

# Committee Guide

**GA 1st 2024**

**Envision • Engage • Empower**

**2**  **24**

**Navigating a New Age**

***Preventing Illicit  
Financing of Armed  
Conflict***



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## 1. Personal Introduction

Honourable delegates,

On June 4th, OLMUN 2024 will officially start, and we will be debating our topic “Preventing Illicit Financing of Armed Conflict”. We are glad to welcome you all to the General Assembly’s First Committee!

In order for the conference to become an amazing experience for everyone, there needs to be some preparation done. So this committee guide will give you a quick overview of our topic and some ideas for further research. But first, let us introduce ourselves:

### 1.1. Keara Hartschuh

Dear delegates, welcome to the OLMUN 2024. My name is Keara, and I am excited to chair the GA 1st at OLMUN for the third time since my debut in 2019 as a delegate. I’m 21 years old and currently studying industrial engineering and management at DHBW Ravensburg, in addition, I work at an aerospace and defence leader in Munich due to my dual studies. For me, OLMUN is all about gaining new experiences, getting to know other people from around the world, and having fun of course. I am looking forward to many interesting debates. Besides OLMUN, I am actively involved with the VWI (Association of German Industrial Engineers) and enjoy outdoor adventures in the mountains. I love hiking and skiing. I wish you all the best in your preparation for the conference. See you in June!

### 1.2. Barbora Dvorakova

Ahoj! My name is Barbora, I am 18 years old and I am more than thrilled to chair all of you. Based off of my name, you could have guessed I am not from Germany, but in fact from the Czech Republic. My school, Grammar School Nad Alejí in Prague has a long streak of attendance at OLMUN, and after having attended at OLMUN twice as a delegate in the GA 1st, I applied as a chair. My hobbies include debating and reading, and I am interested in topics such as national (in)security, international relationships and the Middle East, both from the political and cultural view. I have previously organised an MUN at my own school twice, attended multiple MUNs taking place in Czechia and will be chairing for my very second time. Apart from that, in my personal life, I do volunteer work at a cat shelter, take part in a Microsoft Student Trainee Centre and tutor Maths and English. But in my spare time, I love to bake and cook, obtain random information and ride my bike. That’s all about me, now it’s about you. Can’t wait to get to know all of you, and I hope you will have a great time in our conference. See you in June!

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## 1.3. Miriam Böwing

Hi, my name is Miriam and at the time of OLMUN I will be 18 years old. I live near Gifhorn, and I am currently attending 12th grade at Otto-Hahn-Gymnasium. My three courses on advanced level in school are History in English, Politics, and English, which describes my interests very well. I love languages and political debates, and therefore Model United Nations has been one of my dearest hobbies for the last few years. In my free time I enjoy participating in my school's student newspaper, playing piano and volleyball, as well as listening to music (which I am doing right now). The first time I attended OLMUN was in 2022. This year's conference will be my fifth MUN but my first one as a chair. So that is why I am very excited to be one of the chairs of the GA 1st. I can't wait to see you all in June, and I am really looking forward to our debates. I am sure that you will have a great time during our debates, and later OLMUN 2024 will be connected with amazing memories!

## 2. How to use this Guide

This Committee Guide will serve as an introduction to the topic. Accordingly, it is not meant to be used as an all-inclusive summary, but it is rather the groundwork for your own analysis and research.

But remember: The Committee Guide is only about our topic. So please also familiarise yourselves with the country you will be representing. Its past, present, political structure, its connection to the topic ... maybe even its flag and national anthem if you like!



In preparation for the conference, we kindly ask you to prepare both a draft resolution and a policy statement. A resolution is the formal document produced and adopted in a committee, which will be voted upon at the end<sup>1</sup>. The policy statement is a strategic document that gives you an overview of a country's position. It consists of the position, the country's relation to the topic and its proposals of policies to pass in the resolution<sup>2</sup>.

You will find more information on how such documents are written and structured and about what to know about your country in the footnotes or in the OLMUN Handbook. You can find it in the download section of the OLMUN website.

To be able to support you in your preparations and answer your questions, please send us your policy statement and draft resolution by the 22nd of May. We will definitely keep an eye

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wisemee.com/how-to-write-a-resolution/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wisemee.com/how-to-write-a-mun-position-paper/>

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on the delegates who hand in their documents either too late or not at all. However, better hand it in late than never ;).

Please also pay attention to 9. *Further Research on the Topic* and 10. *Final Words*. There you will find other necessary information about the conference and useful tips to remember. Now, enjoy reading!

