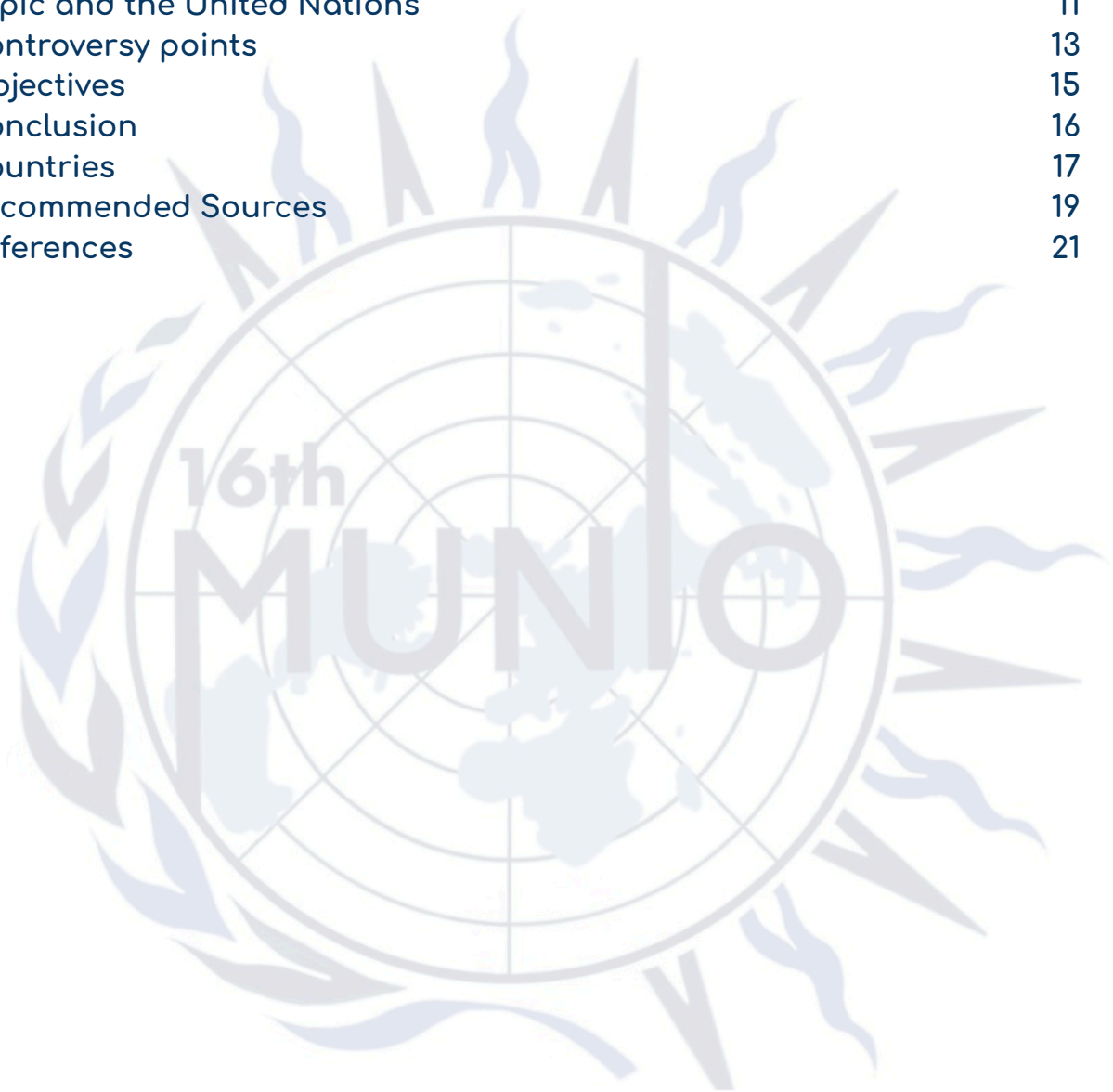




## **BACKGROUND OPCW**

# INDEX

Introduction	3
History of the Committee	5
Long term	7
Topic and the United Nations	11
Controversy points	13
Objectives	15
Conclusion	16
Countries	17
Recommended Sources	19
References	21



## Introduction

### “Control Over the Fabrication, Distribution and Elimination of Chemical Weapons and their Components.”

Welcome delegates to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the 16th edition of the Model United Nations Instituto Oriente 2026. On behalf of the Instituto Oriente, the Academy of English, and the Secretariat, we, as a Chair, are glad to have you in this committee.

