



SCMUN

**SPECIAL, POLITICAL,
AND DECOLONIZATION**

2017

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Welcome Letter from the USG

Hello delegates!

My name is Lauren Walker and I am so excited to serve as your USG of General Assembly Committees. I am a freshman from Laguna Beach, California majoring in International Relations/Global Business. This is my fifth year in Model United Nations, beginning my freshman year in high school. Through my time in MUN, I have chaired multiple committees, ranging from novice to Crisis to advanced General Assemblies. At USC, I also serve on the Executive Board for MUN as the Director of Recruitment, in charge of interviewing potential new members.

In addition to Model UN, I am an executive board member of the Trojan Scholar Society and Scholars Leading Scholars organizations. In addition to my interests within USC, I also love to travel and have been to London and Paris participating in MUN conferences internationally. My love for international politics and my travel have given me a passion for MUN and the topics we will be discussing in the General Assembly committees.

As your USG, I welcome both high school and middle school students to USC for SCMUN 2017. Hopefully the topics that you will be discussing during our two-day conference will invite you to take on a more global perspective and holistic approach to solving these pressing world issues. Topics in these committees include human rights abuses to deactivating anti-personnel landmines and whether this is your first General Assembly committee or potentially your last, we invite all to work together in creating solutions and keeping an open mind once in committee. With your hard work and dedication, this can be an incredibly meaningful experience and hopefully will spark or continue your interest in MUN.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these committees or the conference in general, please do not hesitate to contact me. I cannot wait to meet you all at SCMUN 2017 and Fight On!

Lauren Walker
USG of General Assembly Committees
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Welcome Letter from the Chair

Greetings delegates!

Welcome to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly, otherwise known as the Special, Political, and Decolonization (SPECPOL) committee at SCMUN 2017. My name is Abhiram Reddy and I am a first-year student at the University of Southern California currently pursuing a degree in International Relations. I was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois but spent all 4 years of high school abroad in Southern India. I have been attending Model United Nations conferences since my freshman year of high school and have been fortunate enough to serve as a delegate and chair in the the U.S., India, and the U.A.E. I have also been blessed with the opportunity of being Secretary-General at my high school's conference back in 2015. At USC I'm involved in our MUN club and have also deputy chaired a committee at our college conference.

Although originally created to focus on decolonization, the SPECPOL is, in modern times, one of the broadest General Assembly committees. The Fourth Committee discusses problems as complex as outer space security and child trafficking. However, our committee's agenda focuses on the deeply concerning issues of **Protecting World/Cultural Heritage Sites in regions of armed conflict** and **Deactivating anti-personal landmines**.

As a committee, you will be tasked with drafting a resolution that will work to ensure that some of our planet's most important sites are protected from the groups that attempt to exploit natural resources, foster ideological revolution, and garner international attention. Our committee will also be responsible for ensuring that a resolution is formulated that addresses the impact of anti-personal landmines on millions of people across the world, and resolves the discrepancies that prevent key international players from enforcing formal bans on these weapons. I am extremely excited to see what all delegates will bring to the table. This background guide should only be used as a starting point for your research, rather than a definitive document. Please feel free to contact me with any and all questions regarding the committee. Good luck with your preparation and I look forward to seeing you in April.

Best,
Abhiram Reddy
abhiramr@usc.edu

Committee History

As the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (GA), the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) was initially two separate committees: the fourth focusing on decolonization and the Special Political Committee” (SPC).¹ At the time of the establishment of the main organs of the General Assembly, the fourth committee’s primary focus was to facilitate and assist decolonization efforts throughout the world. In the aftermath of the independence movements of the late 20th century, the fourth committee and the SPC merged in 1993 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/233.²

Outside of decolonization, the committee has primarily tackled issues that fell outside the time frame of the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) or those that transcended the boundaries between various other committees such as human rights, peacekeeping, mine action, outer space, public information, and atomic radiation.³ As a result, the committee has grown into one of the most versatile organs of the General Assembly and is well-equipped to deal with agendas as diverse as Palestinian refugee protection and the militarization of Outer Space.

¹ “Special Political and Decolonization,” *United Nations General Assembly*, accessed on December 21, 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/index.shtml>.

² “UN Documentation: General Assembly,” *UN Documentation Research Guide*, accessed on December 21, 2016, <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/committees>.

³ *Ibid.*

Committee Mandate

In accordance with GA resolution 47/233, the SPECPOL today tackles issues that fall outside the scope of the DISEC and have ramifications among the other GA committees.⁴ All United Nations member states are represented within the SPECPOL by a single vote. The committee submits separate reports on each allocated agenda item to the plenary where voting on draft resolutions occur.⁵

While GA committees do possess significant potential to impact the international community, it is crucial to note that in accordance with “Article 2” of the U.N. charter all member states are guaranteed sovereignty in action.⁶ Thus, none of the GA committees can take definitive action or provide resolutions that go beyond recommendations to sovereign member states. Additionally, the SPECPOL is unable to discuss affairs that fall directly into the scope of another committee’s agenda, but is able to make recommendations as to the actions of other committees.

Finally, although the SPECPOL is not able to directly create new organs with the United Nations as an entity, it is (as with all GA committees) able to propose the creation of subsidiary bodies to address specific agendas that lie outside the scope of the other GA committees.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Chapter 1: Purposes and Principles,” *United Nations*, accessed on December 21, 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>.

Key Terms to Know

World Heritage Site: A world heritage site is a location or landmark of outstanding natural or cultural heritage that is designated by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization in accordance with the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. For the purposes of this committee, only sites officially listed by UNESCO as World Heritage sites will be considered as such.

Cultural Heritage: Cultural Heritage is defined by the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* as follows. “Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.”⁷

Natural Heritage: Natural Heritage is defined by the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* as follows. “Natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view; geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation; natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.”⁸

Cultural Landscape: A term first utilized in the 1992 World Heritage Convention. This term refers to "combined works of nature and of man" and can fall into three

⁷ “Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on December 5, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

primary categories: “clearly defined landscape designed and created intentionally by man”, “organically evolved landscape”, and “associative cultural landscape”.⁹

Sharia Law: This term refers to a system traditional religious law that governs practitioners of Islam. This form of regulation extends to every aspect of a Muslim’s life and is primarily derived from the Qur’an, Hadith, and precedents. For the purposes of this committee it is important to note that Sharia is not a specific set of laws and has been interpreted in a variety of forms by numerous scholars, organizations, and people.

