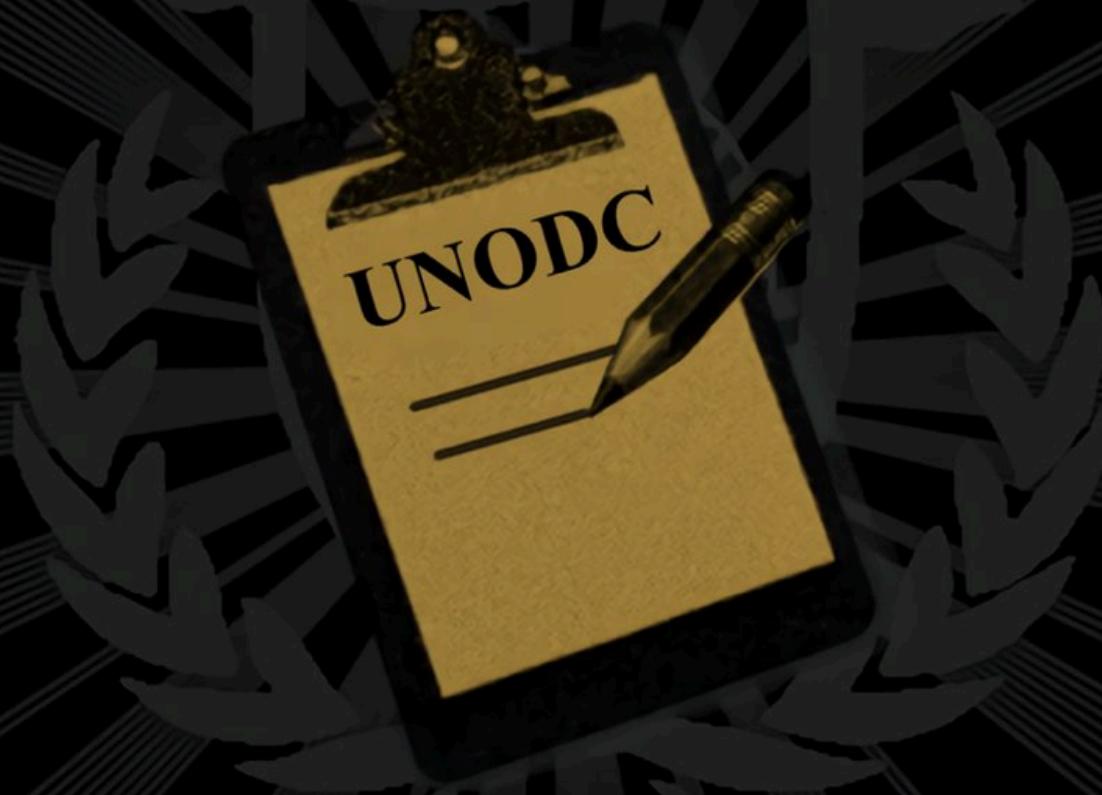


BACKGROUND GUIDES



WESMUN
2026

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Letter from the DIAS

Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) at WESMUN 2026. We are honored to act as your chairs for this committee, and are optimistic that the discussions and debates of this MUN will be both productive and engaging. As your chairs, we are dedicated to creating an atmosphere in which all delegates are comfortable and feel confident enough to express their country's policies, whilst participating in multiple interactive debates.

This background guide is going to act as your foundation when researching your country's stance for each topic. It will provide you with a general overview of our committee topics by emphasizing pressing matters, major parties involved and the solutions you must provide in your resolution paper. Although this guide proves to be a good source of background understanding, we strongly encourage that each delegate conducts individual research and further understands the viewpoint of their assigned country. It is important that you have an in-depth understanding of the topics we will cover in order for us to conduct an efficient conference. We suggest that you do not limit your research to the contents of this document.

Our topics of focus this year are:

1. Addressing the challenges faced by individuals who use substances, including homelessness, violence and the impact of drug distribution
2. Addressing the causes of cybercrime and terrorism financing through digital and financial networks

We will address the complex difficulties faced by people who use substances through approaches that focus on health, human rights and community support. Additionally, we will explore how cybercrime and terrorism financing take place throughout different systems, and highlight the importance of global cooperation and developing stronger investigative tools. As a delegate of UNODC, you are expected to understand the legal and ethical details of these issues, so we can conduct an efficient conference.

