

# **DISEC**



**CHAIR: HUNTER BARBEE**

**CO-CHAIR: EMMA STUBBLEFIELD**

**SECRETARY: VARUN SUBRAMAN**

**MODEL UNITED NATIONS  
AT CHAPEL HILL**

**FEBRUARY 21-24, 2019  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH  
CAROLINA**

## **A WORD FROM YOUR CHAIR:**

Dear Delegates,

My name is Hunter Barbee and I am excited to welcome you to MUNCH XIX. I will be your chair for the Disarmament and International Security Committee. I am thrilled to be able to have this opportunity to listen to what will be an important discussion on international issues.

I have been involved with Model United Nations since eighth grade, and was a delegate in this very committee at MUNCH XVI my sophomore year of high school.

As a current first-year student, even though my major and career interests lie elsewhere, I have continued my passion for MUN and international relations through MUNCH and the Carolina International Relations Association, and I am excited to share this experience with all of you through this conference.

I hope this committee will bring new insights and discussion on the current state of all security issues globally, and specifically on the topics that will be covered this February. The civil war in Yemen, stray IEDs, and the growth of artificial intelligence are very important issues and I hope we can come together and tackle this issues diplomatically and resourcefully.

I hope you all come interested, informed, and ready to work. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to email me at hbarb109@live.unc.edu. I hope to see you all in February!

Best wishes,

Hunter Barbee

DISEC Chair

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

A subcommittee of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the First Committee, also known as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), works to promote continuing peace and security across the globe. It deals with any disarmament issue relating to any other arm of the United Nations, fostering cooperation in the maintenance of global peace, regulation of arms including the manufacturing and storing of, and promoting stability between all member states.

The committee meets each year for a single four to five-week session following the general debate in the General Assembly. The session is split into three stages: general debate, specific discussions related to certain themes of issues, and action on drafts. All 193 UN member states can attend.

DISEC works endlessly each year in order to promote peaceful, cooperative resolutions to global security issues. In a volatile climate such as today, with constant arms and security issues, the importance of DISEC will continue to grow.

## **YEMEN CIVIL WAR**

During the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, Yemeni citizens were also highly involved in protests to remove longtime president Ali Abdullah Saleh. President since 1990, he resigned in early 2012 after a small revolution left roughly 2000 dead. Saleh handed over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. The transition of power failed, however, as Hadi ineffectively tried to deal with many problems facing Yemen such as corruption and food insecurity. Taking advantage of the weak government, Ansar Allah, which translates to Partisans of God, took control of Yemen's northern province of Saada in 2015.

More widely known as the Houthi movement, Ansar Allah is a mostly Shia Muslim movement who had fought multiple previous uprisings against Saleh, who had their leader and founder Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi killed in 2004. Hadi was forced into exile as the Houthis took over the capital of Sanaa, taking shelter in nearby Saudi Arabia. As the conflicts started, Saleh openly supported his former enemies, until he removed his support in late 2017, announcing his support for the Hadi government instead. This led to the former president being accused of treason by the Houthis and killed by a sniper while trying to flee the city.

Since 2015, conditions in Yemen have gotten steadily worse. Since 2015, Saudi Arabia and a coalition of Arab states that currently include UAE, Senegal, Sudan and Morocco, and formerly Qatar, have used airstrikes against the Houthis and declared support for the Hadi government. This coalition is also backed by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. Saudi Arabia fears that the Shia-majority Houthis will give Iran a foothold in Yemen. They have claimed that Iran, along with Hezbollah and North Korea, has given tactical and military support to Ansar Allah, a claim all three deny. Now, sides have reached a military stalemate, even as fighting continues.

Also contributing to the fighting in Yemen are groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIL, having local supporting militants taking land in eastern Yemen and carrying out attacks in the west, particularly in Aden, where the Hadi government has been relocated to. The Houthis have tightened their control of the north, and have fired ballistic missiles across the border into Saudi Arabia. One such missile targeted at Riyadh led the coalition to strengthen their blockade of Yemen, which the coalition claims is to prevent Iran from smuggling in weapons to the rebels, a claim the Iranian government denies.

