



XITH EDITION

MACE MUN 2025
Background Guide

Agenda: *Combating threats to international peace and security posed by Non-State Actors (NSAs) with special emphasis on the Middle East in light of recent events.*

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates!

We are very pleased to welcome you to the simulation of the *UNGA: DISEC* at *MACE MUN 2025*. It is an honour to serve as your Executive Board for the duration of the conference. This Background Guide is designed to give you an insight into the case at hand, so we hope this acts as only a *catalyst* for furthering your research, and not limited to just this guide. Please refer to it carefully. Remember, a thorough understanding of the problem is the first step to solving it.

Do understand that this Background Guide is in no way exhaustive and is only meant to provide you with enough background information to establish a platform for beginning the research. Delegates are highly recommended to do a good amount of research beyond what is covered in the Guide. The guide cannot be used as proof during the committee proceedings under any circumstances.

We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first-timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates are not how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how one manages the balance to respect disparities and differences of opinion and work around this while extending their foreign policy to present comprehensive solutions without compromising on their self-interests and initiate consensus building.

New ideas are by their very nature disruptive, but far less disruptive than a world set against the backdrop of stereotypes and regional instability due to which reform is essential in policy making and conflict resolution. At any point during your research, do not hesitate to contact the Executive Board Members for clarifications or in case you need help in any other aspect. We look forward to a fruitful discussion and an enriching experience with all of you.

Best regards,

Eswar Chava

Chairperson

Siddharth S

Vice Chairperson

Sanika Siva S

Rapporteur

Important Points to Remember

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

1. **Procedure:** The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organized and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of the agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.
2. **Foreign Policy:** Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.
3. **Role of the Executive Board:** The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.
4. **Nature of Source/Evidence:** This Background Guide is meant solely for research purposes and must not be cited as evidence to substantiate statements made during the conference. Evidence or proof for substantiating statements made during formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:
 - a. **United Nations:** Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body is held as a credible proof to support a claim or argument. Multilateral Organizations: Documents from international organizations like OIC, NATO, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.
 - b. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country.
 - c. **News Sources:**
 1. Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.
 2. State operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, may be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are – RIA Novosti (Russian Federation), Xinhua News Agency (People's Republic of China), etc.

****Please Note: Reports from NGOs working with UNESCO, UNICEF and other UN bodies will be accepted. Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia, or newspapers like the Guardian, Times of India, etc. be accepted. However, notwithstanding the criteria for acceptance of sources and evidence, delegates are still free to quote/cite from any source as they deem fit as a part of their statements.*

Guidelines

- Read the entirety of the background guide in the order it was written. Make sure to highlight the names of specific treaties, documents, resolutions, conventions, international bodies, events and any other specific incidents so that you can get back to them later and do a lot more thorough research.
- Understand some of the basic details regarding the country that you've been allotted whether this be the capital, current affairs regarding geopolitical situation, political hierarchy etc. While not strictly necessary, you never know when this can turn out to be handy. Geography Now's A - Z Country List has been a particularly helpful resource for this.
- Use a search engine of your choice to create as many tabs as possible for the highlighted terms from your background guide. Wikipedia or a YouTube video act as a great way to get a brief summary of the incidents at hand but such sources (especially Wikipedia articles) cannot be used in committee as sources.
- Delve into deeper research regarding the particular position of your allocation with the agenda at hand. Try searching for the voting stances of your allocation in related conventions and understanding the reasons for voting as so. UN Press Releases are also a helpful source for this matter.
- Find the website for the foreign ministry of the country you have been assigned alongside the "Permanent Mission of COUNTRY to the United Nations" website and search for a key term relating to the agenda, this should often give you statements from recent press conferences or UN committee sessions that can act as valuable sources of information in forming a position.
- Keep a handy copy of the Charter of the United Nations, whether as a .pdf file extension or a physical copy works. This contains the founding principles of the United Nations and contains articles that lay out the mandate of the six bodies that the United Nations is primarily divided into. Spend some additional time researching the specific mandate and functions of the committee that you have been assigned.

- The Executive Board may ask for the source of a statement that a delegate makes in committee either during a Point of Order circumstance or if said statement stands to be of interest to the Executive Board. Therefore, it is recommended that delegates keep track of their sources when making / disputing a claim and also ensure their validity. Please do remember that while you as a delegate are allowed to cite any source you wish during committee.

Hierarchy of evidence

Evidence can be presented from a wide variety of sources but not all sources are treated as equal. Here's the hierarchy in which evidence is categorised:

Tier 1: Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of the Nations' official organs or committees; any publication, statement, or document released by a UN member state in its own capacity. The evidence falling in this tier is considered most reliable during the simulation.

