

TWHS MUN V



DISEC

Regulation & Prevention of the Illegal Arms Trade in West
Asia

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Table of Contents

Introduction of Chairs	3
Introduction of Committee and a Note on Research and Preparation	5
Introduction of Topic	7
History and Description of Topic	8
Current Status	11
Bloc Analysis	12
Committee Mission	16
Questions to Consider	17
Works Cited	18



Dear delegates,

My name is Sarah Katz, and I am so excited to be one of y'all's DISEC chairs at TWHSMUN. This is my second year chairing for TWHSMUN, and my fourth year in Model UN. I'm currently a senior at the Woodlands High School, and am President of the Woodlands Model United Nations club. In the past four years I have attended and won awards at conferences such as, TWHSMUN, HAMUN, and NHSMUN. I am thrilled to be able to guide you through your time at TWHSMUN, and hope to help you through the trials and tribulations that come with attending a Model United Nations conference.

My co-chair, Nicholas Natale, and I have chosen this topic because of its significance in current global issues. Your research should begin with this background guide, but we hope that when you write your position paper you continue your research further. It is essential that you have an overall understanding of your nation, and understand your countries policies and opinions when it comes to this topic. It is also of incredible importance that your opinions on the topic do not reflect on your position paper, and that you focus on your countries policies. Due to this topic being an ongoing problem in our world, it is vital that you keep your research up to date and stay aware of any legislature or political status even after your position paper has been submitted.

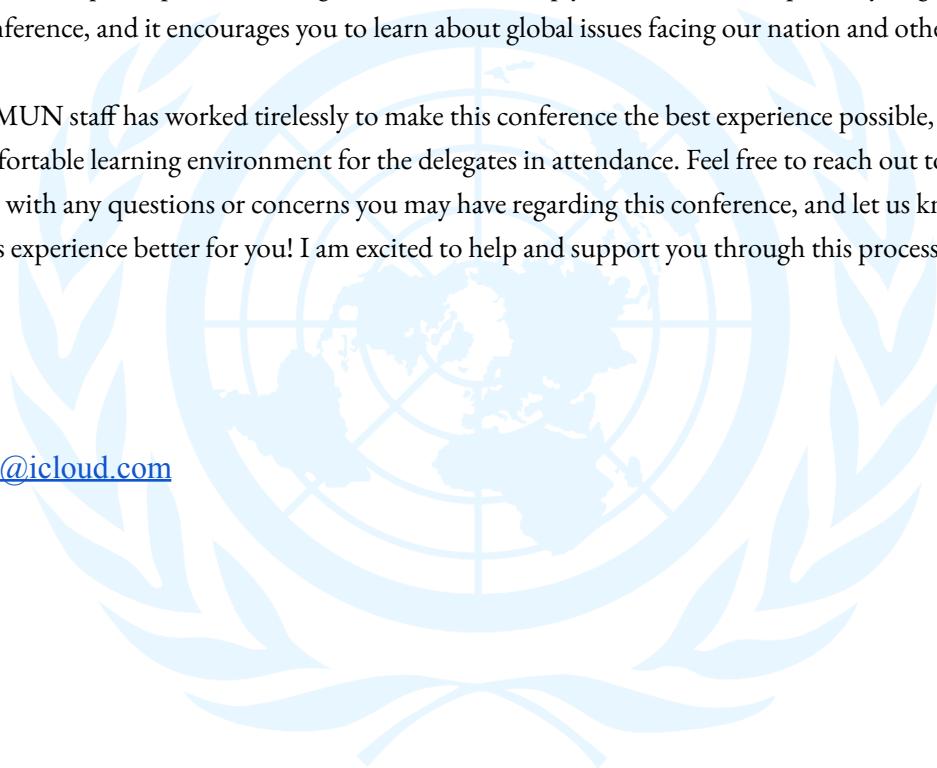
From a young age, global issues and politics have interested me, and I have a particular interest in topics regarding military power. This topic is crucial to our future world, and it is important that we as the future generation find potential solutions to combat this issue, and others. The illegal arms trade in West Asia has proven to be a problem that has gone on through centuries, and hasn't received the attention it deserves. It is time that we make a change and advocate for those who cannot. It is time that we find a resolution and represent the nations across the world. Nick and I hope that throughout your time at this conference, you are able to learn, speak out, and participate in creating resolutions that help your nation. We hope that you grow and learn from this conference, and it encourages you to learn about global issues facing our nation and others.

