



DISEC

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Disarmament and International Security Committee

DPSIMUN '26

[CONFERENCE THEME]

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

DAIS

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COMMITTEE

DISEC

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1.1 Welcome Message

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to DPSI MUN 2026 and to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC). This year's theme, "Radical Resilience: Engineering Stability in the Age of Volatility," challenges us to think critically about how the international community can maintain peace and stability in a rapidly changing world.

Throughout this committee, you will have the opportunity to examine complex issues surrounding autonomous weapons, drone warfare, arms control, emerging technologies, and international security. These topics require more than simply identifying problems; they require cooperation, creativity, diplomacy, and a willingness to consider perspectives different from your own.

We hope that this conference encourages you to become confident speakers, thoughtful negotiators, and responsible representatives of the international community. Come prepared to debate, collaborate, and challenge yourselves.

We look forward to seeing the ideas and solutions you bring to DISEC.

Welcome to DPSI MUN 2026, and best of luck to all delegates!

1.2 Chair Messages

Edward Eshun & Benjamin Baffoe-Bonnie CHAIRS, African Union

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee at DPSI MUN 2026. My name is Edward Eshun, and I am honored to serve as your Chair for this conference, as well as my co chair Benjamin Bonnie DISEC is a committee where diplomacy, strategic thinking, and international cooperation are essential.

The topics before us are particularly relevant in a world where technological developments are transforming the nature of warfare while traditional arms-control systems face increasing challenges.

As delegates, I encourage you to approach each topic with an open mind and a willingness to engage seriously with different perspectives. Strong debate is not simply about speaking the most; it is about listening carefully, building meaningful alliances, defending your country's position, and working toward practical solutions.

During the conference, I hope to see thoughtful speeches, productive negotiations, and resolutions that demonstrate both ambition and realism. Do not be afraid to question existing ideas or propose new approaches, but remember that effective diplomacy requires compromise.

I wish every delegate the very best of luck. I look forward to seeing you in committee and to witnessing the discussions and solutions you will develop together.

Best regards,
Edward Eshun and Benjamin Baffoe Bonnie
Chair, Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)
DPSI MUN 2026

1.3 General Overview

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, tasked with addressing global challenges related to international peace, security, and the regulation of armaments. Comprising all UN Member States, DISEC serves as a central platform for multilateral dialogue on disarmament, conflict prevention, and the management of both traditional and emerging security threats. Its mandate encompasses questions concerning disarmament, arms regulation, non-proliferation, and broader principles of international security.

The security environment in which DISEC operates has changed considerably. Military capabilities are increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber technologies, unmanned vehicles, and other emerging technologies. At the same time, established arms-control arrangements have come under pressure as geopolitical tensions have increased and confidence between major military powers has weakened.

The First Committee has already begun addressing these developments. During its 2024 session, for example, delegates considered the international security implications of artificial intelligence in the military domain, including the risks of arms races, miscalculation, escalation, and proliferation to non-State actors.

In parallel, traditional arms-control mechanisms are facing significant challenges. The expiration of the New START Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on 5 February 2026 removed the last remaining bilateral treaty imposing binding limits on the strategic nuclear arsenals of the world's two largest nuclear powers.

In line with the conference theme, "Radical Resilience: Engineering Stability in the Age of Volatility," DISEC provides a forum for examining how international institutions can adapt to an increasingly unpredictable security environment. The committee must consider whether existing mechanisms remain sufficient and, where they do not, how new forms of cooperation, regulation, verification, and confidence-building can be developed.

The purpose of this committee is therefore not simply to debate whether new technologies or weapons should exist. Delegates must consider the broader question of how international security can remain stable while the technologies, alliances, and strategic calculations underlying that security continue to change.

Regulating Autonomous Weapons Systems and Drone Warfare

| Background Information

Warfare has always been influenced by technological development. However, the combination of artificial intelligence, advanced sensors, robotics, and unmanned platforms has introduced a particularly important shift: weapons are increasingly capable of operating with reduced human intervention.

One of the central concepts in this discussion is the Autonomous Weapons System (AWS). Although definitions vary among governments and international organizations, the term generally refers to a weapon system that can select and engage targets after activation without further human intervention. This should be distinguished from remotely piloted drones, in which a human operator generally remains responsible for selecting targets and authorizing attacks. Drones can contain autonomous functions, such as navigation or target recognition, without necessarily being fully autonomous weapons.

