



Dear Delegates,

My name is Karen Rodriguez and I will be your Director for the General Assembly 1 at KnightMUN 2013. I am currently a sophomore at the University of Central Florida majoring in Political Science with an International and Global Studies track, and a double minor in French Language and Marketing. I have been involved with Model UN since my freshman year of high school and this conference will be my third time directing a committee.

Two things that I have always been known for is my love for travel and my tendency to be involved. Outside of Model UN, I am a Student Ambassador for the 4Ever Knights Student Alumni Association, an LSA Board Director for the LEAD Scholars Program, the Public Relations Chair for Latin Rhythm, and a member of Sigma Alpha Pi, as well as several other committees within the aforementioned organizations.

As far as travel goes, I recently spent this past summer in Montpellier, France through an invitation to help further my French. Being born and raised in Miami, FL into a Cuban household, I am fluent in Spanish and jumped at the opportunity to become trilingual more smoothly. Through the UCF Alternative Break Program, I have recently been chosen to go to Antigua, Guatemala this upcoming spring break to volunteer at local orphanages. My experiences with and appreciation for different cultures only further fuels my love for MUN.

Over the course of this weekend I have no doubt that we will all have much to learn from each other. Please rest assured that I am here for *you*. Should you ever have any questions regarding our committee, KnightMUN, UCF, or college in general, know that I truly love everything that I do and will never turn away someone looking for advice or opinions. I hope you are all as excited as I am, and I can't wait to have the pleasure of meeting you all!

Thank you and see you soon,  
Karen Rodriguez



## Topic I: The Conflict in Mali

### *Background*

In 1960, the Sudanese Republic and Senegal gained their independence from France under the title of the Mali Federation. Shortly after, Senegal became independent from the Mali Federation and what was of the landlocked Sudanese Republic became known as Mali.<sup>1</sup>

A rather typical form of intrastate conflict has broken out in Mali in recent years. The conflict is typical because it reflects the ways in which African states were created as a consequence of European colonization, with often little attention given to the preferences of ethnic groups that were not in a position to seize control of post-colonial states. Rwanda is perhaps the most notable example of this. Political independence was won by the Hutus while the other key ethnic group, the Tutsi, suffered political persecution for having collaborated with Belgium in the administration of the colonial rule. In Mali, there are ethnic divisions between Southern, darker skinned groups – often animists and Christians – that have controlled the politics of the Malian state. In the North, the Tuaregs have been politically marginalized. In many respects, the position of the Tuaregs the Northern Sahara region – encompassing Libya, Algeria, and Northern Mali – is similar to the circumstances of the Kurds of Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Both groups have deep histories and distinctive cultures, but they have found themselves partitioned between states ruled by different ethnic groups – none of whom have been willing to make any concessions to Tuareg or – in the case of this example – Kurdish aspirations for statehood.

Since its inception, then, Mali has been a powder keg for separatist ethnic conflict. A series of local developments in Northern Mali conspired to light the fuse. For starters, the region has experienced persistent drought in the 1970s and 1980s. The economic deprivation associated with these experiences strengthened sentiment for Tuareg secession, which was suppressed by the states in the region. Peace agreements followed which were promised more assistance for development projects, but these promises never materialized. Drought intensified in 2011 and was accompanied by the political impact of the NATO intervention in Libya. Gaddafi, the deposed dictator in Libya, recruited Tuaregs to fight the NATO supported armed opposition. When Gaddafi was defeated, well-armed Tuareg militia dispersed into adjacent Northern Mali and initiated their armed rebellion against Mali in January 2012. The Tuareg rebellion was led by several groups – among them, the Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad (MINA),<sup>2</sup> Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa. These groups succeeded in overrunning the Malian military. For nine months – between April 2012 and January 2013 – armed opposition groups maintained de facto control over the North while the United Nations the Economic Community of the Western African States considered launching a military campaign to restore the territorial integrity of Mali.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21014206>

<sup>2</sup> Giorgio Califero, “Understanding the Standoff in Mali,” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2013. [http://fpif.org/understanding\\_the\\_standoff\\_in\\_mali/](http://fpif.org/understanding_the_standoff_in_mali/)