This Chair aspires that each delegate has a remarkable time and experience. Remember that your ideas and your proposals matter; these could be an aid to make a change and inform people about the prohibition of chemical weapons and their danger.

To understand the prevention and viable solutions to the Control over the Fabrication, Distribution, and Elimination of Chemical Weapons and their components. First, the delegates will have to comprehend the causes, consequences, and which countries are the most affected by this problem. The control over this armament and its components has been part of the proliferation of chemical weapons, stemming from geopolitical interests, armed conflicts, and weaknesses in international control mechanisms. Its consequences include humanitarian crises, violations of international law, and threats to global security. Countries such as Syria, Iraq, and North Korea have been particularly affected, raising international concerns over the use, production, and distribution of these weapons.

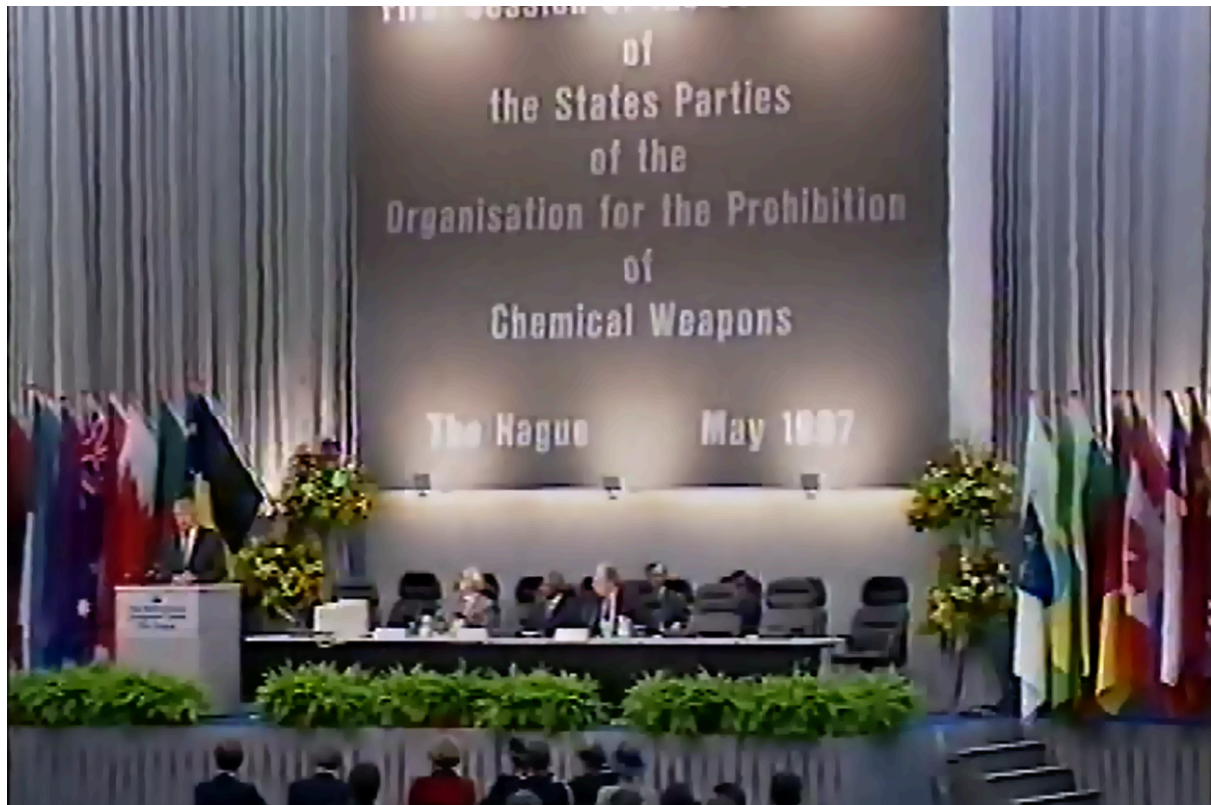
Chemical armament and its components are considered dangerous because they involve highly toxic substances that can cause mass casualties, long-term environmental damage, and severe health effects. If misused or obtained by non-state actors, these weapons pose a serious threat to international peace, human rights, and global security, requiring strict monitoring and regulation.

The consequences between nations include undermining global security, fueling regional instability, and eroding trust among countries, making diplomatic resolutions and peacekeeping efforts more difficult. This topic was chosen considering the importance, effects, and consequences that this causes.