This distinction is important because the debate surrounding autonomous weapons is not simply a debate about drones. It concerns where human decision-making ends and machine decision-making begins.

Modern unmanned systems can provide significant military advantages. They can conduct surveillance over dangerous areas, gather intelligence, operate for long periods, and reduce the exposure of military personnel to danger. Autonomous functions can also allow systems to process large quantities of information more rapidly than a human operator.

However, these advantages create corresponding security concerns. If a weapon is capable of independently identifying and engaging a target, responsibility for its actions becomes more difficult to determine. Questions also emerge over whether an autonomous system can adequately distinguish between civilians and combatants, assess proportionality, and respond appropriately to changing circumstances.

International humanitarian law already contains rules governing the conduct of hostilities, including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack. The challenge is determining whether and how these existing rules can be applied when increasingly complex decisions are delegated to machines. The ICRC has emphasized that humans remain responsible for complying with international humanitarian law and that accountability cannot simply be transferred to a weapon system or computer program.

The development of autonomous systems therefore presents DISEC with a central policy dilemma: How can states benefit from technological innovation while ensuring that human control, accountability, and international law remain meaningful?

Historical Context

The idea of removing soldiers from direct exposure to warfare is not new. During the twentieth century, states experimented with remotely controlled aircraft, reconnaissance systems, and other unmanned technologies. Their initial uses were largely focused on surveillance and intelligence.

The development of satellite communications, precision-guided weapons, advanced computing, and improved sensors subsequently transformed unmanned systems. By the early twenty-first century, armed drones had become increasingly important in military and counterterrorism operations.

The expansion of drone warfare demonstrated the strategic advantages of unmanned platforms but also generated controversy surrounding civilian casualties, targeted killings, sovereignty, transparency, and accountability.

The next stage of development has involved incorporating increasingly sophisticated autonomy and artificial intelligence into military systems. This has prompted concern that future weapons could make increasingly important decisions without direct human involvement.

The United Nations began formally considering the implications of lethal autonomous weapons systems within the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) framework in 2014. The CCW's Group of Governmental Experts on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems has since provided a principal diplomatic forum for states to discuss the issue. In 2024, the Group continued examining possible elements of an instrument and other measures concerning autonomous weapons.

The General Assembly has also increasingly addressed the issue. In December 2024, it adopted resolution A/RES/79/62, Lethal autonomous weapons systems, by a vote of 166 in favour, 3 against, and 15 abstentions.

The issue remained on the international agenda in 2025, when the General Assembly adopted A/RES/80/57, again entitled Lethal autonomous weapons systems, by 164 votes in favour, 6 against, and 7 abstentions.

This progression demonstrates that the international community is moving beyond asking whether autonomous weapons are a future possibility. The debate is increasingly concerned with what rules should govern their development and use now.

| Current Situation

Autonomous weapons and military artificial intelligence remain rapidly developing areas of international security. States continue to invest in unmanned systems, artificial intelligence, autonomous navigation, surveillance, and decision-support technologies.

This accelerated integration of AI into national defense apparatuses extends beyond experimental concepts into active combat operations. Modern defense doctrines increasingly rely on automated target recognition algorithms, algorithmic sensor fusion, battle-management software, and swarm intelligence, which allow multiple uncrewed platforms to coordinate operations with minimal latency.

Major military powers and emerging regional actors are heavily funding machine-learning research to secure battlefield speed and operational superiority.

At the same time, international negotiations have not yet produced a universally accepted comprehensive treaty specifically regulating lethal autonomous weapons systems. Multilateral discussions have primarily taken place within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) through its Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS).

Despite years of deliberations aimed at establishing regulatory norms, structural blockages within the CCW's consensus-based voting mechanism have repeatedly stalled progress toward a legally binding instrument. As a result, civil society coalitions and over 130 member states supporting strict prohibitions have expressed growing concern over the delay in formal rulemaking relative to the rapid pace of technological deployment.

The 2024 and 2025 General Assembly resolutions demonstrate broad international interest in establishing common approaches. However, differences remain regarding definitions, the required level of human control, the scope of possible prohibitions, and the appropriate legal instrument. The adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 79/62 with overwhelming support marked a significant step in formalizing broad multilateral engagement. Nevertheless, key geopolitical divides persist.

Current Situation - Continued

Proponent states and humanitarian organizations advocate for a "two-tier approach" that explicitly bans fully autonomous weapons operating without meaningful human control while regulating semi-autonomous systems through strict operational constraints.

