



SPECPOL
BACKGROUND GUIDE

Special Political and Decolonization Committee

DPSIMUN '26

CONFERENCE THEME

“Radical Resilience: Engineering Stability in an Age of Volatility”

DAIS

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COMMITTEE

SPECPOL

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1.1 Welcome Message

Dear delegate,

Welcome to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee at DPSIMUN'26. This year, under the theme “Engineering Stability in an Age of Volatility,” we invite you to step into a world where alliances shift, conflicts transcend borders, and the pursuit of power can destabilize entire regions. The challenges before us are not distant possibilities—they are unfolding now, testing the international community’s ability to respond with diplomacy, resolve, and ingenuity.

In SPECPOL, we will confront two critical issues at the heart of this instability: the rise of state-sponsored proxy warfare driven by strategic resources and regional influence, and the growing challenge of sanctions evasion and the illicit trade of strategic resources through black markets. These are not problems with simple solutions. They demand that you question the systems that allow instability to persist, weigh the interests of your nation against the responsibilities of the international community, and, most importantly, engineer solutions capable of creating lasting stability.

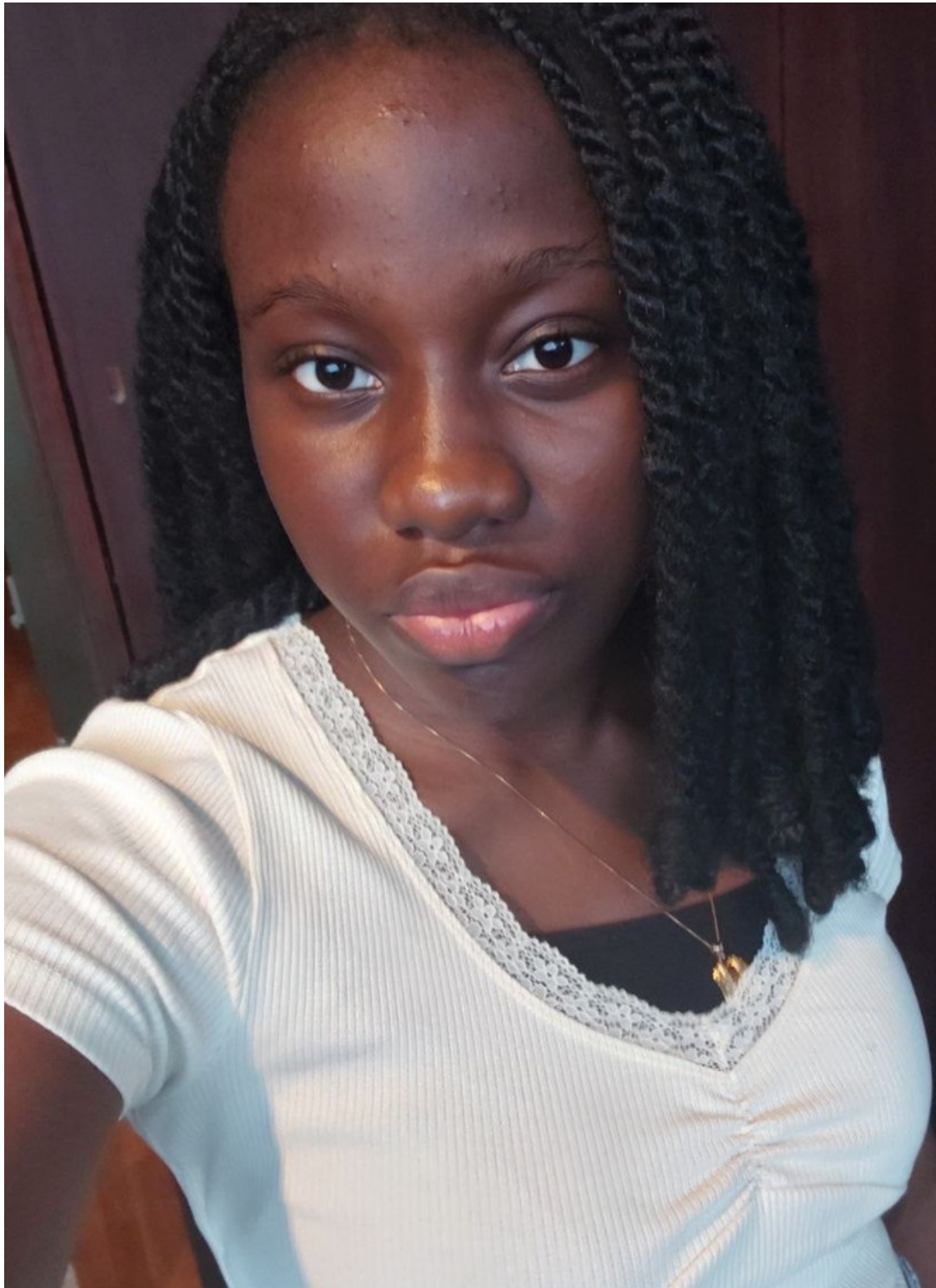
As delegates, you will be called upon to defend your nation's interests, navigate complex alliances, challenge opposing perspectives, and work beyond them to build practical and innovative solutions. The decisions you make in committee will ultimately determine whether we merely respond to instability—or begin to dismantle the mechanisms that sustain it.