## 3. Committee Introduction

The First Committee of the General Assembly (GA 1st) is one of the principal committees of the General Assembly and serves as the primary policy making body of the United Nations. It was established along with five other subcommittees at the first session of the General Assembly in 1946. The committee deals with disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace affecting the international community. Therefore, it is also known as the “Disarmament and Security Committee” or DISEC.

The history of the General Assembly and its main committees dates back to the founding days of the United Nations. The first resolution ever adopted by the General Assembly was recommended by the GA 1st and passed on January 24, 1946, in London. Nowadays, the headquarters of the First Committee of the General Assembly are in New York City.

In the GA 1st, member states exchange their views on disarmament-related issues and seek common agreements. Its decisions are not legally binding but represent a strong self-commitment of the international community. Resolutions passed by the First Committee are forwarded to the plenary sessions of the General Assembly, where they are further discussed and adopted.

All 193 member states of the United Nations are represented in the GA 1st, and they all have one vote. Disarmament, conflict prevention, regulations on weapons from conventional weapons to weapons of mass destruction, as well as stability, are as relevant today as they were when the UN was founded directly after the Second World War. For this reason, the First Committee of the General Assembly is truly important and should not be overlooked.

## 4. Important Definitions

### 4.1. Armed Conflicts

Armed conflicts, also referred to as wars, exist when there is an armed confrontation between two or more parties. The involved parties engage in an extensive and sustained use of armed force against each other. There are international armed conflicts between States and non-international armed conflicts which focus on the interaction of organised armed groups within a State as well as the interaction of government authorities with these groups<sup>3</sup>. Our topic addresses both of these types. Armed conflicts cause violations against international humanitarian law, mass displacement, the loss of people, and the destruction of landscape<sup>4</sup>.

### 4.2. Illegal Economies

Illegal economies, also known as underground economies or black markets, describe an economy next to the state's economy which produces income by violating the legal forms of commerce. They count as an organised crime because participants produce and sell forbidden goods and services based on supply and demand<sup>5</sup>. Fluid organised criminal networks use illegal economies for their own benefits. The use of the illicit money is therefore often connected to criminal activity. This is a danger for the state's economy as it undermines taxes. Common examples of illegal economies are the diamond trade in Sierra Leone and the heroin trade in Afghanistan<sup>6</sup>.

### 4.3. Proxy Wars

Proxy wars are armed conflicts fought by parties which do not become directly involved during a war. Powerful nations want to avoid military confrontation in their own countries.

For this reason, they strategically support parties in other states which are involved in a conflict. They also tie alliances concerning this conflict.

The nations fighting indirectly thereby risk the destruction and dramatic effects on the population of the countries directly involved.

Usually, proxy wars occur in less developed countries which have connections to more powerful countries; through trade, alliances, or the opponent. During the Cold War, there were many popular proxy wars. For example, in the Vietnam War, the US supported South

3 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS\\_ATA\(2023\)757582\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS_ATA(2023)757582_EN.pdf)

4 [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS\\_ATA\(2023\)757582\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS_ATA(2023)757582_EN.pdf)

5 <https://definitions.uslegal.com/illegal-economy/>

6 <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/illicit-economies-armed-conflict/>

# 5 The Role of Illegal Economies in Armed Conflicts

Vietnam whereas China and the Soviet Union supported the northern communist forces<sup>7</sup>.

## 5. The Role of Illegal Economies in Armed Conflicts

Illegal Economies, as the name already suggests, are illicit and thereby count as a way of illicit financing of armed conflicts, which brings us back to our topic. They affect armed conflicts in many different ways. Armed conflicts and illegal economies often overlap with areas of instability.

Illegal economies can be a source of income of organised criminal groups or, in general, a source of income of a party of an armed conflict. However, this typically happens in an indirect way: The criminal networks which produce and sell these illicit goods and services sponsor armed groups because these groups bring advantage to the illegal economy. For example, the armed group protects the production and distribution<sup>8</sup>. The armed groups use the money from illegal economies to illicitly finance their conflicts by buying weapons and destabilising their opponents.

Armed conflicts, as well as illicit economies are both taking transnational dimensions. By crossing country borders, illegal markets become part of illicit financial flows (IFFs). By fuelling money laundering and corruption, the country's political stability is threatened, and further criminal activity is encouraged. This insecurity contributes to the outbreak of armed conflicts<sup>9</sup>. Illegal economies support and motivate armed conflicts to spread in neighbouring countries in order to increase their income.