Our TWHSMUN staff has worked tirelessly to make this conference the best experience possible, and create a safe and comfortable learning environment for the delegates in attendance. Feel free to reach out to either Nicholas or I with any questions or concerns you may have regarding this conference, and let us know how we can make this experience better for you! I am excited to help and support you through this process.

Sincerely,

Sarah Katz

sarahkatzx@icloud.com



Dear delegates,

My name is Nicholas Natale and I am ecstatic to be your DISEC Co-Chair. While this is my first time chairing a delegation, it is not my first time participating in TWHSMUN. I have attended TWHSMUN II, III, and IV and won an award at TWHSMUN IV. I am a senior attending The Woodlands High School and Vice President of our model United Nations club. As someone who has previously done DISEC in earlier conferences, I am delighted to finally be chairing one and helping all of you find the amazing experience I was able to have as a DISEC delegate.

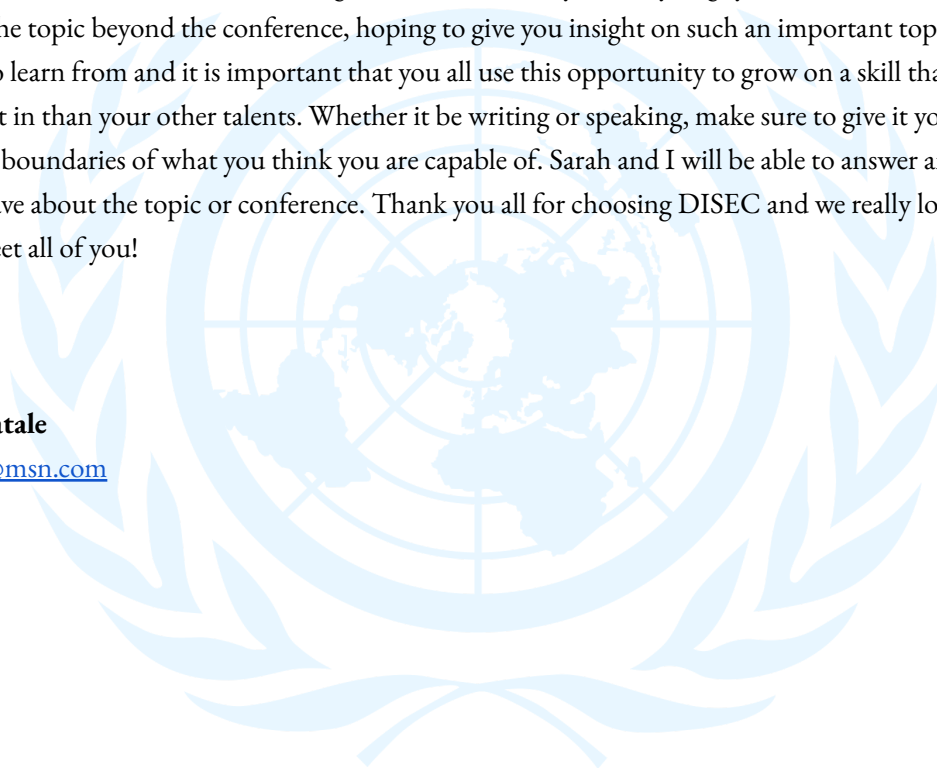
We chose this topic because of its importance to the international stage of global affairs. You will be required to complete research over this topic and its significance to your country. Focus on how this topic affects your country's diplomacy, economy, politics, defense, etc. Your research should not be limited to these fields. Every part of information you collect is vital to building a strong position paper and any speeches you might develop prior to and during the conference. Ensure that your sources are credible; you'll be able to find a lot of information about your country's policies and views towards the topic through your country's official website. Information is crucial to winning any award.