We hope this background guide serves not only as a foundation for your research, but as the beginning of your mission in SPECPOL. Come prepared to question, negotiate, collaborate, and, above all, engineer stability in an age of volatility.

Sincerely,
Mary & Ewurabena
Chairs, SPECPOL — DPSIMUN'26

1.2 Chair Messages

Ewurabena.G Crentsil **CHAIR, SPECPOL**



I am honoured and excited to be your Chair for this year's MUN. This is going to be my third MUN and is actually my first time chairing a committee.

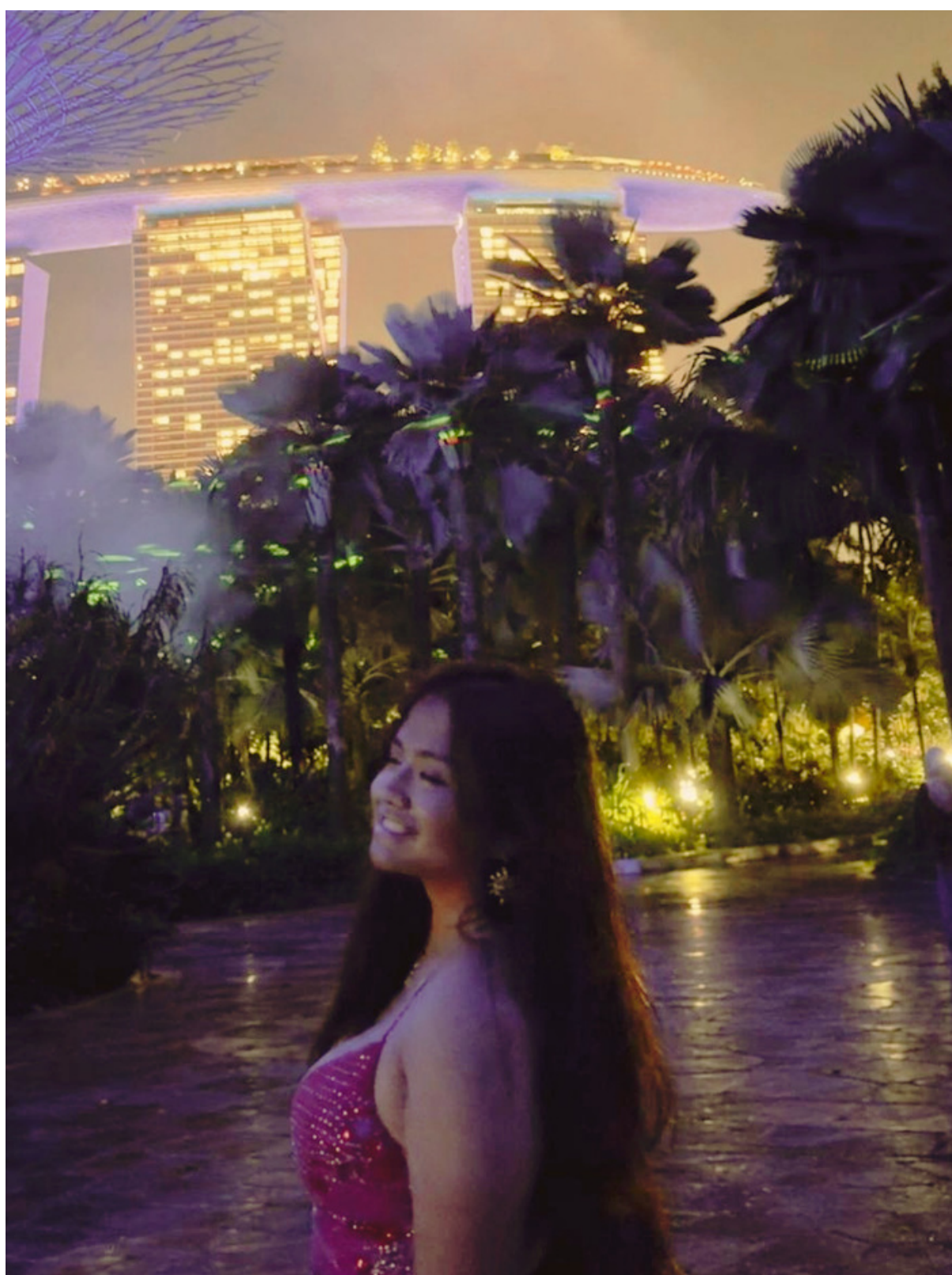
MUN's can seem a little bit daunting at first, especially if you're stepping outside your comfort zone, but I encourage you to approach it with an open mind; MUNs are an opportunity to build your confidence, meet new people, develop new perspectives and learn new things, so don't be afraid to speak up.