Armed Conflict- For the purposes of this guide, armed conflict will refer to lasting altercations between two or more actors possessing devices capable of inflicting severe physical harm within a specific region.

Desertification: This term refers to the ecological process by which previously lush land is rapidly converted into desert and can be attributed to a variety of factors including deforestation, overgrazing, and drought.

Biodiversity: A term that refers to the variety of life within a specific region but can also be extended on an international scale. Biodiversity is typically not a quantitative measure but is useful in determining a location’s natural value.

Anti-Personal Landmines: These landmines are specifically designed to injure or kill human beings that exert weight upon them. They are often buried underground during times of conflict.

Anti-Tank Landmines: These landmines are specifically designed to damage or destroy tanks and other artillery that exert a large amount of weight upon them. Humans are typically unable to set off anti-tank landmines.

⁹ “Cultural Landscape,” *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 5, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/#1>.

Background: Topic A
Protecting World Cultural Heritage Sites in Regions of Armed Conflict

History of Situation

Armed conflict has consistently been a trademark of human civilization. As a species, we have spent incredible amounts of time engaged in violent struggles that have decimated surrounding communities. Oftentimes, these conflicts transcend into the destruction of monuments, religious symbols, and sites that epitomized the best of human ingenuity. Throughout human history, protecting our cultural heritage has always been of utmost importance.¹⁰ In times of strife, these sites served as beacons of hope for thousands of people on almost every continent, a way for them to ensure that their legacy lived on regardless of their fate. Thus, the tactical destruction of these landmarks has traditionally been a basic tactic of warfare and conquest.¹¹

Although cultural and natural heritage sites have been targeted for centuries, one of the earliest modern-day examples of an effort to protect these sites occurred in 1959.¹² The 1954 decision to construct the Aswan Dam was met with both praise and concern from governments in the region and the international community. The formation of the dam would lead to the creation of a large lake that covered the Upper Nile Valley and thus threatened numerous sites of historical importance to the ancient Nubian civilization of Egypt and Sudan.¹³ A plea for assistance in 1959, was met by an International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia by UNESCO in 1960. The campaign facilitated the excavation of thousands of artifacts, many of which were placed in museums in Cairo, and the relocation of temple sites to higher ground.¹⁴ The highly successful campaign acted as the precursor for the November 1972 adoption of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.¹⁵

¹⁰ Stephen Stenning, "Destroying Cultural Heritage: more than just material damage," *British Council*, last modified August 21, 2015, accessed on December 5, 2016, <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/destroying-cultural-heritage-more-just-material-damage>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² "Monuments of Nubia-International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on December 5, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/172/>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

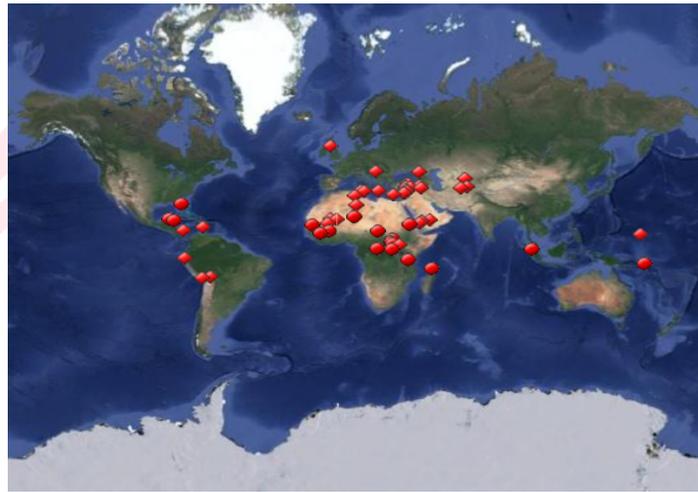
¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on December 5, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>.

The UNESCO also defines 10 criteria utilized for the selection of new natural heritage sites as follows.¹⁶

- (i) to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) to bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) to be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) to be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);
- (vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

¹⁶ "The Criteria for Selection," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>.



Unfortunately, the establishment of the convention did not entirely safeguard heritage sites. Article 11 of the convention facilitates the production of a “List of World Heritage in Danger” that dictates the specific sites around the world at risk: which are pictured above in the map.¹⁷ It is not a coincidence that a majority of these locations are within zones of armed conflict. The following case studies examine world heritage sites (both natural and cultural) that are currently threatened by armed conflict throughout the world. These examples are not exhaustive and are only intended to provide a basis for further research.

¹⁷ “List of World Heritage in Danger,” *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/danger/>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Subtopic 1: Case Study- Palmyra



First listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1980, Palmyra is the site of an ancient city in the Syrian Arab Republic located north-east of Damascus.²⁰ As the above picture illustrates, the site features the ruins of multiple civilizations with the oldest monuments dating back to 2000 B.C.E.²¹ The monuments that span the expanse of Palmyra included temples, theaters, urban quarters, and markets that marked a crossroad between Ancient Rome, Greece, and Persia. A large central street ran through the center of the city where goods from India and China could be transported into the vast Roman empire. Further Roman influences are seen in the large aqueduct that borders the walls of the city and in the massive amphitheater near its center.²²

¹⁹ Silvan Rehfield, "Site of Palmyra," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, whc.unesco.org/en/documents/120400.

²⁰ "Site of Palmyra," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*



After capturing the ancient city in 2015, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) proceeded to begin the systematic destruction of many of the location's monuments such as the iconic "Temple of Bel".²⁴ The group proceeded to damage numerous artifacts at local museums, most frequently by breaking the heads off statues.²⁵ Numerous scholars have noted that contrary to simply destroying the entire site, specific monuments seem to have been targeted. Many of the targeted monuments and artifacts seem to indicate a cross-cultural exchange between Europe and Asia thus showcasing the deeply intertwined history of the two continents through Palmyra. Scholars have also noted that ISIL seems to target structures that contradict their religious doctrine and thus are believed to promote "anti-Islamic" values.

In March of 2016, a Russian backed offensive by the Syrian army recaptured the city.²⁶ Preliminary evaluation of the site by the UNESCO in April of 2016 indicated that many areas were more damaged than previously believed. In the Palmyra museum, multiple sarcophagi lay smashed with severed heads. Several monuments

²³ "Site of Palmyra," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, whc.unesco.org/en/documents/132617.

