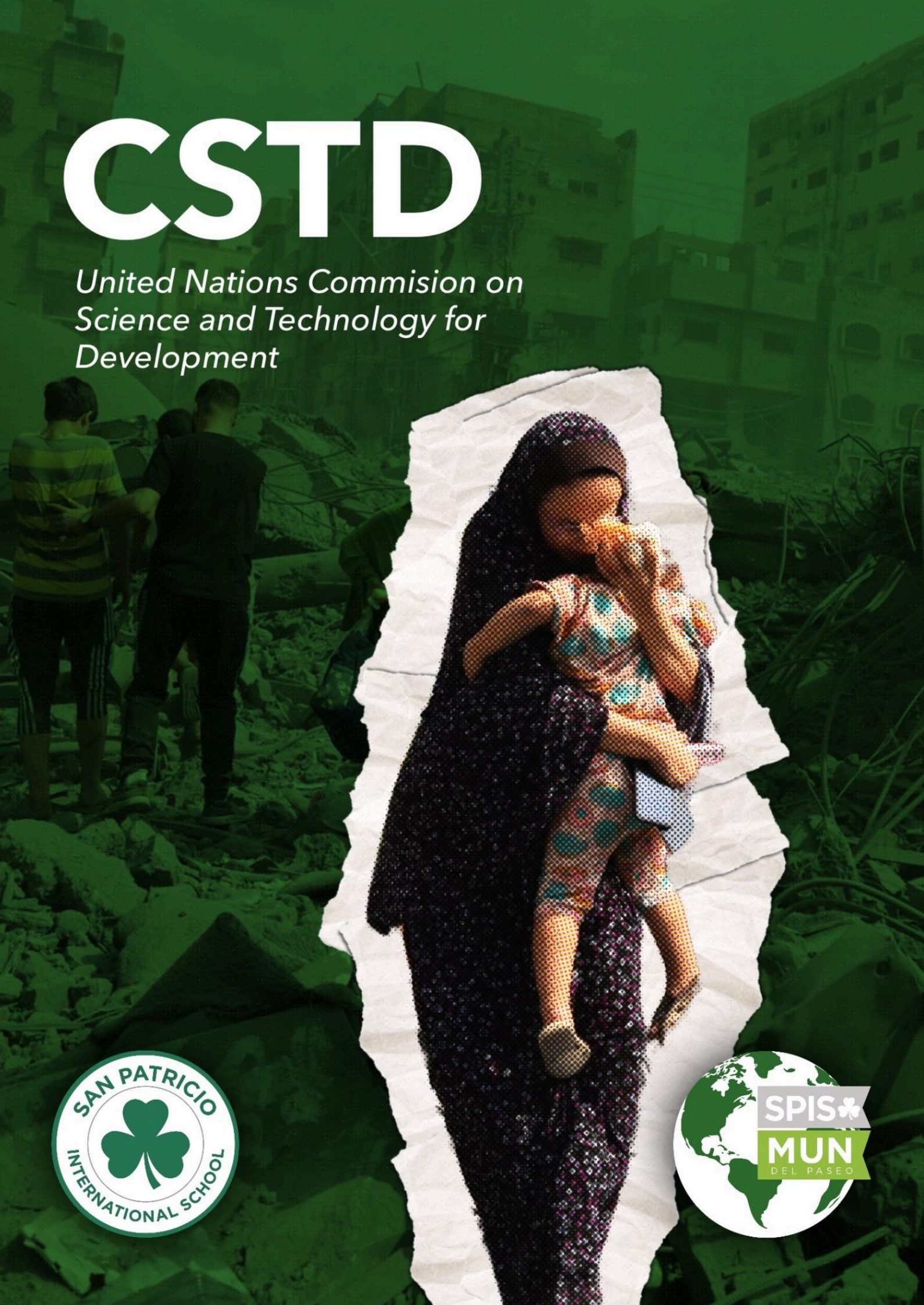
CSTD

United Nations Commision on Science and Technology for Development



Committee: The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)
Topic: Analyzing the Influence of Technology on the Gaza Strip Conflict and Regulating the Use of Technology in Armed Conflict
Written by: Ana José Albores

Hello Delegates!

