

NHSMUN

National High School Model United Nations

2023

UPDATE PAPER: DISEC

Topic A: Preventing Non-State Actors from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction

Topic B: The Ethics of Surveillance Technology

Secretary-General
Ming-May Hu

Director-General
Ana Margarita Gil

Chiefs of Staff
Victor Miranda
Kylie Watanabe

Conference Services
Yohan Mutta
Dennis Zhang

Delegate Experience
Max Bross
Yui Ogihara

Global Partnerships
Pierre-Etienne
Courrier
Safa Elzanfali

Under-Secretaries-
General

Joseph Agarwal
Hunter Atkins
Ananya Chandra
Samantha Chen

Christian Hernandez
Brandon Lin

Rekha Marcus
Kara Murphy
Rhea Raman
Scarlett Royal

Therese Salomone
Meg Torres
Sachee Vora
Amy Zeng

Dear Delegates,

My name is Mia Murakami Cho, and I am beyond excited to welcome you to DISEC at NHSMUN 2023! I will be one assistant director for Session I of the conference. In high school, I was very involved in Model UN. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to attend several conferences, including NAIMUN, hosted by Georgetown University, and MUNUC, hosted by the University of Chicago. I am thrilled to add NHSMUN to the list of conferences I have attended, but this time as a part of the dais!

I can confidently say that participating in MUN during my time in high school was a rewarding experience: it helped me to develop cultural competence, a fervent passion for human rights causes, and an interest in comparative international law. My experiences in debate have led me to discover many of my passions, and I hope that your experience at NHSMUN can help you do the same.

Outside of school and MUN, I spend most of my free time volunteering with an NGO called iACT, which works with refugees to develop refugee-led solutions in areas affected by mass atrocities. Currently, I am working on developing a way to educate my local community as well as my peers to get them more involved with human rights causes. Your directors have prepared a background guide that serves as a great starting point for delegate research. I have also prepared this update paper as a resource to reference for more recent updates on the topic. I am so excited to hear the brilliant solutions you will share during committee.

Best of luck!

Mia Murakami Cho

Disarmament and International Security Committee
Session I



Secretary-General
Ming-May Hu

Director-General
Ana Margarita Gil

Chiefs of Staff
Victor Miranda
Kylie Watanabe

Conference Services
Yohan Mutta
Dennis Zhang

Delegate Experience
Max Bross
Yui Ogihara

Global Partnerships
Pierre-Etienne
Courrier
Safa Elzanfali

Under-Secretaries-
General

Joseph Agarwal
Hunter Atkins
Ananya Chandra
Samantha Chen

Christian Hernandez
Brandon Lin
Rekha Marcus
Kara Murphy
Rhea Raman
Scarlett Royal

Therese Salomone
Meg Torres
Sachee Vora
Amy Zeng

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)! My name is Santiago Hernández, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II. Even though this is my first year as NHSMUN staff, I have attended the conference three times before as a delegate in committees such as FAO and IOM. I have been involved with Model UN since middle school, and since then, my love for it has grown exponentially.

I was born in Mexico City and have lived there ever since. I'm a freshman at Anáhuac University in Mexico, currently majoring in Industrial Engineering. Some of my interests include playing and listening to music (I'm particularly into rock and indie music), watching movies, and doing sports like basketball and swimming. I am also part of a math tutoring program for middle and high school students, and this is something that I particularly enjoy since teaching is one of my passions. This is why if anything comes up before or during the conference, I will be more than happy to help.

NHSMUN is one of the most rewarding and life-changing experiences that you can have in High School. It doesn't just help you academically but also in much more personal ways. It helps you develop global consciousness, learn teamwork and negotiation skills, find ways to communicate your ideas, and make lots of friends from all around the world. I have grown a lot as a person thanks to MUN, and it has left an impact on my life because of how much I learned about myself and the world during my time as a delegate. Now it's your turn to live this amazing opportunity, and I hope that every single one of you enjoys this experience as much as possible. Enjoy each step of this process and do your best so that you can be proud someday of living this amazing opportunity.

Your directors have worked hard and accomplished to deliver amazing background guides and research materials for your preparation. My co-AD and I have written this update paper with the same purpose so that you can better understand your topics and come as prepared as possible for your committee sessions. I am very excited to see what you can bring to the conference, and if any question comes up during this time, feel free to contact me or anyone on the dais, and we will be willing to help with anything.

Without further ado, I hope you can truly live this experience to the fullest. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you at the conference!!

Regards,

Santiago Hernández
Disarmament and International Security Committee
Session II





DISEC

NHSMUN 2023



TOPIC A:

PREVENTING NON-STATE ACTORS FROM ACQUIRING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Photo Credit: Guy Volb

Introduction

Preventing non-state actors (NSAs) from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is a concern that continues to persist across the globe. The landscape concerning WMD, being biological, chemical, and nuclear, is forever changing. As long as the international community continues to experience conflict across borders, the conversations about WMD will continue.¹

In 2022 alone, significant changes in international relations have affected the issue of weapons on a global scale. These include the war in Ukraine, the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, Korean nuclear tension, and severe conflicts in the Middle East.² These developments have had global impacts on global security, and there is growing concern over the NSAs located within these states and possible access to WMD. Thus, there has been a meaningful international conversation surrounding the possible use of WMD as well as the prevention of their proliferation.³ Although most of this discussion has been about governments and states employing such weapons, there has been some focus on NSAs and preventing them from accessing such destructive weapons.