Tier 2: Includes: any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state. E.g.: Xinhua News (China), Prasar Bharti (India), BBC (United Kingdom) etc. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable in case no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.

Tier 3: Includes: any publication from news sources of international repute such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etc. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

Foreign Policy and Foreign Relations

Foreign policy, in simple terms, is what your country aims to achieve in regards to the issue at hand or in general with its relations with other countries.

1. What role must foreign policy play in your research?

Understanding the foreign policy of your country must be a checkbox that you tick off at the very beginning of your research.

Your foreign policy should dictate everything from the arguments you make, the reasoning you give for making those arguments, and the actions you take in the Council.

2. Where do I look to find foreign policy?

Most of the time, foreign policy is not explicitly stated. It must be inferred from the actions and statements issued by the country. Reading the meeting records from previous meetings of UNSC (or any other UN body where your country might have spoken on the issue) is a great place to start. If such records are unavailable, look for statements from your country's Foreign Ministry (or equivalent like Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs etcetera) and top leadership (PM, Pres., Secretary of State, Defence Minister).

Foreign Relations on the other hand refers to the diplomatic ties that one country has with another and considers elements such as the mutual presence of embassies, consulates, ambassadors & diplomatic dialogue. More often than not, foreign policy is what will be of your primary concern during your MUN but it is important to also consider any extremities in your allotted country's foreign relations.

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six important organs of the United Nations (UN), and the primary deliberative, strategy making and representative organ of the UN. The first committee of the General Assembly is the Disarmament and International Security Committee. It deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime.

The Mandate of DISEC

The committee considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments. The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly entitled to verbatim records coverage.

Introduction

Governance failures, combined with 21st-century social, economic, environmental and demographic conditions, have all contributed to paving the way for the rise of highly heterogeneous non-state and quasi-state actors in the Middle East. Has the state, then, been irremediably under-mined, or will the current transition lead to the emergence of new state entities? How can the crumbling of states and the redrawing of borders be reconciled with the exacerbation of traditional inter-state competition, including through proxy wars? How can a new potential regional order be framed and imagined?

Since the end of the Cold War, it has been highlighted that there was a shift in the power of policies in the international system. The predominance of the state as a conceptual and practical pillar has declined in the face of the rising centrality of non-state actors in the conduct of international relations. Non-state actors, possessing military capabilities operating outside the direct hierarchical control of the state, are increasingly defining trends in global and regional politics. Considering the most recent attack on Israel by Hamas, the concept of promoting the regional counter terrorism measures is of vital importance in this committee.

Middle East, despite the considerable recent developments, continues to be associated with violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by a host of violent Non-State Actors and numerous disreputable governments. The International Security continues to be largely influenced by the presence of Non-State Actors and their prominent presence in a volatile region, is a matter of grave concern. Before discussing about the threats posed by them, it is imperative to define the term 'Non-State Actors' hereby referred to as NSAs.

The threats posed by NSAs in the Middle East are at an all-time high, with Iran-backed militias, Hamas, Hezbollah, and other armed groups fuelling regional instability. The ongoing Israel-Hamas war and Hezbollah's escalation in Lebanon demonstrate how state-backed NSAs can trigger large-scale conflicts. The UN must develop stronger policies for the Middle East to prevent NSAs from exploiting power vacuums, acquiring advanced weapons, and destabilizing entire regions.

Non-State Actors

Non-state actors are entities that participate or act in international relations, with sufficient power to influence and cause change without any affiliation to established institutions of a state. These individuals or organizations have significant political, economic, or social influence without being allied to any particular country or state. Few UN experts report that, 'a non-state actor can be any actor on the international stage other than a sovereign state'.

The concept of non-state actors should include organisations that are largely or entirely autonomous from central government funding and control, and emanate from civil society or the market economy or from 'political impulses' beyond the control of the State. It also includes organisations that operate as, or participate in networks that extend the boundaries of two or more states, thus engaging in transnational relations, linking political systems, economies and societies. Finally, it includes organisations that seek to affect political outcomes either within one or more states or within international institutions.

While NSAs like IGOs play a crucial role in maintaining International Peace, the infamous NSAs like the Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs) pose a serious threat to International Peace and Security. In international relations, violent non-state actors (VNSA) are individuals and groups that are wholly or partly independent of state governments and which threaten to or use violence to achieve their goals.

Violent Non-State Actors in the Middle East

Within the broader category of non-state actors, the emergence of a range of armed groups across the Middle East has attracted great concern and international attention. The phenomenon of violent non-state actors is global in scope and by no means limited to the Middle East. Armed actors that are not formally linked to the State threaten security in different settings around the world. As with non-state actors, the category of violent non-state actor is also broad.