²⁴ Dominic Bailey, "Palmyra: Islamic State's demolition in the desert," *BBC*, published on October 5, 2015, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34294287>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Dominic Evans, "Syrian army, with Russian air support, advances inside Palmyra," *Reuters*, published on March 26, 2016, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-idUSKCN0WR0RA>.

were inaccessible under the rubble and landmines set forth by ISIL.²⁷ April also saw the unanimous adoption of a decision taken in the 199th session of the UNESCO Executive Board to further protect Palmyra and all sites damaged by ISIL and similar organizations.²⁸

Unfortunately in December 2016 reports were issued by a variety of news agencies that ISIL had once again captured Palmyra despite repeated Russian airstrikes. The news once again indicates that ISIL will continue to have the opportunity to destroy the shared cultural heritage of Palmyra.²⁹ Destroying cultural heritage sites offer armed groups opportunities to damage the identities of entire states or ethnic groups, while simultaneously drawing international attention to their actions.³⁰

Situations similar to those in Palmyra demonstrate that World Heritage Sites are oftentimes destroyed intentionally in zones of armed conflict in an attempt to convey powerful messages and to erase aspects of human history. Over the next few months there is no doubt that the situation in Palmyra will continue to develop, likely in line with the Islamic State's previous rule over the area.

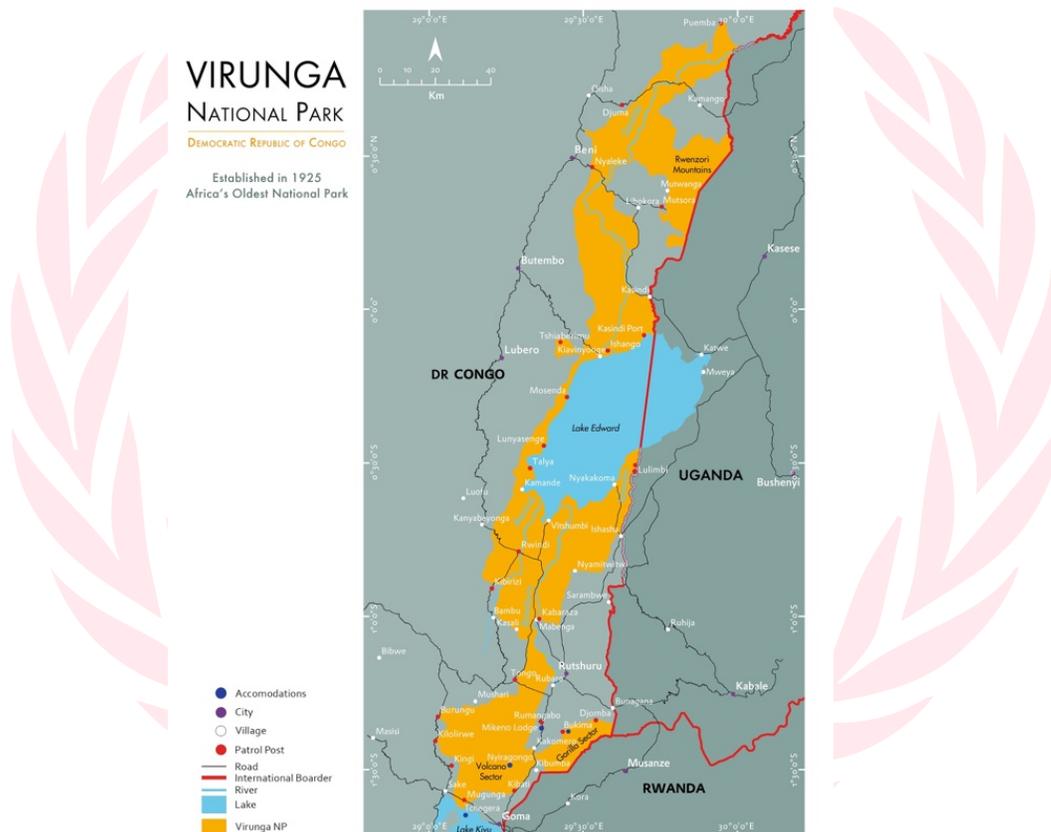
²⁷ "UNESCO experts take preliminary stock of destruction in World Heritage site of Palmyra," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, published on April 27, 2016, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1488/>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "ISIL 'recaptures' Palmyra from Syrian forces," *Aljazeera*, published on December 11, 2016, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/isil-recaptures-palmyra-syrian-forces-161211133342925.html>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Subtopic 2: Case Study- Virunga



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Deep within the rainforest of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) lies Virunga National Park. The almost 2 million acre park stands as one of the world's most stunning displays of biodiversity and natural beauty.³² Virunga stands as one of the only places in the world where rainforests and steppes border volcanic wastelands below towering glaciers.³³ Understandably, this variety in terrain leads to the emergence of thousands of species of flora and fauna that call Virunga, including the elusive Mountain Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) and Okapi (*Okapi johnstoni*).³⁴ However, Africa's first national park is rarely today a site of peace.

³¹ "About Virunga National Park," *Virunga National Park Official Tourism Site*, accessed on December 21, 2016, <https://visitvirunga.org/about-virunga/>.

³² "Virunga National Park," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on December 21, 2016, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/63/>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

After barely surviving decades under colonial control, the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to experience massive unrest throughout the latter half of the 20th century.³⁵ In the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, a vicious civil war engulfed the state for the successive decade. Unfortunately, Virunga was oftentimes trapped in the crossfire. The park itself has been a battleground for numerous conflicts, most notably the 2008 Battle of Goma, and as a result has been occupied by armed forces that proceeded to significantly damage the area.³⁶ These armed conflicts impact local villages and the hundreds of tribal people who exist in the area surrounding and within the park.³⁷



Poaching has also posed an extremely potent threat to Virunga's biodiversity. Virunga remains the home of one of only two populations of the critically endangered mountain gorilla. These primates are poached for bushmeat, a delicacy in some of the region's larger cities. Virunga is currently protected by numerous forest rangers that work tirelessly to safeguard the park's wildlife from poaching. However, over the past 10 years alone, almost 150 rangers have been murdered in the line of duty. Militias are known to engage in operations to massacre park rangers that oppose their bushmeat smuggling in order to continue the lucrative industry in Central and East Africa.³⁸ Besides the effects on biodiversity, bushmeat is also a prime medium for viral transmission between primates and humans (as theorized to have occurred with the

³⁵ "Mountain Gorilla," *WWF Global*, accessed on January 4, 2016, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/endangered_species/great_apes/gorillas/mountaingorilla.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

conversion of SIV to HIV).³⁹ While poachers primarily target adult mountain gorillas, adolescents are also coveted for sale as exotic pets throughout Africa.⁴⁰