This topic means a lot to me because of how much media attention it gets. We only hear about conflicts in West Asia through our phones and televisions, delivered to us from 3rd party news sources based in the United States or another first world country. I believe that by encouraging you delegates to do your research over such an important topic that gets a lot of media exposure, you can get a firsthand account of a country's views and history with the topic, personally learning how your country's people feel.

We at TWHSMUN look forward to hearing from each and every one of you guys and we encourage you to look deeper into the topic beyond the conference, hoping to give you insight on such an important topic. This is a conference to learn from and it is important that you all use this opportunity to grow on a skill that you may be less proficient in than your other talents. Whether it be writing or speaking, make sure to give it your all and go beyond your boundaries of what you think you are capable of. Sarah and I will be able to answer any questions you might have about the topic or conference. Thank you all for choosing DISEC and we really look forward to getting to meet all of you!

Sincerely,

Nicholas Natale
nicknatale1@msn.com



Introduction to Committee

The Disarmament and International Committee (DISEC) is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly and deals with issues related to international disarmament, global security, and maintaining peace. DISEC was created in 1945 with membership granted to all United Nations members. The committee has handled the regulation and disarmament of nuclear missiles, biological weapons, chemical weapons, land mines, cluster munitions, conventional weaponry, and ammunition. In DISEC, you will have the opportunity to explore a topic relevant to the maintenance of international peace and discuss solutions to the problem. Your solution(s) should be peace-oriented and contribute to general international peace.

A Note on Research and Preparation

At TWHSMUN, position papers are **required** in order to be eligible for awards. Position papers should be no more than 4 pages in length, and will be due on **October 26th** through the Google Form that was emailed to your sponsor. They should be 12 pt. Times New Roman font, standard margins, and double-spaced. If interested, delegates may use the [NMUN guide](#) or [Best Delegate](#) for more detailed guidance on constructing a position paper. It is imperative that delegates write the papers utilizing their assigned country's perspective on the given topic. A good position paper will often include the following components:

1. **Heading:** Use the following format for your heading:

Committee Name:

Topic:

Country:

School Name:

Sponsor Name:

Delegate Name:

2. **Topic Background:** Describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Include specific examples such as recent international action regarding the topic. If there have been examples of past UN action regarding the issue include them here.
3. **Country Policy:** Clarify the position of the delegation's country on the topic and what recent actions it has taken to enforce this position. Include the relevant statements by prevalent leaders of the state, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policies enacted by the country.
4. **Proposed Solutions:** Detail the delegation's proposed solutions for the issue thoroughly. Each idea should have a clear connection to the correlating problem that it aims to solve and also identify possible

obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solutions should be natural extensions of the country's policy and perspective on the topic.

5. **Works Cited:** Cite all of your sources in MLA format—if this page is not included then the delegate will have committed plagiarism which will disqualify them from receiving an award.



Introduction to Topic

Our topic is *Regulation & Prevention of the Illegal Arms Trade in West Asia*, so we will be looking into the operation of these illegal rings and some of their activities in recent years. Our goal is to find a long-term solution to the issue that prioritizes the goals of DISEC, which is disarmament. It is imperative that delegates remain true to their country's views, especially in a sensitive topic such as this. We encourage delegates to look past simply the trade of arms, and regard also how this activity affects your country's population. Looking into your country's economic and defense policies about the topic is vital to your complete understanding of the topic. It is essential that you also consider the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals when writing your position and resolution paper. Whether your country holds a positive or negative opinion regarding the topic, the overall goal of the committee is to create resolutions that benefit your country and the countries with views similar to that of yours.

