAEL, C. R. (2019, June 14). *Ethical Considerations for the use of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems*. DTIC. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/trecms/pdf/AD1108368.pdf>

Note to Correspondents: Joint call by the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross for States to establish new prohibitions and restrictions on Autonomous Weapon Systems | United Nations ... (2023, October 5). the United Nations. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2023-10-05/note-correspondents-joint-call-the-united-nations-secretary-general-and-the-president-of-the-international-committee-of-the-red-cross-for-states-establish-new>

Sleepwalking Into a Brave New World: The Implications of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems. (n.d.). SOMNIA - Spotlight on Military News and International Affairs. Retrieved January 3, 2024, from <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/23/286/Hogan.pdf>

SECTION 6

TOPIC 2

STRATEGIES FOR THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE ARMED CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is an event that continues to give people something to talk about, and it has done so ever since the war broke out in February 2022. However, it is necessary to rethink what led to this event and why it is still ongoing.

As a starting point in understanding each party involved, without making direct accusations, we have to mention that Ukraine was (and still is) a strategic and valuable territory for Russia, not only because of its geographical location, but because of the agricultural production, defense and military industry, and the possibility of having a naval force in the Black Sea.

Ever since the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine has sought to make its way as a sovereign and independent state, even looking for "Westernization", by looking for allies in the European Union, the United States, and NATO. This has led to this country being in both internal and external conflict, with a feeling of divided nationalism caused by the diverse feelings of the population around the country. (Council of Foreign Affairs, 2023)

INTRODUCTION / GENERAL BACKGROUND

In order to completely disassociate itself from Russia, Ukraine has agreed to renounce all nuclear weapons, seeking to become a non-nuclear developed country, being one of the nations with the most reserves until 1994.

In addition to the split in nationalism, presidential elections were held in 2004 between Western-oriented Viktor Yushchenko, and Viktor Yanukovich with eastern-mindedness. Nevertheless, Yanukovich won with direct support from Russia, and became highly controversial due to apparent fraud.

This caused many Ukrainians to take to the streets and start the "orange revolution". Using this color, protests referenced the tone of Yushchenko's political party, making all those who were not happy with the result of the election able to cast their vote again, which left the latter candidate in power.

It is then that everything became complicated for Ukrainian decision makers. In 2008, the idea of being part of NATO started a debate on the extension of the Membership Action Plan (MAP), since this organization aims to preserve peace and security over the North Atlantic area. (U.S. News, 2023)

To understand the importance of this debate, we have to understand what NATO is first. Its acronym stands for North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an organization which has built an alliance between Europe and North America, achieving cooperation and consultations about the security and defense of their Member States. As a result, they carry out multinational operations to help in the resolutions of disputes and conflicts.

These operations are developed under the Principle of Collective Defense, which states that if one or more member states are attacked, the rest of the allies will consider it a direct attack on them, meaning they can take both military and political action to help resolve the situation.

This principle seeks to maintain democratic values and helps Member States in defense and security cooperation and consultation related to conflict resolution. This allows them to use military power as a last resort to keep the crisis on the sidelines, in case all diplomatic routes have failed. (NATO, 2023)

Due to Russia's closeness to Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin openly expressed his opposition to this action by all means, even by speaking with the president of the United States, George W. Bush, saying, "Ukraine is not even a true nation-state." Therefore, all proposals were frozen and no MAP was provided to Ukraine at that time.

Viktor Yanukovich decided to run again as president for the 2010 elections, which he won, resulting in the change of both domestic and foreign policy, leaving aside the relationship with the European Union and getting closer to Russia. This added, the arrest of his political counterpart, Yulia Tymoshenko, gave ukrainians the sense that there was some kind of corruption going on.

Once again, ukrainians took the streets and protested against Yanukovich decisions, with the main focus on Maidan Square in Kiev, where at least 130 civilians were killed. As a result, Yanukovich fled to Russia and those who remained in office agreed on returning everything back to its Status Quo.

With the fall of the USSR, Russia became landlocked to the Black Sea. Hence, in 2014, russian authorities decided to invade Crimea, a Ukrainian peninsula that has a majority Russian population. This led to indignation and criticism from the International Community, the European Union and the United Nations. (U.S. News, 2023)

It is with this event that the conflict and current problems began. Eight years before the war exploded, Russia took control over Crimea and gained strategic power on the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, regions in eastern Ukraine. Despite the Minsk negotiations, agreed upon in 2014/2015, all of this led to a confrontation between Ukrainian separatist, supported by Russia, and the Ukrainian government.