When NSAs acquire WMD, the danger and risk associated with such weapons increase exponentially due to logistical loopholes in international law. When NSAs have access to WMD, they serve as an even greater threat to global peace.⁴ Because of this, the United Nations (UN) has heightened its attention on preventing them from acquiring such weapons, even in the last eight months.⁵ With these concerns in mind, delegates should consider how relevant current events have affected the UN's efforts to prevent NSAs from acquiring WMD.

Diplomatic Progress: Resolution 2663 and New Agreements

There has been considerable progress in diplomatic efforts in the past year to ensure that WMD are not readily available. The UN and states' diplomatic exchanges have taken significant steps to minimize the use and spread of WMD.

The Security Council, considering its role in ensuring international peace and security, spent its 9205th meeting discussing the non-proliferation of WMD.⁶ This UN meeting took place on November 30, 2022, and was dedicated to extending the mandate of its subsidiary 1540 committee, unanimously adopting Resolution 2663, which extended the mandate for ten years until November 30, 2032.⁷ The subsidiary 1540 committee is relevant to the prevention of NSAs from acquiring WMD because it calls for the supervision of the appropriate implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which was ratified in 2004.⁸ The committee ensures the relevant and timely implementation of Resolution 1540, which in turn imposes binding obligations to adopt legislation and policies to prevent supporting NSAs from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring, or using WMDs.⁹ The extension of this mandate ensures that this topic is a priority at the Security Council. Delegates should consider how the extension of the Security Council's subsidiary 1540 committee's mandate has affected the NSA's current access to WMD and their country's

1 Andrew Blum, Victor Asal, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, "Non-State Actors, Terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction," *International Studies Review* 7, (March 2005): 133–137, <https://academic.oup.com/isr/article/7/1/133/1797342>.

2 "2022 Year in Review: As Conflicts Rage, International Dialogue Remains 'the Only Hope' for Peace," United Nations, last modified December 29, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131977>.

3 Jen Kirby, "The Treaties That Make the World Safer Are Struggling," *Vox*, January 5, 2023, <https://www.vox.com/world/23510633/arms-control-bioweapons-convention-nukes-ukraine-putin>.

4 United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, "Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction Only Way to Prevent Non-State Actors from Acquiring Them, Deputy Secretary-General Tells Security Council," press release, December 15, 2016, <https://press.un.org/en/2016/dsgsm1035.doc.htm>.

5 "Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - Security Council, 9205th Meeting," United Nations, last modified November 30, 2022, <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1x/k1x7wu9utg>.

6 "United Nations Security Council," United Nations, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>.

7 United Nations, "Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - Security Council, 9205th Meeting."

8 United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs, "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."

9 "Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee), November 2022 Monthly Forecast," Security Council Report, accessed January 8, 2023, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-11/non-proliferation-1540-committee-5.php>.

stance on those effects.

Additionally, as a part of the unanimous adoption of Resolution 2663, the Security Council decided to adopt new measures to properly apply Resolution 1540 further.¹⁰ Under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter of the UN, the Security Council established that the 1540 committee would review each aspect of the original Resolution 1540 in the next five years.¹¹ Then, the committee must draft and submit a report on the status of the implementation of each aspect to the UN Security Council before December 2027. According to Resolution 2663, this will be completed as a prerequisite for further extension of the 1540 mandate in November of 2032.¹²

Resolution 2663 also appointed a group of experts on the topic of WMD by request of the Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, to the committee to help accelerate the full implementation of Resolution 1540.¹³ Delegates should consider the value of third-party advisors, such as experts in microbiology, independent researchers, and more, and contemplate the implications of such a request by the Secretary-General. Delegates should be knowledgeable about their country's stance and history with WMD. They should be aware of whether their country has been cooperative with the UN efforts to disarm states and NSAs.

Many countries have also taken it upon themselves outside of the UN to create new agreements with other states. The goal of these alliances is to encourage international cooperation to prevent NSAs from having access to WMD. For example, the United States and Morocco have created an initiative to observe and become aware of the proliferation of WMD.¹⁴

10 "Security Council Extends Mandate of Committee Monitoring Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Weapons for 10 Years, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2663 (2022) | UN Press," United Nations, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15123.doc.htm>.

11 "Non-Proliferation: Today's Vote on the 1540 Committee's Mandate Renewal," Security Council Report, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/11/non-proliferation-todays-vote-on-the-1540-committees-mandate-renewal.php>.

12 "Security Council Extends Mandate of Committee Monitoring Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Weapons for 10 Years, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2663 (2022) | UN Press," United Nations, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15123.doc.htm>.

13 United Nations, "Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - Security Council, 9205th Meeting."

14 "U.S. and Morocco Co-Host Proliferation Security Initiative Workshop - United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State, December 8, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-and-morocco-co-host-proliferation-security-initiative-workshop/>.

15 "U.S. Relations with Morocco - United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State, June 6, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-morocco/>.

16 Toms Dumpis, "Morocco, US Organize Meeting to Fight Nuclear Proliferation," January 26, 2021, <https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2021/01/333383/morocco-us-organize-meeting-to-fight-nuclear-proliferation>.

17 "Proliferation Security Initiative - United States Department of State," U.S. Department of State, November 2, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/proliferation-security-initiative/>.

18 "Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today," National Defense University Press, December 4, 2019, <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2031922/mercenaries-and-war-understanding-private-armies-today/>.

19 "Weapons of Mass Destruction - Unoda," United Nations, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/>.

The initiative, named the North American Proliferation Security Initiative, established a formal partnership between both countries through the workshop they hosted for the region from December 6 to 8, 2022, in Tangier, Morocco.¹⁵ The purpose of this workshop was to express commitment to furthering the efforts to stop private and public causes of the proliferation of WMD in North America.

