WMUN II

Disarmament and International Security Committee

Kavin Rameshkumar	Luka Board	Laila Board
Co-Chair	Co-Chair	Co-Chair

Letter from the chairs

Honorable delegates,

Welcome to the Wilder Model United Nations Conferences' second iteration. You are participating in the Disarmament and International Security Committee (also known as DISEC), co-chaired by Kavin Rameshkumar, Luka Board, and Laila Board.

Laila Board is a seventh grader in the GYSA program at L. Douglas Wilder Middle School, and this is her second year participating in Model United Nations, while her first year chairing. She is an active member of the National Junior Honors Art Society, National Junior Honors Society, a student council representative, and in the yearbook committee at L. Douglas Wilder Middle School. Outside of school, Laila enjoys playing soccer, dancing, or volunteering for numerous organizations in Henrico, including the VMFA, Scouting America, and more.

Kavin Rameshkumar is an eighth grader in the GYSA program at L. Douglas Wilder Middle School, and this is his first year participating in Model United Nations, and this is his first year chairing. He is part of the National Junior Honors Society, the Math Club, the D&D

Club, the Technology Student Association, and the Video Game Club. Outside of school, Kavin enjoys swimming, reading, and playing the violin.

Luka Board is a seventh grader in the GYSA program at Wilder Middle School. She has been involved in Model United Nations for two years; however, this is her first year chairing. Luka has been a member of the Wilder Lego Robotics Team and is in the National Junior Honor Society. Outside of school, Luka enjoys going to rock concerts, watching TV and film, and being an active member of Scouting America.

In this committee, delegates will debate topics concerning preventing the proliferation of autonomous weapons systems and addressing the threat of biological and chemical weapons. We highly encourage you to research and collect information on your topics at hand and the role that you will be given. We please ask that you write your position paper on your given role, and we kindly ask you to refrain from using any sort of AI, or your position paper will be flagged, and you will not be eligible for an award. Please format your citations in MLA 9 format; if you do not, your paper will be flagged for plagiarism, and you will not be eligible to receive an award. Submitting a position paper is optional, but it is mandatory to be eligible for an award. Alongside your position paper, chairs will be looking to find exceptional contributions to the debate, and to earn an award, delegates must show noteworthy skill in both the debate and their position paper writing. If any questions/concerns emerge, feel free to contact any one of your chairs or wildermun@gmail.com. We are extremely looking forward to having you at our conference and sincerely hope that you have just as much fun at this conference as we will!

Best wishes, Your Chairs,

Laila Board, Kavin Rameshkumar, Luka Board

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Topic 1: Preventing the Proliferation of Autonomous Weapons Systems

Topic 2: Addressing the Threat of Biological and Chemical Weapons

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Committee Overview

The Disarmament International Security Committee (also known as DISEC) is the first committee in the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was created in 1945 due to countries needing a space to discuss issues related to security and peace. DISEC mainly focuses on regulating weapons and creating a safer world. In DISEC, delegates will have to debate topics focused on safety in the world, controlling weapons, and global threats to peace.

Topic I

Preventing the Proliferation of Autonomous Weapons Systems

Topic Overview: Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) are military systems that can select and attack targets with limited or no human control, raising important questions about who is responsible for life-or-death decisions on the battlefield.

As these systems become more advanced and more widely used, they create increasing risks for global security and international humanitarian law. Concerns include whether AWS can comply with the laws of war, their vulnerability to hacking or malfunction, and the potential for an arms race in autonomous weapons to escalate conflicts (Campaign to Stop Killer Robots; United Nations 2025). In this committee, delegates will focus on Autonomous Weapons Systems, the cybersecurity and hacking risks they pose, and whether international inspections or oversight should be required before these systems are developed, deployed, or even used in conflict.

Background: The idea of Artificial Intelligence being used in the military was first explored in 1966, with early research projects such as “Shakey the Robot.” Shakey was a tool developed by SRI International in 1966, which was a revolutionary creation because it

could perceive its environment, plan actions, and move independently based on those decisions (SRI International; Computer History Museum). Although Shakey was not used as a weapon, the robot proved that machines could “think” like humans in limited ways. Shakey was ultimately retired in 1972 due to the end of the research period. Applying AI to defense and warfare has continued to attract attention and investment since then. Advances in computing power, sensors, and machine learning have enabled much more complex systems. Modern militaries already use AI in many ways, such as analyzing satellite images and surveillance data, guiding missiles and drones, assisting with logistics, planning, and cyber defense.

However, autonomous weapons systems go a step further. Instead of just supporting a human operator, they can independently choose and attack targets. Some current weapons already have partial autonomy, such as defensive systems that automatically shoot down incoming missiles. The concern is that, as technology improves, more countries may develop weapons that make offensive targeting decisions on their own, with less or no human oversight. (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs 2025; Digital Watch Observatory)

Today, the global market for military and autonomous weapons systems is expanding rapidly. Spending on AWS in defense is projected to grow from around $14.8 billion in 2025 to over $35.6 billion by 2035, a compound annual growth rate of 9.4% (Mobility Foresights). This significant increase reflects how many countries view AI and AWS-driven systems as critical for gaining a military advantage.