Violent challengers to the State's monopoly on the use of force can take many different forms, including tribal and ethnic groups, warlords, drug traffickers, youth gangs, terrorists, militias, insurgents and transnational terrorist organisations. Nor are their concerns always primarily political or directed towards the state level. Many are motivated less by ideology than by profit-seeking, while others are driven by local concerns. Examples include armed drug lords in Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and elsewhere, international smuggling rings, mafia-type organisations, community-based vigilantes and private security forces that have emerged in both politically stable and unstable countries.

In the Arab world, the social and political conditions which followed the uprisings of 2011 have provided the setting for the emergence of an array of armed non-state actors in several states.

- **Arms Trafficking:** Terrorist organizations have engaged in arms trafficking, which involves the illicit trade of weapons. They often acquire arms through black markets, smuggling, and corrupt networks. These weapons are then distributed among their members or sold to other groups or individuals.
- **Conflict and Instability:** Terrorist groups frequently operate in regions affected by conflict or political instability. Their actions can exacerbate existing conflicts or create new ones, leading to increased demand for weapons. The resulting instability provides opportunities for arms proliferation as various factions seek to arm themselves.
- **Exploitation of Weak Governance:** Terrorist groups take advantage of weak governance structures and porous borders to smuggle arms across national boundaries. They exploit corrupt officials, inadequate law enforcement, and inadequate border controls to facilitate the movement of weapons.

- **Capturing Military Arsenal:** In some cases, terrorist groups have managed to capture or seize weapons from military stockpiles. This can occur during conflicts, when security forces are overwhelmed or when there are instances of collusion or defection among military personnel. These captured weapons then become part of the terrorists' arsenal.
- **External Support:** Terrorist organizations may receive arms and military support from external actors sympathetic to their cause. This can occur through state sponsorship, where a nation provides weapons to a group it deems beneficial to its interests. Alternatively, sympathizers or private donors may provide financial resources to purchase weapons.

Regional Counter Terrorism measure taken by EU

Counter-Terrorism measures are measures taken at national, international or EU level aimed at preventing and tackling the terrorist threat. The EU implements counter terrorism measures adopted at UN level, and has adopted measures of its own to support the fight against terrorism.

Counter-terrorism measures and sanctions are sometimes mistakenly considered one and the same thing, due to the fact that certain sanctions regimes are targeting terrorist groups and organisations and thus contribute to the overall fight against terrorism financing. The latter are referred to here as CT sanctions. These existing CT sanctions consist of a travel ban on natural persons and an assets freeze, and prohibition from making funds and economic resources available to natural persons and entities. As such, CT sanctions are a powerful precautionary instrument to deny terrorists resources and mobility.

Over the years, responding to different threats, there has been a significant increase in CT measures, such as laws criminalizing any form of support to groups or individuals designated as “terrorists” or counter-terrorism clauses in funding agreements.

Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism adopted on 15 March 2017 includes a humanitarian exemption in its recitals. Recital 38 foresees that "the provision of humanitarian activities by impartial humanitarian organisations recognised by international law, including international humanitarian law, do not fall within the scope of this Directive, while taking into account the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union."

Problems faced by the Middle Eastern Countries

The Middle East, a region with a rich history and diverse cultures, has long been plagued by the spectre of terrorism. Despite the shared threat, a glaring deficiency persists: a lack of unity in combating terrorism. This discord among Middle Eastern nations has impeded their collective efforts to eradicate this menace.

The deep-seated political and ideological differences have led to a lack of trust among Middle Eastern countries. These nations have historically competed for regional dominance, and their conflicting interests often overshadow the common goal of counterterrorism. The Sunni-Shia

divide, exemplified by the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, exacerbates these tensions. As long as these rivalries persist, unity remains elusive.

Secondly, external powers have exacerbated the disunity. Foreign interventions, driven by geopolitical interests, have further complicated the situation. Superpowers like the United States and Russia have supported various factions, indirectly perpetuating the cycle of violence. This has created a sense of insecurity and mistrust among Middle Eastern nations.

The primary that comes into picture is the absence of a centralized authority to coordinate counterterrorism efforts has hindered cooperation. A unified regional organization could play a pivotal role in fostering collaboration, intelligence sharing, and joint military operations. However, such an organization remains a distant dream, as many nations prioritize their individual interests over collective security.

The lack of unity in the Middle East to combat terrorism is a formidable obstacle to peace and stability in the region. To effectively address this issue, Middle Eastern nations must put aside their differences, prioritize shared security, and work towards a collaborative, regional approach to counterterrorism. Only through such unity can the Middle East hope to overcome the scourge of terrorism and create a more peaceful and prosperous future for its people.