With a score of 7.43 out of 10 on the Global Organized Crime Index, Western Asia has the second most pervasive arms market in the whole world, right behind East Africa. Conflicts in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Yemen have resulted in a boom in the illegal arms trade. Neighboring countries, such as Jordan, are seeing gun ownership become commonplace and arms are being sold in markets to anyone able to afford them. It has been shown that over 90% of weapons used in illegal activities in Jordan originated from the illegal arms trade. West Asia's desire for arms is both the source and fuel for the conflicts that continue to rage on in the region.

The countries with the highest arms trafficking scores in the region according to the Global Organized Crime Index are all involved in conflict. Iraq, Syria, and Iran all score a 9 out of 10 for arms trafficking, primarily motivated by political Islamicism. Meanwhile, Turkey scores a close 8.5

due to the Kurdish move for independence and Yemen scores a concerning 9.5, the highest in the world, due to ongoing political instability and a civil war.

This illicit arms trade in the region has been fueled by an ongoing rivalry between an American-backed Saudi Arabia and a Russian-backed Iran. The arming of multiple proxy groups, such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda affiliated groups have been made possible due to this conflict. Iran has long been accused of discretely shipping weapons to Shi'ite Houthi rebels in Yemen, who are currently fighting for control of the country. Saudi Arabia, displeased with the instability along their shared border, receives support from the United States and United Kingdom in arming the Yemeni government to take action against the rebels and instability along the border. Western arms sales, such as the ones from the United States and United Kingdom, are often connected to lethal attacks on

civilians and the inadvertent weaponization of the Islamic State.

Not only are arms coming in directly from foreign countries, older weapons from previous conflicts are being reused and resold in the market. Arsenals from the 1980s Iran-Iraq war are still being used in both countries today. Soviet-era weapons used in the 1990s are being used in Syria's bitter civil war. Recycled weaponry like these arms are primarily coming from Libya, where the disorder following the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 allowed arms to move east into areas of conflict, like much of West Asia. Recently, it has been found that Hamas has exploited the weak oversight mechanics of Libya and smuggled missiles and munitions into Gaza.

Criminal groups in West Asia have little difficulty acquiring their weapons. Open-air public marketplaces sell arms publicly and under the counter. These bazaars often operate in sparsely populated areas where law enforcement activities are limited. Additionally, digital platforms and social media have created new opportunities for dealing and have greatly expanded the illicit arms trade in the region. Public forums, such as Facebook, allow supply and demand markets to meet, usually unmoderated and publicly accessible. Many of these gun enthusiast groups reportedly have thousands of members all over the world.

Access to the illegal arms trade has enabled extremist and paramilitary groups to seize political and territorial control of other nations. For example, after Lebanon's civil war, Beirut granted Hezbollah the right to keep its weapons in order to

fight Israeli forces. Even after Israel withdrew from the country in 2000, Hezbollah still keeps these weapons today. The group is considered to be the most heavily armed non-state actor in the world. The military and political control Hezbollah holds allows it to greatly influence Lebanon's government. Armed extremist groups are able to expand their operations due to recurring shipments of arms through illegitimate markets. Having a seemingly limitless supply of munitions grants groups such as Hezbollah the ability to control and influence the politics of their home countries and even other countries.

History of Topic

Although the illegal arms trade in West Asia is becoming more of a topic of news and controversy as of late, the trade has proven to be a reoccurring issue throughout history. The presence of illegal or dangerous weapons became an issue in the 1980s, from the Iran-Iraq War, which was resolved by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 598. The weapons used during this war are still being bought and sold in West Asia, 45 years later. More illegal weapons were added to the trade arsenal during the 1990s Yugoslav Wars. The majority of these weapons are being used by Syrian rebels to fight in the ongoing Syrian Civil War, which has caused around 600,000 casualties. The majority of the weapons in the trade are from Libya, where the collapse of the Gaddafi Regime which allowed supplies such as weapons to move to zones of conflict. This foresight in planning on behalf of the Libyan government has been proven to have provided Hamas with missiles and other arms.