Several government leaders, including those from the United States and Morocco, experimented with a data-based approach to analyzing the use of WMD in the region.¹⁶ They evaluated trends relating to WMD, international and national efforts in banning WMD, cargo systems in transporting such weapons, their delivery systems, and other related aspects of the transport of WMD. Additionally, the workshop allowed representatives to learn from experts through briefings. They were able to try various response tactics through a scenario-based exercise and were able to observe a cargo inspection at the Port of Tangier Med. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which was initially established in 2003, has been endorsed by 107 countries.¹⁷ Delegates should come prepared by understanding their country's stance on the PSI and should consider any international or national frameworks that could be strengthened to push for their respective country's agenda, all while maintaining diplomacy with other countries.

Mercenaries and Private Military Companies

Mercenaries play a significant role in acquiring WMD.¹⁸ Aside from terrorist groups, they are one of the most likely NSAs to have access to such weapons.¹⁹ Mercenaries, or private military

corporations, are for-profit corporations that will fight in armed combat in exchange for financial gain, often alongside national militaries.²⁰ Some notable mercenary groups include the Wagner Group, Academy, and Defion Internacional. Considering their roles in warfare, it is not uncommon for mercenaries to attempt to acquire arms, including WMD.

The war in Ukraine has caused many precedents to be broken in European international relations and has completely shifted the tone of European global security, including the involvement of private forces in warfare. On December 22, 2022, the United States White House announced that the Wagner Group, a private military company prominent in Russia, bought arms from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK).²¹ The first shipment of arms was said to include rockets and missiles. According to the White House, there is growing concern among the international community that the DPRK will continue to provide arms to the Wagner Group. Such a scenario would be especially concerning as it comes shortly after the DPRK’s repeated testing of WMDs capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.²² According to

20 “The Awakening of Private Military Companies,” Warsaw Institute, February 2, 2021, <https://warsawinstitute.org/awakening-private-military-companies/>.

21 Aamer Madhani and Edith M. Lederer, “Russian Mercenary Group Bought Arms from North Korea, Says White House,” *Public Broadcasting Service*, December 22, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/russian-mercenary-group-bought-arms-from-north-korea-says-white-house>.

22 Sean Seddon, “North Korea Carries out Latest Weapon of Mass Destruction Test,” *Metro*, December 23, 2022, <https://metro.co.uk/2022/12/23/north-korea-carries-out-latest-weapon-of-mass-destruction-test-17987127/>.

23 Amy Woodyatt, “December 7, 2022 Russia-Ukraine News,” *CNN*, December 8, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-12-07-22/index.html>.

United States President Biden, the DPRK’s choice to send the Wagner Group arms violates UN sanctions. Additionally, Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has expressed the increasing possibility of nuclear war.²³ The Russian president states that Moscow will “fight for its national interests” by “all means available, if necessary.” As nuclear war resurfaces as an international worry, the international community expresses concern for the state of WMD and the NSA’s access to them. The exchange between the Wagner Group and the DPRK is a prime example of how NSAs can gain access to WMD through states that are not cooperating with UN resolutions.

Delegates should consider this example and craft solutions that consider the existence of private military companies whose entire industry survives off of exchange of employing WMD. The use of private military corporations is an extremely controversial topic of debate in and of itself, so delegates should consider their country’s policy on private military corporations, as well as their use of WMD.

North Korean and Russian diplomatic relations have become increasingly scrutinized as the DPRK has been accused of selling weapons to the the Wagner Group.

Credit: Alexei Nikolosky, The Presidential Press and Information Office



Ninth review conference on biological weapons

WMDs are made up of three categories: biological, chemical, and nuclear. In recent months, there has been significant discourse surrounding biological WMD due to the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention hosted by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.²⁴ This conference was hosted in Geneva, Switzerland, from November 28 to December 16, 2022.

Biological weapons and warfare have become increasingly relevant due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the last three years, there have been enormous developments in the biological sciences to help prevent the effects of COVID-19.²⁵ Although progress was made in lessening the impacts of the pandemic, the field of biological weapons has also grown. Now, the international focus has turned to ensuring that biological innovations will not be used to make biological weapons more accessible or discreet. This has posed a significant challenge in

the movement towards non-proliferation of WMD and was a topic of discussion at the conference.²⁶

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a research institution that co-hosted an event at the convention titled “Biorisk Awareness Across Stakeholder Communities,” called for awareness of biosecurity measures and the danger of biological weapons.²⁷ This event included activities such as having participants review a practical toolkit developed by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute that demonstrates the importance of practicing ethical and responsible biological science.²⁸ Additionally, the event hosted non-state stakeholders from different industries, including academia and corporations, who understand the cross-sectoral nature of biosecurity causes. Raising awareness on the topics of biological weapons to sectors that are both directly and indirectly involved in the cause of the non-proliferation of WMD is very recent and was not included in past conferences.²⁹

The Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons

24 “Biological Weapons Convention - Ninth Review Conference (2022): United Nations,” Biological Weapons Convention - Ninth Review Conference, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://meetings.unoda.org/bwc-revcon/biological-weapons-convention-ninth-review-conference-2022>.

25 Regan F Lyon, MC, USAF, “The COVID-19 Response Has Uncovered and Increased Our Vulnerability to Biological Warfare,” *Military Medicine* 186, no. 7-8 (August 2021): 93–196, <https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usab061>.