⁴¹In 2014 SOCO International, a British oil company, conducted seismic tests that detected the presence of oil beneath the lakes and rainforest of Virunga.⁴² Oil exploration would include deep forest and lake drilling threatening the hundreds of unique species that thrive in Virunga. Additionally the fisheries of Lake Edwards, where a majority of the oil is believed to be underneath, directly economically sustain 30,000 people within the area. Although, no drilling has occurred due to considerable international backlash against SOCO, reports have emerged that suggest that the DRC's government intends to redraw the park's borders to facilitate oil exploration.⁴³ Multiple Non-Governmental Organizations also fear that oil exploration within the park could make the region even more attractive for armed actors, thus threatening the fauna of the park and the people of the region further.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Virunga: Protecting Africa's Oldest National Park," *WWF Global*, accessed on January 4, 2017, http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/congo_basin_forests/oil_extraction/virunga_together_we_did_it/.

⁴² "Virunga National Park: Intact for nine decades, now more threatened than ever," *WWF Global*, published on April 21, 2015, accessed on December 21, 2016, http://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?244730/Virunga-National-Park-Intact-for-nine-decades-now-more-threatened-than-ever.

⁴³ Maud Julien, "DR Congo seeks Virunga park boundary change," *BBC*, published on March 14, 2015, accessed on December 21, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31876577>.

Virunga's threats continue to its mountain gorillas, people, and biodiversity continue with the illegal charcoal trade that has emerged within the park's boundaries.⁴⁴ Rwanda's 2004 ban on charcoal production has driven private firms within the state to pursue exploitation in the rainforest of Virunga for charcoal.⁴⁵ Citing the mountain gorilla's as the sole reason for the park's World Heritage status and protection, these firms often attempt to kill the gorillas and the rangers that protect them in hopes of loosening the DRC's restrictions on the economic activities that can be undertaken within the park's boundaries.⁴⁶ Investigative reports have further suggested that SOCO may very well be one of the companies partnering up with rebel groups in the regions, yet SOCO denies the allegations.

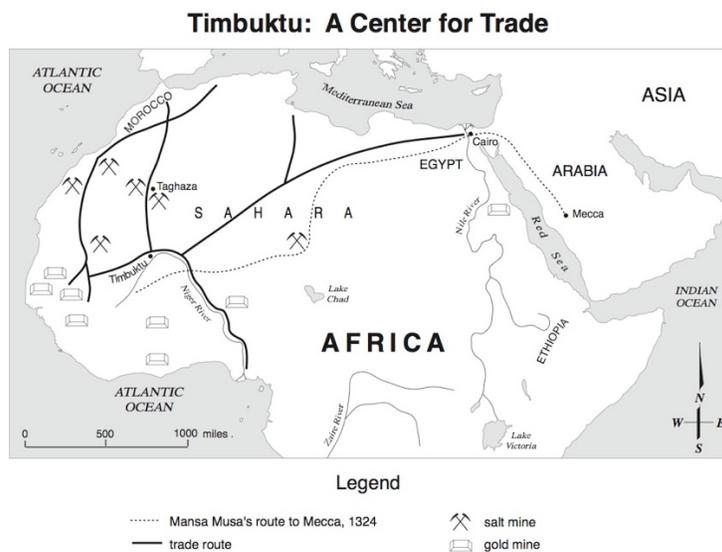
Situations similar to those in Virunga, demonstrate that World Heritage Sites can be threatened by armed conflict in connection with significant ecological and economic factors. Although the United Nations has attempted to provide aid to the people of the region and have contributed peacekeeping forces, the conflict surrounding the central African rainforest prevails. Fears of continued war grip the region whose mountain gorillas at this point represent the final barrier between the government and foreign companies who intend to exploit the region's natural resources by any means necessary.

⁴⁴ Stefan Lovgren, "Congo Gorilla Killings Fueled by Illegal Charcoal Trade," *National Geographic*, published on August 16, 2007, accessed on December 21, 2016, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/08/070816-gorillas-congo_2.html.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Subtopic 3: Case Study- Timbuktu



Located at the border of the Saharan desert in Mali, Timbuktu was one of Northern Africa's most important academic, cultural, and religious centers throughout the 15th and 16th centuries.⁴⁸ Timbuktu featured the University of Sankore, an academic community of over 25,000 students at any given time.⁴⁹ The University attracted scholars from around the region to discuss science, literature, and philosophy as well as disseminate Islam throughout Northern Africa. Additionally, Timbuktu featured elaborate markets where goods such as spices and textiles from Europe, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa were traded among thousands of people. These products are known to have ended their journeys as far away as England and China, through trade routes over land. Timbuktu also featured several large mosques that represented the height of Islam during the time period. Essentially, much of the prevalence of Islam throughout the region can be traced back to the Timbuktu.⁵⁰

In March 2012, a violent coup overthrew the government of the state. The political turmoil that ensued left a significant power vacuum throughout the country which was filled by a clash between the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and Islamic extremist groups such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic

⁴⁷ "Timbuktu: A Center for Trade," *Learn NC*, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/multimedia/8814>.

⁴⁸ "Timbuktu," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119/>.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine.⁵¹ June of 2012 saw Ansar Dine take control over the area surrounding Timbuktu and proceed to damage multiple sites of cultural heritage within the city citing Timbuktu's history as propagating "idolatry".⁵² Ansar Dine intends to enforce sharia law over all of Northern Mali and view the religious dissemination and sufism associated with Timbuktu as contrary to their ideology. Almost immediately after the beginning of the attacks grave concerns about the safety of the World Heritage site were expressed by UNESCO and various members of the international community.⁵³

In January 2013, French and Malian forces conducted numerous successful operations to recapture Timbuktu from Ansar Dine and their associates.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, in their retreat from the city, several libraries were torched by rebel groups thus destroying thousands of priceless manuscripts.

⁵¹ Tiemoko Diallo and Adama Diarra, "Islamists declare full control of Mali's north," *Reuters*, published on June 28, 2012, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-crisis-idUSBRE85R15720120628>.

⁵² "Mali's Timbuktu and Askia Tomb put on Unesco danger list," *BBC*, published on June 28, 2012, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-18626033>.

⁵³ *Ibid*.

⁵⁴ Adama Diarra, "French, Malians retake Timbuktu, rebels torch library," *Reuters*, published on January 28, 2013, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mali-rebels-idUSBRE900C720130128>.