It is widely known that it is fairly easy to obtain arms in West Asia, which are commonly used by criminal groups. These weapons are received through relatively open markets, which sell them over and under the counter depending on the location, and they are typically smuggled along with drugs, animals, and other illegal items. This issue has only worsened as a result of social media and digital marketplaces, which allow for arms vendors to publicize their markets more widely and publicly. With such easy access to weaponry, there seems to be an increased level of conflict in these areas. There is increased political unrest as a result of corruption, and higher amounts of revolutions, simply in order for criminal groups to rise to power.

Global superpowers have had a massive contribution to the growth of the illegal arms trade. The United States sells weapons all over West

Asia, with Saudi Arabia being their prime export. These weapons end up in the wrong hands consistently, either being used to enforce authoritarian reign or establish extremist groups. Many weapons come into the market after being used in previous conflicts, such as the Gulf War and Iraq War.

Outdated weaponry from global superpowers, such as the United States or former Soviet Union, are still frequently sold in the illegal arms trade. The Soviet AK-47 and American M16 are the most common assault rifles in the world despite being decades out of date. These weapons are still being manufactured and in circulation due to the demand brought forth by the illegal arms market. These weapons were primarily obtained through previous wars or given as gifts from communist countries.

Current Status

Currently, the illegal arms trade in West Asia is negatively affecting many nations, some of which are currently at war. In Iran (backed by Russia) and Saudi Arabia (backed by the United States) a rivalry has grown leading to proxy groups gaining access to arms. These proxy groups include, but are not limited to Hamas, Hezbollah, and members of al-Qaeda. For years, Iran has been accused of illegally trading and supplying weapons with rebels in Yemen. As a result of this, the U.S. and U.K. supported Saudi Arabia enabling the Yemen government to crack down on rebels that inhabit their shared border. There is a common correlation between arms sales in the West Asian region, and attacks on civilians. It is also linked to an unintended weaponization of the Islamic State.

Such easy access to weapons has also led to an increase in revolutions, and gains to power. This drives the question of whether the negative effects of the arms trade is worth civilians' increased access to possibly gaining

power back from unfair leaders. It is essential that throughout your research, you find yourself considering other points of view of what the increased access to arms has done to civilization, particularly in West Asia.

Increased access to weapons doesn't only affect the government and groups of rebellion, but also day to day civilians. With increased access to weapons, organized crime has become a real issue in these nations. Human trafficking and smuggling has become more of an issue, and with the ongoing conflicts, these crime groups are more likely to go unseen. For individual citizens, West Asian nations are seeing a growth in theft, with governments unable to provide proper punishment to non law abiding individuals. It is not uncommon for individuals to purchase guns in order to protect themselves and their families, which leads to accidental gun injuries. This radical increase in weaponization of civilians is a nod to the growing distrust of the government in this region, which poses a threat to the future of democracy.

Numerous factors have led West Asia to become the hub of illegal arms trade. There is a lack of oversight methods in the region to prevent this. Nations have deliberately created a flooding of weapons to civilians. The limit of government and police intervention has proven to create issues within the nations. This lack of involvement and regulation has only contributed to the pattern of deadly conflicts in the region, an issue we are attempting to solve.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division:

The division regarding the regulation and prevention of the illicit arms trade within West Asia comes in disagreements on how to create and implement legislation surrounding the topic. While a large majority of countries can agree that illegal arms are commonly used in criminal activities, the debate on how to restrict and limit the illegal trade has been a hot topic of discussion. In 2017, fifty-four percent of global homicides were done using firearms. The expanding access to firearms, especially in West Asia, will only continue to grow unless international action is taken. Firearms act as a nexus between crime and terrorism, both relying on a large amount and a frequent steady income which is made possible by illicit arms dealers.

Governments in West Asia struggle to deal with the illegal arms trade as it is seemingly invisible. Additionally, many governments are influenced by terrorist organizations such as Lebanon's Hezbollah. Arms markets pop up out of nowhere constantly, either online or in bazaars. The inability for law enforcement officials to trace arms back to their points of origin makes apprehending suppliers and manufacturers extremely difficult. Many countries from outside the region have also expressed concern in the lack of legislation on an international level as the only existing piece of international law is the Firearms Protocol which was adopted in 2001. The weapons obtained by criminal organizations in West Asia are commonly used to commit acts of terrorism or violent crime in countries outside the region. Many countries believe in both seizure and destruction of intercepted illegal arm shipments and recovered illegal weapons. While arms are normally traded

by the weapon, the problem of illegally dealing disassembled arms and parts has contributed to the growth of the illicit market which has resulted in an increase in violent crimes globally.