For more practical advice, make sure you thoroughly research your country's position on the topics, think critically about the issues, and be prepared to engage in respectful and constructive debates with your fellow delegates. I hope this committee provides an enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding experience for everyone.

I'm looking forward to meeting all of you and wish you the best in your preparation.

All the best,
Ewurabena
Chair, SPECPOL

Mary de Manuel **CHAIR, SPECPOL**



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to SPECPOL! I'm so excited to have you join us for what I hope will be a challenging, engaging, and memorable committee. Our topics are complex, with no easy answers, so come prepared to question, challenge, negotiate, and think beyond the obvious.

I encourage you to step outside your comfort zone, speak up, and approach every debate with an open mind. More than anything, I hope this committee gives you the opportunity to explore new perspectives, connect with others, and turn your ideas into meaningful solutions.

I can't wait to see what each of you bring to the room. Let's make this a committee worth remembering.

All the best,
Mary
Chair, SPECPOL

1.3 General Overview

The Special Political Decolonisation Committee, or SPECPOL, one of the six central committees in the UN General Assembly, seeks to address a wide range of special political and decolonisation-related topics. These topics include: issues related to Palestinian refugees, space exploration, effects of atomic radiation, peace-keeping operations and addressing the political and humanitarian crises of non-self-governing territories and displaced populations. With the current state of general insecurity in the Global South (this term encompasses the geographic regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean), the committee plays a large role in mitigating and preventing conflict.

In alignment with the theme of this year's MUN, *"Engineering Stability in an Age of Volatility,"* SPECPOL serves as a stage for discussions addressing instability in these aforementioned geographic areas, as the instability in these nations can often be described as special political situations. SPECPOL continues to collaborate with diverse organisations such as the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to promote peace and security across its member states. Our committee tasks delegates with engineering sustainable, realistic structural mechanisms that safeguard international peace, mitigate global instability and uphold human dignity.

1.4 Addressing the rise of State-sponsored proxy warfare over strategic resources and regional influence

1.4.1 Background Information

Proxy wars are conflicts where major powers pursue strategic objectives indirectly by supporting other nations or non-state groups instead of engaging in direct military confrontation. This support could be through funding, weapons, training, intelligence, or logistical assistance. Proxy wars have become a central tool of geopolitical competition; by relying on proxies, states are able to secure access to strategic resources and expand regional influence while reducing costs and risks associated with direct conflict.