This UN – West African intervention never materialized, but it was nonetheless interesting for the way it underscored UN priorities. The UN is, after all, a club of states and is deeply committed to maintaining the territorial integrity of each member state, but at what cost, one might wonder, to marginalized groups like the Tuaregs? Impatient with UN and West African dithering, France, the former colonial power in the region, launched a military intervention against the Tuaregs in January of 2013 and quickly reversed the rebel groups’ territorial gains. In the wake of the French intervention, the Malian state has entered into peace talks with the main group of the rebels – MINA. Mali held national elections on July 28, 2013 and swore in a new president on September 4.<sup>3</sup> Turnout for the election was low in Northern Mali, suggesting continued Tuareg distrust of the national government. The Malian state has made offers of limited autonomy to the Tuaregs under a federalist system, but this has not placated Tuareg aspirations for national self-determination.<sup>4</sup> Stepping back from the events of the last couple of years, it is clear that there has been a continual cycle of conflicts pitting the Tuareg against Mali and other states in the region. It is also evident that radical Islamic groups like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have proven adept at inserting themselves into this conflict. They have garnered headlines in the West for imposing a particularly brutal form of Islamic Fundamentalism on regions under their control, such as Timbuktu. The question for delegates to consider is how can the deep-seated conflicts Northern Africa be addressed?

***Points for delegates to consider***

- Delegates should contemplate the secession of Southern Sudan from Sudan in 2011. To what extent does secession represent a reasonable to the conflicts that have been unfolding in Northern Mali? Of course, to entertain this possibility, member states might have to question the historical commitments of the UN to safeguarding the territorial integrity of its member states. Such commitments might, in fact, be contrary to the UN’s professed mission of securing global peace and prosperity.
- If a federal solution to the conflict in Mali were envisioned, what would it need to include in order to defuse the underlying conflicts in the region? Federalism can come in numerous different forms and include cultural, political and economic autonomy. In

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<sup>3</sup> Giorgio Califerno, “Can Mali Reunite?” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. <http://fpif.org/can-mali-reunite/>

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Zunes, “The Mali Blowback: More to Come?” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, February 1, 2013. [http://fpif.org/the\\_mali\\_blowback\\_more\\_to\\_come/](http://fpif.org/the_mali_blowback_more_to_come/)



addition, federalism might also be a mechanism of economic redistribution, infusing more resources into the region and placing them under the democratic control of the Tuaregs.

- Islamist factions within the region pose additional problems. It would be hard for the US, in particular, to countenance succession for the Tuaregs or even greater regional autonomy for them, were such autonomy to provide a safe haven for operation of Islamist groups hostile to the West. How could curbing AQIM influence be a part of any political settlement of the conflicts in the region?
- Is it ultimately the case the political stability in region will be maintained through armed force? The United States and other Western states can be expected to provide Mali with increased military aid. Perhaps this aid will be leavened with the deployment of Special Forces – serving in some capacity as combat advisors to the Malian military – while the US uses drones to eliminate the leaders of the Islamist factions. All of this seems depressingly likely. How can we avoid a situation in which “peace” will sprout from the barrel of gun?

## **Topic II: Controversy over the Arms Trade Treaty**

### ***Background***

Since 2006, the United Nations has been developing an agreement for the removal of illicit trading of conventional arms. After years of constructing, the UN finally completed a presentable version of the treaty in March of 2013. This new product was born with the focus of regulating the international trade in conventional arms addressing everything from small arms to battle tanks, combat aircraft and warships.

On April 2, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly passed by a vote of 154-3 (with 23 abstentions) the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).<sup>5</sup> The Treaty seeks to regulate the \$70 billion global arms trade by means of setting up a system that would review all global arms transfers and exports to purchasers that might use such weapons for terrorism or violations of humanitarian law, including genocide.<sup>6</sup> Unlike, for example, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the ATT has no enforcement provisions aside from “naming and shaming” states that violate its

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<sup>5</sup> Editorial Board, “Containing the Conventional Arms Trade,” *New York Times*, September 30, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/01/opinion/containing-the-conventional-arms-trade.html>