As a result, illegal economies contribute to the funding of insurgencies and insecurity. They thereby enable and fuel armed conflicts. One could therefore declare illegal economies a reason for the persistence of such conflicts around the globe, as illegal economies are directly linked to the financing of armed conflicts. But conflicts also create an environment that enables organised crime and thereby allows illegal economies to prosper. The longer those illegal economies exist, the more intertwined they become with the armed conflict's dynamics, and the more difficult it becomes for a state to restore peace and the power of its institutional systems and legal economy<sup>10</sup>.

7 <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/what-are-proxy-wars-and-where-are-they-happening/>

8 <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2022C36/>

9 <https://www.imf.org/en/About/Factsheets/Sheets/2023/Fight-against-illicit-financial-flows>

10 <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/illicit-economies-armed-conflict/>

## 6. Connection between Proxy Wars and Illicit funding of Armed Conflicts

Illicit funding has been and still is a major driver of armed conflicts. Just as has been mentioned above, illegally sourced money funds wars, and that includes proxy wars nonetheless. To fund the armed conflicts, direct illegal transactions take place and there are grey areas in the trade sector, which opposing sides exploit to pursue their own goal. To keep up with their designated support of armed groups, fighting on their behalf with resources they have provided for them.

Opposing sides frequently resort to taking advantage of their own country's resources, mostly items such as diamonds, opium and other drugs, and later on trade them within illegal economies. Meanwhile, countries supporting those combatants often use previously illegally acquired money. For instance, during the Nicaraguan civil war, spanning from 1978 to 1990, the United States has participated in the illegal trade of arms with Iran to ensure further support for the Contras military group. Once revealed to the public, the situation has sparked public outrage, but many more cases such as this one have taken place due to lack of transparency and accountability.

## 7. Current Situation and Agreements

As of 2024, the topic of using illegally acquired resources remains relevant to the current geopolitical situation. Practices such as, but not limited to the exploitation of natural resources, drug trade, arms and human trafficking still pose a real threat to civilians worldwide. One of the primary drivers of illicit funding in armed conflicts is the trafficking of illegal drugs. Regions such as Latin America, Afghanistan, and parts of Southeast Asia serve as major hubs for the production and transit of narcotics, providing armed groups with lucrative revenue streams. The proceeds from drug trafficking not only sustain the operations of these groups but also contribute to corruption, violence, and social upheaval. It is an ongoing issue, especially through the last century, when the number of conflicts is on rise, causing security concerns all over the globe. To tackle the problems, the international forum of nations has previously tried to take appropriate measures.

International cooperation has enabled a debate on this topic and has been fruitful regarding signed treaties and mutual alliances. Debates usually take place on the grounds of organisations such as the United Nations, Interpol or Financial Action Task Force - organisations founded off the initiative of G7 countries to tackle money laundering. Naturally, the topic itself poses a threat so widespread, multiple treaties have been produced and signed, such as United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), International Convention for the Suppres-



# 8 Guiding Questions

sion of the Financing of Terrorism, Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (Firearms Protocol) and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter-Terrorist Financing (CTF) Frameworks.

However, even with the efforts nations have put into solving the matter, it still remains as an important issue to pursue higher goals on, since it is a major driver of conflicts worldwide, having ravaged areas and populations.

To sum it up, the challenge of illicit funding in armed conflicts requires comprehensive and coordinated responses at all levels. By disrupting the flow of illicit funds, promoting good governance, and addressing the underlying causes of conflict, states and international organisations can pave the way for peace and prosperity in conflict-affected regions.

## 8. Guiding Questions

- What international mechanisms can be enhanced or established to tackle the financing of armed conflicts through illegal economies?
- How can transparency within the international banking system be improved to detect and prevent illicit financial flows?
- Which legal measures can member states adapt to prevent the trade of resources that indirectly fund armed groups?
- In what ways can economic policies be shaped to reduce the reliance on sectors vulnerable to exploitation by illegal economies?
- What innovative technologies can be deployed to trace and disrupt financial support to armed conflicts?
- What role can civil society and non-governmental organisations play in detecting and reporting activities related to the illicit financing of armed conflicts, and how can their involvement be enhanced?