Deeply concerned about the possible dangers this could cause in the future, we, as a Chair, believe that this topic is more than necessary to

be discussed and have an expectation that delegates will look for viable and creative solutions to this issue.

The most important thing for this committee is the planet and its protection. In this document, crucial information about the topic will be found, so it helps the delegates perform the best during this model.





## History of the Committee

During “World War I” and “World War II”, Chemical weapons were used on a large scale; therefore, in the end, they left a legacy of old and abandoned armament that is still a problem for many countries.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union came to possess tens of thousands of tons of chemical weapons. The amount in the hands of these two countries was enough to destroy much of the Earth's human and animal life.

The first international agreement to limit the use of this equipment was in 1675, when France and Germany formally agreed in Strasbourg to ban the use of poisoned bullets.

On 29 April 1997, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the world's first multilateral disarmament agreement, entered into force, providing for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of destruction over time.

The event marked the culmination of many years of painstaking negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and the Preparatory Commission, and the birth of an international chemical disarmament regime led by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

According to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), in 2025, the OPCW will face challenges related to verifying the destruction of chemical weapons, preventing their re-emergence in response to their use, and promoting international cooperation in the peaceful use of chemistry.



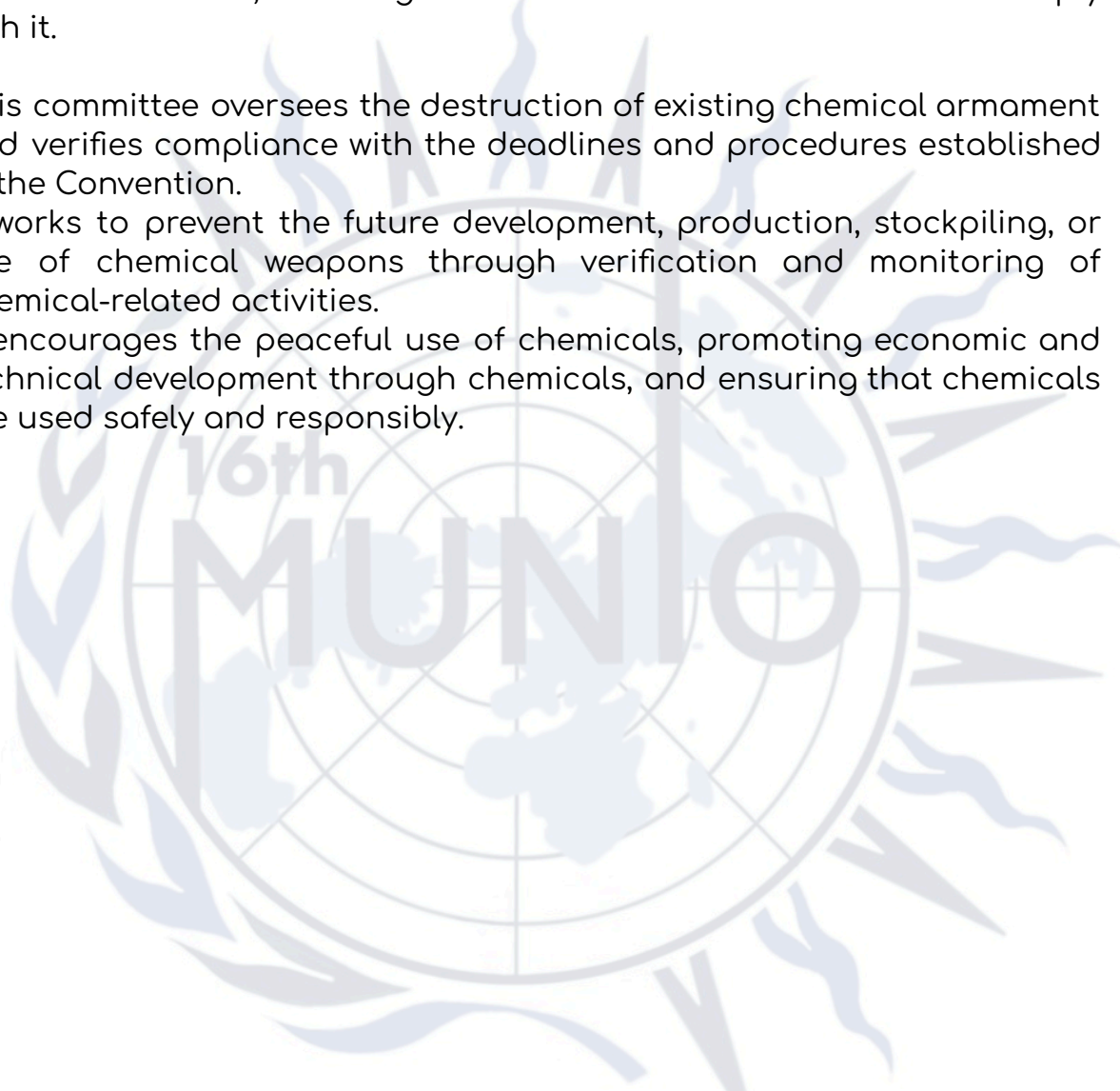
## *Purpose of the Committee*

The OPCW's main purposes are to eliminate these weapons and prevent their resurgence, as well as to promote the peaceful uses of chemicals and provide support to countries in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention. The OPCW also seeks to achieve the universality of the Convention, meaning that all countries adhere to and comply with it.

This committee oversees the destruction of existing chemical armament and verifies compliance with the deadlines and procedures established in the Convention.

It works to prevent the future development, production, stockpiling, or use of chemical weapons through verification and monitoring of chemical-related activities.

It encourages the peaceful use of chemicals, promoting economic and technical development through chemicals, and ensuring that chemicals are used safely and responsibly.



## Long term

Twenty years ago, this equipment was not widely used in armed conflicts, although concerns persisted about their potential use in armed conflict or by terrorist groups. The threat of using chemical weapons, such as sarin gas, remained a major concern. Sarin was invented in Germany in the 1930s, but was not used in combat during World War II.

After the war, most major powers adopted nerve gas as a chemical weapon. In the 1950s, the British invented another type of nerve gas, VX. In 1995, the lethal gas was used in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, by the Japanese Buddhist sect Aum Shinrikyo in a subway attack that killed 12 people.

Within this framework, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) plays a fundamental role as the body responsible for implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a treaty that prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, and use of all types of chemical weapons.

