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Research Report General Assembly Issue #1: The question of addressing the role of oil resources in prolonged armed conflicts.

Oil resources are defined as the amount of crude oil located in a particular region and are often a key factor in creating or prolonging conflict (Chen). Nations rich in natural resources, especially oil, natural gas, and minerals, are more prone to violence and conflict than other nations, so much so that since 1990, oil-producing countries have been twice as likely to have a civil war compared with non-oil-producing countries ("The Resource Curse"). This so called "resource curse" creates a massive threat to international peace and security.

Many conflicts have been historically attributed to oil resources. According to Human Rights Watch, when Sudan began exporting oil, it marked a "turning point" in the country's civil war and eventually became the main cause of the conflict. Oil revenues were used by the government to obtain weapons and ammunition, thereby exacerbating the conflict. Beyond that, the expansion of oil fields caused the displacement of many southern Nuer and Dinka people, leading to human rights abuses ("Sudan, Oil, and Human Rights"). A historical example of foreign intervention due to oil resources was the Persian Gulf War in which Saddam Hussein, then leader of Iraq, invaded Kuwait with the aim of acquiring the nation's oil reserves ("Persian Gulf War").

Oil resources remain a driver of many modern conflicts. Oil has played a major role in destabilizing Libya during the current ongoing civil crisis. Despite prospects of peace, Libya has returned to regional disputes over oil reserves. Foreign intervention due to Libya's oil reserves also has destabilized the region, as Türkiye has been supporting one side of the conflict in order to protect the maritime oil and gas deals they have brokered ("Civil Conflict in Libya").

The international community has recognized the potential for oil resources to cause and prolong conflict. For example, the Group of Seven Nations have met to discuss lowering the price cap of Russian oil from $60 per barrel to $45 per barrel, thereby diminishing revenues used to fund Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine (Payne and Irish). The UN Security Council has recently updated its sanctions on Libya; creating a new designation criteria which sanctions individuals who have provided support to groups involved in illicit exploitation or export of Libyan petroleum products ("Security Council Updates Sanctions").

Challenges remain while addressing the role of oil resources in prolonging conflict. Resource-rich nations often have "insufficient decision-making power" and "insufficient leadership on key resource challenges," making the implementation of solutions difficult (Aysan et al). The issue of avoiding decision making is also pressing; Russia has been able to evade sanctions through deceptive tactics such as indirect shipping routes ("Countering Russian"). Delegates should focus on ways to mitigate these issues and diminish the impact that oil resources have on prolonging conflict.

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