



### **Committee: Security Council**

**Topic A:** What sanctions should be imposed to governments that use chemical weapons against civilians?

#### **Committee Description:**

The Security Council started actions on January 17, 1946. It is responsible, according to the UN charter, of maintaining the peace and security of the international community and is the one who takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat or aggression against peace. This Council counts with five permanent members and ten more that are constantly changing for other members of the United Nations. One of the main tasks of the Security Council is to be a mediator between states in conflict in order to maintain peace.

#### **Introduction and Description:**

The term Chemical Weapons is defined as “any toxic chemical that can cause death, injury, temporary incapacitation, or sensory irritation through its chemical action and is delivered by munition or other devices that can be considered weapons”. Chemical weapons were used for the first time during WWI by both the Allied and the Axis powers. The main chemical weapon used was poisonous gas, chlorine gas, and mustard gases. The use of these chemical weapons left almost 100,000 casualties. After these devastating results, during the Geneva Conventions (1949), the use of chemical weapons in warfare was prohibited. Nevertheless, this protocol didn't prohibit the creation, development, research or stockpiling of such weapons, resulting in the future use of these weapons in several other conflicts. In 1992, the Chemical Weapons Convention asked for members of the UN to dismantle their chemical weapons arsenal. Therefore the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPWC) was created in 1997, to verify the destruction of the chemical weapons.

#### **History of the Topic:**

Following Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the first Gulf War (1990-1991), sanctions were implemented to make sure those weapons weren't used again. Such sanctions range from the most common economic sanctions (embargoes, trade blocks, freezing of international assets) to military intervention by the UN or any international organization (e.g. NATO). These sanctions worked to ensure that no nation used chemical weapons until the 2013 chemical attack by the Syrian

regime against the population of their own country, which almost erupted in the military intervention of the US, France and other allies.

**Points of View:**

Almost all the members of the UN say that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable. This is why most of the countries have allied with the OPWC to dismantle their chemical arsenals. Several countries still refuse to dismantle their chemical weapons. The US, France, GB, China and Russia have stated in independent addresses, that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and the using them could lead to international consequences.

**Case Studies:**

Syria's Chemical Attack on Ghouta (Sept 21, 2013)

Iraq's Chemical Weapon Program and uses (1980s, 1980, 1991)

Aum Shinrikyu Doomsday Cult attacks on Japan (1994-1995)

**Present Situation:**

The most recent use of chemical weapons by a government is the one of Syria. More than 1,300 people died in that chemical attack. This caused the UN Security Council to hold emergency meetings discussing the course of action to be taken by members of the UN. A Joint Russia-US Plan to dismantle the Syrian chemical arsenal was placed into effect by the UN in late September, preventing military intervention by the US.

**Conclusion:**

Chemical Weapons possession is a serious threat to human beings. Since the Geneva Convention it was stated that these weapons shouldn't be used. Yet, their use in warfare and terrorist activities still poses serious threats to civilization. It is the Security Council's job to protect the safety of anyone that can be attacked by chemical weapons.

**Bibliography:**

UN. (n.d.) UNODA-Chemical Weapons. Retrieved on October 20, 2013 from: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Chemical/>

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. (n.d.) History of CW use. Retrieved on October 20, 2013 from: <http://www.opcw.org/about-chemical-weapons/history-of-cw-use/>