

# **CSMUN 2026 : Academic Background Guide**

**Theme: “New territories of conflict: what humanity and what humanism?”**

## **A. Historical Background**

The nature of conflict has evolved beyond traditional territorial wars. Since the late 20th century, new domains of confrontation have emerged:

- Cyber space: cyberattacks, digital espionage, disinformation
- Outer space: militarization of satellites and anti-satellite weapons
- Biotechnology: dual-use research and biosecurity risks
- Artificial intelligence: autonomous weapons systems

Key developments include:

- Cold War technological competition
- Expansion of the internet in the 1990s
- Increasing reliance on digital infrastructure
- Recent conflicts involving cyber warfare (e.g. attacks on critical infrastructure)

These shifts raise fundamental questions about what “humanity” and “humanism” mean in non-physical battlefields.

## **B. Current Situation**

Today, conflicts increasingly occur in spaces where:

- Civilians are directly impacted
- Responsibility is difficult to attribute
- Existing international law is insufficient or unclear

Such as :

- Cyberattacks targeting civilian infrastructure (hospitals...)
- Autonomous drones in modern warfare
- Space militarization and satellite destruction
- Information warfare and election interference

Major concerns:

- Lack of regulation of AI weapons + Regulation gap in emerging conflict domains (cyber, AI, space) + Militarization of space
- Growing cyber insecurity + Inequality in technological access
- Ethical limits of technological warfare + Protection of civilians in non-physical warfare + Ethical limits of autonomous systems
- Military advantage vs ethical constraints (humanism)
- Sovereignty vs global governance

## **C. UN Actions**

The United Nations has addressed these issues through:

- Discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS)
- Groups of Governmental Experts on cybersecurity
- Treaties such as the Outer Space Treaty (1967)

However, there is no comprehensive framework regulating all new domains of conflict.

#### **D. Key Actors**

- Major powers: United States, China, Russia -> Western bloc: balance regulation with maintaining leadership ; China/Russia: prioritize sovereignty and state control
- Global South: emphasize fairness, access, and protection
- Emerging technological states: India, Israel = prefer flexible, non-binding frameworks
- International organizations: United Nations, NATO
- Private sector: tech companies (AI, cybersecurity)

These actors shape both the development and regulation of new conflict zones.

#### **E. Geopolitical Issues**

- Competition for technological dominance
- Inequality between technologically advanced and developing countries (innovation vs regulation, AI development vs control)
- Security vs freedom (surveillance, data control, privacy, laws, human rights)
- Risk of escalation without clear rules
- Sovereignty vs International Cooperation
- Efficiency of warfare vs Human dignity (humanism)

The central question remains: how can human dignity and ethical principles be preserved in increasingly dehumanized forms of conflict.

In this context, the challenge goes beyond the mere evolution of military technologies: it is about determining whether states will be able to build a regulatory framework suited to these new arenas of conflict. Their ability to act collectively will determine whether human dignity can be preserved in increasingly dematerialized conflicts.