Conversely, several major military powers favor non-binding political declarations or codes of conduct, arguing that existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL)—including Geneva Convention principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution—already provides a sufficient legal framework.

Drone warfare also continues to develop rapidly. The increasing availability of relatively inexpensive unmanned systems has lowered the technological barriers to obtaining aerial capabilities. The widespread proliferation of commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) components, first-person-view (FPV) loitering munitions, and low-cost uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) has fundamentally reshaped modern conflict.

Low-cost systems enable non-state actors, smaller nations, and proxy forces to execute precision strikes, conduct real-time reconnaissance, and overwhelm traditional air defense networks. This democratization of aerial strike capabilities poses severe challenges to traditional arms control regimes, export control standards, and the tracking of dual-use technology supply chains.

For DISEC, the central challenge is therefore to create a framework that protects civilians and international peace while allowing legitimate technological development and peaceful uses of unmanned technology. Delegates in the First Committee must reconcile national security requirements with international legal accountability.

Key priorities include defining mandatory levels of human agency (human-in-the-loop, on-the-loop, or over-the-loop), establishing mandatory legal reviews under Article 36 of Additional Protocol I for algorithmically driven weapons, and mitigating algorithmic bias in automated targeting systems. Crucially, DISEC must construct regulatory guardrails that restrict military escalation without curtailing civil aviation, commercial innovation, disaster relief operations, or peaceful agricultural and environmental drone applications.

Subtopics

1.4.4.1 Accountability and Legal Responsibility in the Use of Autonomous Weapons

A key issue is ensuring that the complexity of an autonomous system does not make accountability impossible. International frameworks should identify who bears responsibility for decisions involving autonomous weapons and ensure that States remain accountable for weapons they develop, acquire, or deploy.

1.4.4.2 Ethical Implications of Removing Human Control from Warfare

Delegates should consider whether certain decisions should always remain under human control, particularly decisions involving lethal force against people. They should also examine whether international standards should establish minimum requirements for human supervision, predictability, reliability, and testing.

1.4.4.3 Preventing the Proliferation of Drone Technology to Non-State Actors

Delegates should consider measures such as improved export controls, international cooperation, tracing mechanisms, information-sharing, and controls on particularly sensitive components. Any proposed measures should account for differences in technological capacity between States and avoid creating unnecessary barriers to peaceful technological development.

1.4.4.4 Establishing International Frameworks for the Regulation or Prohibition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons

Delegates should determine what form an international framework could take. Possible approaches include a legally binding treaty, restrictions on specific categories of weapons, mandatory human-control requirements, national reporting mechanisms, or strengthened implementation of existing international humanitarian law. The objective should be to develop rules that are realistic, enforceable, and capable of adapting to future technological developments.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- 1** What should qualify as an autonomous weapons system under international law?
- 2** What should qualify as an autonomous weapons system under international law?
- 3** Who should be legally responsible when an autonomous weapon causes unlawful harm?
- 4** Should certain categories of autonomous weapons be prohibited completely?
- 5** How can States ensure that autonomous weapons comply with international humanitarian law?
- 6** How can the proliferation of armed drones to non-State actors be prevented?

Useful Sites and Documents

United Nations Office of Disarmament (UNODA)

[UNODA](#)

United Nations General Assembly(UNGA)

[UNGA](#)

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

[CCW](#)

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

[ICRC](#)

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)

[UNIDIR](#)

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/79/62

[UGAR](#)

UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/80/57

[UGAR](#)

[Glossary]

Non-State Actor- *An organization or entity that is not a government of a sovereign State but can influence or participate in international security matters.*

Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS)- *A term commonly used in international discussions for autonomous systems capable of applying lethal force.*

[Autonomous Weapons System (AWS)] - *A weapon system capable of selecting and engaging targets after activation without further human intervention.*

[Artificial Intelligence (AI)]: - *Technologies that allow computer systems to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence.*

Drone: - *An unmanned aircraft or other unmanned vehicle that can be remotely controlled or may contain autonomous functions.*

Human Control: - *The involvement of human decision-makers in the selection, authorization, supervision, or termination of the use of force.*

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): - *The body of international law governing the conduct of hostilities and protecting persons affected by armed conflict.*

Strengthening Arms Control in an Era of Technological and Geopolitical Instability

Background Information

Arms control has historically played an important role in reducing the risks associated with military competition. Through treaties, verification mechanisms, transparency measures, and confidence-building arrangements, States have attempted to limit the development and deployment of certain weapons while reducing the possibility of accidental or deliberate escalation.

