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# **Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC)**

**The Impact of Combat Trauma on Veterans:  
Mental Health Challenges and Acts of Violence**

## **Committee Background**

The Disarmament & International Security Committee or “DISEC” was the first of the Main Committees to be created in the charter of the General Assembly when the charter of the United Nations was signed in 1945. It was founded with the primary purpose to respond to the aftermath of World War II and to create strategies to address disarmament challenges, and advocate the needs for an international forum to discuss peace, and encourage the reduction of arms worldwide. The First Committee (DISEC) annually meets every October for a 4-5 week session, after the General Assembly General Debate. All the 193 member states of the UN are invited to attend. It’s the main committee of the General Assembly authorized to have verbatim records. These records are a detailed transcript of the debates and discussions that take place during committee meetings, recording every word spoken by the delegates. The other main committees of the UN General Assembly generally have to summarize records, which gives a more of an overview of the meetings. Its headquarters are located in New York, United States.

Its main objective is to examine issues related to conventional arms control, nuclear disarmament, conventional arms regulations, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in general threats to peace that cause a negative impact on the international community, and formulate solutions. This includes building a safer, more secure world and to protect people from harm. Its’ goals include establishing general principles for international peace and security, it aims to develop and promote principles to guide cooperation between nations to maintain global peace and security. DISEC also emphasizes advocating for Disarmament and Regulation of Armament, it focuses on disarmament efforts, reduction, and regulation of various types of weapons. It also prioritizes promoting cooperative arrangements and measures.

DISEC has put sweat and tears on working for a better and safer world everyday, and their efforts have paid off, however DISEC was especially successful on several treaties. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one of them , and it is a essential piece of global efforts to prevent the distribution of nuclear weapons, it also promotes cooperation to use nuclear energy only for peaceful uses to help develop the goal of nuclear disarmament in general. This has made the world safer and more prosperous for over fifty years, however the countries that haven’t signed the treaty, India, Pakistan, and Israel, are still practicing the misuse of nuclear energy and weapons.

The committee has also aimed to address the hazards that come with chemical and biological weapons with international agreements to prevent their use and eventually, eliminate them. DISEC has also recognized the importance of space, it has made efforts to establish international standards for the peaceful use of outer space, with the goal to prevent the militarization of space and promote its use only for scientific and peaceful purposes. With cyber threats rising, DISEC has recognized the challenges of state-sponsored cyber warfare, remarking the importance for international cooperation to avoid cyber conflicts and promote the peaceful use of technology

## **Topic Background**

One of the main concerns of immediate international security is the effects of combat trauma on veterans. When an individual serves in the military, it faces exposure to different traumatic events than civilians. Chronic exposure to wars and combat tends to result in extensive psychological problems among soldiers. According to the National Center for PTSD “war zone deployment, training accidents and military sexual trauma (or, MST) may lead to PTSD.” This is just one of the many mental illnesses that they may develop, a few are depression, substance use disorder, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and in the worst cases, physical violence towards others.

The military produces a sense of purpose, well-defined roles and hierarchy, camaraderie, honor and mission, things that hardly are defined or find in the civilian world. So, in most cases when veterans shift out the military to the civilian life, they can feel the sensation of loss of identity and meaning of life. The U.S Department of Veterans Affairs has stated that about 50% of veterans lack mental health treatments, and the “2021 National Veteran Suicide Prevention annual report showed that 17 veterans died by suicide every day in 2019.” This means families losing mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, and many more. Veterans have a higher chance of owning guns and the death rates of firearm suicide than civilians. In overall, they suffer higher suicide rates compared to civilians, and not to mention firearms are the most effective way of self-harm and the most popular suicide method among veterans.

From another point of view, combat trauma must be addressed for security reasons. Combat trauma, specifically PTSD, triggers irritability, anger, and in general difficulty managing emotions. This leads to higher risks of situations where veterans may be involved in conflicts or violent incidents, putting both themselves and others at risk. Despite this, mental health treatments for combat trauma are often deprioritized compared to other public health issues, causing veterans to be unattended and without the adequate support for reintegration into civilian life. Therefore, international coordination is necessary to develop policies to ensure appropriate mental health treatment. Reintegration efforts, and arms control initiatives are essential for the reduction of the risks of uncontrolled trauma. Nevertheless, many veterans don't seek help due to the perceived stigma surrounding mental health issues. According to VA Data on Mental Health, only 50% of veterans with mental health issues receive care, leaving 50% of unattended veterans.

Technology has been a great tool for assisting the mental state of veterans. The virtual support has had a great impact by offering a supportive space where Veterans can interact with others who have lived the same experiences as them. Some platforms such as Innerworld has help reduce the isolation that many Veterans feel after returning to civilian life. In general, technology has supported mental health through apps for meditation, online therapy services, and digital support communities. This is a great

advantage for handicapped veterans who have less ability to transport or go to physical attention centers.

