

**Committee: World Health Organization****Topic: Addressing the Use of Biological Warfare Regarding Terrorism****Report of the Chairs**

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**I. Theme of the Conference**

Model United Nations San Antonio (MUNSA) is a conference dedicated to fostering authentic and passionate debate amongst delegates in order to generate solutions to current global issues. The theme of *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* encapsulates our mission to urge delegates to foresee a future in which these problems have been dissolved. With collaboration in mind, delegates from every committee are encouraged to visualize innovative resolutions and a prosperous world to come. Together, we will propel ourselves into an age in which brilliant ideas converge to transform our world and address its most paramount issues.

**II. Rationale**

This committee aims to address the use of biological warfare regarding terrorism and its potential effect on the global community and thus hopes to oversee the cooperation of nations to work towards international safety regarding such warfare. The primary concern of this committee is the protection of communities against organized terrorist groups launching biological attacks upon them. The majority of countries are opposed to the possession and use of biological weapons, regardless of who is in possession or the purpose of such weapons. The goal of this committee is to visualize a world in which bioterrorism has been dismantled and biological advances are used for the improvement of public health.

**III. Background of the Topic**

Bioterrorism is the use of biological weapons with the intent of damaging the welfare of society. Germany's use of mustard gas in World War I was the first example of a large scale use of biological weapons.<sup>4</sup> In the mid-1930s Japan created a secret testing facility called Unit 731, where they tested fatal biological weapons on prisoners.<sup>5</sup> The use of these deadly weapons has seen promotion and spread through large scale wars, which has, in turn, posed a threat to the

communities by exposing them to these diseases. While Syria in 2016 being the last confirmed use of biological weapons;<sup>2</sup> however, possession of biological weapons and their use has been banned by the UN since 1975.<sup>6</sup> Despite the prohibition of biological weapons, non-state groups and terrorist organizations have been progressing in the creation and development of their biological weapons.

#### **IV. Contemporary Evidence of the Topic**

Across the world, instances of bioterrorism have increased at alarming rates. While nations going through internal turmoil such as Syria are more prone to biological attacks like the chlorine gas attacks in 2016, small communities near terrorist groups and cities around testing facilities are most at risk.<sup>2</sup> Due to the lack of precautions when handling biological weapons, leaks and contamination are common occurrences, especially when biological weapons are in the hands of small terrorist groups with little infrastructure. To combat potential damage from biological weapons, the UN assembled the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) when the first multilateral disarmament treaty, through the Biological Weapons Committee, was opened for signing. In 1975, the UN created a treaty that banned the use of biological weapons alongside other weapons of mass destruction.<sup>6</sup>

The current spread of biological weapons means potential damage to innocent bystanders on a global scale. The danger of a bioterrorist attack comes from the invasive nature of the weapons and the difficulty of tracking the source of the attacks. Without regulations and restrictions, biological terrorism may cause irreversable damage to both large powers and smaller nations through leaks, testing, and massive loss of civilian life.

#### **V. References and Research Resources**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Bioterrorism. Retrieved September 5, 2019 from <https://emergency.cdc.gov/bioterrorism/>
2. Eaves, Elizabeth. (2018). A form of biological warfare in Syria and Yemen. Retrieved September 6, 2019 from <https://thebulletin.org/2018/11/a-form-of-biological-warfare-in-syria-and-yemen/>

3. O'tool, Tarry. (2014). FEMA's Role in Managing Bioterrorist Attacks and the Impact of Public Health Concerns on Bioterrorism Preparedness. Retrieved September 6th, 2019 from <http://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/publications/femas-role-in-managing-bioterrorist-attacks>
4. Patton, James. (2015). Gas in The Great War. Retrieved September 6, 2019 from <http://www.kumc.edu/wwi/medicine/gas-in-the-great-war.html>
5. Unit 731. (2019). Japan's Biological Weapons Program. Retrieved September 6, 2019 from <https://unit731.org>
6. United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. (2017). Biological Weapons. Retrieved September 5th, 2019 from <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/bio/>

## **VI. Note to the Delegates**

We are pleased to have you as part of the World Health Organization committee. We wish to facilitate an engaging and progressive discussion, as well as achieve a consensus to further global health. We encourage you to participate in and enjoy *MUNSA XXIV: Envision* with us. It is a privilege to be partaking in this Model UN Conference with you! Please feel free to contact any of the chairs through email:

Audrey Michel, [amichel7331@stu.neisd.net](mailto:amichel7331@stu.neisd.net)

Diego Escobedo Ruiz, [descobedoru9730@stu.neisd.net](mailto:descobedoru9730@stu.neisd.net)

Isaiah Bosmans, [ibosmans1619@stu.neisd.net](mailto:ibosmans1619@stu.neisd.net)

Malachi Brand, [mbrand8450@stu.neisd.net](mailto:mbrand8450@stu.neisd.net)

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## **VII. Director General Contact Information**

Joseph Ruelas - [jruelas4856@stu.neisd.net](mailto:jruelas4856@stu.neisd.net)

Dana Marion - [dm Marion0455@stu.neisd.net](mailto:dm Marion0455@stu.neisd.net)