Case Studies of VNSAs in the Middle East

1. Al-Nusra Front

Al-Nusra Front is one of the most capable al-Qaeda-affiliated groups operating in Syria during the conflict. The group in January 2012 announced its intention to overthrow Syrian President Bashar al-Asad's regime, and since then has mounted hundreds of insurgent-style and suicide attacks against regime and security service targets across the country. The group is committed not only to ousting the regime, but also seeks to expand its reach regionally and globally. Initially, al-Nusra Front did not publicize its links to al-Qaeda in Iraq or Pakistan.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) played a significant role in founding the group. ISIL predecessor organizations used Syria as a facilitation hub and transformed this facilitation and logistics network into an organization capable of conducting sophisticated explosives and firearms attacks. ISIL leaders since the beginning of al-Nusra Front's participation in the conflict provided their facilitation hub with personnel and resources, including money and weapons.

During 2013, al-Nusra Front and ISIL were consumed by a public rift stemming from ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's April 2013 statement announcing the creation of ISIL and claiming the merger of both groups. Al-Nusra Front and ISIL have strategies for Syria, and a public merger between them probably would have undermined al-Nusra Front's autonomy in the country. In April 2013, al-Nusra Front's leader, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri.

During early 2014, the rift between al-Nusra Front and ISIL in which ISIL has openly accused al-Qaeda senior leaders of deviating from what it perceives as the correct militant path has taken place not just on the ground but in social media as well. Al-Nusra Front's leaders probably have learned lessons from members' previous experiences in Iraq and have sought to win over the Syrian populace by providing parts of the country with humanitarian assistance and basic civil services. Several Syria-based armed opposition groups cooperate and fight alongside Sunni extremist groups, including al-Nusra Front, and are dependent upon them for expertise, training, and weapons. Al-Nusra Front has managed to seize territory, including military bases and infrastructure in northern Syria.

The group's cadre is predominantly composed of Syrian nationals, many of whom are veterans of previous conflicts, including the Iraq war. Thousands of fighters from around the world have traveled to Syria since early 2012 to support oppositionist groups, and some fighters aspire to connect with al-Nusra Front and other extremist groups. Several Westerners have joined al-Nusra Front, including a few who have died in suicide operations. Western government officials have raised concerns that capable individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violent acts. An al-Nusra Front attack in May 2014 the first known suicide bombing by an American in Syria targeted regime personnel, highlighting the involvement of US persons in the conflict.

2. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is a Sunni extremist group based in Yemen that has orchestrated numerous high-profile terrorist attacks. AQAP emerged in January 2009 following the unification of Yemen and Saudi terrorist elements, signalling the group's intent to serve as a hub for regional terrorism in the Arabian Peninsula. AQAP was preceded by al-Qaeda in Yemen (AQY), composed of several al-Qaeda veterans who escaped from a Sanaa prison. AQAP's original leadership was composed of the group's now-deceased amir Nasir al-Wahishi; now-deceased deputy amir Sa'id al-Shahri; and Wahishi's successor as amir, Qasim al-Rimi. Dual US-Yemeni citizen Anwar al-Aulaqi, who had a worldwide following as a radical ideologue and propagandist, was the most prominent member of AQAP; he was killed in an explosion in September 2011. Throughout 2015, AQAP has sustained rapid and cumulative losses to its leadership ranks, including the death of Nasir al-Wahishi. Shortly after Wahishi's death, AQAP released a video naming the group's long-time operational commander Qasim al-Rimi as Wahishi's successor.

The group has targeted local, US, and Western interests in the Arabian Peninsula, as well as abroad. One of the most notable of these operations occurred when AQAP dispatched Nigerian-born Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to detonate an explosive device aboard a Northwest Airlines flight on 25 December 2009 the first attack inside the United States by an al-Qaeda affiliate since 11 September 2001. That was followed by an attempt to send explosive-laden packages to the United States on 27 October 2010. In January 2015, two French nationals attacked the Charlie Hebdo magazine's Paris office, an operation one of the attackers claimed Anwar al-Aulaqi funded. A week after the attack, AQAP released a video on Twitter claiming

that the group chose the target and financed the operation. AQAP has also sought to expand its media presence by launching the English-language publication, Inspire magazine, in 2010.

AQAP has also undertaken a number of attacks targeting the Yemeni Government, including a complex attack in December 2013 against Yemen's Ministry of Defense that killed at least 52 people; and in February 2014 the group freed over two dozen prisoners from Sanaa's central prison. Since the Houthi rise to power in early 2015, AQAP elements have prioritized combating Houthi expansion and regularly engage in attacks and skirmishes with the growing Houthi presence. AQAP also has formed a stronghold in Mukalla, Hadramawt Governorate, where it has freed prisoners, robbed banks, and taken over government facilities.