For decades, concerns about morality, technological reliability, and safety have pushed the international community to question how far the development and use of Autonomous Weapons Systems should go, and what rules, limits, laws, or bans might be necessary to prevent catastrophic misuse. From an ethics perspective, many countries and experts argue that allowing machines to make life-or-death decisions—without understanding human values or empathy—is deeply problematic. They also worry about how AWS could enable strikes with little political cost, lowering the threshold for conflict and making it easier for actors, including terrorists, to use force remotely. Doubts remain about whether these systems can reliably distinguish between combatants and civilians, or respond safely to unexpected situations. Even a small error rate could lead to serious violations of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva

Conventions. Furthermore, there are concerns about accountability: If an AWS causes a civilian casualty, who bears responsibility—the programmer, commanders, manufacturers, or the state? Technologically, poorly trained algorithms may misidentify targets, especially in crowded or dynamic environments, and machine-learning systems can behave unpredictably when encountering novel situations, with hidden flaws or biases (Campaign to Stop Killer Robots).

Safety and security risks further complicate the picture. AWS can be vulnerable to hacking, spoofing, or other cyberattacks, potentially allowing terrorists or non-state actors to seize control or induce dangerous behavior. An arms race in AWS could encourage premature deployment, leading to escalation (Campaign to Stop Killer Robots).

These overlapping worries have fueled discussions at the United Nations and in regional organizations. Responses include proposals for complete or partial bans on fully autonomous weapons systems (often called "lethal autonomous weapon systems"), emphasizing that meaningful human control must always be maintained over the use of force. Others favor regulation, such as allowing AWS only under clear human supervision, with limited scope and rigorous testing. There are also proposals to clarify that international laws fully apply to AWS and to require states to conduct reviews of any new autonomous weapons before development, acquisition, or use (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs 2025; Digital Watch Observatory). Together, these debates highlight the international community's division over the future of Autonomous Weapons Systems, while underscoring the shared need for clarified rules and possibly new treaties to mitigate catastrophic risks.

In this committee, delegates will focus on Autonomous Weapons Systems, the cybersecurity and hacking risks they pose, and whether international inspections or oversight should be required before these systems are developed, deployed, or even used in conflict.

Topic II

Addressing the Threat of Biological and Chemical Weapons

Topic Overview: Autonomous Weapons Systems are one of the most controversial uses of artificial intelligence today. Since the invention of AI in 1956, this technology has been praised as "new and amazing" for its ability to make complex, human-like decisions quickly and efficiently. Over time, AI has moved from everyday uses, such as traffic analyzers and recommending music or clothes, to far more serious applications in warfare. Autonomous Weapons Systems are military systems that can select and engage targets with limited or no direct human control, raising serious and important questions about who is responsible for life-and-death decisions on the battlefield.

Background: Biological and chemical weapons are among the most dangerous ever developed, capable of causing mass suffering with relatively small amounts of material (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons"). Unlike conventional weapons, they can spread silently, are often difficult to detect, and may have long-term health and environmental effects (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons"). Biological weapons are designed to spread disease or cause death by using living agents, such as bacteria, viruses, or fungi, or by using toxins made by these organisms.(United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons"). Chemical weapons use toxic chemicals, delivered as gases, liquids, or aerosols, to injure or kill (OPCW, "Article I – General Obligations"). Because these weapons can harm civilians as easily as combatants, spread fear far beyond the battlefield, and overwhelm public health systems, the international community has spent decades trying to control, reduce, and eliminate them through treaties, inspections, and global norms (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "1925 Geneva Protocol").

International efforts to control biological and chemical weapons have evolved, shaped by both historical experience and changing technology (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "1925 Geneva Protocol"). During World War I, large-scale use of chemical weapons caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and shocked the world, leading to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibited the use—but not the development or stockpiling—of chemical and biological weapons in war. Later, growing concern about the unique dangers of biological weapons led to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), opened for signature in 1972 and entered into force in 1975 (United

Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons Convention"). The BWC bans the development, production, stockpiling, and acquisition of biological and toxin weapons, and requires existing stockpiles to be destroyed or converted to peaceful purposes (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons Convention"). Concern over chemical weapons, especially after their use in various conflicts and industrial accidents, helped produce the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which opened for signature in 1993 and entered into force in 1997. The CWC prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of chemical weapons, and created the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to verify compliance. While the CWC has detailed verification, the BWC still lacks an inspection system, leaving important gaps open to regulation.

