

ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE (DISEC)

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TOPIC B: MITIGATING CIVILIAN AIRSTRIKES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

INTRODUCTION

Airstrikes have plagued various countries in the Middle East for years, and as a result, thousands of civilians, each year, are caught in the crossfire, sustain life-threatening injuries or wind up dead. Countries like Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Iran, are pulling at their last straws to sustain themselves, let alone providing proper shelter and protection for innocent civilians. As these airstrikes have increased in frequency, since they first started, moderating and reducing their impact and use has become an almost necessity.

BACKGROUND

Airstrikes are not uncommon during the war, and after the First World War, they became a regular part of the more powerful countries' repertoire. Countries like the USA, Russia, and Britain have some of the largest armouries in the world and tend to use them more and more often. Since the early 2000s, with middle eastern conflicts on the rise, these countries started playing more active roles in middle eastern conflicts and have not stopped since.

Most airstrikes used in the Syrian war and the Yemen Crisis, as well as other conflicts, are introduced by foreign parties, who have more power than the combatants and have something to gain. These countries (USA, Turkey, Britain, Russia) pick a side and supply them with military force; and this was not a big issue, because countries form alliances all the time until it becomes noticeable that these beneficiary countries were only doing this for personal gain and that the innocent civilians of the combatant countries, were only getting hurt in the process.

ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE (DISEC)

KEY INFORMATION

In Syria, over 220,000 civilians have been killed by airstrikes between March 2011 and July 2020 alone. This number does not include the numerous survivors with no chance of a life they had once had before. Collateral damage is an externality during wars, but, as the Syrian war has continued, the number of civilians caught in the crossfire is becoming a big problem.

These airstrikes are not only killing people but are also causing the displacement of millions of people. This month alone, 2.7 million people have internally displaced in Syria because of aerial bombardments. By March 2020, the death toll by airstrike has reached 7,700 civilians in Yemen. Most of these deaths consist of women and children. These attacks are led by Saudi forces and backed by the USA.

As the pandemic has taken over things, the communities affected by these airstrikes are under so much pressure, and cannot take much more. As the pandemic has raged on, putting everything at a standstill, it seems incomprehensible, that a cease-fire is not be considered and implemented. With an increase in fighting and COVID-19 hitting the world's most massive humanitarian crisis, Yemen is on the brink of catastrophe. An increase in airstrikes in Yemen is putting COVID-19 mitigation efforts and the overall humanitarian response at serious risk. As such lessening, the effect of these airstrikes against civilians, or rather, stopping them altogether, is a must.

It is important to attenuate the target put on civilians. Civilians do not have the power to fight back, but other countries do. It is essential to focus on stopping the conflict between the combating powers. Aid and shelters are a must, in order to protect and possibly re-establish the people of these countries.

ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE (DISEC)

Mitigating the civilian airstrikes is vital. As it stands, completely stopping or monitoring all airstrikes would be next to impossible in the short-run, however a goal for the long-run. The time factor could also be a key point of debate for this committee session.

ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE (DISEC)

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ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE (DISEC)

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**ARISMUN 2020: UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST
COMMITTEE (DISEC)**

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