3. Al-Qaeda

Osama Bin Laden formed al-Qaeda in 1988 with Arabs who fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union, and declared its goal as the establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate throughout the Muslim world. Toward this end, al-Qaeda seeks to unite Muslims to fight the West, especially the United States, as a means of overthrowing Muslim regimes al-Qaeda deems "apostate," expelling Western influence from Muslim countries, and defeating Israel. Al-Qaeda issued a statement in February 1998 under the banner of "the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders", saying it was the duty of all Muslims to kill US citizens civilian and military and their allies everywhere. The group merged with the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (al-Jihad) in June 2001.

On 11 September 2001, 19 al-Qaeda suicide attackers hijacked and crashed four US commercial jets two into the World Trade Center in New York City, one into the Pentagon near Washington, D.C., and a fourth into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania leaving nearly 3,000 people dead. Al-Qaeda also directed the 12 October 2000 attack on the USS Cole in the port of Aden, Yemen, which killed 17 US sailors and injured another 39, and conducted the bombings in August 1998 of the US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 224 people and injuring more than 5,000. Since 2002, al-Qaeda and affiliated groups have conducted attacks worldwide, including in Europe, North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.

In 2005, Ayman al-Zawahiri, then Bin Laden's deputy, publicly claimed al-Qaeda's involvement in the 7 July 2005 bus bombings in the United Kingdom. In 2006, British security services foiled an al-Qaeda plot to detonate explosives on up to 10 transatlantic flights originating from London's Heathrow airport. During that time, the numbers of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups increased. Following Bin Laden's death in 2011, al-Qaeda leaders moved quickly to name al-Zawahiri as his successor.

While al-Zawahiri leads a small but influential cadre of senior leaders widely called al-Qaeda Core, the group's cohesiveness the past three years has diminished because of leadership losses from counterterrorism pressure in Afghanistan and Pakistan and the rise of other organizations such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that serve as an alternative for some disaffected extremists. The 2015 deaths of Nasir al-Wahishi and Abu Khalil al-Sudani, two of al-Qaeda's most experienced top leaders, has hindered the organization's core functions.

Nonetheless, al-Qaeda and its affiliates in South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East remain a resilient organization committed to conducting attacks in the United States and against American interests abroad. The group has advanced a number of unsuccessful plots in the past several years, including against the United States and Europe.

4. Hezbollah

Formed in 1982 in response to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Hezbollah (the "Party of God"), a Lebanon-based Shia terrorist group, advocates Shia empowerment globally. Hezbollah has been involved in numerous terrorist attacks, including the suicide truck bombings of the US Embassy in Beirut in April 1983, the US Marine barracks in Beirut in October 1983, and the US Embassy annex in Beirut in September 1984, as well as the hijacking of TWA 847 in 1985 and the Khobar Towers attack in Saudi Arabia in 1996.

Hezbollah has participated in the Lebanese Government since 1992. With the 2004 passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which called for the disarmament of all armed militias in Lebanon, Hezbollah has focused on justifying its retention of arms by casting itself as the defender of Lebanon against Israeli aggression. On 12 July 2006, Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, sparking the 2006 war in which Hezbollah claimed victory by virtue of its survival. It has since sought to use the conflict to justify its need to retain its arms as a Lebanese resistance force. In May 2008, Hezbollah militants seized parts of Beirut in response to calls by the government to restrict Hezbollah's secure communications and arms. In negotiations to end the violence, Hezbollah gained veto power in the government and retained its arms and secure communications.

In July 2011 the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) indicted four Hezbollah members including a senior Hezbollah official for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who was killed by a car-bomb in Beirut on 14 February 2005. Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah has publicly stated that Hezbollah will not allow any members to be arrested, and continues to paint the STL as a proxy of Israel and the United States.

Nasrallah publicly indicated in May 2013 that Hezbollah was supporting Bashar al-Asad's regime by sending fighters to Syria, including Iraqi Shia militias. The group also supports Palestinian rejectionist groups in their struggle against Israel and provides training for Iraqi

Shia militants attacking Western interests in Iraq. The European Union designated Hezbollah's military wing as a terrorist organization on 22 July 2013, following the March conviction that year of a Hezbollah member in Cyprus, the July 2012 bus bombing in Bulgaria, and the group's intervention in Syria.

Hezbollah launched missiles and drone attacks on northern Israel in solidarity with Hamas. Israel responded with heavy airstrikes on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon. Fears of a full-scale Israel-Hezbollah war grew as Israeli forces threatened to expand operations beyond Gaza. Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, warned that Lebanon would retaliate if Israeli ground forces entered Gaza.