We are proud to welcome you to our 2024 SPIS Model of the United Nations. We are very delighted and excited about your participation. Furthermore, we hope you enjoy and have fun in this experience, in addition to continuing to improve your debating skills. If you have any doubts, questions, or comments please feel free to ask any of your chairs (Moderator: Ana Jose Albores Soto, Director: Ricardo Castillo Villela, and Secretary: Jueun Park)

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at:
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Sincerely,
Ana José Albores

I. COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

First held in the country of Vienna in 1979, The United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development was in the beginning an intergovernmental committee, however, it was later established as a functional employment on April 30, 1992, by the General Assembly. This committee is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in other words, one of the lower bodies than ECOSOC, yet it provides supplemental information related to the topic. The CSTD committee is a leading UN institution with forty-three members that support developing countries to access the international economy fairly and effectively, in addition to providing the UN with advice through different analyses and recommendations to guide future work and actions. They employ annual intergovernmental discussions about the issues related to the development of technology and science. Beyond the state meetings, their focus is also viewed on civil society representatives including NGOs, social movements, and labor unions.

II. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

Known as the “Six-Day War” since 1967, an armed conflict began between the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Israel; however, it was held for not more than 40 years until 2005. Nonetheless, small wars and combats still take place between Israel, Palestine, and Hamas about the control and management of the territory of Gaza. Gaza is a narrow strip of land measuring 25 miles long and 7 miles wide. It is one of the two Palestinian Territories, with the majority of its population being Muslims

and over 1 million being refugees. As time goes by, technology has been implemented, increasing its use during wars for both combat and non-combat purposes. As a large number of people living near the area of Gaza have access to mobile devices, it has become extremely valuable, so the people have communication with Great Britain. Beyond international communication, technology has given the people living near the Gaza Strip the opportunity to capture footage of the war and share it online, which has raised the attention of many people to protect their families and civilians who are suffering from the armed conflict.

The use of technology during wars has been divided into five different categories, each having a different purpose. The first category is the offensive arms, which are made to harm the enemy while also using defensive weapons to protect themselves from any offensive blows. Then, transportation technology helped to move the soldiers and the weapons in the most discreet ways, not letting the enemy notice. The fourth category is communication coordination, which allows the soldiers to communicate in an easier and faster way through the armed forces. Finally, the sensors detect the weaponry and the unknown forces.

Since early times, the relationship between military technology and its tactics of use has meant success in combat. Technology can have either a positive or negative effect depending on its use and how it is managed, as well as the ability of the person and their tactics. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the types of weapons used were high explosives, repeating rifles with smokeless powder, and machine guns; however, according to the “Law of Armed Conflict,” the weapons that may cause unnecessary injuries or create indiscriminate effects need to be governed, and it also prohibits certain types of weapons like land mines, blinding laser weapons, or incendiary devices. The regulations were made to attempt to limit the deaths and suffering of both civilians and soldiers during the armed conflict.

As time goes by, technology has taken place during wars more often. In recent ones, technology has been framed as something crucial that may provide the advantage needed. However, as mentioned, every military armed conflict has its use of strategic technological planning, for example, the use of high-tech defense or controlling the network of communication through other foreign countries. This is with the hopes of knowing as much detail as possible from the enemy.

III. CURRENT ISSUES

Even though technology has contributed to saving an enormous amount of lives, the number of blackouts has been increasing frequently in the area of Gaza. There has been a lack of communication between the civilians of the area and the outside world. Technology failure has also led to confusion and miscommunication. An example could be the misinformation about the new safe location for refugee families to travel and stay in, which has contributed to a higher death toll. As the technology worsened in the war, many reports from different platforms, such as “X” (Twitter), displayed false information, affecting both the civilians living near the Gaza area and the people living in foreign countries and changing their perception of the situation, mostly for the worse. Although it has been proven several times, technology is a key part of winning wars.

In today’s society, technology has affected wars by creating destructive weapons with improved sensors, faster range, and greater accuracy, as well as big artillery guns that make it hard for troops and soldiers to move. The ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) has expressed concern with

digital information and the use of technology, how it is increasing extremely rapidly, how most of them lack accurate sources, and how they have affected many people with poor critical thinking skills. In comparison to before, the information is now spread around the globe using social media as the main network, which can impact different audiences. Due to this increase, many people have had access to other smartphones for sharing information but also for violating their privacy, causing civilian harm, which later may also involve law interference.