West Asia's illicit arms markets are still widely accessible despite the Firearms Protocol and the efforts of statewide legislation. When coming together to discuss international policy, delegates should consider asking themselves the following questions: How is my country affected politically, economically, and socially by the illegal arms market in West Asia? Has the Firearms Protocol been successful in my own country? How can I create a policy that benefits everyone? Is there a bloc that aligns with my country's interests? Are there any countries that may share similar policies and views to mine?

States in Favor of New Legislation Regarding the Illicit Arms Trade in West Asia:

States in this bloc believe that new international action should be taken in order to combat illegal arms trafficking. Many states see the existing Firearms Protocol as outdated and needing replacement. However, many states also view the Firearms Protocol as useful, but not enough to combat the issue. This bloc would primarily focus on forming a new major international law to combat the issue presently and into the future. States in this bloc should consider getting involved with West Asian countries and figuring out how to write legislation that will not negatively affect West Asia's economy, stability, and governance. This bloc would be focusing on dealing with the illicit arms trade on a regional level, such as that in West Asia and generating legislation specific to the region. As a result, members of this bloc should be aware that having the support of the delegations of West Asia would allow for a greater chance of resolution to be passed. New legislation can be whatever the states of the bloc come together to agree on. The bloc may split apart if states disagree on the new legislation being formed but are still in favor of new legislation being created.

States in Favor of Existing Legislation Regarding the Illicit Arms Trade in West Asia:

States aligning with this bloc believe that the current Firearms Protocol is capable of hindering the illegal arms market in West Asia or believe that it needs updating. These states do not see a need for new legislation, believing it might negatively impact their own country's policies. These states see the issue on more of a global scale and choose to act in that way, considering how West Asia would be affected by the Firearms Protocol but also their own country. Many states may also believe that the Firearms Protocol just needs to be updated to accommodate the growing and changing illegal arms market. These states still have to consider the opinions of West Asian delegations in order to gain support for their resolutions and might have to compromise and make changes to secure signatories. This bloc may split depending on the goals of other states and their different processes and plans for achieving their goals.

Peacekeeping Contributors and Observers:

Some states may see both as necessary for disarmament or may not have an opinion due to a lack of experience with the illegal arms market. These states should still believe that peace is the best option and will be siding

with the bloc that they believe will resolve the issue most effectively and efficiently. These states may support multiple resolutions and halt their support for resolutions as conditions change. Their votes and support will be necessary for every bloc wanting a resolution passed. Additionally, observers might be uninvolved with the topic and may only choose to listen to what other states have to say. Observers may become signatories for resolutions they'd like to see debated and presented but may refrain from voting during the conference. Their views and opinions may also prove useful and necessary to passing a resolution.

Committee Mission:

DISEC was created in 1945 with the formation of the United Nations. DISEC was one of the main committees in the General Assembly. DISEC was formed in order to provide nations with a space to discuss national security, weapons, and peace among the world. The United Nations describes the reason for the creation of DISEC is to establish “general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security...” It is essential that you keep this mission in mind as you complete your research and write your position paper. It is also important to note that DISEC cannot directly alter the Security Council’s decision making process however, they can advise topics for the council’s consideration.

The jurisdiction of DISEC that we will be primarily focusing on is the regulation of arms and other weapons. It is crucial that as you conduct your research, you look into the weapons being sold in your nation both legally and illegally, and research how these weapons are being sold. Your job as a committee will be to decide how to counteract the illegal arms trade in the Middle East. This doesn’t only include writing legislation, but also researching whether some weapons are necessary for your citizens survival, and deciding whether certain trade should stay unregulated. It is of the utmost importance that throughout your time researching and participating in the conference, that you stay true to the ideals of the state that you represent.