## 9. Possible Solutions

- **Enhancing International Cooperation:** The establishment of a UN-led international task force dedicated to disrupting financial networks that fuel illegal economies and armed conflicts is crucial. This task force should facilitate the sharing of financial intelligence and support collaborative efforts in cross-border investigations to trace and neutralize illicit financial flows.
- **Implementing Transparency Measures:** Member states must enforce stricter regulatory oversight of financial transactions, including those involving digital currencies and online platforms, to ensure transparency and accountability. The adoption of a global registry for beneficial ownership could prevent the misuse of corporate entities in financing conflicts, making it harder for illicit actors to operate anonymously.
- **Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Frameworks:** Advocating for international treaties and national legislations that impose sanctions on entities and individuals involved in the illegal trade of resources or the direct financing of armed groups is essential. Such legal measures should also address the emerging challenges posed by digital currencies and encrypted online transactions in the context of illicit financing.
- **Promoting Economic Resilience and Community Engagement:** Encouraging economic diversification in regions prone to conflict can reduce reliance on sectors vulnerable to exploitation by illegal economies. Investing in community development and education programs offers sustainable alternatives to those who might otherwise be drawn into illegal activities. Moreover, empowering civil society and non-governmental organizations to detect and report activities related to illicit financing can provide valuable grassroots intelligence, enhancing prevention efforts.
- **Leveraging Technological Innovations:** The adoption of blockchain technology can significantly improve the traceability of high-value commodities often linked to conflict financing, while data analytics and machine learning tools can help identify patterns indicative of illicit financial transactions. Furthermore, developing secure digital platforms for reporting and analysing suspicious activities can enable more efficient cooperation between financial institutions, governments, and international organizations.

## 10. Further Research on the Topic

Now it is your turn! We collected a few links and documents in the following and in the footnotes that can help you to start off your research. However, keep in mind that this is just a tiny amount of the information you find online. While we encourage you to scan the internet for written sources, sometimes it can also be a good introduction to the topic to watch YouTube videos or listen to podcasts. Your research can and should go further than these links and does not necessarily have to include any of them. It is your responsibility to find a way of doing research that yields the results you are aiming for and, just as important, allows you to enjoy this process and enables you to follow your curiosity and interests!

Global Initiative Research Report: Illicit Economies and Armed Conflict. Ten dynamics that drive instability. By S. Walker, M. Botero Restrepo.

<https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/GMFA-Illicit-economies-28Jan-web.pdf>

UNIDIR, UNODC: Addressing the Linkages between Illicit Arms, organised Crime and Armed Conflict. By L. Pinson.

[https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UNIDIR\\_UNODC\\_Addressing\\_Linkages\\_Illicit\\_Arms\\_Organized\\_Crime\\_Armed\\_Conflict.pdf](https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/UNIDIR_UNODC_Addressing_Linkages_Illicit_Arms_Organized_Crime_Armed_Conflict.pdf)

SWP Comment: Key Features of Illicit Economies in African Conflicts. Insights from the Reports of UN Panels of Experts. By J. Vorrath, L. Zuñiga.

<https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2022C36/>

We also highly encourage you to look into the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) reports on combating terrorist financing and also the United Nations Security Council resolutions related to sanctions and illegal trade.

In addition, it can also be helpful to look into studies on the effectiveness of technological solutions in tracing illegal financial flows.

## 11. Final Words

Please do not feel overwhelmed by all the information. We know that especially as a first timer the whole process of research about your country and about the topic can seem endless and scary. Every participant has been there before. We will take every step to make the conference a safe space where no one needs to be scared of being judged upon. Together, we will make sure that every delegate feels comfortable and encouraged to participate.

To ensure a successful debate, here are some things to remember:

- Take a look at the OLMUN Handbook, it includes everything you need to know about the United Nations, the preparation, and the conference itself.
- Familiarise yourselves with the Rules of Procedure. You will find them, as well as the OLMUN Handbook, in the download section of the OLMUN website.
- Always stick to your country's opinion. We know it is challenging to represent a view one does not agree with personally, but not representing the country's view would undermine the whole purpose of Model United Nations.
- Make sure to follow the dress code. If you are not dressed according to the dress code, there will be punishments. This video will provide you with information about what you can wear and what not to wear to the conference:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmjH43sJt68>
- Please remember our deadlines and take your tasks seriously. OLMUN depends on what you make of it. You can find them under 2. How to use this Guide.
- If you have any questions or concerns, always feel free to contact us. Reach us via email at: [ga1@olmun.org](mailto:ga1@olmun.org). We are looking forward to meeting and debating with you in June!



**OLMUN 2024**

**23<sup>rd</sup> International  
Session**