



SPECIAL  
POLITICAL AND  
DECOLONIZATION  
COMMITTEE  
TOPIC BULLETIN

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## Contents:

Letters from the Chairs .....	3
Topic A: Ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands .....	4
Introduction .....	4
Topic History & Current Situation .....	5
Questions to Consider .....	6
Topic B: Radicalized Citizens Returning from Syria & Iraq ...	8
Introduction .....	8
Topic History & Current Situation .....	9
Questions to Consider .....	10
References .....	11



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Dear Delegates of SPECPOL,

Our names are Ryan Leung and Raehash Shah and we will be serving as this year's chair for the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. Welcome to AMUN 2019! We look forward to having a great conference this year and some great committee sessions. We hope you are all excited to have a great time at AMUN and to engage in meaningful debate, critical thinking, and collaboration. See you soon!

Best,

Ryan Leung and Raehash Shah  
Chairs, SPECPOL



## **Topic A: Ownership of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands**

### **Introduction**

The Diaoyu/Senkaku islands are a piece of land wanted by both China and Japan. China claims the islands as part of their historical territory. Japan, who has control over the islands, claims that the islands were not owned by China or any other country before they obtained control over the islands. The islands are land that also has massive amounts of natural resources. This includes schools of fish and potential offshore oil and natural gas reserves. Both countries, China and Japan, desperately need these resources. China, the world's biggest consumer of electricity, uses massive amounts of coal and oil to power its country and thus needs the islands for access to their oilfields. Japan, another large consumer of energy, is also projected to be in food storage. Therefore, in order to maintain Japan's current quality of life and secure food and energy resources, Japan needs the islands.



## Topic History & Current Situation

Throughout history, China and Japan have both controlled the islands at different points of time. In 1895, the Japanese government formally obtained control of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. Japan claims the islands were not owned by any country prior to acquiring the islands while China claims it has had sovereignty over the island chain for centuries. In 1945, Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, as part of Ryukyu Islands, are under the United States government's control after the surrender of Japan at the end of World War II because of the atomic bomb explosions of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1969, the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) identified potential oil and natural gas reserves near the islands. In 1971, the United States Senate passed the Okinawa Reversion treaty where the United States returned rights and interests obtained in World War II back to the Pacific Theater. In 1972, a specific agreement between Japan

and United States of America concerning the Ryukyu Islands and the Daito Islands is signed between Japan and the United States. This agreement returns the Senkaku Islands (which are a part of the Ryukyu Islands) to Japanese administration. This agreement sparks the first anti-Japanese protests, led by Taiwan. In 1978, The Japan-China Peace and Friendship Treaty which puts aside the dispute over the isles for future resolution. However, since this treaty numerous protests have led to further dispute over the island. In 1996, many Chinese protests took place. On September 26, Hong Kong activist, David Chan, drowned after jumping off the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands during a pro-China protest. On September 29, tens of thousands of people gathered in Hong Kong's Victoria Park to mourn David Chan's death and protest against Japan's claim of islands. On October 7, three activists from Hong Kong and Taiwan land on the Diaoyu Islands. In 2004, Activist Feng Jinhua and six others from China land on the islands. These are the first mainland activists to



successfully land on the islands. In 2010, a Chinese trawler collided with Japanese patrol boats near the islands which resulted in the Japanese arresting the Chinese skipper, Zhan Qixiong. This incident prompted the major diplomatic dispute between the two countries. In 2012, more acquisition from both countries caused further disputes. On August 14, Hong Kong activists reached the islands for the first time since 1996 with seven activists disembarking onto the island. On August 19, ten Japanese activists swam ashore and raised the Japanese flags on the island chain. On September 10, the Japanese government decided to purchase the islands from private Japanese owner to diffuse territorial tensions. On September 14, six Chinese surveillance ships sail into waters around Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands to declare China's territory and for "law enforcement". On September 15, the biggest anti-Japanese protests since 1972 are held in cities across China. The Japanese embassy in Beijing are surrounded by protesters throwing rocks, eggs, and bottles. On

September 16, anti-Japanese protests break out in dozens of mainland cities. In some cities, peaceful protests become violent as protesters clash with policemen, attack Japanese cars and smash Japanese restaurants. On September 17, Japanese firms like Toyota and Honda shut factories and offices across China. On September 18, two Japanese activists land on Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands while widespread anti-Japanese protests have been held across China at anniversary of Japan's invasion of Manchuria. Since 2012, anti-Japanese protests still occur throughout China. However, the possession of the islands is still disputed.