As with all committees in the United Nations, it is important that you keep in mind the sustainable development goals when creating resolutions. Find ways to write proposals that not only help your country’s community, but also create additional opportunities. The United Nations sustainable development goals are as follow: no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitization, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water.

Questions to Consider

1. How has the illegal gun market in West Asia affected your country?
2. Does your country have any policies and legislation to combat arms trafficking?
3. How can the arms problem in West Asia affect the world on a global scale?
4. Does the current Firearms Protocol address your country's concerns?
5. If the illegal arms market is invisible and nearly impossible to trace, what's the best way to hinder it?
6. How will the interests of West Asian countries impact the effort to prevent illicit arms trafficking in and out of the region?
7. Has your country conducted a military operation within West Asia? If so, were munitions left behind that could've been recycled into the arms trade?
8. How does your country handle seized illegal munitions?
9. How is your country's crime rates affected by illegal weapons? Where are these illegal weapons coming from and what crimes are they used for?
10. Has any criminal or terrorist organization originating in West Asia operated in your country?
11. Are there any countries that might share similar interests to your own? Has your country ever been involved in diplomacy with these other countries?



Works Cited

- “The Middle East as the World’s Illicit Arms Depot.” *Global Initiative*, 24 Mar. 2023, globalinitiative.net/analysis/middle-east-illicit-arms-trafficking-ocindex/. Accessed 04 July 2024.
- “Countries with the Highest Arms Trafficking Rate in the World - the Organized Crime Index.” *The Organized Crime Index | ENACT*, ocindex.net/rankings/arms_trafficking?f=rankings&view=Cards&group=Country&order=D ESC&criminality-range=0%2C10&state-range=0%2C10. Accessed 04 July 2024.
- Alaraby, Muhammad, and Alexander Muller. “Countering Illicit Arms Transfers in the MENA Region: The Case of Yemen and Libya.” *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/16657.pdf. Accessed 04 July 2024.
- Bayoumy, Yara, and Phil Stewart. “Iran Steps up Weapons Supply to Yemen’s Houthis via Oman - Officials.” *Reuters*, 20 Oct. 2016, www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-iran-idUSKCN12K0CX/. Accessed 05 July 2024.
- “Iran-Iraq War.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/event/Iran-Iraq-War. Accessed 06 July 2024.
- “Syrian Civil War: Facts & Related Content.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/facts/Syrian-Civil-War. Accessed 06 July 2024.
- Cohen, Jordan, and Jon Hoffman. “Many Arms and Little Influence in the Middle East.” *Cato.Org*, 11 Aug. 2023, www.cato.org/commentary/many-arms-little-influence-middle-east. Accessed 23 July 2024.
- Wezeman, Pieter D, et al. “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2023.” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2024-03/fs_2403_at_2023.pdf. Accessed 10 July 2024.

Schaechter, Iris. “Conventional Terrorist Weapons.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/images/odccp/terrorism_weapons_conventional.html#:~:text=Manufactured%20Firearms&text=Small%20Arms%3A%20most%20firearms%20under,guns%20and%20light%20machine%20guns. Accessed 10 July 2024.

“Assault Rifle.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 2 July 2024, www.britannica.com/technology/assault-rifle. Accessed 10 July 2024.

“In Day-Long Debate, Speakers in Security Council Wrestle with Impacts of Illicit Small Arms, Light Weapons as Both ‘source and Symptom’ of Violent Conflict | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.” *United Nations*, 15 Dec. 2023, press.un.org/en/2023/sc15533.doc.htm. Accessed 13 July 2024.

“Global Study on Firearms Trafficking 2020.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, Mar. 2020, www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Firearms/2020_REPORT_Global_Study_on_Firearms_Trafficking_2020_web.pdf. Accessed 23 July 2024.

“The Firearms Protocol.” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/the-firearms-protocol.html. Accessed 15 July 2024.