26 U.S. Department of State, “The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference.”

27 “Sipri Co-Hosts Side Event at the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention,” SIPRI, December 15, 2022, <https://www.sipri.org/news/2022/sipri-co-hosts-side-event-ninth-review-conference-biological-weapons-convention>.

28 “Sipri Co-Hosts Side Event at the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention,” SIPRI, December 15, 2022, <https://www.sipri.org/news/2022/sipri-co-hosts-side-event-ninth-review-conference-biological-weapons-convention>.

29 “Biological Weapons Convention – UNODA,” United Nations, accessed January 6, 2023, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/>



Kelly Pollard, a microbiologist at the United States Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories, performs a manual extraction of the SARS-CoV-2 virus

Credit: Governor Tom Wolf

Convention concluded with participants and states agreeing on the adoption of a final document. Similar to that of Resolution 2663, the final document from this conference appointed a cohort of experts to oversee and review the progress of the Biological Weapons Convention to effectively address concerns for future conferences.³⁰ Additionally, the conference created a new Working Group, which will perform research to create evidence-based suggestions to improve the Biological Weapons Convention as the scientific world continues to innovate. This Working Group was created to maintain the relevance of the Biological Weapons Conventions measures.³¹ As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to develop, the scientific community will continue to advance. The new Working Group is responsible for understanding these new developments and responding to them appropriately to adequately maintain the mission of the original Biological Weapons Convention as the world continues to modernize.³²

In addressing the subtopic of biological weapons, delegates should consider how current events affect the accessibility of such weapons by NSAs. Any new developments in the world of the biological sciences can affect the conversation about biosecurity and biological weapons.³³ Delegates should consider not only their country's stance on current biological weapons but also their country's position or role in biological advancements.

Conclusion

All in all, there have been notable developments in recent years regarding how to prevent NSAs from acquiring WMD. There is much to consider, from UN resolutions to developments in the biological sciences, when proposing resolutions. The Korean nuclear threats, as well as their assistance towards Russian mercenary the Wagner Group, is one of the most current threats to the non-proliferation of WMD for NSAs.³⁴ There are still several unanswered questions about the role of WMD potentially in the hands of NSAs. Delegates

should carefully consider recent developments as well as past precedents in order to craft relevant but evidence-backed solutions to best prepare for debate.

biological-weapons/.

30 U.S. Department of State, "The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference."

31 U.S. Department of State, "The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference."

32 U.S. Department of State, "The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference."

33 Lyon, MC, USAF, "The COVID-19 Response Has Uncovered and Increased Our Vulnerability to Biological Warfare," 93-196.

34 George Wright, "North Korea Sold Arms to Russia's Wagner Group, US Says," *BBC News*, December 22, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64072570>.



DISEC

NHSMUN 2023

TOPIC B: THE ETHICS OF SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY

Photo Credit: Oleksandr Perevoznyk

Introduction

Surveillance technology refers to systems and devices used to collect information.¹ These technologies are essential for evolving security needs. However, the consistent innovations in surveillance technology have led to a series of ethical debates regarding safety and privacy. Mass surveillance is a serious topic that the UN has addressed on several occasions, and it is the DISEC committee’s task to regulate the development of surveillance technology. The end goal is to ensure compliance with the parameters set by the international community. Several aspects can be discussed regarding the applications of these mechanisms. This update paper highlights new challenges and perspectives that have emerged over time. We will begin by looking at the recent protests in Iran and surveillance technology’s role. Then we will delve deeper into new technologies such as blockchain and their capabilities.

Case Study: Adoption of Surveillance Technologies in Iran

The protests in Iran are one of the most prevalent current social conflicts. To understand the protests, it is necessary to analyze the context and causes that have transformed the movement. One of the most defining changes has been the use of surveillance technologies. Authorities have attempted to intervene in these protests with these technologies to subdue opposition.² In addition, facial recognition and telecommunications networks have aided in identifying protest participants.

The protests began following the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman. The country’s morality police arrested her in Tehran for allegedly violating rules regarding dress code and behavior, which have been in place since 1979.³ Amini was held in a detention center and died three days after her arrest. While the details of her treatment in the detention center are undisclosed, there has been much negative speculation considering her quick death and the reputation of the morality police.⁴ In response, the people of Iran began calling for a transparent justice system and checked enforcement. The protests started in September 2022 and are still ongoing.

Several women have protested publicly by marching on the streets, many of whom burn their headscarves and engage in street fights while chanting “women, life, and freedom.”⁵ There have been strikes at universities, the oil sector, and even in religious cities such as *Mashhad*. Moreover, Iran’s national soccer team refused to sing their national anthem at the World Cup in Qatar on November 21, 2022, to support the protests.⁶ The government responded through the use of force, killing 458 people. As of December 2022, 18,000 people have been detained. Journalists, lawyers, sports stars, and civil society figures have been arrested.⁷ Additionally, the Iranian government has been adopting surveillance technologies to identify and detain civilians who have attended the protests. This has led to several discussions regarding human rights and the right to privacy for the Iranian people.