Competition over valuable resources such as water, gas, oil and rare earth minerals has increased and intensified existing conflicts, with major powers backing opposing sides to protect their own economic and geopolitical interests. Because of this, many proxy conflicts have been prolonged.

Proxy wars are known to destabilise entire regions, displace millions of people, destroy critical infrastructure and contribute to humanitarian crises, yet they continue to happen because international systems fail to hold these major powers and sponsors accountable for the destruction they finance.

The United Nations has repeatedly addressed issues related to proxy warfare; however, no comprehensive international framework specifically regulates proxy warfare.

1.4.2 Historical Context

One of the most notable proxy wars in history was the Cold War. Instead of engaging in direct military conflict, the Soviet Union and the United States supported opposing groups, governments, and liberation movements in conflicts such as the Vietnam War and the Korean War.

These conflicts enabled both superpowers to expand their influence while avoiding the risk of conflict escalating into full-blown nuclear war. After the end of the Cold War, proxy wars did not disappear. Instead, proxy wars evolved as more and more regional and global powers began to rely on proxy forces to advance their political, economic, and military interests.

In recent years, conflicts in countries such as Syria, Libya, and Yemen have demonstrated how proxy wars prolong violence and worsen humanitarian crises. Many foreign states have supported rival factions, escalating domestic conflicts into complex regional struggles. One example is the conflict in eastern Ukraine escalating into a full-scale invasion in 2022.

1.4.3 Current Situation

The growing availability of advanced weapons, intelligence, and private military companies has made proxy wars more sophisticated and extremely difficult to regulate. States can provide financial, logistical, and military support to proxy actors while maintaining distance from the conflicts themselves. Allowing them to pursue their strategic interests, including access to valuable resources and greater regional influence, without directly implicating themselves in conflict.

The UN has expressed concern over the current reality of proxy wars around the world; however, despite sanctions and peacekeeping efforts, enforcement remains inconsistent, and many external actors continue to provide varying forms of support to parties involved in conflict. The involvement of multiple states and non-state actors makes it difficult to determine responsibility and hold sponsors accountable.

The international community is currently faced with the challenge of balancing states' security interests with the need to uphold international law, protect civilians, and prevent proxy conflicts from escalating into regional or global disasters.

1.4.4 Subtopics

1.4.4.1 Competition for Resources and Regional Influence

Address the use of proxy wars to obtain resources such as oil, gas, minerals, and shipping lanes and outline the use of proxy wars by global and regional powers to gain influence over certain blocs and to protect their own economic security by targeting those blocs

1.4.4.2 The Weaponisation of Humanitarian Aid and Intelligence

Addressing the use of humanitarian aid and intelligence as weapons for indirect warfare and developing international frameworks to safeguard the neutrality of humanitarian aid and intelligence from exploitation in proxy conflicts

1.4.4.3 Loopholes in Foreign Military Assistance

Preventing indirect participation in conflict through arms transfers and military aid, and strengthening global oversight into the provision of foreign military aid

1.4.4.4 Funding militant groups and non-state actors

Addressing the role of global and regional powers in sustaining proxy wars. Preventing the funding, training and arming of non-state actors by global and regional powers to incite proxy war

1.4.5 Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1

How can the international community discourage states from sponsoring proxy groups?

Can there be stronger international laws, diplomatic measures, or incentives to reduce state support for proxy actors?

2

What role should the UN and other organisations play?

Should these organisations make efforts to strengthen peacekeeping, mediation, sanctions monitoring, or early-warning systems?

3

How can the sponsoring of proxy groups through financial support and the flow of weapons be reduced?

Should nations strengthen arms embargoes, financial oversight, border patrol or intelligence sharing, and how can they do this while protecting their own economic interests?

4

How can countries affected by proxy conflicts be supported?

How can the international community provide humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding initiatives, and economic reconstruction to promote long-term stability?

5

How can humanitarian aid and international missions be protected from interference in proxy conflicts?

What measures can be taken to ensure humanitarian organisations and international missions can operate safely and effectively?