In recent armed conflicts, there have been numerous uses of advanced technology like drones, satellites, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). However, the Gaza Strip conflict has been different. Led by the Hamas and their "Operation al Aqsa Flood," their strategy has been low-tech warfare, which, surprisingly, has made Israel struggle and lose its multimillion-dollar defense system. "The resulting destruction and horror may even challenge, at least on the Israeli end, the very assumption that possessing advanced defense technology is enough to prevent mass atrocities" (Groppi, 2023). As the debate continues right now, which type of technology gives countries the advantage needed to win wars? The low-tech weapons used by Hamas have amazingly created one of the biggest terrorist attacks ever in history. Using jeeps, pick-ups, and non-high-tech artillery, they have managed to infiltrate Israel's border security beyond kidnapping and killing thousands of civilians.

For the part of arms, the Hamas have not yet used anything prohibited; in fact, they relied on low accuracy and high rates of friendly fire. Nevertheless, in the past couple of years, Iran has provided more technological expertise, mainly the group capable of creating rockets, in addition to now having in their name around 30,000 missiles. Beyond that, Hamas has also used cheap and homemade drones with high-tech

sensors interfering with communication across the Israeli fence. Coincidently, the same drone techniques have been used by the Russians against Ukraine. Hamas also has its cyber department used for information gathering and cyber espionage. Starting in 2015, Hamas created fake Facebook accounts to get to know Israeli accounts, cooperates, and politician pages. In addition, in 2018, Hamas hacked several IDF soldiers' phones and files, squirting their military details until they were found by Israel in 2022.

Social media is one of the most useful weapons that have been used during the Gaza Strip conflict. Hamas has been using this tool amid surprise attacks as well as threats and attacks through hacked personal accounts of Israel. Using social media, in other words, is controlling what everybody else sees. Hamas has been uploading thousands of graphics and images of indiscriminate killings with the hope of spreading fear and terror among the Israeli population. In addition, they have spread live videos through mobile phones and televisions of shooting, bombing, and killing innocent people to show a sense of helplessness. As a major concern, many Israeli authorities have come to the point of begging many Israeli families to delete any social media app such as TikTok, Instagram, etc. to prevent any type of psychological trauma.

Regulating the new military technology is a long and complicated process; it must be technically comprehensible as well as clarify precisely the details and policymakers it would need to pursue the new regulation. Along with that, controversy like weapon malfunctions or battlefield misbehavior also needs to be taken into consideration. As the use of technology in Italy has increased rapidly through the years, the regulations already existing may be challenged, creating many debates in the areas of cyber-military

operators, the use of artificial intelligence, drones, etc. There have not been formal regulations about it; in fact, many state and non-state actors are supporting informal means, which include the regulation of asymmetric conflicts. Nevertheless, difficulties are presented along the way, such as the lack of clarity between the actors, the uncertainty about its employment, and the challenges it may include in gaining accurate information about the new technologies around the world.

The modern International Humanitarian Law (IHL) has made several efforts to slowly develop regulations in armed conflicts, which include the regulations of formal sources and an emphasis on informal regulations about new military technologies. However, in the past couple of decades, the role of the regulations that need to be implemented has been noticeably decreasing. NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and society are extremely crucial in advocating for new regulations since they can both diffuse and create new prohibited norms and regulations. The work against technology is an extensive job that needs worldwide help from scientists, states, NGOs, etc. to provide crucial decisions about what type of new regulations should be implemented in modern armed conflicts.

IV. UN ACTION AND RESOLUTION

On December 6, 2023, the Secretary-General of the United Nations delivered a letter to the President of the Security Council committee. In the letter, he expressed his concerns about the human catastrophe invoking Article 99 of the UN Charter. According to them, an estimated $1.2 billion will be needed to provide the necessary humanitarian aid for the 2.2 million people in the Gaza Strip conflict.