Recent events in Iran highlight governments’ tendency to develop technological systems to surveil or restrict their citizens as a means of control.⁸ The Iranian government created its national Internet network, allowing greater control over the content its citizens can post or access on the internet. Governments can tamper with domain names, filter keywords, block particular IP addresses, and urge online providers to

1 “Surveillance Technologies,” American Civil Liberties Union, accessed February 8, 2023, <https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology/surveillance-technologies>.
2 Tim Starks and Aaron Schaffer, “Analysis | Iran sought a surveillance project with ‘unprecedented’ reach,” *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/01/17/iran-sought-surveillance-project-with-unprecedented-reach/>.
3 “Iran: A really simple guide to protests,” *BBC News*, October 26, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63240911>.
4 “Iran: A really simple guide to protests.”
5 Vivian Yee and Farnaz Fassih, “They Have Nothing to Lose’: Why Young Iranians Are Rising Up Once Again,” *The New York Times*, September 26, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/world/middleeast/iran-protests-raisi-khamenei-hijab.html>.
6 Yee and Fassih, “They Have Nothing to Lose’: Why Young Iranians Are Rising Up Once Again.”
7 Joshua Askew, “Iran protests: What caused them? Are they different this time? Will the regime fall?” *Euronews*, December 20, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/12/20/iran-protests-what-caused-them-who-is-generation-z-will-the-unrest-lead-to-revolution>.
8 “Content Blocking,” EFF, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.eff.org/es/issues/content-blocking>.



This image shows Iranian protesters in October 2022 marching in Berlin in support of Mahsa Amini. Credit: Amir Sarabadani

remove content or search results.⁹

The creation of national internet networks is not new. Countries like China and North Korea have such networks within their countries.¹⁰ However, the government of Iran still had to convince its citizens to adopt the new network. They did so by making it cheaper and faster than other internet providers. The government went as far as shutting down access to the global internet.¹¹ Other means of surveillance are “Super Apps,” in which users can browse the web, send messages, and stream media content in one app. These applications are usually run by a government or by technology companies that follow a government’s regulations.¹² These apps allow governments to have rigorous control over the type of content users can post or access.

Another surveillance technology that has been widely used in the country is a computer tool called SIAM. The Communications Regulatory Authority (CRA) is responsible for installing this tool. SIAM provides the government

with information and control over the individual phones of citizens.¹³ SIAM allows Iran to track a phone’s location, decrypt messages, see personal information, intercept cellular communications, and even generate a comprehensive Call Detail Record (CDR). The CDR includes the date, time, duration, location, and recipients of a customer’s phone calls.¹⁴

Most countries allow security agencies to legally obtain and analyze cellular communications, but SIAM pushes past that boundary. While SIAM is necessary for maintaining cellular networks, the surveillance power that SIAM gives to the government “goes beyond traditional lawful intercept requirements, at least in non-repressive countries,” according to a study provided by the University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab.¹⁵ By using SIAM technology, the Iranian government has been capable of obtaining the protestor’s personal data. As a result, the government was able to send messages warning people not to attend the protests or associate with online communities that oppose the government’s views.

⁹ “Content Blocking.”

¹⁰ Sophie Bushwick and Tulika Bose, “What you need to know about Iran’s Surveillance tech,” *Scientific American*, November 4, 2022, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/what-you-need-to-know-about-irans-surveillance-tech/>.

¹¹ Bushwick and Bose, “What you need to know about Iran’s Surveillance tech.”

¹² Bushwick and Bose, “What you need to know about Iran’s Surveillance tech.”

¹³ Claudia Glover, “Iran is using spyware to track citizens attending protests,” *Tech Monitor*, November 3, 2022, <https://techmonitor.ai/technology/cybersecurity/iran-protests-spyware-mobile-phone-tracking>.

¹⁴ Sam Biddle and Murtaza Hussain, “Hacked Documents: How Iran can track and control protesters’ phones,” *The Intercept*, October 27, 2022, <https://theintercept.com/2022/10/28/iran-protests-phone-surveillance/>.

¹⁵ Bushwick and Bose, “What you need to know about Iran’s Surveillance tech.”

Finally, there is the case of using biometrics, specifically facial recognition systems, to enforce legislation. According to an interview done with Oxford University researcher Masha Alimardani, there have been reports of women in Iran who have received mail citations for violating the law without any type of face-to-face interaction with law enforcement officials during or days after protests occur.¹⁶ This detection is possible due to a seven-year-old government ID system that requires face scans and several other biometric identifiers. The authorities can access this database system via SIAM technology or public surveillance devices. With this technology, officials have the power to identify protest participants.¹⁷

It falls under this committee’s responsibility to address the situation involving the use of surveillance technology as a means of control. Questions arise regarding the right to privacy and protection of personal data and biometric information protection.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)’s has published a report on the right to privacy in the digital age.¹⁸ It outlines the need to adopt and enforce data privacy legislation that abides by human rights law. Legislation should include “safeguards, oversight, and remedies to effectively protect the right to privacy.”¹⁹ This will ensure the technology is used for its intended purpose and not as a means of control.

The Widespread Adoption of Blockchains and Data Storage

The blockchain concept has been around since 2008. There is no doubt that it has the power to transform the industry. Blockchain is a technology that enables information to be shared publicly but in a secure ledger.²⁰ It operates as a shared

digital and distributed database, referred to as a Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT). It facilitates recording transactions and tracking assets in a business network by storing the data on structures known as blocks.²¹ Assets are all types of resources that a company possesses, which allow a business to operate. They can be tangible (such as cash, machinery, or land) or intangible (such as intellectual property, brands, copyright, or patents).

Members of private or public networks can update blockchains since they can record, share, and view encrypted data. This makes them secure because if somebody tries to edit or delete an entry in one copy of the ledger, the majority of the data will not reflect this change, rejecting it in the process.²² This allows a transparent recording of data and transactions, as it allows almost anything of value to be tracked and traded on a blockchain, reducing risks for everyone involved.