6

What are the gaps in current international efforts to prevent and respond to proxy warfare, and how can these gaps be bridged?

Should the UN establish new monitoring mechanisms and strengthen sanctions and their enforcement, or enhance international cooperation?

7

How to identify and deal with violent non-state actors?

Should the UN develop common criteria for identifying and responding to armed groups?

1.4.6 Useful Sites and Documents

War on the Rocks - The Moral Hazard of Proxy Warfare

<https://warontherocks.com/the-moral-hazard-of-proxy-warfare/>

Geopolitics - Proxies of Evil

<https://politicsgeo.com/proxies-of-evil/>

Global Situational Awareness - Modern Proxy Warfare in a Globalised World

<https://www.globalsitu.com/post/modern-proxy-warfare-in-a-globalised-world>

New America - A New Age of Proxy Warfare

<https://www.newamerica.org/insights/twenty-first-century-proxy-warfare-confrontingstrategic-innovation-multipolar-world/a-new-age-of-proxy-warfare/>

Vox - The Middle East's cold war, explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veMFCFyOwFI>

Johnny Harris - Who's Really Pulling the Strings in Global Wars

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqJnmaLWnqQ>

WarfareExplained - Every US–Soviet Proxy War Explained in 10 Minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoaorUaOh74>

Engine- Washington targets Iran's shadow fleet again

<https://www.engine.online/news/washington-targets-irans-shadow-fleet-again-7f27>

Africa Defense Forum- Gold Is Key Currency Driving Sudan War

<https://adf-magazine.com/2026/06/gold-is-key-currency-driving-sudan-war/>

Mezha - Chinese exporters send microchips to Russia and Iran, enabling Shahed drone production

https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/f58898e5_chinese_exporters_send/

1.5 Sanction evasion and Smuggling resources from the black market

1.5.1 Background Information

Economic sanctions are penalties used as tools of statecraft, like trade restrictions, asset freezes, and embargoes, to coerce targeted states into changing their behaviour without having to resort to military action. Despite these measures, a large number of sanctioned actors continue to evade regulations by trading natural resources illegally on the black market and evading sanctions.

Oil, gold, diamonds, lumber, rare earth minerals and other valuable goods are frequently trafficked across borders through third-party intermediaries, falsified documents, or criminal networks. Armed groups, organised crime, corruption, and continuing conflicts are often funded by the revenues made from these operations.

Sanction evasion jeopardises international security and economic stability in addition to reducing the efficacy of international measures. It is a challenge to stop illegal commerce due to weak border restrictions, little international collaboration, and insufficient enforcement methods. The UN has made bolstering international collaboration to stop resource trafficking on the black market and fight sanction evasion a top goal as geopolitical tensions rise.

1.5.2 Historical Context

Since the United Nations was founded in 1945, the use of economic sanctions has greatly increased. Sanctions were applied sparingly throughout the Cold War, but from the 1990s, they were employed more frequently to address armed conflicts, human rights abuses, terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons. Sanctioned states and organisations created increasingly complex strategies to get around prohibitions over time.

While illicit markets for oil, diamonds, precious metals, and other natural resources grew, smuggling networks spread across international borders. Despite international sanctions, the trade in “conflict diamonds” helped fund armed groups during conflict in nations such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In a similar vein, terrorist groups like ISIS made substantial profits from the illicit selling of antiquities and oil. In response, the international community toughened anti-money laundering laws to monitor illegal financial flows and launched programs like the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme to lessen the trade in conflict diamonds. However, chances for illegal resource trafficking and penalty evasion have persisted due to globalisation, digital banking and increasingly intricate supply chains

1.5.3 Current Situation

Sanction evasion is still a significant problem for the world community today. States, corporations, and criminal groups continue to circumvent sanctions by taking advantage of flaws in banking systems, international trade, and border security. False documents, transshipment through third countries, shell corporations, or illicit shipping methods are frequently used to conceal illegal shipments.