Iran has been a key backer of both Hamas and Hezbollah, supplying weapons, intelligence, and financial aid. Following the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, the United States warned Iran against direct involvement. Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria launched attacks on US bases, prompting American airstrikes against Iranian-linked targets. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) allegedly helped train Hamas operatives before the October 7 attack, further deepening tensions.

5. Hamas

Hamas formed in late 1987 at the beginning of the first Palestinian intifada (uprising). Its roots are in the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and it is supported by a robust sociopolitical structure inside the Palestinian territories. The group's charter calls for establishing an Islamic Palestinian state in place of Israel and rejects all agreements made between the PLO and Israel. Hamas' strength is concentrated in the Gaza Strip and areas of the West Bank.

Hamas has a military wing known as the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades that has conducted many anti-Israel attacks in both Israel and the Palestinian territories since the 1990s. These attacks have included large-scale bombings against Israeli civilian targets, small-arms attacks, improvised roadside explosives, and rocket attacks.

The group in early 2006 won legislative elections in the Palestinian territories, ending the secular Fatah party's hold on the Palestinian Authority and challenging Fatah's leadership of the Palestinian nationalist movement. Hamas continues to refuse to recognize or renounce violent resistance against Israel and in early 2008 conducted a suicide bombing, killing one civilian, as well as numerous rocket and mortar attacks that have injured civilians.

Hamas in June 2008 entered into a six-month agreement with Israel that significantly reduced rocket attacks. Following the temporary calm, Hamas resumed its rocket attacks, which

precipitated a major Israeli military operation in late December 2008. After destroying much of Hamas' infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, Israel declared a unilateral cease-fire on 18 January 2009.

Hamas and Fatah in April 2011 agreed to form an interim government and hold elections, reaffirming this pledge in February 2012. Hamas departed its long-time political headquarters in Damascus in February and dispersed throughout the region as Syrian President Bashar al-Asad's crackdown on opposition in the country made remaining in Syria untenable for the group. In May 2012, Hamas claimed to have established a 300-strong force to prevent other Palestinian resistance groups from firing rockets into Israel. Conflict broke out again in November.

While Hamas had worked to maintain the cease-fire brokered by Egypt that ended the week-long conflict, other Palestinian militant groups flouted the cease-fire with sporadic rocket attacks throughout 2013 and 2014. Fatah and Hamas in April 2014 agreed to form a technocratic unity government headed by PA Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and to hold legislative elections within six months. Hamas has not renounced violent resistance against Israel even while pursuing reconciliation with Fatah.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel, firing thousands of rockets and conducting a large-scale incursion into southern Israel. Hamas militants killed over 1,200 Israelis and took more than 240 hostages, marking the deadliest attack on Israel in decades. In response, Israel declared war on Hamas, launching a massive aerial and ground campaign in Gaza. The Gaza humanitarian crisis worsened, with tens of thousands of Palestinian casualties, major infrastructure destruction, and UN concerns over war crimes allegations. Hezbollah in Lebanon began launching cross-border rocket attacks on Israel, escalating fears of a regional war.

6. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

ISIL is also known as DA'ESH or DA'ISH, an acronym for its name in Arabic. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant is a terrorist organization that has exploited the conflict in Syria and sectarian tensions in Iraq to entrench itself in both countries. ISIL's stated goal is to solidify and expand its control of territory once ruled by early Muslim caliphs and to govern through implementation of its strict interpretation of sharia. The group's strength and expansionary agenda pose an increasing threat to US regional allies and US facilities and personnel in the Middle East as well as in the West.

ISIL formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq and later the Islamic State of Iraq was established in April 2004 by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi, who pledged his group's allegiance to Osama Bin Laden. The group targeted Coalition and Iraqi forces and civilians to pressure foreigners to

leave Iraq, reduce Iraqi popular support for the US and Iraqi Government, and attract recruits. The group suffered a series of setbacks starting in 2007 resulting from the combination of Sunni civilian resistance and a surge in Coalition and Iraqi Government operations against the group before rebounding in late 2011 after Coalition forces withdrew, amid growing Sunni discontent with the Shia-dominated Iraqi Government.

While gaining strength in Iraq, ISIL also expanded its presence in Syria and established al-Nusra Front as a cover for its activities there. Disputes over the group's strategic direction in Syria led to conflict and ultimately ISIL's disavowal by al-Qaeda in February 2014, setting the stage for ISIL's subsequent challenge to al-Qaeda for leadership of the global extremist movement.