<sup>6</sup> Rachel Stohl, “Tell the Truth About the Arms Treaty,” *New York Times*, April 11, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/12/opinion/tell-the-truth-about-the-arms-trade-treaty.html>



provisions. For the ATT to go into effect, it would have to be ratified by at least 50 member countries, including the United States.<sup>7</sup> The opposition to ATT's ratification ranges from the National Rifle Association in the United States, which is likely to hamstring the US Senate, to abstaining states like Russia and China who argue that the terms of the treaty are ambiguous. Not coincidentally, Russia and China are also major sellers of arms internationally. The US is by far the leading seller of arms in the global market – responsible for about 80% of the global arms trade – but US laws already require US arms manufacturers to comply with an existing export control system that is designed to keep weapons out of the hands of terrorists and rights abusive states and social movements.<sup>8</sup>

*As delegates consider this topic, they should contemplate the following points.*

- There was significant opposition to the Treaty within the General Assembly. What can delegates do to allay the concerns of the states that opposed or abstained from the ATT? One underlying philosophical issue for delegates to consider is the idea of sovereignty. Protecting human rights means – almost inevitably – constraining the powers of states and thus making sovereignty conditional rather than absolute. In this instance, the conditions imposed on sovereignty are particularly light. Member states are merely asked to accede to a voluntary regime of export controls on arms transfers. It could be argued that such controls would have the effect of engendering more security cooperation between states, particularly in volatile regions of the world where deep seated conflict are rendered more lethal and protracted by availability of the arms.
- Members might consider the relationships between non-state actors – such as transnational criminal organizations and terrorist groups – and the global arms trade. States should have, one imagines, a vested interest in insuring that non-state actors do not develop the capacities to challenge the distinguishing characteristic of the modern state, namely its monopoly over the exercise of legitimate force within its territorial boundaries. A world in which this attribute of statehood no longer holds would be world that is spinning out of the control of states themselves.

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<sup>7</sup> Neil MacFarquhar, “UN Treaty is the First Aimed at Regulating Global Arms Sales, *New York Times*, April 2, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/03/world/arms-trade-treaty-approved-at-un.html?ref=opinion>

<sup>8</sup> Paul Rodgers, *Losing Control: Global Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Third Edition, London: Pluto Press, 2010.



- Members might reflect on the nature of most violent political conflict in the world today. Most of this conflict is intrastate rather than interstate conflict and it is reflective of the decomposition of existing states under the pressures of global environmental change, demographic increase, persistent poverty, simmering ethnic conflicts and pervasive political corruption and dysfunction within existing states. Whereas a century ago, the primary casualties in violent conflicts were soldiers, today they are citizens. Often citizens are targeted in campaigns of ethnic cleansing designed to secure territory for a particular identity. The global arms trade is helping to fuel these sorts of conflicts. It is creating an increasingly disordered world for states. If one thinks that states have an interest in securing their survival, they wouldn't they also embrace the very modest controls that the ATT would place on the global arms trade?
- Counterpoised to these sorts of arguments are the security perceptions of mostly non-Western or Anti-American states who are insecure – often for historically persuasive reasons. Their capacity to use armed force is what ultimately keeps them in power. Any regulation of the global arms trade might turn out to be threat to their power, particularly if they are construed as rights abusive regimes.
- Members might also think about the economic incentives that are associated with the global arms trade. Regulating the global arms trade might bring about its reduction. This would impose losses arms manufacturers, but these losses might be mitigated by economic conversion projects that enable arms manufacturers to shift to other forms of production. How can conversion projects figure as side payments that might engender more widespread support for the ATT?

### **Topic III: Bioterrorism**

For the purposes of this committee and as defined by the United Nations, “bioterrorism is the unlawful use, or threatened use, of microorganisms or toxins derived from living organisms to produce death or disease in humans, animals, or plants.”<sup>9</sup>

#### ***Introduction***

The practice of using biological agents and diseases as weapons has been around since 600BC. Slowly but surely biological weapons have earned their place in history as a deadly and effective way to terrorize enemies. One of the worst unveiled atrocities of the research and deployment of biological weapons was during and after WWII by Unit 731 of the Japanese

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/disarmament/education/wmdcommission/files/No22.pdf>