### *Social Consequences*

The importance of this control lies not only in its military dimension but also in its humanitarian, environmental, and social effects, which could severely affect the entire world. Chemical weapons can cause massive damage.

The OPCW's focus as a committee is not limited to destroying existing arsenals, but also includes monitoring and supervising the production of chemical precursors (substances that could be used to make weapons), and overseeing international trade in these compounds to prevent their misuse for purposes of warfare. Furthermore, it promotes international cooperation in the peaceful and beneficial use of chemicals, such as in medicine or agriculture.

### *Political Consequences*

Chemical weapons control has profound implications. Verifying compliance with the treaty requires ongoing cooperation between states, transparency, inspections, and a system of mutual trust between countries. When a country fails to comply with the treaty's laws, significant diplomatic tensions, international sanctions, and even legal proceedings arise, as the use of chemical weapons can be considered a war crime under international treaties.



At the broader societal level, the existence and use of these weapons generate fear, concern, forced population displacement, collective trauma, and distrust of international institutions. Therefore, the importance of completely eliminating these types of weapons in a verified and safe manner is not only a technical or military issue, but also a deeply human and ethical one worldwide.





## Short term

In the past five years, there have been several incidents and concerns related to the use or threat of chemical weapons. In May 2024, the United States of America accused Russia of using chloropicrin in Ukraine. The misuse of these devices can have far-reaching consequences:

### *Social Consequences*

The threat of chemical weapons use can generate fear, anxiety, and mistrust among the population. The fear of chemical attacks can affect people's mental health and emotional well-being. The possibility of their use can destabilize international security, generating conflicts and tensions between States.

In 2020, the control and distribution of this equipment were primarily managed through the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Convention stipulates, among other things, that States Parties must ensure the physical safety of people and the protection of the environment in fulfilling their obligations. The methods used must comply with national and international legislation on safety and emissions, and may not include open-air incineration, burial, or dumping into bodies of water.

### *Political Implications*

This Convention prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, and use of these armaments and requires States Parties to destroy their stockpiles. The OPCW, based in The Hague, monitors compliance with the CWC, receives declarations from States Parties on their chemical weapons activities and materials, and conducts inspections to verify compliance.

Also, these States Parties must submit detailed declarations to the OPCW on their chemical weapons stockpiles, materials, and related facilities, as well as destruction plans.

### *Economic Consequences*

Approximately five years ago, economic sanctions imposed on countries developing or using chemical weapons, along with reduced investment in research and development related to these arms, led to a decline in production and trade in certain industries. Also, the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles and the clean-up of contaminated sites

generated considerable costs for governments and international organizations.