In June 2014, ISIL unilaterally declared the establishment of an Islamic caliphate and called on all Muslims to pledge allegiance to the group. Since then, ISIL has announced the establishment of eight provinces outside of Iraq and Syria, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Algeria, the Caucasus, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, West Africa, and Yemen. It has also continued to attract a large number of foreigners to Iraq and Syria—including thousands of Westerners—to take part in the group's campaign of violence and help the "caliphate" grow.

ISIL's vast territorial safe haven in Iraq and Syria, access to Western foreign fighters, and substantial financial resources pose a persistent and growing threat to the United States. Since September 2014, ISIL's leadership has issued multiple public calls for attacks against US and Western interests around the world, and the group has made similar calls for attacks in its English-language magazine, Dabiq. ISIL members and sympathizers have responded by planning or conducting attacks at an unprecedented pace at least 37 plots between February 2014 and July 2015.

Funding of Terrorism

What is Financing of Terrorism?

Terrorist financing involves the solicitation, collection or provision of funds with the intention that they may be used to support terrorist acts or organizations. Funds may stem from both legal and illicit sources. More precisely, according to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, a person commits the crime of financing of terrorism "if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and wilfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out" an offense within the scope of the Convention.

The primary goal of individuals or entities involved in the financing of terrorism is therefore not necessarily to conceal the sources of the money but to conceal both the financing and the nature of the financed activity.

What is Money Laundering?

Criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, corruption and others, tend to generate large amounts of profits for the individuals or groups carrying out the criminal act. However, by using funds from such illicit sources, criminals risk drawing the authorities' attention to the underlying criminal activity and exposing themselves to criminal prosecution. In order to benefit freely from the proceeds of their crime, they must therefore conceal the illicit origin of these funds.

Briefly described, "money laundering" is the process by which proceeds from a criminal activity are disguised to conceal their illicit origin. More precisely, according to the Vienna Convention and the Palermo Convention provisions on money laundering, it may encompass three distinct, alternative *actus reas*: (i) the conversion or transfer, knowing that such property is the proceeds of crime (ii) the concealment or disguise of the true nature, source, location, disposition, movement or ownership of or rights with respect to property, knowing that such property is the proceeds of crime; and (iii) the acquisition, possession or use of property, knowing, at the time of the receipt, that such property is the proceeds of crime.

The international standard for the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism has been established by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is a 33-member organization with primary responsibility for developing a world-wide standard for anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism. The FATF was established by the G-7 Summit in Paris in 1989 and works in close cooperation with other key international organizations, including the IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations, and FATF-style regional bodies.

How are Efforts to Combat Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism linked?

Similar methods are used for both money laundering and the financing of terrorism. In both cases, the actor makes an illegitimate use of the financial sector. The techniques used to launder money and to finance terrorist activities/terrorism are very similar and in many instances identical. An effective anti-money laundering/counter financing of terrorism framework must therefore address both risk issues: it must prevent, detect and punish illegal funds entering the financial system and the funding of terrorist individuals, organizations and/or activities. Also, AML and CFT strategies converge; they aim at attacking the criminal or terrorist organization through its financial activities, and use the financial trail to identify the various components of

the criminal or terrorist network. This implies to put in place mechanisms to read all financial transactions, and to detect suspicious financial transfers.

How are Corruption and Money Laundering linked?

Anti-corruption and anti-money laundering work are linked in numerous ways, and especially in recommendations that promote, in general, transparency, integrity and accountability. Recommendation 6 of the FATF 40+9 Recommendations and Paragraph 7 of the Methodology for Assessing Compliance with the FATF 40+9 Recommendations, are particularly relevant to anti-corruption efforts. The essential connections are:

- Money laundering (ML) schemes make it possible to conceal the unlawful origin of assets. Corruption is a source of ML as it generates large amounts of proceeds to be laundered. Corruption may also enable the commission of a ML offense and hinder its detection, since it can obstruct the effective implementation of a country's judicial, law enforcement and legislative frameworks.
- When countries establish corruption as a predicate offense to a money laundering charge, money laundering arising as a corrupt activity can be more effectively addressed. When authorities are empowered to investigate and prosecute corruption-related money laundering they can trace, seize and confiscate property that is the proceeds of corruption and engage in related international cooperation.
- When corruption is a predicate offense for money laundering, AML preventive measures can also be more effectively leveraged to combat corruption.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Secretariat is currently coordinating a project to draft a paper outlining the links between corruption and money laundering that may facilitate the implementation of international AML/CFT standards.

Conclusion

The emergence of violent non-state actors in the Middle East in recent years is correlated with the growing weakness of many states in the region. States with low levels of legitimacy are unable to maintain the loyalty of many within their populations. When such states resort to repression they typically provoke opposition. Similarly, when states exclude significant elements of their populations through neglect, lack of capacity or some other form of discrimination, they can create the conditions within which violent non-state actors emerge. Where the State fails to provide security or other basic services, violent non-state actors can move in to provide alternative governance, services and collective goods thus increasing their own legitimacy in the process.

