



CalsMUN 2023



Fighting Social Inequality
CalsMUN 2023

Research Report

Forum: General assembly 1

Issue: Combating International Illicit Production
and Distribution of 3D Printed Arms

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Personal Introduction

Willemijn

Hi! I'm Willemijn and I am currently studying at University College Utrecht for my Bachelor of Liberal Arts and Science. I've been going to MUN's ever since my third year of high school and I've actually organized CalsMUN twice as well. This year I am back as the President of the General Assembly, or, in other words, your chair. A few fun facts about me: I don't like sauteed spinach, I confuse the colors orange and purple and I like to think outside of the box for solutions (which is what you should also do during this conference). I am always happy to help with any questions you have regarding the conference (or other things) and I'm very excited to see you during CalsMUN 2023!

Lieke

Hello! My name is Lieke and I am currently enrolled at the Marnix Academie in Utrecht where I am learning to become an educator at elementary schools. This is going to be the first MUN I am going to attend and I am very excited to be doing it alongside two of my best friends. I also have some fun facts: I am severely hard of hearing (literally, hearing aids and everything), I don't like pumpkin soup and I secretly despise Willemijn (no, she doesn't x Willemijn). I'm sure the conference is going to be fun and I'll try my hardest to make sure it will be as enjoyable for all of you as for us. I look forward to seeing you all at CalsMUN!

Lisa

Hello! My name is Lisa and I'm studying law at Radboud University (which I really recommend btw) and this is going to be my 15th MUN (I think, I lost count). I have loved participating in MUN's and organizing CalsMUN during my time at Cals College, but this is most likely going to be my last one so I'm hoping to make this a memorable one! Some fun facts about me are that I refuse to cut sandwiches into pieces, and I never read my texts. Don't be afraid to speak up this MUN to ask challenging questions and make life-changing points during the debate! After all, no one will remember it in 5 years time if you mess up so it doesn't really matter anyway!

Introduction:

In 2021, there were several incidents in the UK in which extreme right activist groups got arrested for printing and distributing 3D-printed firearms. On the 14th of June, Dean Morrice, who was a former driver in the army and a neo-nazi, was sentenced to 18 years in prison because of ten terrorism related offenses. After raiding his home, police found chemical compounds to make explosives, two 3D printers along with instructions on how to make firearms and parts with it. They also found some 3D-printed prototypes of weapons which caused them to issue a warning for potential terrorist use of 3D-printed firearms. A few days after the warning, a 15-year-old was going to trial after being caught with manuals on how to make explosives using household materials and firearms using his dad's 3D-printer. However, 3D-printed firearms are not only a threat in the UK. In Poland, this has been happening ever since the second world war, as well as other places where incidents occurred



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since in countries such as Cyprus, the US, Ireland and France. This makes a lot of sense, because improvised firearms, not necessarily 3D-printed ones, are used in terrorist attacks 90 percent of the time. This is because terrorist groups, as well as individuals who are interested in these weapons, often do not have the money, resources or credibility to get 'real' weapons, thus they turn to alternatives (Veilleux-Lepage, 2022). During the debate, we want to find a solution for the issue of the increasing amounts of illicit production and distribution of such weapons.

Definition of Key Terms:

3D-printed weapons: a weapon produced by means of a 3D-printer.

UNSC: stands for United Nations Security Council, which is a committee within the UN which is mainly responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

UNCTOC: stands for United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was a convention which took place in Vienna in 2003. The main purpose of the convention was to enhance the capacity of the States Parties to destroy transnational organized crime and to simultaneously review the implementation of the Convention on Organized Crime. In it, they prioritize countering the production and distribution of firearms heavily and also touch upon 3D-printed weapons.

Terrorism: the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims (Oxford Languages, 2022).

Destruction vs disarmament of firearms: in order to reach a resolution in which we counter the issue, we need to establish the difference between the destruction and the disarmament of firearms. Destroying firearms would mean the literal destruction of the weapon itself whereas the disarmament is simply making sure they are not capable of being used.

General Overview

In short, this issue has been influencing countries more and more. Mainly due to terrorism. The USA has been having issues with this for longer and has therefore already put in place some restrictions and laws but there is much to improve on. The Netherlands plays an important role as they hosted the latest conference on the matter, which took place in The Hague in May of 2022. 20 other countries joined, among which were Spain, Germany and the UK. No finite laws have been put in place yet and therefore this is a major point of interest and it can be improved on a lot. In general, laws regarding 3D-printed weapons and explosives should be made more strict. Ways of punishing distributors of blueprints for these weapons are also necessary. A recommendation is to read up on the laws put in place (which are very short) and also look into previous attempts to resolve the issue as to not fall into repetition again.

- <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/printing-insecurity-tackling-threat-of-3d-printed-guns-in-europe>
- <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2018/3d-printable-guns-and-why-export-controls-technical-data-matter>



Stakeholders

All UN member states should be involved in the matter as technology is getting more and more accessible as well as advanced, which will result in an increasing threat to all inhabitants if the wrong organizations and groups get access to this. This includes terrorist organizations in the middle east, as well as individuals in the rest of the world. The US faces a particular complex problem, seeing as this is one of the few countries where individually owning guns is not illegal (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overview_of_gun_laws_by_nation).