## Topic and the United Nations

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is governed by the relationship agreement between the two organizations adopted by the General Assembly in September 2001.

The UN has given top priority to the reduction and eventual elimination, destruction, and prohibition of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, which are a major threat facing humanity.

Although these objectives have remained unchanged over the years, the scope of negotiations has changed as political realities and the international situation have evolved. The UN, through the Commission on Human Rights and the Security Council, has declared that the use of chemical weapons may constitute a “war crime” and even a crime against humanity, depending on the context. This means that their use can lead to international criminal prosecution in tribunals such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), along with the possibility of destroying existing arsenals under international supervision by the signatory states.

The international community is facing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and landmines, which are harmful to the civilian population, especially women and children. It is also increasingly clear that different types of armament unequally affect people of different genders and ages.

Following significant global efforts, the United Nations has created several treaties aimed at regulating and restricting the use of these devices, or eliminating them altogether, such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Biological and Chemical Weapons Convention.

The UN Security Council has also passed resolutions to investigate the use of these weapons in recent conflicts, such as Syria, and has even created joint mechanisms with the OPCW to identify those responsible, along with implementing measures to prevent the proliferation of this weaponry, including controls on related materials and legislation to prevent their illicit trafficking.

The indiscriminate use of these devices had devastating consequences. Since World War I, chemical weapons have caused more than a million casualties worldwide.

The United Nations Charter does not prohibit its Member States from possessing and using conventional armament, provided this is done in accordance with international law.

Although the UN and the OPCW have made progress in eliminating arsenals, the lack of cooperation by some States and the use of chemical weapons by non-state actors show that there is still a long way to go. International sanctions must be strengthened to prevent impunity and reinforce the rapid response capacity to new attacks.





## Controversy points

A principal factor contributing to the controversy surrounding this subject is the dual-use characteristic of numerous chemical substances. Materials intended for benign applications in the pharmaceutical, agricultural, or manufacturing sectors may, in specific scenarios, be employed in creating prohibited toxic agents. This technical ambiguity complicates the establishment of effective verification systems and has sparked discussions about the boundaries between legitimate scientific advancement and the likely military applications of chemical substances. The precarious distinction between authorized chemical research and weapons development raises ethical and regulatory dilemmas that create divisions among nations and within the scientific community.

Proponents advocating for stringent regulations on chemical weapons assert that many nations and international organizations believe these mechanisms are vital to maintain peace, uphold international security, and safeguard human rights. The total eradication of these weapons and the stringent oversight of chemical precursors would substantially mitigate the threat of large-scale assaults on civilian populations and curb their deployment in hostilities. Furthermore, rigorous adherence to the CWC is regarded as a fundamental measure to reinforce universal disarmament and non-proliferation, which are integral tenets of international humanitarian law.

Support for stringent control is also echoed by stakeholders focused on environmental protection and public health.

Some nations contend that inspection and verification processes may infringe upon their national sovereignty, particularly when perceived as intrusive or biased. Indeed, accusations have emerged suggesting that particular countries face more stringent scrutiny than others, contingent on their geopolitical affiliations or strategic priorities.

The discussion, therefore, emerges from the intricate endeavour of reconciling national security priorities, adherence to state autonomy, progress in scientific research, and the overall welfare of the global community. The trajectory of chemical weapons, from their widespread deployment during World War I to recent occurrences in Syria, illustrates that their presence continues to pose a potential risk. Nonetheless, efforts to regulate these weapons cannot be divorced from political, economic, and strategic factors. Certain nations, for instance, contend

that specific regulations obstruct their industrial progress or curtail their capacity to study legitimate chemical entities.

In summary, the regulation of the production, distribution, and disposal of chemical arms and their components is contentious due to its nexus with scientific inquiry, ethical considerations, international safety, and global politics. Advocates emphasize the imperative of complete disarmament and the necessity to avert humanitarian disasters, while detractors caution against potential exploitation, imbalances in the implementation of agreements, and strategic dangers for specific countries. This dichotomy renders the issue one of the most intricate obstacles within the realm of global disarmament, and finding a solution will hinge on collaborative dialogue, technological openness, and the commitment of nations to aspire for a world devoid of chemical armaments.

The United States maintains a firm stance in favour of strict verification and accountability for all countries. It has completed the destruction of its own arsenal and promotes sanctions against countries that violate the treaty's rules. It also participates in initiatives that seek to prevent impunity and corruption in the use of chemical weapons.