Later on, the Kremlin requested Russian reinforcements, stating that it was to "manage the extraordinary situation that its citizens were going through in Ukraine". As a result, West leaders denounce these actions as a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Hence, Putin decided to withdraw Russian troops and claimed that he did not want war between the two states. However, he left the door open to using force in the future and stood on the control over Crimea. This withdrawal did not make much of a difference, since the pro-Russian residents wanted the Russian Federation to take over the Crimea Peninsula.

Therefore, Russia justified its annexation actions with the support of 95.5% of voters in favor, carried out through a not internationally recognized referendum. The United States, concerned by the situation, received the Ukrainian prime minister at the time and committed to supporting them in this issue.

The United Nations General Assembly voted 100 to 11 in denying recognition of the result of the Crimea referendum, while 58 states abstained. The UK foreign secretary declared "The result reinforces the fundamental principles on which the UN was founded: principles of territorial integrity and the non-use of force. President Putin should take note of this and work together with all parties to reduce tension."

Due to the non-recognition, pro-Russian settlers occupied Ukrainian institutional buildings and the cities of Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv to request the independence of Crimea be recognized, using the referendum as a basis. As a result, the government of President Olexander Turchynov responded with a "anti-terrorist operation" against pro-Russian separatists, although it stopped shortly after it began as both Russia and Ukraine, the United States and the European Union agreed on measures to reduce the crisis in eastern Ukraine.

On May 11, Ukraine denied recognition of the referendum and denounced that the cities were taken "by force", while pro-Russians in Donetsk and Luhansk celebrated their imminent victory in the territories. Upon learning this, Putin brought Russian troops back to Ukrainian territory, with a vote in favor of 153-1 in the Russian Parliament, and authorized military intervention.

After 5 months of clashes, the Ukrainian government requested a "Minsk truce", referring to the first Minsk agreement (although it collapsed a few days after being signed). Putin asked the hundreds of troops who were near the borders between the two countries to return to their bases, after having been in Rostov practicing training exercises.

In January 2015, a rocket attack, which was blamed on pro-Russian separatists, left 30 people dead and others badly wounded in Mariupol. In view of the events, NATO member states held an extraordinary meeting with Ukraine to strongly condemn the acts of violence in the country.

After long peace negotiations between Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the "Normandy Format", a document which called for a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine, was agreed on.

Actor and comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyy won the 2019 Ukrainian elections with around 70% of the vote. He was a defender of the position of now-former President Petro Poroshenko, and promised to take care of the issue of corruption, and end the conflict led by his neighboring country.

Russia and Ukraine agreed to exchange dozens of hostages captured in the wake of Moscow's annexation of Crimea and the intervention in Donbas. Both parts released 35 prisoners. There was controversy with the decision taken by Ukrainian authorities, since one of the prisoners was one of those allegedly involved in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, in July 2014.

In 2021, Russia announced a massive military exercise, increasing tensions in eastern Ukraine and adding a high risk of war, after weeks of tensions and allegations. Ukrainian authorities announced that there are at least 11,000 troops threatening the border, so Russia decided to withdraw its forces, leaving the crisis temporarily halted.

By November of the same year, President Zelenskyy mentioned that 100,000 troops had been deployed on the east border of Ukraine, and the US president, Joe Biden, warned Russia that economic sanctions would be imposed if they invaded Ukraine.

It was then that Russia presented a list of security demands to reduce tensions between the two countries, as well as with European states, in which it highlighted the need of reassurance that Ukraine would not join NATO by any means, as well as that this body would resign from continuing to send troops to the ukrainian territories. Hence, NATO representatives stated that they would continue ensuring Ukrainian sovereignty if Russia insisted on carrying out any provocation of aggression.

Early in 2022, the United States and Russia held negotiations on the Ukraine situation in Geneva. These consisted of a meeting that would later be described as "very professional" and "useful", but without reaching any agreement on the disagreement, which led to a NATO Council and Russia meeting. Additionally, there was a cyberattack to the public websites of the Ukrainian government early that year. This resulted in these being temporarily disabled and a message saying that all the information of public officials had been leaked into the public domain. As a result, both the U.S. and NATO committed to helping Ukraine in matters related to its security.