Therefore, governments need to allocate proper funding to boost mental health care, hire more trained professionals, and implement outreach activities that reach out to veterans proactively. Telemedicine and mobile health are also effective measures, particularly for rural populations who might find it challenging to receive face-to-face care. By prioritizing accessibility, greater numbers of veterans can gain the help they need before their circumstances worsen.

Reintegration programs must also do more than focus on mental health care. Employment opportunities, housing assistance, and community support initiatives are important factors in helping veterans get settled upon leaving service. Others lack the stability of work due to skill imbalances or lingering psychological effects of combat. Job training, mentorship, and financial support can assist them in this transition in a great way. Proper social networks, including veteran peer groups and family support groups, can reduce isolation and despair too. These more general social and economic conditions need to be addressed in preventing long-term consequences of combat trauma and keeping both society and veterans healthy as well.

### **Current Situation**

Suicide and violence among veterans are on the increase globally because of poor mental health care. Most veterans experience PTSD, depression, and anxiety, but they cannot get the appropriate care due to stigma and bureaucratic hurdles. They cannot seek help because stigma and bureaucracy hinder them, making their conditions worse. An estimated 14-20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffer from PTSD, yet concerning numbers are unattended due to stigma and fear of judgements, worsening their mental state. Most veterans cannot recover and reintegrate into society without intervention, leading to increased risk of self-inflicted harm or violence. The solutions to these mental illnesses are vital for both public safety and individual health.

Despite rehabilitation programs established by governments and non-profit organizations, access remains an issue. Short funding leads to excessive wait times, clinics with too few staff, and inadequate outreach services. Rural veterans often have very little mental health care in their immediate environment, making immediate aid challenging. Rural veterans, who make up nearly one fourth of the veteran population in the U.S., have even fewer access to mental health services, with 1 in 3 rural veterans reporting no access to mental health care within 30 miles of their homes. Others do not want to accept it due to pride or fear of judgment. Lacking proper resources, these programs cannot provide suitable support to the patients.

The primary concern is the relationship between veteran mental illness disorders and firearm abuse. Nearly 40% of U.S. veterans have access to guns. Studies have shown that 1.5 times more likely to commit suicide by the use of fire-arms compared to non-

veterans. According to the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health, “70% of all veteran suicides were committed using firearms.” The majority of veterans are armed because they have previously been in the military, endangering themselves with more suicides and violent acts. Studies show that veterans are also more likely to use firearms in committing suicide than the rest of society. Aggression can also be caused by untreated disorders, endangering both veterans and society. Gun safety habits together with mental health screenings would prove effective in curbing these dangers.

International institutions like the United Nations underscore the importance of social reintegration programs. The United Nations has stated that, unemployment rates for veterans can reach up to 20%, which just adds to the chronic feeling of isolation and despair most veterans suffer. Helping veterans reintegrate into civilian society can reduce isolation and despair. Employment placement, peer support groups, and community activity programs can be stabilizers. Psychological counseling that takes account of the veteran's experiences is vital to eventual healing. Multidisciplinary care guarantees that veterans receive not only medical attention but also social and emotional support.

To answer this growing crisis, governments must prioritize veterans' mental health. Increased funding for therapy, counseling, and hotlines can provide greater access to mental health treatment. The VA (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) has reported in 2020 that nearly 60% of veterans who sought the help of therapy had positive outcomes. Public initiatives to decrease stigma and eliminate fear of seeking assistance can get veterans to open up. Active coordination between governments, non-profit groups, and mental health professionals can create stronger support systems. Spending on these programs can allow society to heal the veterans and enable them to establish meaningful lives.

## **Conclusion**

To finally conclude the chairs' conclusions are, combat trauma has left a deep wound on veterans, it's a global crisis that cannot longer be ignored. These left without the adequate mental health assistance, many veterans have to struggle each day to reintegrate into civilian life, leading to potential dangers for themselves and public health. It's urgent that DISEC implements international collaboration to improve veteran care, regulate firearm access for those who need it, and finally the implementation of bold policies that promote both national and global security. The time to act is and the world can't afford to wait.

Combat trauma in veterans is a global issue that requires immediate action. Without proper mental health intervention, affected veterans may struggle with reintegration, posing risks to themselves and society. DISEC must advocate for international cooperation to enhance veteran support programs, regulate access to firearms among affected individuals, and ensure global peace and security through proactive policies.

## **Guiding Questions**

1. How can DISEC work with member states to improve mental health support systems for veterans?
2. What policies should be implemented to regulate firearm access for veterans with untreated trauma?
3. How can international cooperation help prevent violent incidents linked to combat trauma?
4. What role can technology and cyber resources play in providing better mental health care for veterans?
5. What actions and policies has your country implemented to address the issue?

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