In many regions of the world, violent conflicts, corruption, environmental degradation, and violations of human rights are still fueled by the smuggling of natural resources. Illegal resource extraction frequently generates substantial income for terrorist groups, sanctioned states, and non-state armed groups, enabling them to carry out military actions in violation of international prohibitions.

The World Customs Organisation, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the United Nations, and regional organisations are still striving to improve financial transparency, bolster sanctions enforcement, and foster global collaboration. Global efforts to stop resource smuggling on the black market and sanction evasion are still hampered by disparities in country enforcement capabilities, corruption, and a lack of information sharing.

1.5.4 Subtopics

1.5.4.1 Black-market trade and the smuggling of strategic resources

Sanctioned actors can make money and get around international prohibitions by engaging in the illicit trade of commodities like oil, gold, diamonds, lumber, and rare earth minerals. In order to stop illegal trade, delegates should think about ways to enhance international monitoring, certification programs, and resource tracking.

1.5.4.2 Illegal Financial Networks and Sanction Evasion Techniques

Shell corporations, offshore accounts, cryptocurrency, and money laundering networks are frequently used by sanctioned states, organisations, and people to conceal financial activity. Delegates ought to investigate strategies for enhancing financial transparency, bolstering anti-money laundering protocols, and upending illicit financial networks.

1.5.4.3 International cooperation, maritime enforcement, and border security

Sanctioned items can be trafficked illegally due to lax border controls and a lack of collaboration between governments. Delegates ought to talk about how international organisations, maritime authorities, and customs agencies can enhance enforcement, intelligence sharing, and inspections while safeguarding lawful commerce.

1.5.4.4 International Organisations' Role and Accountability

Cooperation between governments, businesses, and international organisations is necessary for sanctions to be successful. In order to hold people, businesses, and governments responsible for sanction evasion, delegates should look into ways that the UN and other organisations may improve enforcement procedures, bolster sanctions monitoring, and more.

1.5.5 Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- 1 Why do sanctioned states, organisations, and individuals continue to evade international sanctions?** What political, economic, and institutional factors make sanction evasion possible?
- 2 What more can be done by the international community to stop strategic resource smuggling?** Should countries improve border security, boost marine surveillance, implement more stringent certification procedures, or strengthen customs inspections?
- 3 How can financial systems be strengthened to detect and prevent sanctions evasion?** Should governments strengthen banking oversight, control shell corporations, strengthen anti-money-laundering policies, or promote information sharing among financial institutions?
- 4 What part should international institutions like the United Nations play?** Should the UN create new institutions to coordinate enforcement, enhance international investigations, increase technical aid, or bolster sanctions monitoring?
- 5 How can nations work together more successfully to break up criminal networks engaged in illicit trade?** Should states increase intelligence sharing, conduct joint investigations, strengthen extradition agreements, or improve cross-border law enforcement cooperation?
- 6 How can sanctions remain effective while minimising humanitarian consequences?** Should food, medicine, and humanitarian aid be given more exemptions while the prohibition on illegal commerce is strictly enforced?
- 7 How should states, companies, and individuals involved in sanction evasion be held accountable?** Should those who facilitate illicit commerce face harsher international penalties, asset freezes, criminal prosecutions, or other sanctions?
- 8 Who should provide financial and technical assistance to nations with weak enforcement capabilities?** In order to improve sanctions enforcement and fight illegal resource trafficking, should wealthy nations, international financial institutions, and UN agencies offer financing, training, technology, and capacity-building initiatives?

1.5.6 Useful Sites and Documents

TRTAFRIKA -Commodity smuggling: A silent killer of Africa's economic future

<https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/f62df2844c18>

Foundation for Defense of Democracies- EU's New Russia Sanctions Target Evasion Mechanisms, But Enforcement Challenges Remain

<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/07/28/eus-new-russia-sanctions-target-evasion-mechanisms-but-enforcement-challenges-remain/>

EU Sanctions map

<https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main>

Engine- Washington targets Iran's shadow fleet again

<https://www.engine.online/news/washington-targets-irans-shadow-fleet-again-7f27>

The Maritime Executive - Italian Forces Board Falsely-Flagged Shadow Fleet Tanker

<https://maritime-executive.com/article/italian-forces-board-falsely-flagged-shadow-fleet-tanker>

