

## **PARKMUN 2023**

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

#### **The Question of Safeguarding Uranium Mines in Conflict Zones**

Uranium ore concentrate (yellowcake) - a concentrated powder form of uranium created by removing impurities from raw uranium ore.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - is an autonomous international organization within the United Nations system that seeks to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for military purposes including nuclear weapons.

#### **What should a resolution on this question aim to achieve?**

Uranium is an immensely powerful and extremely expensive material. In times of conflict in a country uranium mines, or stores of the ore, may be targeted, by groups such as warring militias or terrorist organisations, either for profit or to produce weapons. For this reason, it is important that the UN sets in place comprehensive guidelines for what should be done to safeguard uranium mines and stores in times of conflict. This is not an easy feat to achieve but with good collaboration and constructive debate it can be done.

It should be remembered however that every conflict is different, and that national sovereignty should not be infringed upon, these should be reflected within the resolution. It should also be iterated that, for delegates who may not be aware, that the DISEC Committee does not have the power to deploy UN Military Forces to any area, this can only be done by the Security Council. Issues like these should rather be solved through diplomatic means.

#### **The Nigerien Crisis 2023 – a good reference you can make in relation to this question**

The Nigerien Crisis is a very recent example of when uranium mines may fall into the wrong hands.

In July 2023, a coup d'état occurred in Niger. President Mohamed Bazoum was removed and detained by the presidential guard. Following this General Abdourahamane Tchiani, Commander of the Presidential Guard, would declare himself leader of the military junta.

Much concern has been raised for Niger worldwide, for its people and its democracy. One specific area of concern, which is truly relevant to this question, is the concern around the uranium mines in the country. Niger is the world's 7<sup>th</sup> largest producer of uranium ore, with 2,020 metric tons produced in 2022, which was down from 2,991 produced in 2020. With such large and valuable production of the ore in Niger, what may happen to the mines due to instability is largely unknown. This is exactly why a resolution on this topic is vital, we should not have to find out what will happen to these mines if left unguarded.

#### **Further reading and citation of sources**

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/ensuring-safe-and-secure-passage-for-the-nuclear-industrys-vital-natural-resource>