There are three main types of blockchains, which vary depending on who can participate and who has access to the data. Private blockchains require validation from the network’s central administrator, allowing the information to be kept private in most cases.²³ In public blockchains, anyone can participate in validating network transactions, and the software code is open-source and available to the public. However, the administrators of these networks cover who develops the software code, who can work in the consensus mechanism, and who can participate in the communal governance activities that maintain the network.²⁴ And finally, consortium blockchains consist of known participants pre-approved by a central authority to share information within a blockchain network.²⁵ It is essential to understand this classification, as each type of blockchain has its security challenges and specific characteristics that determine their possible applications in different sectors.

16 Mack DeGeurin, “Iran is using facial recognition to enforce modesty laws,” *Gizmodo*, January 10, 2023. <https://gizmodo.com/iran-hijab-facial-recognition-protests-enforce-laws-1849969854>.

17 DeGeurin, “Iran is using facial recognition to enforce modesty laws.”

18 UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Resolution 42/15, The right to privacy in the digital age Note by the Secretariat, A/HRC/47/61, May 18, 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/ahrc4761-right-privacy-digital-age-note-secretariat>.

19
 20 “What is Blockchain technology?” IBM, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.ibm.com/topics/what-is-blockchain>

21 “What is Blockchain technology?” IBM, accessed January 5, 2023, <https://www.ibm.com/topics/what-is-blockchain>

22 Adam Hayes, “Blockchain Facts: What Is It, How It Works, and How It Can Be Used,” Investopedia, last modified September 27, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain.asp#toc-what-is-a-blockchain-in-simple-terms>.

23 “What is blockchain security: Challenges and Examples” Simplilearn, last updated November 23, 2022, https://www.simplilearn.com/what-is-blockchain-security-and-its-examples-article#blockchain_security_challenges.

24 Simplilearn, “What is blockchain security.”

25 Simplilearn, “What is blockchain security.”

Blockchains are typically used for money transfers, cryptocurrencies, logistics, healthcare, and personal identity security. These industries can use blockchains for different purposes, creating new applications for the technology. For example, blockchains have been used in the medical field to strengthen disease surveillance systems.²⁶ Blockchains can be used to identify health security concerns, analyze preventive measures, and facilitate decision-making processes to act rapidly and effectively.²⁷ Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been used “to simplify the trial process for vaccines and medications, to raise public awareness, track donations and fundraising activities, and act as a reliable data tracker.”²⁸ Blockchains also have a significant implication for the development of surveillance systems. Since they are massive databases, they allow essential data to be securely transferred and communicated without replicating it.

Another example of how blockchains are used is the US Department of Defense.²⁹ The U.S Department of Defense has partnered with Guardtime Federal to develop software solutions and engineering tools based on blockchain technology. They are working to store weapon development data on secure decentralized ledgers.³⁰ This way, foreign governments or terrorists have a hard time accessing them. As for tracking technologies, blockchains have been applied for COVID-19 test certificates, pollution levels, electricity use, and disaster relief efforts.

There exists the risk the information stored in blockchains falls into the wrong hands, as blockchains are prone to cyberattacks. This would compromise the security of thousands of people, which is why this system has to be thoroughly tested and regulated to ensure that it can be used in the safest and most ethical way possible.

There are four specific ways hackers attack blockchain technology: Routing attacks are when hackers intercept data as it is transferred to the Internet service providers.³¹ Phishing attacks are scamming attempts such as false emails to individuals with access to a blockchain asking for their credentials or access codes with fake hyperlinks.³² Sybil attacks are when hackers use many false network identities to crash the system and gain access to privileged information.³³ And finally, when large-scale public blockchains use a lot of computing power, one agent acquiring more than 50 percent of that power would have the ability to manipulate it.³⁴ Such attacks are known as a “51 percent attack”. An example of such a threat was the attack on “ZenCash” in 2018, when hackers managed to access the platform by “mining” into the system using a massive amount of energy, reorganizing the blockchain and costing the company around USD 500,000.³⁵ Understanding that there are weaknesses in the current use of blockchain is vital to develop strong resolutions that can strengthen the ways in which these technologies operate and therefore ensure the security of blockchain data applied to surveillance systems around the world.

Another concern regarding blockchains and similar data-storage technologies is that tier application in specific sectors, such as mass surveillance or personal identity security, has led to a series of debates regarding the right of privacy in digital media.³⁶ Digital surveillance is generally linked to a lack of transparency from those in charge of regulating it. The UN recognizes this problem and has addressed it at the General Assembly’s Report on its fifty-first session, where it states that “governments often fail to release reliable information on what kind of surveillance systems they use and for what purposes—and often neglect to present evidence on the

26 Sudip Bhattacharya, Amarjeet Singh, and Mahbub Hossain, “Strengthening public health surveillance through blockchain technology,” *AIMS Public Health* 6(3): (September 2, 2019) 326–333. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6779606/>

27 Bhattacharya, Singh, and Hossain, “Strengthening public health surveillance through blockchain technology.”

28 Dounia Marbough et al, “Blockchain for COVID-19: Review, Opportunities, and a Trusted Tracking System,” *Arab J Sci Eng* 45, 9895–9911 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13369-020-04950-4>.

29 Vishesh Raisinghani, “3 Ways Blockchain Tech is being used for Surveillance,” GDA Capital, November 18, 2021, <https://gda.capital/2021/11/18/3-ways-blockchain-tech-is-being-used-for-surveillance/>.

30 Raisinghani, “3 Ways Blockchain Tech is being used for Surveillance.”

31 “What is Blockchain Security?” IBM, accessed January 8, 2023, <https://www.ibm.com/topics/blockchain-security>.