Timbuktu today is a shadow of its prolific past. One of the most prominent threats currently facing the city is desertification. Global warming has contributed to the encroachment of desert sands into the boundaries of the once legendary city.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the instability of Mali's government has contributed to a largely neglected local population who live in constant fear of drought and a resurgence of rebel attacks. Many of the problems that Timbuktu faces could be at least partially alleviated with funds from tourism: an industry that has been significantly impacted by the conflict that transpired and continues to simmer in the region.⁵⁷ The lack of tourism has also contributed to an increase in poverty among the residents of the area who capitalized off the area's once thriving travel industry.⁵⁸

In situations such as those similar to Timbuktu, environmental factors and a lack of tourism act as as major threats to World Heritage Sites yet armed conflict prevents local governments from working towards improving the state of these sites. Timbuktu was once a thriving oasis among a barren desert, in recent years the location seems to have become more desert than city. The destruction of these sites

⁵⁵ Francesco Bandarin, "Timbuktu," *UNESCO World Heritage Center*, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/119/>.

⁵⁶ Adam Duval Smith, "Life in Timbuktu: how the ancient city of gold is slowly turning to dust," *The Guardian*, published on September 14, 2014, accessed on January 4, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/sep/16/sp-life-timbuktu-mali-ancient-city-gold-slowly-turning-to-dust>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

continues to affect the modern communities surrounding the locales who depend on World Heritage sites for survival.



SCMUN

United Nations & International Involvement

A large portion of the responsibility for safeguarding World Heritage Sites currently falls under the mandate of the UNESCO. In May 1954, the UNESCO facilitated the drafting and signing of the *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*.⁵⁹ The convention has been ratified by 127 states and provides a framework for the protection of cultural heritage around the world. 1999 saw a second protocol be added to the convention that provided increased protection of cultural heritage, called upon international sanctions and demands for individual criminal responsibility in events of cultural destruction, and the establishment of the *The Committee for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* and *The Fund for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (in accordance with articles 24 and 29 respectively).⁶⁰

Unfortunately similar provisions have not been accorded to the destruction of Natural Heritage sites which remain relatively underprotected by UN regulations. The international community has historically done very little to combat the destruction of heritage sites outside what is outlined in the terms of the conventions and through the establishment of multilateral conferences.

⁵⁹ "Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict,"

UNESCO, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001875>.

⁶⁰ "Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1999," UNESCO, accessed on January 4, 2017, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001875/187580e.pdf>.

Bloc Analysis

For “Topic A” the defined blocs for the committee are rather similar in their intended goals of protecting world heritage sites yet differ on their preferred method of doing so. Thus, a majority of these blocs are developed through an attention to regional actions and beliefs. Note that these blocs are not set in stone and do have room for growth and amendment.

African States: As illustrated by various case studies many states in both Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa face tremendous levels of threat to their world heritage sites. A majority of the heritage sites of the continent are threatened by ecological factors that are exasperated by armed conflict, and thus affect many of their citizens. States in this bloc may focus their efforts in committee on bridging the gap between the protection of natural and cultural heritage as well as the reduction of armed conflict.

Middle-Eastern States: States in this bloc may be primarily concerned with addressing the destruction of cultural heritage within the state’s borders. A major issue for this bloc will translate into facilitating the protection of heritage sites among areas that are oftentimes incredibly politically instable. This bloc may also look to work with African, Latin-American, and other Asian states to look for economically sensitive ways to protect heritage sites.

Latin American, South and South-East Asian States: States within this bloc may look to work towards establishing economically efficient framework to protect heritage sites from armed conflict without impacting rapid development. Additionally, states in this bloc may also be concerned with establishing further framework to safeguard their numerous natural heritage sites.

European, North American, and East Asian States: States in these areas face fewer threats from armed conflict to their heritage sites but still are deeply concerned with protecting these sites for all humankind. These states may be focused on working with the other blocs to tackle issues from a variety of different approaches.

Committee Mission

Ultimately, the goal of this committee's resolution will be to evaluate the effectiveness of current framework to address the protection of cultural heritage sites in regions of armed conflict and determine whether significant alterations will need to be made. The committee will also be tasked with evaluating the importance of protecting natural heritage sites in regions of armed conflict and potentially the implications of doing so. It is essential to work between blocs to address a variety of international concerns while simultaneously keeping in mind that many states may differ on their approaches to the agenda.

Any resolution drafted by the committee will need to take into account the causes and other effects of armed conflict as well as the economic implications of working to protect World Heritage Sites: many of which are in danger in states that may be struggling financially. Potential resolutions must also consider preventive measures to safeguard Heritage Sites before armed conflicts arise.

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Background: Topic B
Deactivating Anti-Personnel Landmines

History of Situation

Few devices are more destructive than landmines, which have killed hundreds of thousands of children, herding animals, and crops. Since 1975, land-mines have exploded under more than 1 million people and are estimated to currently be killing 800 people a month. There are an estimated 110 million landmines still underground (Unicef). Around every 22 minutes 1 person somewhere in the world is killed or injured by a landmine (PBS).

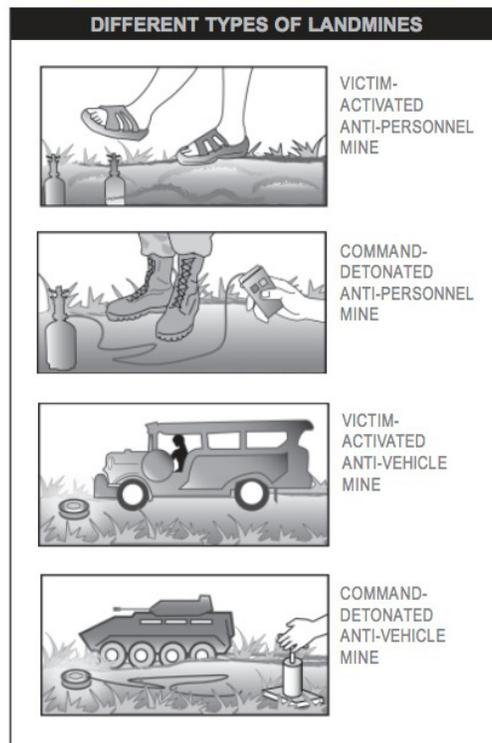
Mines began to appear on a large scale in 1918 in response to assault tanks. Due to the increase in quantity and effectiveness of American tanks, the Germans decided to develop new weapons in order to counteract their success. At first, they utilized underground artillery shells and covered them with wooden boards. However, these mines proved to be unreliable and time consuming. These tanks during World War I caused the invention of the anti-tank mine. Because these mines were ineffective due to their size, inefficiency, and easy re-deployability by opposing forces, anti-personnel mines were developed to address these issues as defensive weapons. They were used to protect strategic areas such as borders, camps, and other important infrastructure and to restrict the movement of opposing forces (International Campaign to Ban Landmines).