This decision was not of the liking of Russian authorities, therefore, they claimed that both the U.S. and NATO did not abide Moscow's security requests. Nevertheless, they reiterated the need for these claims to be met, especially the one regarding Ukraine's addition to NATO. This also led to a meeting between President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping, where they signed a joint declaration calling on the East to abandon those ideologies that had been forged after the Cold War. In such a document, both parties called on NATO to leave ideas of expansionism in Eastern Europe, as this is a direct violation of the security of the Asian and Pacific blocs.

By February, tensions increased because Russia deployed what they called "the longest military exercise since the Cold War". The Russian Defense Minister claimed that it would be held from February 10 to 20, with at least 30,000 soldiers, warplanes, missiles and live-fire exercises.

Based on the conflict's background, the White House denounced this as an act that would only generate more tensions on the Ukrainian border, while the Kremlin justified it as preparation for possible aggression. As a result, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom traveled to Brussels and Warsaw to ask for international support, as well as the solidarity of NATO member states to prevent this situation from getting worse.

ACTUAL SITUATION

Based on all the information contained in the Background section, delegates can understand how conflict has been ongoing in the region, but reached the actual situation by February 21, 2022. Under such tensions, President Putin recognized the independence of two territories in eastern Ukraine, the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic. As a result, several world leaders denounced the situation as a direct violation of the Minsk Peace Treaty, and, a couple of days later, Putin deployed troops to keep the peace in these "new free territories". (House of Commons Library, 2023)

Just a couple of days later, Russia invaded Ukraine, starting from the east in the territory of Donbás. This event was condemned around the world. Zelenskyy, then, declared martial law and broke relations with Russia. (U.S. News, 2023)

If we take a look at the United Nations scenario, we can say that it has not stood idly by. The UN has reviewed what both parties have done since the invasion began. The actions taken by Russia were a direct attack that violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, all of which goes against the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

The General Assembly appointed Amin Awad, Assistant Secretary-General, as Crisis Coordinator of the United Nations, aiming to open an investigation for war crimes and crimes against humanity. (United Nations, 2022) On the other hand, the Security Council remained at the forefront, carrying out different mandates and renewing others, as the conflict threatens international law and international peace and security.

There has been an increase in tensions in the Security Council as well, as informal interactions are less, because Member States are divided among those who support Ukraine and those who do as well, but did not condemn Russia's actions. A clear example of this can be represented in the number of presidential statements that went from 24 in 2021 to only 7 in 2022, being the lowest since the Security Council has been working on them with the current format. (Just Security, 2023)

In the statement called "Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine", the presidency of the Security Council expressed that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are committed to resolving their disputes through peaceful means. (Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine, 2022)

It could be said that the Security Council is limited by the veto of permanent states, which could put into question how a crisis of such magnitude can be managed. On March 2, a resolution drafted by the European Union and Ukraine was presented upon the General Assembly. This resolution rejected Russia's invasion of Ukraine, emphasizing that Russia should withdraw its military troops and respect international law. It was approved with 141 votes in favor, 5 against and 35 abstentions, after Russia's veto in the Security Council on February 25.

It is important to mention that the meeting in which this resolution was adopted was proposed by the Security Council after the above-mentioned veto. Although General Assembly resolutions are not legally binding, they do have a considerable political presence, especially when the Security Council has been unable to act. (European Union External Action, 2022)

When questioned about the situation, the U.S. ambassador mentioned that any permanent state that used the veto to justify its own action, lost all moral authority. Hence, this led states, mainly from the EU, to rethink the use of the veto power, since both in the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and with the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia used its veto power. The thought went so far as to question whether the veto is only for those countries with "greater power", as the intention is to improve the legitimacy of the decisions of the UN Security Council.

This latter mentioned approach is not a criticism to the Security Council's functioning, but an observation by Member States of the UN that allows us to assess the contributions and opportunities that the acting of this body can have.

It must also be remembered that a Permanent Member does not necessarily have to veto a project. It may abstain, and thus not affect the other members. In fact, there is a precedent a few years after its creation, in 1949, when the General Assembly asked these countries to support international cooperation and act with moderation, by making use of the veto. This is in its resolution "Essentials of Peace".

By April 2022, the General Assembly met to discuss "the veto initiative", which was co-sponsored by 83 States, 3 of which were permanent members of the Security Council. Hence, General Assembly resolution 262/76 stated that "the President of the General Assembly shall convene a formal meeting of the General Assembly within 10 working days of the issuance of the veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council, to hold a discussion on the situation on which the veto was issued, provided that the Assembly does not meet in an emergency special session on the same situation."