32 IBM, “What is Blockchain Security?”

33 IBM, “What is Blockchain Security?”

34 IBM, “What is Blockchain Security?”

35 IBM, “What is Blockchain Security?”

36 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age, A/HRC/51/17, (August 4, 2022), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3985679?ln=es>

efficacy of those systems.”³⁷ Since blockchain technology has been growing exponentially and has found several applications in the evolution of surveillance mechanisms, ensuring vigilance in the privacy of blockchain users is necessary for creating new networks that can help fulfill the security needs while also adhering to the ethical parameters of the development of this type of systems.

It is undeniable that the proper use of these technologies can lead to significant progress in creating new technologies that could strengthen justice, increase productivity, and even improve the lives of various citizens worldwide. In this committee, delegates must take into consideration the applications of blockchains and other data storage systems in surveillance technologies to not only follow closely the development of new digital means that secure the right of privacy of the users but also to find ways to adapt existing blockchain technologies to create transparent and efficient surveillance mechanisms that comply with the human rights law and make a positive contribution to societies around the world.

Conclusion

As time goes by, the development of new surveillance technologies continues to bring up challenges and opportunity areas that can be addressed by understanding their applications in various sectors. The widespread adoption of these systems also requires the creation of strict regulations that ensure that this technology evolves in the most ethical way possible. To ensure that the resolutions presented in the committee sessions properly address the essential parts of this topic, delegates thoroughly investigate how these mechanisms are being implemented. Delegates must understand the real problems and moral dilemmas regarding this type of innovation. Even though governments have applied distinct regulations on the matter, it falls into the DISEC’s responsibility to find ways to regulate the type of information that the authorities can access to grant security to citizens of different countries while also respecting their right to privacy. It is also important to study how emerging technologies such as blockchains and other innovative mechanisms are applying personal data to find

effective ways to prevent this type of information from being exposed to third parties that can potentially become a threat to individuals and organizations. Therefore, delegates have to develop and apply new legislation and efficient resolutions that comply with the ethical parameters on the creation and application of surveillance technologies in private and public sectors to effectively enforce their adequate use and guarantee that human rights are preserved and respected around the world.

³⁷ The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age,

Works Cited

Topic A

UN Sources

- Security Council Report. “Non-Proliferation (1540 Committee), November 2022 Monthly Forecast.” Accessed January 8, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2022-11/non-proliferation-1540-committee-5.php>.
- Security Council Report. “Non-Proliferation: Today’s Vote on the 1540 Committee’s Mandate Renewal.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2022/11/non-proliferation-todays-vote-on-the-1540-committees-mandate-renewal.php>.
- United Nations. “2022 Year in Review: As Conflicts Rage, International Dialogue Remains’ the Only Hope’ for Peace | UN News.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/12/1131977>.
- United Nations. “Biological Weapons Convention – UNODA.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/biological-weapons/>.
- United Nations. “Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction - Security Council, 9205th Meeting | UN Web TV.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1x/k1x7wu9utg>.
- United Nations. “Security Council Extends Mandate of Committee Monitoring Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Weapons for 10 Years, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2663 (2022) | UN Press.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc15123.doc.htm>.
- United Nations. “United Nations Security Council |.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>.
- United Nations. “Weapons of Mass Destruction – Unoda.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/>.
- UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. “Biological Weapons Convention - Ninth Review Conference (2022): United Nations.” Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://meetings.unoda.org/bwc-revcon/biological-weapons-convention-ninth-review-conference-2022>.

Non-UN Sources

- Blum, Andrew, Victor Asal, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld. “Non-State Actors, Terrorism, and Weapons of Mass Destruction.” *International Studies Review* 7, (March 2005): 133–137. <https://academic.oup.com/isr/article/7/1/133/1797342>.
- Dumpis, Toms. “Morocco, US Organize Meeting to Fight Nuclear Proliferation.” *Morocco World News*. Accessed January 6, 2023. <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2021/01/333383/morocco-us-organize-meeting-to-fight-nuclear-proliferation>.
- Kirby, Jen. “The Treaties That Make the World Safer Are Struggling.” *Vox*. January 5, 2023. <https://www.vox.com/world/23510633/arms-control-bioweapons-convention-nukes-ukraine-putin>.
- Lyon, Regan F, MC, USAF. “The COVID-19 Response Has Uncovered and Increased Our Vulnerability to Biological Warfare.” *Military Medicine* 186, no. 7-8 (August 2021): 193–196. <https://doi.org/10.1093/milmed/usab061>.
- Madhani, Aamer, and Edith M. Lederer. “Russian Mercenary Group Bought Arms from North Korea, Says White House.” *Public Broadcasting Service*. December 22, 2022. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/russian-mercenary-group-bought-arms-from-north-korea-says-white-house>.
- National Defense University Press. “Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today.” December 4, 2019. <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Media/News/Article/2031922/mercenaries-and-war-understanding-private-armies-today/>.
- Seddon, Sean. “North Korea Carries out Latest Weapon of Mass Destruction Test.” *Metro*. December 23, 2022. <https://metro.co.uk/2022/12/23/north-korea-carries-out-latest-weapon-of-mass-destruction-test-17987127/>.