From 1918 to 1939, AP mines were used in Poland, Russia, and Korea to target soldiers and for other specific military objectives. However, in the 1960s, random dissemination of the mines began. During the United States' bombing of Laos, an estimated 2 million dollars' worth of landmines were dropped per day. In Cambodia, mines were deployed at even larger quantities within their civil war. In 1979, when the Soviet forces entered Afghanistan, random and remote mines became the norm. In the status quo, there is an estimated 110 million AP mines and 250 in storage located in 108 countries (Care).

Marking and mapping minefields used to be expected of all landmines; however, these practices are no longer strictly used. Further, many are not even placed in a contained area, but placed randomly around a variety of strategic areas. As a result, soldiers and civilians have no way of knowing when they enter a landmine area. Weather events such as rain and floods have also shifted minefields over time. Without clear records, clearing up the mess after a conflict is rendered even harder (International Treaty to Ban Landmines).

Subtopic 1: Types of Landmines

Landmines are containers of explosive material with detonating systems that are triggered by contact with a person or vehicle. Designed to incapacitate a person or vehicle through damage caused by an explosive blast, fragments, or jet of molten metal, they are generally buried within 15 cm of the earth's surface, or above ground. There are two core types of landmines: antipersonnel (AP) landmines and antitank (AT) landmines.



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There are three general types of antipersonnel landmines: explosive blast effect, fragmentation, and bounding. Explosive blast effect AP landmines are the most commonly found and are designed to cause secondary infection and amputation. They are coined as being “Irresistible to Children” because their odd shape and bright color attracts children. Fragmentation AP landmines are structured to rupture into fragments that turn into lethal projectiles upon detonation of the mine. They are coined “Dead from 50 Meters” because they can kill up to 50 meters from the mine.

⁶¹ "Landmines: A Poor Man's Weapon?" *Rappler*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Jan. 2017.

Bounding AP mines are the deadliest mine. They are triggered by very little pressure and can kill up to 35 meters and cause severe injuries over 100 meters (Care).⁶²

Antitank landmines are utilized to damage tanks and other vehicles. They are larger and more explosive than AP mines. When vehicles are unarmed, an antitank mine can usually completely destroy the vehicle. These have deathly and unintended consequences, such as preventing vehicles carrying medical supplies from using roads and civilians the ability to get basic necessities from the market (Care).

Subtopic 2: The Falkland Islands

When Britain and Argentina went to war over the Falkland Islands, they left behind over 20,000 landmines. Although generally considered a negative consequence, landmines provide an uncommon, yet highly effective, habitat protection for penguins. When Argentina occupied the islands, they laid down landmines along the beaches to fend off the British. Surprisingly, the landmines have not killed anyone; instead, they have provided a fenced-off zone for penguin habitat. Although humans and sheep set off the mines, penguins lack enough weight to trigger the mines, and thus they have protection from outside interference. Additionally, it has protected the Islands from tourists (Green).⁶³



⁶² "Facts About Landmines." CARE. N.p., 25 Oct. 2013. Web. 05 Dec. 2016.

⁶³ Green, Hank. "How an Island Full of Landmines Led to a Thriving Penguin Population." *Mental Floss*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Jan. 2017.

Subtopic 3: Cambodia

Landmines have killed or maimed 63,000 people in Cambodia as of 2013. Cambodia's issue with landmines spurred from their civil war that eventually culminated in a genocide in the late 1970s claiming the lives of up to three million people (Haas). However, it is no simple task to remove landmines. Although one landmine costs about \$3 to manufacture, it costs around \$1,000 to safely remove them (Haas).⁶⁴ But, it is not all negative. There are three main organizations working to clear landmines in Cambodia: the Cambodia Mine Action Committee (CMAC), the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the Halo Trust. This work has been effective with a constant decline in casualties. Casualties caused by landmines have decreased from 188 deaths in 2006 to 22 in 2013 (UNDP).⁶⁵

Cambodia created the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority in order to coordinate fixing Cambodia's landmines. Funded by Australia, Canada, Switzerland, Austria, and the United Kingdom on a budget of US\$25 million, this UNDP project has so-far benefitted over 700,000 people and is allowing Cambodia to reach closer toward the mandates set out in the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. However, US \$440 is still needed in order to make Cambodia fully mine-free (UNDP).