As of today, the United Nations has shown its urge to allow humanity access to all people by avoiding the target of hospitals, schools, and clinics and providing them with basic aid. The UN chief stated, “Crucial life-saving

supplies, including fuel, food, and water, must be allowed into Gaza. We need rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access now." (United Nations, n.d.) Also, avoiding collective punishments, as many attacks included indiscriminate rockets, the UN expressed its concerns about the decision of the Israeli authorities to shut off the electricity, water, food, and fuel supplies to civilians. Finally, the United Nations also suggested the release of hostages, or, in other words, the full protection of civilians guaranteed by international law.

The committee of the Security Council has agreed to encourage "humanitarian pauses" above the release of the captives from Hamas. Nonetheless, it is said that this is the fifth time the UN has asked about the pauses. The United Nations also suggested international votes about the urges; however, while the results of the votes have not yet been fully stated, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia abstained from voting.

The UN has called for an "immediate, durable, and sustained humanitarian truce" while also supplying essential services to all the affected people in the Gaza region. Using it in its favor, the UN has made use of the social media network to show its concerns and urges, as well as encourage people to donate money and supplies through the platforms of Instagram and "X" (Twitter). While the United Nations can't directly intervene, the UN continues to provide as much help as possible. However, because Hamas is not recognized by the UN as a terrorist organization, there are many consequences. For example, the "lack of a unified voice among the international community risks eroding the UN's credibility in response to one of the worst terrorist attacks in history."

(*Senator Collins, Bipartisan Group Urges UN to Designate Hamas as a Terrorist Organization | U.S. Senator Susan Collins of Maine*, 2023).

V. ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. In what ways has the use of technology been increasing in wars over the years, and what are its advancements and new uses?
2. What are the negative and positive effects of the utilization of technology during armed conflicts?
3. How has the role and influence of social media and other digital platform communications affected the Gaza Strip conflict?
4. What existing regulations and measurements are already applied to the use of technology during wars, and how are they effective?
5. As technology grows, will there be a need to add or reinforce more regulations about the use of high-tech weapons, artillery, and armament?
6. What are the new concerns and risks for civilians due to the use of high-tech weapons during their management?
7. What are the different types of advantages for countries with large amounts of technological advancements and control?
8. What type of technology is being used between Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip conflict?
9. Who are the other foreign countries involved in the Gaza Strip conflict? How are they interfering and helping the war?
10. How has the United Nations intervened in the regulation of technological weapons and the use of technology in armed conflicts?
11. How are the civilians living near the area of Gaza being affected by the war and its consequences?

VI. **CONCLUSION**

Since the first war started in 1967, the armed conflict in the Gaza Strip area has now become one of the biggest terrorist attacks ever. As time goes by, technology has taken its place in many modern wars through high-tech weapons and artillery. Since a long time ago, technology was the tool that gave countries the advantage needed to win wars, because it made transportation and communication between soldiers much easier. During the war in Gaza, technology has kept the civilians living near the area able to communicate with others in foreign countries. In addition, the use of social media has been crucial since many people have shared live footage of the problem and its consequences, raising the attention of more and more people.

Nevertheless, many of the digital communication platforms like “X” (Twitter) or Instagram have been shown to provide untrustworthy information, which has increased the amount of misinformation and confusion among many people. The use of technology during wars has increased its implementation through destructive weapons with improved sensors, faster range, and more accuracy. In the Gaza Strip conflict, surprisingly, Hamas has used low-tech artillery, yet it has managed to trespass on many Israeli defenses. Even though Hamas has not used highly technological weapons, it has used social media to its favor, spying on many soldiers and politicians to get specific details and information about Israel.

As regulations for the use of technology in armed conflicts already exist, many of them have been informal and not taken very seriously between states, so there

have been many efforts to create more formal measurements. The United Nations has already expressed its concern about the conflict, and even though it may not intervene directly, it has tried to provide as much help as possible to the civilians by giving them food, water, and fuel supplies, as well as allowing them humanitarian access to hospitals and schools. While creating new regulations and measurements about the use of technology may take time, it is needed to take into consideration the controversy and new problems it may cause, as well as focus on better management of the communication of information through digital platforms to prevent misconceptions and miscommunications. Finally, also take into account the affected civilians in the Gaza Strip conflict and how to reduce the number of consequences they are suffering.

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