However, the contemporary international security environment presents significant challenges to existing arms-control systems. Relations between major military powers have deteriorated, new technologies are developing rapidly, and several traditional agreements have weakened or expired.

The expiration of the New START Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation on 5 February 2026 represents a major development. The treaty had imposed legally binding limits on deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems and provided important verification measures.

At the same time, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, hypersonic weapons, cyber capabilities, autonomous systems, and advanced missile-defense technologies are increasingly influencing strategic calculations.

DISEC must therefore consider how arms control can remain effective when both the geopolitical environment and the technologies involved are changing.

Historical Context

Modern arms control developed significantly during the Cold War, when the United States and Soviet Union sought to manage the dangers created by their nuclear arsenals.

Treaties such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and New START created different forms of limitations, transparency, and verification.

Arms-control agreements have also addressed chemical weapons, biological weapons, conventional weapons, and weapons testing.

However, the international arms-control framework has experienced significant setbacks in recent years. The United States and Russia withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019, while New START expired in 2026.

These developments have increased concerns regarding strategic stability and the possibility of renewed arms competition.

At the same time, technological developments are creating capabilities that were not considered when many existing treaties were negotiated. This raises questions about whether traditional arms-control structures are sufficiently flexible to address modern security challenges.

Current Situation

The international arms-control environment is undergoing significant change.

The expiration of New START in February 2026 removed the last remaining bilateral treaty imposing binding limits on the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia. This has increased concerns regarding strategic predictability and transparency.

Meanwhile, States continue to modernize their nuclear forces and invest in emerging military technologies.

The international community must also address the continued importance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other multilateral instruments while considering technologies that were not previously covered by traditional arms-control frameworks.

For DISEC, the challenge is to develop practical mechanisms that can restore confidence, improve transparency, and reduce the likelihood of uncontrolled arms competition.

Subtopics

1.5.4.1 The Erosion of Existing Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Agreements

Delegates should consider how existing agreements can be strengthened and whether expired or weakened arrangements can be replaced with new mechanisms.

Particular attention should be given to maintaining the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation, improving transparency, and preventing States from interpreting the weakening of one agreement as a justification for unrestricted military expansion.

1.5.4.2 Integrating Emerging Technologies into Arms Control Frameworks

Delegates should consider whether existing treaties can be adapted to these technologies or whether new agreements are necessary.

International cooperation on definitions, transparency, testing standards, and responsible military use could help reduce uncertainty and prevent technological competition from becoming destabilizing.

[Useful Sites and Documents]

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
([UNODA](#))

United Nations General Assembly
([UNGA](#))

United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
([UNIDIR](#))

International Atomic Energy Agency
([IAEA](#))

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
([NPT](#))

Organisation for the Prohibition of chemical Weapons
([OPCW](#))

Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
([CCW](#))

[Glossary]

[Arms Control] - *Agreements or measures intended to regulate, limit, or manage military weapons and capabilities.*

[Confidence-Building Measure (CBM)] - *A measure designed to reduce mistrust and the risk of misunderstanding between States.*

[Disarmament] - *The reduction or elimination of weapons or military capabilities.*

[Non-Proliferation] - *Efforts to prevent the spread of weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.*

Nuclear Deterrence] - *The strategy of preventing an attack by maintaining the capability and intention to respond with nuclear force.*

[Strategic Stability] - *A situation in which States have reduced incentives to initiate conflict or rapidly expand their strategic arsenals.*

[Verification] - *Processes used to determine whether States are complying with the obligations of an agreement.*

[Arms Race] - *A competitive increase in military capabilities between States or groups of States*

[Hypersonic Weapon] - *A weapon capable of travelling at speeds of at least Mach 5 while possessing characteristics that distinguish it from traditional ballistic trajectories.*

[Emerging Technology] - *A developing technology that may significantly influence military capabilities, international security, or strategic stability.*

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- 1 How can the international community strengthen arms control following the expiration of New START?
- 2 How can States maintain transparency regarding strategic weapons?
- 3 What new technologies should be incorporated into future arms-control agreements?
- 4 How can AI and autonomous systems be addressed without preventing peaceful technological development?