

Forum: Disarmament and International Security

Issue: The issue of chemical weapons still being used for warfare by states within the UN

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Introduction:

Chemical weapons have throughout time been used as an supplementary weapon which leaves additional damage and harm towards its opponents, making it even harder for soldiers to survive war. The use of chemical weapons has its beginning in World War I and has now been evolved and expanded.

The 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has made huge progress in lowering the amount of chemical weapons in sticking. The progress of CWC resulted in the destruction of 96 percent of the world's stockpile of chemical weapons. Despite the years of progress the number of countries who didn't agree on the convention is still worrying. So far there is an extensive number of countries who has from the start not agreed. These are countries such as egypt, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan. Furthermore, the independent terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State have also never agreed with the convention.

Definition of Key Terms

Chemical weapons: “is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties. Munitions, devices and other equipment specifically designed to weaponise toxic chemicals also fall under the definition of chemical weapons.”

“Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons”

U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR):

The Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program, also known as the Nunn-Lugar Program, was created for the purpose of securing and demolishing weapons of mass destruction and their associated infrastructure in the former states of the Soviet Union.

Chemical Weapons Convention: the Convention aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties.

History

The official use of chemical weapons began in World War I. Both parts of the warfare used poisonous gasses in the conflict. At the time, the weapons were made by adding well known chemicals into standard guns such as grenades. Those chemicals aggravated the wounds and made it even more difficult to survive. Since World War I, chemical weapons have caused more than 1 million deaths globally.

The Geneva Protocol, in 1925, tried to regulate the use of chemical weapons in warfare, prohibiting those weapons in conflicts but not regulating the production or development of chemical weapons. Furthermore, many countries declared it their right to use prohibited weapons against those States that had not signed the Geneva Protocol. Later, as it is known, during World War II poisonous gasses were used in Nazi concentration camps in order to eradicate all prisoners. In the next years, during the Cold War, many countries developed different kinds of weapons, chemical weapons among many others. Since World War II, chemical weapons have been used in few cases, most distinctly by Iraq in the 1980s against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Key Issues

Development, production and manufacture of chemical weapons

Even though production, testing and use of chemical weapons has been banned globally, there are still developers who manufacture these weapons in disguise and there are also still countries who in security are in consumptions of these chemical weapons.

The worrying number of countries who has not agreed with the convention and the lacking efforts from countries who has already agreed with the convention.

As stated earlier Egypt, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan, and the independent terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State has not agreed yet on the convention and are therefore not implementing the destruction of chemical weapons. Moreover, Syria who joined CWC in 2013 have been accused of still being in possession of and

using chemical weapons. United states has also delayed there deadline of the destruction of chemical weapons until 2023.

Major parties involved

Iraq: Iraq has not had any chemical weapons concerns since 2007, however, the Syrian civil war brought doubts. During the Syrian civil war many chemical weapons have been discovered in Iraq's territory. The last major UN report on Iraq's programs in 2004 found 2500 chemical rockets among many other chemical weapons still, they were dated 1980 and therefore unlikely to be used. Other Middle eastern countries have accused Iraq of using chemical weapons in the last years of conflict.

Iran: currently the country denies any relation with chemical weapons as it is "inhumane, immoral, illegal and against its very basic principles". However, the country keeps importing chemical weapons agent precursors, since they can be used for domestic matters nothing can be proved as evidence for the development of chemical weapons.

United States: Following the CWC, United States compromised to destroy any chemical weapons by 2007, however, many delays have pushed the deadline to 2023.

Syria: Recently, many senior Syrian officials have been sanctioned for the use of chlorine as a weapon against civilians. The UN Security Council has failed to adopt a resolutions that would impose sanctions on

entities who endorsed the production or the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Russia: The USSR's Chemical warfare program produced most types of known chemical warfare combat substances and in vast numbers. They developed the world's largest chemical warfare infrastructure. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia became involved with U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programs which aimed at destroying these chemical substances as well as converting chemical warfare infrastructure and men into civilian roles; the CTR agreement expired in 2013, but following this Russia signed a new agreement Protocol with the United States.

Possible solutions

Possible solution for this issue include the use of economic sanctions for those countries, members of the UN, who are currently not following any chemical weapon laws or treaties. Moreover, there is also the possibility to further discuss the legalisation when researching or developing any kind of chemical weapons.

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Appendices

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