## Questions to Consider

What immediate steps can be taken by China and Japan to definitively solve the territorial dispute?

What significance do the islands have on the nation's politics or military?



What geopolitical significance do the islands have for the two countries and others in the region?

What symbolic message will acquisition of the island play for the country awarded?

What role does the Okinawa Reversion Treaty play in this dispute?



## **Topic B: Radicalized Citizens Returning from Syria & Iraq**

### **Introduction**

Over the course of human history, citizens have taken part in the wars of another country on various occasions. A famous example is Tadeusz Kosciuszko a famous Polish officer who fought in the American Revolution. While Kosciuszko's behavior is not entirely unusual, the current situation regarding the recruitment of foreign fighters to terrorism is of a different nature and scale. Over the past decade or so, the goal and methodology of foreign fighter development has been rapidly evolving. Foreign fighters present a major threat to many societies. In fact, foreign fighters are responsible for about 41% of terrorist plots. Foreign fighters have many different reasons for their inclinations towards becoming involved with terrorist organizations. Such reasons include religious obligations, economic desires, and political motives. The modern media has made recruitment much easier for many terrorist organizations, as they can now reach out to a wider audience while spending less resources. This



has led to a significant increase in the number of foreign fighters, especially in places like Syria and Iraq.

## Topic History & Current Situation

The most significant piece of UN legislation concerned with curbing the rise of foreign fighters is Security Council Resolution 2178. That resolution condemned violent extremism and emphasized the need to prevent terrorists' ability to mobilize and to eliminate the support of foreign fighters. The resolution demands that all member states shall, in accordance with international law, prevent the "recruiting, organizing, transporting or equipping of individuals who travel to a state other than their States of residence or nationality" for the purpose of involvement in terrorist acts. The resolution requires that all member states' legal systems are to be properly prepared to prosecute foreign fighters involved in terrorist plots. In a following agreement, Security Council Resolution 2199

further outlined and condemned the methods of funding for foreign fighters, which were identified as trade, oil, and external donations.

The danger posed by foreign fighters is an issue that has evolved at a rapid pace. The UN has been very concerned with the consequences of the conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Experienced fighters are now returning to their countries with combat exposure, who are also prone to further radicalization, many of whom have networks of aid and resources. As it currently stands, Tunisians make up the majority of the over 27,000 foreign fighter recruits, who overall, are from 86 nations. While about one quarter of foreign fighters come from the west, the vast majority hail from neighboring Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The strategy used to recruit foreign fighters is a multi-step process. Social media plays a huge role; ISIL's success in recruiting foreign fighters is largely attributed to the high quality and output of their propaganda content, enabling global outreach and promotion of their message. Groups also utilize



social media platforms to promote the “terrorist lifestyle”, which gives potential recruits a more appealing image of the everyday lives of terrorists. Terrorist groups aim to create what is called a “micro community” through their social media campaigns, hoping that it will serve as a call to action for foreign fighters. All of this had led to a major uptick in ISIL’s recruitment numbers. Even though there are many potential dangers for foreign recruits in traveling to join terrorist groups, they are still strongly convinced by these efforts and are more motivated than ever to wreak havoc on the world.

There are various methods that are utilized to finance terrorism and foreign fighters in the region. Such methods include SMS loans, sales tax fraud, the utilization of fraudulent businesses, front companies, and money laundering. More specifically, ISIL’s sources of income include the sale of illegal oil, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and human trafficking.

The UN has made it a priority to stop terrorist organizations at the

source, which is their recruitment. Despite past efforts and resolutions, the problem is still looming large, especially in Syria and Iraq. As foreign fighters keep pouring into the region, the violence and bloodshed continues. If the UN can successfully limit and compromise the recruiting efforts of terrorist organizations, countless lives will be saved, and peace might someday be restored to Syria and Iraq.

## Questions to Consider

How can member states most effectively share information with one another regarding the travel of foreign fighters?

How can justice be provided for victims?

How can member states collaborate to prevent individuals leaving their nations to become foreign fighters, and how can the UN combat recruitment efforts?



What measures can be taken to combat the illicit financing of foreign fighters?

What opportunities may exist regarding deradicalization programs upon the return of foreign fighters?

How has your nation voted on past resolutions dealing with foreign fighters, and what is your nation's history with foreign fighters entering or citizens joining foreign terrorist organizations?

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