Imperial Army in Manchuria.<sup>10</sup> The unit was a research program with the directive to develop weapons of biological warfare, including plague, anthrax, cholera, and various other pathogens. The program began in the early 1930's, despite the 1925 Geneva Convention, and continued into the 40's, conducting experiments by vivisecting war prisoners and "field testing" pathogens.<sup>11</sup> The program died once the Japanese surrendered, but as information was disseminated, it became clear that the 1925 Geneva Convention was ineffective in controlling the development and proliferation of biological weapons. In 1972, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was put into place, which "prohibits the development, production, and stockpiling of pathogens or toxins in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes."<sup>12</sup> Similar to the Geneva Convention, the BWC does not provide firm guidelines for inspections and disarmament in adherence to the protocol. Purported violations are sent to the Security Council for verification and possible further action regarding repercussions or intervention.

Even after the BWC came into force in 1975, accidents and attacks involving anthrax have been reported. A biological weapons plant in Sverdlovsk, Russia released airborne anthrax spores resulting in 66 confirmed deaths in 1979.<sup>13</sup> The Iraqi government admitted to having conducted research into biological toxins, including that of anthrax. The terrorist cult Aum Shinrikyo was responsible for a 1995 sarin gas attack that killed 12 people in Tokyo subways. Letters containing anthrax spores were mailed to NBC News and the U.S. Capitol in 2001.<sup>14</sup> Incidents continue to present day, regardless of the United Nations framework against biological terrorism.

### ***Current Capacities for Response***

Most governments have a certain level of preparedness to biological attacks, having set up agencies that respond to bioterrorism threats through law enforcement, systems of decontamination, and the stockpiling of vaccines. Earlier in 2013, the United States purchased enough of a new smallpox medicine to treat two million in the case of a biological attack. Some of the lesser-developed countries (LDCs) rely on medieval type quarantines to protect their people from any contagious diseases. On an international level, bodies such as the World Health Organization can provide resources to monitor and fight epidemics, but are limited in their capacity to contain outbreaks.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/17/world/unmasking-horror-a-special-report-japan-confronting-gruesome-war-atrocity.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/03/17/world/unmasking-horror-a-special-report-japan-confronting-gruesome-war-atrocity.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1200679/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://emergency.cdc.gov/bioterrorism/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/organization.htm>



According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the WHO, bioterrorism agents can be split up into three categories: Category A agents are high-priority and pose the highest risk to people due to the speed at which they spread, Category B agents are the second highest priority as they result in moderate illness rates and low death rates, and Category C agents are the third highest priority, being capable of high morbidity/mortality rates.<sup>15</sup>

However much the international community and individual state actors prepare for such an event, bioterrorism is increasingly unpredictable. As technology and research into biological agents continues, the more virus strains there are to be created. It should also be noted that although lab equipment and trained biologists are needed to formulate these strains, it does not take much further effort to create deadly and deployable pathogens. As new vaccines and diseases are developed, new opportunities arise for the production of biological weapons.

### *Developments to Consider*

- The 2012 H5N1 Bird Flu controversy within the WHO resulted in the public publishing of material (detailed to the point of duplicated results) that mutated the H4N1 virus to be transmitted through aerosols, creating a potential pandemic strain. To what extent should dangerous information be disseminated? Should research labs be able to publicly share results such as the H5N1 mutation? The health community gains much from these types of research, but at what point should the international community be concerned about the spread of potentially violent material?<sup>16</sup>
- Since the beginning of its conflict, the Syrian government has admitted to having bio and chemical weapons. This shows the potential of non-signatories states of the BWC to have banned materials. Thus, the BWC is not currently strong enough to track and effectively end dangerous programs, especially those of non-state actors.
- The WHO labels the purposeful and mistaken contamination of food the major threat of the century after 12 European countries battled outbreaks of E. coli in 2011.<sup>17</sup>
- A spike in international trade over the past decade leaves food production the most susceptible and untraceable arena to use biological weapons. How can the international community protect this food supply or more accurately determine the source of hazardous agents?
- There is no current coordinated global plan or new safeguards (since 1975) for future attacks.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/organization.htm>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.who.int/influenza/human\\_animal\\_interface/avian\\_influenza/h5n1\\_research/en/](http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/avian_influenza/h5n1_research/en/)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.who.int/foodsafety/chem/en/>