The weakness of central state institutions in Libya and Yemen together with the exclusionary and repressive practices of the State in Iraq and Syria have combined with other factors to prompt the emergence of an array of violent non-state actors that pose significant threat to domestic and regional security. However, the structural context from which violent non-state

actors emerge make appropriate policy responses, on both the domestic and international levels more difficult to construct.

Ad hoc military strategies can address the problem of violent non-state actors in the immediate term. They cannot, however, resolve the problems of weak state legitimacy and capacity or the absence of effective state institutions, which often constitute the backdrop against which such actors emerge. The situation is further complicated by a paradoxical aspect of the nature of non-state actors in the Middle East. As is the case, elsewhere, when non-state actors take up arms against regimes in some states, quite often they do so with the support of others. To this extent, the 'non-state' component of those actors may be quite diluted.

This has already been visible for some time in the cases of Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Each of these non-state actors has enjoyed the support of Syria and, especially, Iran while retaining significant autonomy over their behaviour. Likewise, the conflicts in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen have drawn an array of regional actors into the fray in support of one involved group or another. The UAE and Qatar have backed conflicting sides in Libya. Saudi Arabia, several Gulf states, Turkey and Iran have all been associated with different armed groups in the Syrian conflict. Iran supports Shia militias fighting ISIS in Iraq and supports the Houthis in Yemen in the face of Saudi opposition.

Thus, the problem of violent non-state actors in the Middle East requires solutions that are located not merely at the local level but also at the broader geopolitical levels. Ad-hoc responses that target these groups without addressing the structural conditions that promote their emergence are unlikely to have any long-term prospects for success and hence the Middle Eastern countries must come together to formulate collective counter terrorism strategies.

Existing Frameworks and Initiatives taken

1. *Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)*: The CTC was established by the UN Security Council in 2001 to coordinate global efforts to combat terrorism. The committee works to promote international cooperation, exchange of information, and best practices in the fight against terrorism.
2. *Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*: In 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which outlines a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating terrorism. The strategy includes four pillars: addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, preventing and combating terrorism, building states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, and ensuring respect for human rights.
3. *Convention on the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism*: The UN has adopted several conventions aimed at preventing the financing of terrorism. The Convention on the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism, adopted in 1999, requires states to criminalize the financing of terrorism and cooperate in preventing and prosecuting such activities.

4. *International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism*: The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2005 and entered into force in 2007. The Convention criminalizes acts of nuclear terrorism and requires states to take measures to prevent, detect, and respond to such acts.
5. *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings*: The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1997 and entered into force in 2001. The Convention criminalizes terrorist bombings and requires states to take measures to prevent and suppress such acts.

Relevant Security Council Resolutions

1. *UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999)*: The resolution established the UN sanctions regime against the Taliban and Al-Qaida and required all member states to freeze the assets of designated individuals and entities.
2. *UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001)*: The resolution was adopted in response to the 9/11 attacks and required all member states to take a range of measures to combat terrorism, including criminalizing the financing of terrorism, denying safe haven to terrorists, and cooperating on law enforcement and intelligence matters.
3. *UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004)*: The resolution requires all member states to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors, including terrorist groups.
4. *UNSC Resolution 1624 (2005)*: The resolution calls on member states to take measures to prevent the incitement of terrorism, including through education and the media.
5. *UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014)*: The resolution calls on member states to take measures to prevent the travel of foreign terrorist fighters and to criminalize the recruitment and financing of such fighters.
6. *UNSC Resolution 2396 (2017)*: The resolution calls on member states to take measures to prevent and disrupt terrorist attacks, including through border security, intelligence-sharing, and countering the use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

Questions a Resolution must Answer? (QARMA)

- How do the Non-State Actors acquire the weapons and the funds they require?
 - How should the word “Terrorist” be defined?
 - Does the political instability in a region have an impact on the International Peace and Security?
 - How do the Non-State Actors acquire modern weapons? Does any member state supply Small Arms and Light Weapons to them?
 - What sort of Counter Terrorism and more importantly confidence building measures can be proposed for this geographical location?
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- What steps can be taken to prevent the WMDs to fall into the hands of VNSAs?
 - How can VNSAs be plucked at the grass root level, i.e, at their grooming stage?
 - How should the international community respond to state-sponsored NSAs (e.g., Iran’s support for Hezbollah and Hamas)?
 - Should there be specific sanctions or diplomatic actions against countries that arm or fund NSAs?