Subtopic 4: Afghanistan

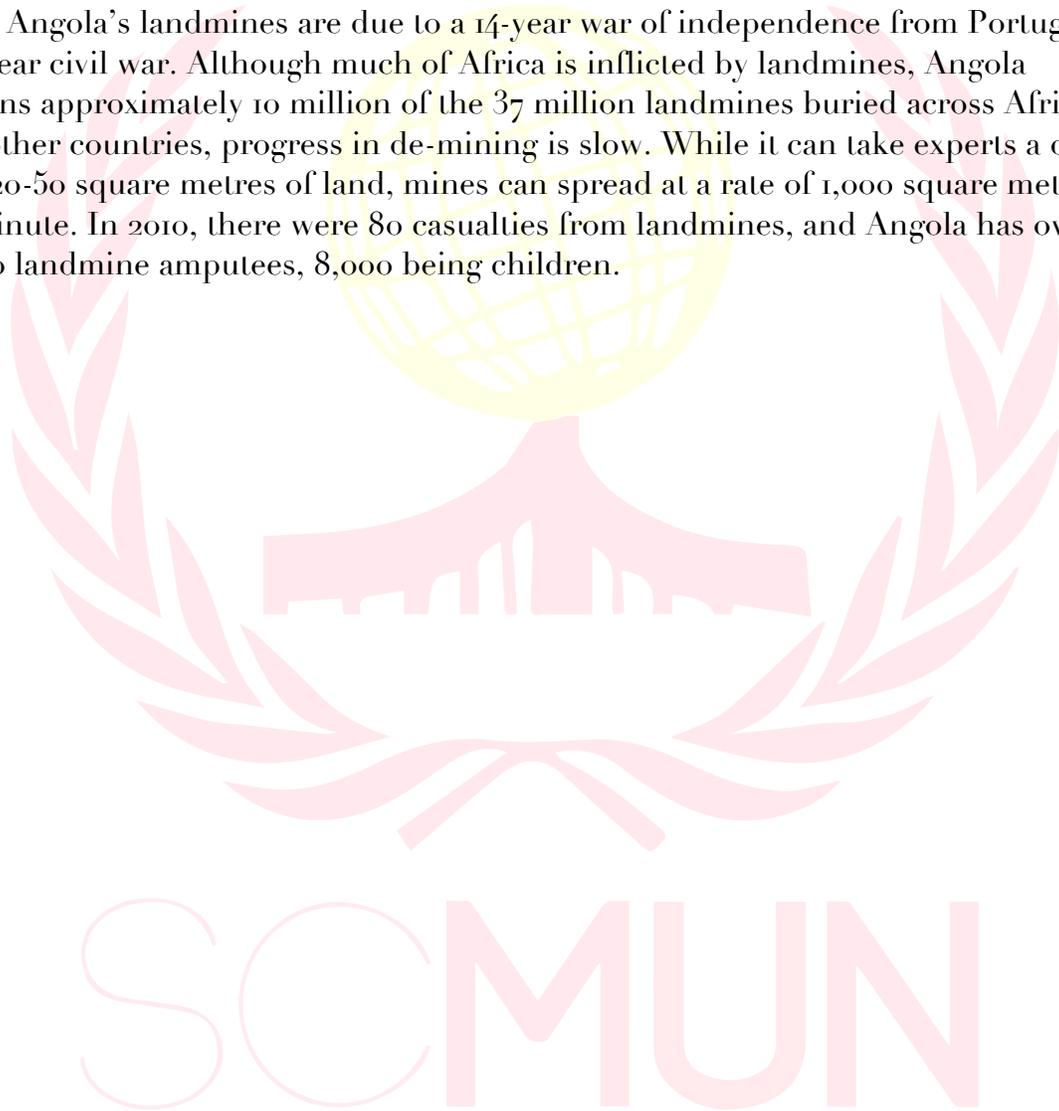
While mines from Britain and the United States do exist, the majority of mines in Afghanistan are from a war with Russia that ended in 1989. Helicopter crews dropped millions of "butterfly mines," which were green plastic and often mistaken by children for toys. While 78% of minefields have been cleared, Afghanistan is still one of the most affected countries by landmines. In fact, 1587 communities are affected in 257 districts across the country. With 4,337 hazardous materials still remaining, development of infrastructure cannot be completed due to safety concerns. These mines disproportionately harm children, with up to 10 million mines located in schools, fields, and pathways. There are nearly 100,000 amputees and the de-mining process is predicted to take centuries.

⁶⁴ Haas, Michaela. "The Killing Fields of Today: Cambodia's Landmine Problem Rages On." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2017.

⁶⁵ "Clearing Mines in Cambodia." *UNDP*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2017.

Subtopic 5: Angola

Angola's landmines are due to a 14-year war of independence from Portugal and a 30-year civil war. Although much of Africa is inflicted by landmines, Angola contains approximately 10 million of the 37 million landmines buried across Africa. Like other countries, progress in de-mining is slow. While it can take experts a day to clear 20-50 square metres of land, mines can spread at a rate of 1,000 square meters per minute. In 2010, there were 80 casualties from landmines, and Angola has over 70,000 landmine amputees, 8,000 being children.



United Nations & International Involvement

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, typically referred to as the "Ottawa Convention" or "Mine Ban Treaty," aims to end the usage of anti-personnel landmines (APLs) worldwide. Initiated in 1997 and put into action in 1999, the Ottawa Convention has 161 signatories. However, there are 36 non-signatories that include major world powers: the United States, Russia, and China.

Parties to the convention “commit to not using, developing, producing, acquiring, retaining, stockpiling, or transferring anti-personnel landmines, which are defined by the treaty as mines ‘designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons’” (Arms Control Association). The treaty also forbids assisting or encouraging any other state or party from engaging in the banned activities of the treaty.

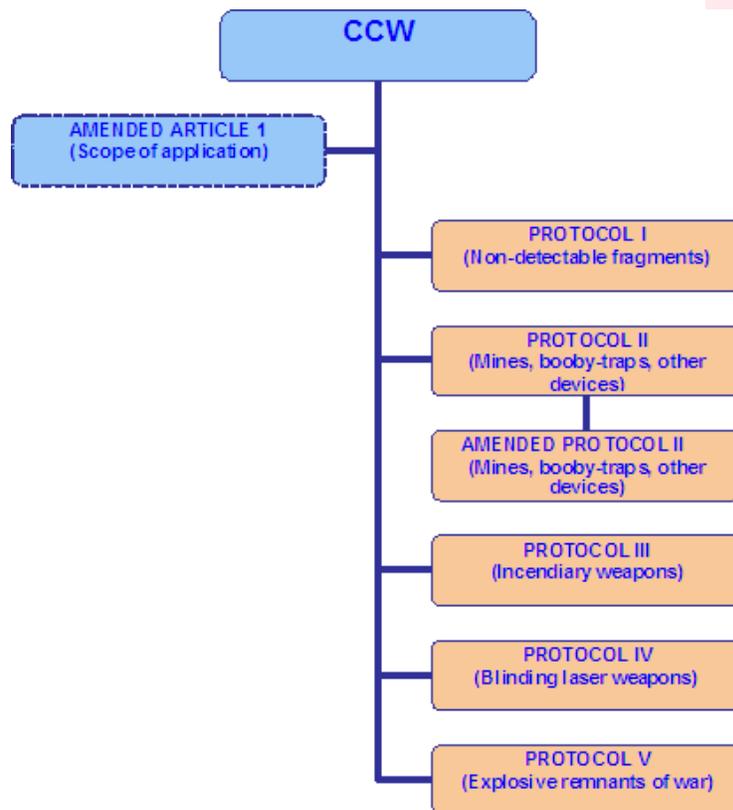
The United States initially refused to sign the Ottawa Treaty with the Clinton Administration; however, even though the United States has not used landmines in two decades, all proceeding leaders have also lacked action on signing any international treaty to ban landmines. In fact, they still have 10.4 million mines in storage. The U.S. has several reasons for not signing. First, they draw the distinction between “smart” and “dumb” landmines. “Smart” landmines, which are allowed by U.S. policy, are those that destruct automatically. “Dumb” landmines are those that last within the ground. The State Department argues that they have the right to use landmines that destruct automatically in order to effectively defend troops. The National Research Council declared that landmines are "militarily advantageous and safe. They achieve desired military objectives without endangering U.S. war fighters or noncombatants more than other weapons of war." Other officials argue that signing onto a treaty would force them to focus on removing every mine, regardless of its importance. So, it would prevent them from focusing on areas that landmine removal is needed most, such as where mines are causing the most casualties.