USA: The US is already taking steps to prevent the escalation of the production and distribution of 3D-printed weapons. We suggest you read the report written by Danton Bryans about the situation and methods used in the US (or click the following link: <http://ilj.law.indiana.edu/articles/19-Bryans1.pdf>).

The European Union and its member states: The EU has come together to discuss the matter and prevention of the issue. In particular the Netherlands plays an important role as they hosted the latest conference on the matter, which took place in The Hague in May of 2022. 20 other countries joined, among which were Spain, Germany and the UK (<https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/printing-insecurity-tackling-threat-of-3d-printed-guns-in-europe>).

Previous attempts to solve the issue

The US is one of the countries which has written a bill on the issue which acknowledges the issue as well as what it entails (you are encouraged to read it, it is very short but contains a lot of relevant information). The final section, which is added to the American constitution states that it will be illegal for “any person to intentionally distribute, over the internet or by means of the World Wide Web, digital instructions in the form of Computer Aided Design files or other code that can automatically program a 3-dimensional printer or similar device to produce a firearm or complete a firearm from an unfinished frame or receiver.”

(<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/2319/text>) These initiatives are a great start to counter the issue yet doesn't fully acknowledge any consequences, nor does it actually solve the issue of it happening regardless of the illegality of it.

The UN Security Council has come up with a resolution regarding smaller, lighter weapons. In section 64, they also mention 3D weapons: they “recognized the threat posed by the 3D printing of firearms, the reactivation of deactivated firearms and the illicit trade in firearms over the Internet.”

(https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2021_839.pdf) They also mention another resolution which was written by the members of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized



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Crime, which encouraged members of the Firearms Protocol to “foster and harmonize their responses to modular weapons and the 3D printing of firearms, the conversion of firearms, trafficking through postal services and the use of the darknet and cryptocurrencies.”

(https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/Fire_Arms_2020/CTOC_COP_WG.6_2020_2_E.pdf). This committee also came up with several other clauses regarding the issue, such as (as seen in CTOC/COP/WG.6/2020/4):

1. Acknowledging that trafficking in firearms is a transnational threat often linked to organized crime and that there are emerging technologies to manufacture firearms, their parts and components and ammunition and new modalities of illicit trafficking, States should revise their domestic legal frameworks and regulations to counter these threats, including by adopting relevant legal regimes, including, where appropriate, through criminalization provisions, so as to also include readily convertible weapons, polymer firearms, modular weapons, the transfer of 3D-printable files and other emerging aspects. (Sec.1.6)
2. With a view to filling legislative gaps with regard to 3D-printed weapons, States should consider regulating the blueprints required for these weapons and their parts and components and establishing as a criminal offense the illicit possession, uploading and downloading of such blueprints and the illicit printing of these items. (Sec.1.10)
3. Acknowledging that 3D printers could be considered dual-use items, States should be encouraged to cooperate with industry with a view to developing legislation requiring companies that manufacture these items to adopt technical limits in the machines that prevent the 3D printing of parts and components of firearms. (Sec.1.11)
4. Recognizing the central role that parts and components play in threats related to technological developments and changing modi operandi, including 3D-printed firearms, converted firearms and trafficking through postal services, States parties should address as a matter of priority the regulation of parts and components, taking into account the definition of those contained in article 3 of the Firearms Protocol, with a view to harmonizing legal regimes and avoiding legal loopholes and discrepancies among legal regimes across jurisdictions. In that same context, States should develop systems to identify patterns and coincidences in illicit postal service shipments of these items and make the investigation of seized parts and components mandatory. (Sec.1.13)
5. Acknowledging the increasing threat of the additive manufacture of firearms, also referred to as 3D-printed firearms, States should develop and use appropriate tools and equipment that help detect such weapons, such as investigations into online and dark web platforms and the more robust monitoring of postal packages. (Sec.3.19)



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Though these only mention the clauses about 3D-printed arms specifically, you are encouraged to read through the document, as much inspiration can be drawn from it for our future resolution. To find the document, look in the bibliography at the end of this document or simply google 'CTOC/COP/WG.6/2020/4'.

Possible Solutions

Finding solutions for this program is a challenge, as the issue is very specific. We can however, zoom out a little and look at the bigger picture while simultaneously focussing on this area. To do this, we would like you to look the following questions:

- What can be done in order to counter technology's growing role in terrorism and weapon production and distribution?
- Which programs or protocols are already in place to counter the production and distribution of self-made weapons and how can these be altered in order to include technological advancements in this industry, such as by use of 3D-printers? (e.g. the UN's Firearms Protocol)
- Which types of research could be conducted in order to give us more insight into the severity as well as process and progression of the issue? Who will do this and why would it be beneficial? Are there any initiatives that could be introduced to combat this issue specifically?

What you can also do is look at the resolutions mentioned in this report drafted by the UNSC, COTC and other conventions and committees which try to counter the issue or related topics and draw inspiration from those in order to come up with solutions and clauses for our resolution.

Also look at solutions which could be implemented on a national level. Though it may not be suitable for all nations, it could lead to great improvements on a bigger scale eventually.

And lastly, we would like you to think outside of the box. Be creative with your solutions and come up with solutions which might seem strange at first. For this, also keep in mind that monetary expenses can be disregarded at MUN's. An example of such a solution is banning 3D-printers altogether.

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