Today's threats are shaped by scientific advances, industrial growth, and the actions of non-state parties (Patrick and Barton). Biotechnology, synthetic biology, and genetic engineering tools like CRISPR can greatly benefit the growth of medicine and agriculture, but they also raise fears of things like genetically modified superbugs and crop-failing fungi (Patrick and Barton). In chemistry, a large global industry produces many legitimate products, but precursor chemicals can be converted into new toxic chemicals (e.g., MCC turning into MIC in the Bhopal Gas Disaster), and research on new toxic substances may outpace treaty definitions ("Biotechnologies and the Treaty Gap"). At the same time, non-state actors, such as terrorists, may try to steal toxic agents, exploit weak laboratory security, or misuse industrial chemicals, especially in enclosed spaces (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons"). The COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated how a biological event, whether natural or deliberate, can overwhelm and overturn health systems and economies.

Debates over how to address these threats show competing priorities among different stakeholders. One key issue is verification and transparency. Some stakeholders want better reporting to ensure that no one is secretly developing prohibited weapons (Revill). Some stakeholders stress state sovereignty and privacy, arguing that invasive inspections could reveal national security information or proprietary business knowledge, and they favor voluntary confidence-building steps instead (Revill). Another debate focuses on how to balance scientific freedom with security controls.

Many researchers and policymakers in countries that focus on innovation argue that biotechnology and chemistry can bring large benefits, and they worry that overly strict regulations could slow research and reduce cooperation between groups (Patrick and Barton). From a more cautious standpoint, even a low chance of catastrophic misuse may be enough to justify stricter oversight of dual-use research, including review by ethics committees and controls on exports of sensitive materials and know-how (Paxton et al.). Countries with more capacity often have advanced laboratories and strong regulatory systems. In contrast, countries with low or middle capacity may not have the staff, equipment, or budget to do the same work, so they often need technical support, training, and sustained funding ("Biotechnologies and the Treaty Gap").

Current treaties and domestic laws provide the main framework for today's system, yet they still leave key gaps. Going back to the BWC, it lacks a standing verification body and does not include regular inspections, and most reporting is still voluntary (Revill). It is often hard to tell when research meant for defense, like vaccine development, is separate from work that could be used for offensive purposes (Revill). Compared with many other arms control agreements, the CWC and the OPCW put more weight on verification. Countries are required to declare relevant facilities and materials, and the OPCW conducts both routine inspections and challenge inspections (OPCW, Convention). It has also helped with the destruction of large declared stockpiles and provides training on chemical safety and emergency response (OPCW, "Article X – Assistance and Protection"). Even so, some actors do not follow the treaty or are not bound by it, new chemicals may not be covered in full, and political disagreements can restrict coordinated action (OPCW, Convention). At the national level, implementation depends on whether each state can make prohibited conduct a criminal offense, oversee laboratories and industry, and manage borders, as well as imports and exports (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Biological Weapons Convention"). Some countries already have clear regulations and active enforcement bodies, while others are still putting these systems in place, leading to uneven levels of protection across the world (Paxton et al.).

In the coming years, countries and international bodies will need to reinforce shared norms and legal rules while still allowing scientific progress and respecting national sovereignty and equity (Paxton et al.).

One option is to restate that biological and chemical weapons are strictly banned, while also strengthening education and social norms that discourage their use (Paxton et al.). Another is to ask countries to submit reports under the BWC and CWC more often and to make those reports clearer and easier for others to review (Revill). Countries may consider a voluntary peer review system for laboratories that handle high-risk work, share more details on how they apply national rules, and use new technologies carefully to support detection and verification (Revill). Capacity-building matters because many countries lack staff, equipment, or stable budgets. Providing funding, practical training, and joint exercises can help under-resourced countries meet their obligations and respond more quickly and safely during emergencies ("Biotechnologies and the Treaty Gap"). Oversight for dual-use research can be handled through ethics committees, clear codes of conduct, and regular discussion with researchers (Paxton et al.). These steps can lower the risk of misuse while still allowing useful research to go forward. Strengthening disease surveillance and early warning systems, along with better international coordination and well-managed stockpiles of medical countermeasures, can improve preparedness and response (Patrick and Barton). Taken together, these measures seek to stop state and non-state actors from obtaining or using biological or chemical weapons, protect public health, and uphold humanitarian and legal standards as global conditions become more complex (Paxton et al.).

The threat of bioweapons and chemical weapons still exists today and has not gone away. Dual-use research, which is carried out for legitimate goals but can also be put to harmful use, makes regulation harder to design and enforce ("Biotechnologies and the Treaty Gap"). Recent conflicts and targeted killings Involving chemical agents suggests that some actors still view these weapons as practical instruments (OPCW, Convention).

In this committee, delegates must focus on ways to reinforce international rules against biological and chemical weapons, identify legal and technical gaps that allow misuse, and reduce the risk that either governments or non-state groups can obtain or employ these weapons (Paxton et al.). Delegates must weigh different viewpoints and goals, including security, public health, freedom in scientific research, economic growth, and fairness across regions (Paxton et al.), to find a resolution for this pressing issue.

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