The fighting and the blockade have led to an extreme humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The blockade has skyrocketed already inflated food and fuel prices. UN reports say Yemen is approaching the world's worst famine in one hundred years if fighting continues. Between March 2015 and December 2018, over 6,800 civilians have been killed and at least 10,700 have been injured due to the war, according to an UN report. Thousands more have died to the rampant disease and starvation. Over twenty million people in Yemen, two-thirds of the population, are food insecure, with half of those severely insecure. Two million children are acutely malnourished, with some groups estimating that over 80,000 children have died from malnourishment since 2015.

Furthering worsening the crisis is the cholera outbreak in Yemen. Since April 2017, there have been 1.2 million suspected cases of cholera and have caused 2,500 related deaths. With most health facilities not operational, it has become one of the worst outbreaks in history.

Between the warfare, food shortages, and disease, Yemen is also facing an extreme refugee problem. Over three million people have fled, with two-thirds of those still displaced. Yemen is facing a multi-faceted crisis that at this point has no end in sight.

## **IEDS IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

When a region is afflicted by long periods of warfare, civilians can unfortunately be harmed unintentionally, even after the fighting has ceased. A common cause of this is improvised explosive devices, or IEDs. There are international laws regulating their use in conflict, but the unlawful use of IEDs, particularly by rogue groups and individuals, has been steadily increasing for years. According to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, there were more than 6,300 recorded IED explosions and over 100,000 casualties between 2011 and 2015. These numbers can vary between group to group, however, as the exact definition of IEDs can also vary. By any definition, hundreds of IED incidents occur globally each month. In 2015, over ten percent of UN member states experienced a suicide attack involving the use of an IED, a larger percentage than ever before.

Cheap and simple to design, IED are popular among groups that may not have easy access to more conventional weapons. Non-state groups such as the Taliban, ISIS, and al-Qaeda utilize IEDs to disrupt peace amongst the Middle East. ISIS, in particular, has left behind explosives in homes, hospitals and schools to discourage and target civilians returning home when ISIS is pushed out of an area.

Not only is the illegal use of IEDs causing danger in the Middle East, but legal use as well. After decades of conflict and warfare throughout the area, explosives placed according to international law now pose a danger to populations trying to return to a normal lifestyle. Stray IEDs placed years ago, now that the fighting may have ceased, are still active and just as dangerous. Unexploded devices still litter some parts of the area, and still add more casualties to civilians affected for years by war. After the conflict ends, they should still not be threatened by arms and munitions from years before.

Solving this problem is not as simple as just going in and cleaning out the afflicted areas. For one a lot of IED locations are unknown and unmarked. Any attempt at cleanup would be a long, arduous process to find the mines that still might not find them all. This would also disrupt the daily life of each locality. The five countries with the most IED casualties are all in the Middle East, so an exhaustive cleanup program would disrupt the whole region. Also, safety is a factor in any potential solution. The most extensive IED problems are in countries with ongoing war and conflict, which pose a threat to international groups that would try and safely remove stray and leftover IEDs. Also, continuing warfare in these regions will continue to cause an increase in the amount of explosions left around, exponentially worsening an already deadly issue. This is not only a prevalent issue, but an extremely complicated one that must be dealt with both carefully and diplomatically.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

Countries around the world have made leaps in technological advancement, particularly in the realm of artificial intelligence. However, this may come at a cost. Throughout, human history, many technological advancements have been turned around and used in warfare. Artificial intelligence (AI) is no exception. The United States' defense department closed bidding in October on its new technology contract: the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure, or Jedi, a proposal to build an universal cloud system for all US forces globally.

This is in addition to other programs from the US putting billions of dollars into hundreds of AI programs. Technology has become exponentially more important in warfare over the last few decades, and will only continue to increase. According to some experts, this will lead to an all-out arms race over weaponized AI. Already used widely in some aspects, such as defusing explosives, increasing the use of weaponized AI will be the next to follow.

To some, this seems no more than a logical advancement in warfare. War has always taken advantage of the most recent technology, and artificial intelligence is just the obvious next step. To others, however, there are problems with this that must be dealt with. Historically, regulation has typically been behind the implementation of such technology, such as chemical and nuclear weapons. With 21st-century technology increasing at a faster rate than ever before in history, some experts view this as an inclination that regulation will be even further behind than before.

Also, some see this as a moral issue, as some claim that warfare fought through artificial intelligence will remove humanity and empathy from war. This has already been proposed about drone warfare, experts say the removal of human involvement will only increase with the further advancement and implementation of artificial intelligence. Whether regulated or not, artificial intelligence is an inevitable next step in global warfare.