Africa Defense Forum- Gold Is Key Currency Driving Sudan War

<https://adf-magazine.com/2026/06/gold-is-key-currency-driving-sudan-war/>

Mining.com - US sanctions Rwandan refinery in Congo gold smuggling network

<https://www.mining.com/web/us-sanctions-rwandan-refinery-in-congo-gold-smuggling-network/>

Mezha - Chinese exporters send microchips to Russia and Iran, enabling Shahed drone production

https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/f58898e5_chinese_exporters_send/

Eurasianet- New report documents how Central Asian states abet Russian sanctions-busting

https://eurasianet.org/new-report-documents-how-central-asian-states-abet-russian-sanctions-busting_

Chainalysis - The EU's 21st Russia Sanctions Package Targets Crypto Platforms for Sanctions Evasion, Introduces Third-Country Ban Mechanism

<https://www.chainalysis.com/blog/eu-21st-russia-sanctions-package-crypto-platforms-july-2026/>

1.6 Glossary

Accountability - The process of holding individuals, organisations, or states responsible for actions that violate international law, agreements, or established standards.

Arms Embargo - A restriction imposed by the United Nations or individual states that prohibits the sale, transfer, or supply of weapons and military equipment to specific countries, groups, or individuals.

Black Market - An illegal system of trade where goods and services are exchanged outside government regulation or international laws.

Conflict Resources - Natural resources that are extracted, traded, or sold in ways that contribute to armed conflict, corruption, or human rights abuses.

Economic Sanctions - Measures used by states or international organisations to influence the behaviour of a country, organisation, or individual. These may include trade restrictions, asset freezes, financial limitations, or travel bans.

Foreign Military Assistance : Support provided by one state to another government or armed group through weapons, training, intelligence, funding, or military equipment.

Global South - A term commonly used to describe regions including Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and parts of Asia that often share historical experiences related to colonialism, development challenges, and global inequality.

Humanitarian Aid - Assistance provided to populations affected by conflict, natural disasters, or crises. It may include food, medical supplies, shelter, and emergency support.

Intelligence Sharing - The exchange of information between governments or organisations to improve security, prevent threats, and support decision-making.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) - A set of rules that regulates the conduct of armed conflict, protects civilians, and limits unnecessary suffering during warfare.

Money Laundering -The process of hiding the origins of illegally obtained money by transferring it through legitimate businesses, financial systems, or other methods.

Non-State Actor - An organisation or group that influences political or security affairs but is not officially controlled by a government, including armed groups, terrorist organisations, and private organisations.

Peacekeeping Operations - Missions authorised by the United Nations to help maintain peace and security in conflict-affected areas through monitoring ceasefires, protecting civilians, and supporting political processes.

Proxy Warfare - A conflict where a state supports another country, armed group, or non-state actor to achieve strategic goals without directly engaging in military conflict

Regional Influence -The ability of a state or organisation to shape political, economic, or security decisions within a specific geographic region.

Sanction Evasion - Actions taken by states, organisations, or individuals to bypass international sanctions through methods such as illegal trade, financial manipulation, or the use of intermediaries.

Shell Company - A company that exists mainly on paper and has little or no active business operations, often used to hide ownership, move money, or avoid regulations.

Strategic Resources - Resources that are important for economic growth, national security, or military capabilities, including oil, natural gas, minerals, and rare earth elements.

Strategic Shipping Lanes - Important maritime routes used for international trade and transportation of resources, which can have significant economic and geopolitical importance

Transshipment -The process of transferring goods through one or more third countries before reaching their final destination, sometimes used to conceal the origin of sanctioned goods.

Violent Non-State Actor- A non-governmental group that uses violence to achieve political, ideological, or economic objectives, including militant organisations and armed groups.

Weaponisation of Humanitarian Aid -The misuse of humanitarian assistance as a political, military, or strategic tool to influence populations or gain an advantage in a conflict.

World Customs Organization (WCO) - An international organisation that promotes cooperation between customs authorities and works to improve border security, trade facilitation, and enforcement against illegal trade.

1.6 Notes