On the other hand, Russia rejects all accusations related to the use of chemical agents and accuses the OPCW of acting corruptly. Its position reflects a constant tension between technical compliance with the treaty and geopolitical disputes.





## Objectives

In this model, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons seeks the participation of delegates to find possible solutions to the problems humanity faces today and the risks that are unleashed.

All of this, considering that one of the main objectives of the OPCW is to achieve a world free of chemical weapons and the threat of their use, in which chemistry is used for peace, progress, and prosperity.

The Chair hopes that each delegate will be able to conduct research, as the Chair will bring and explain some aspects so that, with the help of the other delegations, a Resolution Paper can be reached, taking into account the different positions and ideals.

Having explained this, here are some aspects exercised by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons:

1. Equitable application of the provisions of the Convention to all States Parties.
2. Cooperate with other countries to develop chemical safety capabilities.
3. Promote education about chemical hazards.
4. Address environmental impacts resulting from the misuse of these devices to achieve a more sustainable world.
5. Mutual trust and transparency between states.
6. Safe practices in the chemical industry.
7. Responsible circulation of scientific/technological knowledge.
8. Resilience of vulnerable populations.



## Conclusion

Toxic chemicals are used worldwide in numerous legitimate and peaceful applications, but they can also be used for purposes prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention.

They have been used by both state and non-state actors in several countries, unfortunately resulting in injuries and great human suffering. They indiscriminately affect everyone in their path.

Awareness of the use of chemical weapons is fundamental and crucial because their misuse has devastating consequences. It is important for humanity to understand the risks and implications of these weapons, promoting a fairer and safer world with everyone's help.

That is why we, as a Chair, hope that each delegate will have the courage to face and realize that this is real, and that we, as an international community, can change and give this issue the importance it deserves.

The Chair hopes that after reading this, you are ready to confront real issues and seek solutions. We appreciate the initiative of believing that we, as an international community, can change the world and its perspective.



## Countries

*Russian Federation:* Russia is one of the most controversial countries on the committee, having been accused several times of using chemical agents such as chloropicrin in the current conflict with Ukraine, which violates the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to which it is a signatory. Although it is a member of the committee, it has denied all accusations and accuses the organization of being politicized. Its defensive stance and its influence as a member of the G5 make it a constant point of friction within the committee and with other countries such as the United States, the French Republic, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, among others..

*The United States of America:* Is one of the leading countries in the implementation and enforcement of the CWC. It completed the total destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal in 2023 and currently promotes rigorous inspections, transparency, and sanctions against countries that violate the treaty. It actively defends the OPCW's technical role and is often in direct opposition to countries such as Russia, Syria, and North Korea.

*Syrian Arab Republic:* Is one of the committee's most prominent cases, as it used chemical weapons during its civil armed conflict, leading to its forced entry into the OPCW in 2013 to prevent further incidents. Although it declared the destruction of its arsenal, it has recently been accused of concealing and continuing to use weapons. Currently, with a new government in place in 2025, the country has expressed its intention to cooperate with the organization and complete the elimination of any remaining chemical weapons.

*State of Israel:* It signed the Chemical Weapons Convention but never ratified it, meaning it is not legally bound to comply. It cites regional security concerns and makes its full adherence conditional on other neighbouring countries, such as Egypt, also joining. Its situation raises debate about the legal loopholes in the global chemical weapons control system. Furthermore, the current conflict with Palestine makes its participation in the treaty more difficult.

*Democratic People's Republic of Korea:* Has neither signed nor ratified the CWC and is suspected of possessing a vast active chemical weapons program. It is considered one of the greatest challenges for the committee, as it does not allow any type of inspection or international cooperation. Its isolationist stance obscures and impedes progress toward universalizing the treaty.

#### Countries in G5:

1. French Republic
2. Russian Federation
3. People's Republic of China
4. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
5. United States of America

#### Countries invited to the debate and listening countries:

6. Canada
7. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
8. Federative Arab Republic of Egypt
9. Federative Republic of Brazil
10. Federal Republic of Germany
11. Islamic Republic of Iran
12. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
13. Kingdom of Spain
14. Republic of Angola
15. Republic of Belarus
16. Republic of India
17. Republic of Indonesia
18. Republic of Iraq
19. Republic of Kenya
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**“Those who believe in the world are the ones meant to change it.”**

**President:** Damián Anaya Sosa

**Secretary:** Natalie Ramírez Castrillo

**Moderator:** Isabella Martínez Melo



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