Another important agreement is the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which occurred in 1980, and entered into force in 1983. It seeks “ban or restrict the use of specific types of weapons that are considered to cause unnecessary or unjustifiable suffering to combatants or to affect civilians indiscriminately” Protocol II restricts landmine usage. The objectives are as follows:

- Amended Protocol II (AP II) contains rules which regulates, but does not ban the use of landmines, booby-traps and other explosive devices.

- AP II prohibits the use of non-detectable anti-personnel mines and their transfer.
- AP II prohibits the use of non-self-destructing and non-self-deactivating mines outside fenced, monitored and marked areas.
- AP II seeks to limit the indiscriminate damage caused by landmines and requires States Parties to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians when using these types of weapons.
- AP II applies to non-international armed conflicts as well as conflicts between States, which means that its rules not only apply to States, but also to parties in a conflict other than States. Therefore, if an armed conflict occurs on the territory of a State Party, the Protocol binds all parties to the conflict.

In order to become a party to the convention, a state must only agree to two of the five protocols. Thus, a state can be a party to the treaty and not agree to restricting landmine usage.



Bloc Analysis

For “Topic B” the defined blocs for the committee are primarily determined in line with attitudes towards landmine usage and production, as well as international actions that demonstrate policy in accordance to treaties. The blocs are thus more defined than those in “Topic A” yet are less regionally based.

Signatories to the Ottawa Treaty: These states recognize the dangers of anti-personnel landmines and will be primarily focused on drafting a resolution that works towards their eventual deactivation. This bloc may also consider including solutions that address states who continue to produce and utilize anti-personnel landmines.

Non-Signatories to the Ottawa Treaty (who do not currently produce anti-personnel landmines): These states currently do not produce anti-personnel mines but have not ratified the Ottawa Treaty thus reserving their right to do so. The states in this bloc may be primarily concerned with drafting a resolution that addresses the problems associated with anti-personnel landmines without infringing on their ability to store and produce these weapons in accordance with foreign policy.

Non-Signatories to the Ottawa Treaty (who currently produce anti-personnel landmines): These states have not ratified the Ottawa treaty and currently produce and store anti-personnel landmines, further reserving the right to utilize them as a method of warfare. The states in this bloc may be primarily concerned with drafting a resolution that facilitates the effective deactivation of anti-personnel landmines while standing firmly behind their right to continue to do so. This bloc may consider working with other non-signatories to draft a resolution that does not infringe on each of these states’ individual foreign policies yet still appears innovative to the committee.

Committee Mission

The ultimate aim of this committee will be to draft, and ideally adopt, a resolution that works towards the deactivation of anti-personnel landmines while taking into account the political and economic ramifications of doing so.

States will need to consider their own foreign policy in the production of anti-personnel landmines and in accordance may wish to pursue the drafting of framework to reduce or eliminate the production of these weapons or reserve their right to do. States will also be required to examine past international framework that addresses anti-personnel mines and attempt to bridge gaps between states that ratified these treaties and those who found significant problems within their terms. Any potential resolution will need to address the numerous issues outlined in this background guide regarding anti-personnel mines as well in an effort to safeguard civilians worldwide.

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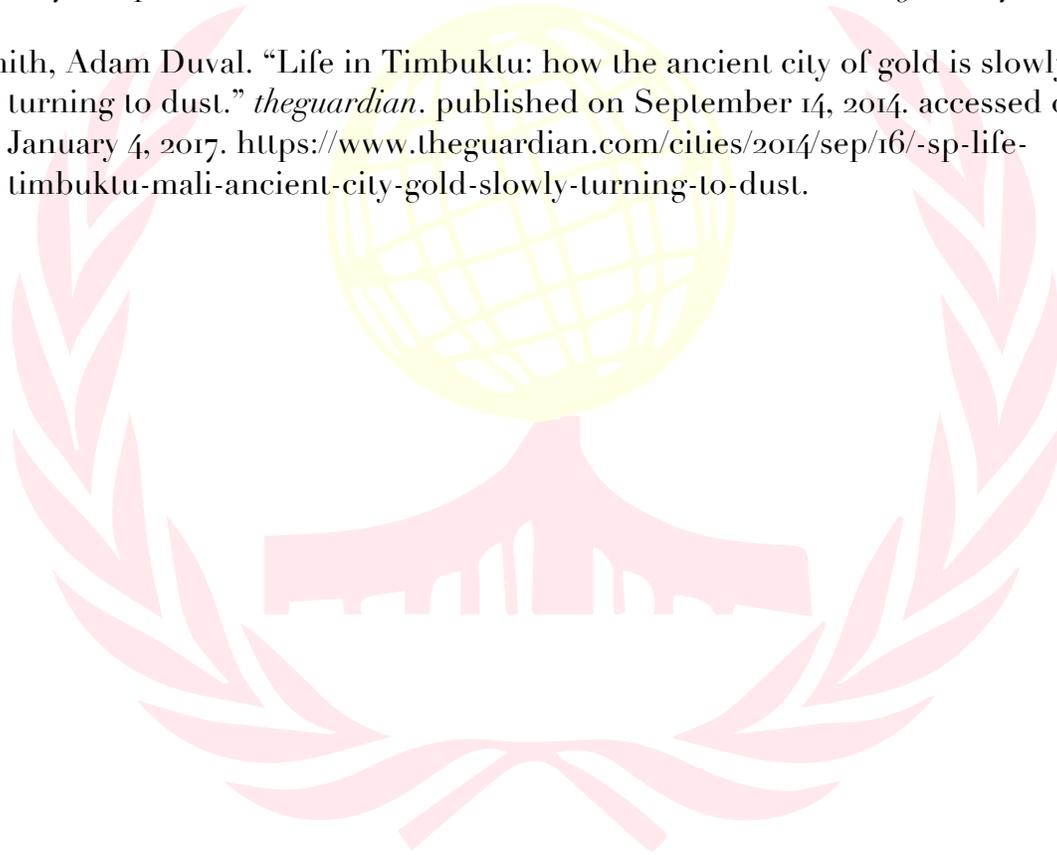
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