Additionally, the General Assembly mentions that said member has at least 72 hours to present a document with the reasons for the veto, before holding a session to argue the decision taken and the Permanent State that issues the veto has the courtesy to speak first in a debate of the General Assembly.

Therefore, although it does not eliminate the use of this right by Permanent Members, it does request that they be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and, above all, that if they do so, they must support their decisions, so this helps future crises that arise in the International Community. (Groupe D'études Géopolitiques, 2023)

Reviewing the role of the Security Council in this whole conflict is important to understand what happened between these two countries since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Despite the fact that Russia invaded Kyiv and Kharkiv, the second largest city in Ukraine, many believed that in a very short time the Kremlin would have defeated Ukrainian forces. Reality was that they gradually retreated and Ukrainian forces withstood.

In April 2022, a Russian missile left 50 dead at a train station in the city of Kramatorsk. Later on, in May, Ukrainian forces surrendered to Russian forces in the Mariupol region, to mark their power the Russian military attacked the Azovstal steel plant, as this was a symbol of Ukrainian resistance.

In July of the same year, the last city under Ukrainian control in Luhansk, Lysychansk, fell under Russian control. Such an event got as a response an ukrainian counteroffensive in Kherson, and the attack on a Russian military base in Crimea. By the end of 2022, Ukraine carried out attacks with aerial drones on military bases inside Russia, and in 2023, tensions did not improve.

At international level, all of these events do not generate many expectations on the ending of the conflict, but it is still expected that both countries can resign from this war, that has left hundreds of thousands dead, and that diplomatic channels can be restored. (The New York Times, 2024)

CONCLUSIONS / FINDINGS

In conclusion, this conflict is an issue that has been going on for almost a decade, since the annexation of Crimea to Russia, and several more decades, with tense relations in both ex-Soviet states.

Although many bodies have taken action to alleviate tensions and better up the situation, both parties have sought allies to cope with the crisis. The aim is that both Russia and Ukraine agree to sign treaties that would lead to peace. Nevertheless, the situation has gradually grown to the levels seen today, with Russia requesting certain requirements not to take it further and Ukraine defending its sovereignty by not letting another country put its interests above its own.

Therefore, the United Nations is seeking to work within its different bodies, in alignment with International Law and the Charter of the United Nations, to emphasize that the most important thing will always be human lives.

REFERENCES

Council Foreign Relations. (2023, February 14). Retrieved from Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia: <https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>

European Union External Action. (2022, March 02). Retrieved from UN General Assembly demands Russian Federation withdraw all military forces from the territory of Ukraine: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/un-general-assembly-demands-russian-federation-withdraw-all-military-forces-territory-ukraine_und_en

Groupe d'études géopolitiques. (2023, June 08). Retrieved from The war in Ukraine and the curtailment of the veto in the Security Council: <https://geopolitique.eu/en/articles/the-war-in-ukraine-and-the-curtailment-of-the-veto-in-the-security-council/>

House of Commons Library. (2023, August 22). Retrieved from Conflict in Ukraine: A timeline (2014 - eve of 2022 invasion): <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9476/CBP-9476.pdf>

Just Security. (2023, January 31). Retrieved from The United Nations in Hindsight: The Security Council, One Year After Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: <https://www.justsecurity.org/84952/the-united-nations-in-hindsight-the-security-council-one-year-after-russias-invasion-of-ukraine/>

(2022). Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine. New York: Security Council.

NATO. (2023, December 28). Retrieved from What is NATO?: <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/>

(2023). Report of the Security Council for 2022. New York: United Nations.

The New York Times. (2024, February 24). Retrieved from How Russia's war in Ukraine has unfolded, month by month.: <https://www.nytimes.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-timeline.html>

U.S. News. (2023, July 23). Retrieved from Russia Invades Ukraine: A Timeline of the Crisis: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/slideshows/a-timeline-of-the-russia-ukraine-conflict?slide=5>

United Nations. (2022, September 03). Retrieved from The UN and the war in Ukraine: key information: <https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-key-information/>



This "COMMITTEE GUIDE: SECURITY COUNCIL" is part of the academic material of the Interuniversity Model of the United Nations of Guatemala -MINUG-. Any copying, printing or reproduction, partial or total, of this material is permitted for academic purposes, as long as the copyright corresponding to MINUG 2020 is respected.

Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, February 2024.



| **MINUG**
MODELO INTERUNIVERSITARIO DE NACIONES UNIDAS DE GUATEMALA