- SIPRI. “Sipri Co-Hosts Side Event at the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention.” December 15, 2022. <https://www.sipri.org/news/2022/sipri-co-hosts-side-event-ninth-review-conference-biological-weapons-convention>.
- U.S. Department of State. “Proliferation Security Initiative - United States Department of State.” November 2, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/proliferation-security-initiative/>.
- U.S. Department of State. “The Ninth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference - United States Department of State.” December 20, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/the-ninth-biological-weapons-convention-review-conference/>.
- U.S. Department of State. “U.S. and Morocco Co-Host Proliferation Security Initiative Workshop - United States Department of State.” December 8, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-and-morocco-co-host-proliferation-security-initiative-workshop/>.
- U.S. Department of State. “U.S. Relations with Morocco - United States Department of State.” June 6, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-morocco/>.
- Warsaw Institute. “The Awakening of Private Military Companies.” February 2, 2021. <https://warsawinstitute.org/awakening-private-military-companies/>.
- Woodyatt, Amy. “December 7, 2022 Russia-Ukraine News.” *CNN*. December 8, 2022. <https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-12-07-22/index.html>.
- Wright, George. “North Korea Sold Arms to Russia’s Wagner Group, US Says.” *BBC News*. December 22, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64072570>.

Topic B

UN Sources

- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Resolution 42/15. The right to privacy in the digital age Note by the Secretariat. A/HRC/47/61. May 18, 2021. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/ahrc4761-right-privacy-digital-age-note-secretariat>.
- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age. A/HRC/51/17. August 4, 2022. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3985679?ln=es>.

Non-UN Sources

- Askew, Joshua. “Iran protests: What caused them? Are they different this time? Will the regime fall?” *Euronews*. Last updated December 20, 2022. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/12/20/iran-protests-what-caused-them-who-is-generation-z-will-the-unrest-lead-to-revolution>.
- BBC. “Iran: A really simple guide to the protests.” *BBC News*. October 26, 2022. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63240911>.
- Bhattacharya, Singh and Mahbub Hossain. “Strengthening public health surveillance through blockchain technology.” *AIMS Public Health*; 6(3): (September 2, 2019) 326–333. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6779606/>.
- Biddle, Sam, and Muratza Hussain. “Hacked Documents: How Iran can track and control protesters’ phones.” *The Intercept*. October 27, 2022. <https://theintercept.com/2022/10/28/iran-protests-phone-surveillance/>.
- Bushwick, Sophie, and Tulika Bose. “What you need to know about Iran’s Surveillance Tech.” *Scientific American*. November 4, 2022. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode/what-you-need-to-know-about-irans-surveillance-tech/>.
- Carter, Rebekah. “The Ultimate List of Blockchain Statistics (2023).” Findstack. Last updated December 5, 2022. <https://findstack.com/resources/blockchain-statistics/>.
- DeGeurin, Mack. “Iran is using facial recognition to enforce modesty laws.” *Gizmodo*. January 10, 2023. <https://gizmodo.com/iran-hijab-facial-recognition-protests-enforce-laws-1849969854>.

- EFF. “Content Blocking.” Accessed January 5, 2023. <https://www.eff.org/es/issues/content-blocking>.
- Glover, Claudia. “Iran is using spyware to track citizens attending protests.” *Tech Monitor*. November 3, 2022. <https://techmonitor.ai/technology/cybersecurity/iran-protests-spyware-mobile-phone-tracking>.
- Hayes, Adam. “Blockchain Facts: What Is It, How It Works, and How It Can Be Used.” Investopedia. Last modified September 27, 2022. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/blockchain.asp#toc-what-is-a-blockchain-in-simple-terms>.
- IBM. “What is blockchain security?” Accessed January 8, 2023. <https://www.ibm.com/topics/blockchain-security>.
- IBM. “What is blockchain technology?” Accessed January 5, 2023 <https://www.ibm.com/topics/what-is-blockchain>.
- IHRNGO. “Iran Protests: at Least 458 People Killed/11 Officially Sentenced to Death.” December 7, 2022. <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5623/>.
- Marbough, Dounia, Tayaba Abbasi, Fatema Maasmi, Ilhaam A. Omar, Mazin S. Debe, Khaled Salah, Raja Jayaraman & Samer Ellahham. “Blockchain for COVID-19: Review, Opportunities, and a Trusted Tracking System.” *Arab J Sci Eng* 45, 9895–9911 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13369-020-04950-4>.
- Raisinghani, Vishesh. “3 Ways Blockchain Tech is being used for Surveillance.” GDA Capital. November 18, 2021. <https://gda.capital/2021/11/18/3-ways-blockchain-tech-is-being-used-for-surveillance/>.
- Simplilearn. “What is blockchain security: Challenges and Examples.” Last updated November 23, 2022. https://www.simplilearn.com/what-is-blockchain-security-and-its-examples-article#blockchain_security_challenges.
- Starks, Tim and Aaron Schaffer. “Analysis | Iran sought a surveillance project with ‘unprecedented’ reach.” *The Washington Post*. January 17, 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/01/17/iran-sought-surveillance-project-with-unprecedented-reach/>.
- “Surveillance Technologies.” American Civil Liberties Union. Accessed February 8, 2023. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/privacy-technology/surveillance-technologies>.
- Yee, Vivian, and Farnaz Fassih. “‘They Have Nothing to Lose’: Why Young Iranians Are Rising Up Once Again.” *The New York Times*. Last updated September 26, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/world/middleeast/iran-protests-raisi-khamenei-hijab.html>.

The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

Written by Mia Murakami Cho and Santiago Hernández

Edited by Samantha Chen, Ana Margarita Gil, Ming-May Hu, Victor Miranda, Kylie Watanabe, and Amy Zeng

© 2023 IMUNA. All Rights Reserved.