We advise that you come well prepared, and ensure you are actively involved throughout the entire session in order to make the most out of this opportunity. If you have any questions, concerns or doubts, please do not hesitate to contact the chairs, we would be delighted to assist you in any way. We look forward to a highly anticipated and rewarding experience for all our delegates.

Best regards,

Chairs of UNODC - WESMUN 2026 (Ayia Waleed, Trufy Chocho, Amaan Anas)

Introduction to committee

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) turns out to be the principal body of the United Nations (UN) that during a global perspective through the various issues of illicit drugs and the related problems of organized crime, corruption, terrorism, and a more efficient criminal justice system. UNODC, which was founded in 1997, not only supports the member states through research and policy guidance but also provides technical assistance and has its presence in more than 150 countries around the globe. The international legal instruments that form the basis of the UNODC mandate include both the UN drug control conventions and the conventions against organized crime and corruption as well. The agency advocates a view that is both well-reasoned and well-grounded in facts, which combines law enforcement with public health, human rights, and sustainable development, and recognizes the need for varied and comprehensive responses to addiction that do not include just penalties.

In the UNODC context of drug control, the agency works on the issue of drugs from the supply side and demand side, but mainly the latter. The focus of the demand side is on prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and social reintegration strategies for at-risk groups affected by homelessness, violence, and social exclusion. The committee also addresses supply by disrupting the illegal drug production and trade, fortifying the borders, fighting money laundering, and at the same time, reducing the power and influence of organized crime groups. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNODC calls on the delegates to search for holistic, collaborative strategies that tackle the root causes, while at the same time, ensuring human rights, promoting health and stability, and maintaining international peace.

The committee has acknowledged the necessity of tackling not only the sociomoral issues but also the very structure of society which contributes to substance abuse and engaging in illegal drug markets. Nowadays, poverty, unemployment, migration, and lack of education and healthcare are among the main factors. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) advocates for community-based approaches and gender-sensitive policies along with prevention strategies directed towards the youth as a necessity in this context. The committee motivates such cooperation between the states, NGOs, and international organizations so as to seamless transition of sustainable, long-term solutions that reduce harm, build public confidence in the institutions, and support people on the path of recovery, reintegration, and social stability at both national and international levels.

Agenda 1:
Addressing the challenges
faced by individuals who use
substances, including
homelessness, violence, and
the impact of drug
distribution

Introduction to the Agenda

The worldwide problem of substance use is not only an individual health-related issue but also a social one since it is deeply interconnected with many things for example: homelessness, violence, social exclusion, and the illegal drug trade. In most cases, people who use drugs are pushed out of society for unstable housing, lack of healthcare, unemployment, and discrimination which they face all through their lives. Drug addiction leads to and at the same time is caused by homelessness. They are both making treatment and rehabilitation extremely hard to access and increasing the risk for the addicted persons to get sick, mistreated, or even killed. Women, children, the homeless, and the marginalized populations suffer the most from this situation as they have to deal with more incidences of rape, sex-slavery, and forced recruitment by the mafias.

Introduction to the Agenda

Historical context:

In several areas, the strict drug laws and too much reliance on imprisonment have not only failed to resolve the issues of social determinants but have also made the marginalized groups more and more impoverished and addicted to drugs. The illegal drug trade, which is one of the main pillars of organized crime, brings along a range of problems that cut across the whole of society and even though it might be in an individual's life or a specific area. Besides that, it not only creates national and international unrest but also causes wars and corruption. The drug trade is the root of origin and the reason for existence for many organized crimes which eventually use these funds to buy weapons for certain factions, bribe officials, and even eliminate any government presence in the poor and war-affected regions. All this is happening amidst a power struggle for control over the drug business, and, unfortunately, the addicts are the ones who suffer the most. Substance use and the illegal drug trade have faced different kinds of challenges over the years, mainly determined by global policies and international treaties. The 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs marked the beginning of a period in which countries all over the world opted for the criminalization of all drug-related activities and very strict control of drug production. Trafficking and drug abuse as well as extensive incarceration and social exclusion and organized crime were some of the negative by-products of the strict regulation. The two main treaties, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1988 UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic, continued to push the world towards a more punitive way of dealing with drugs. The aim was to cut down on trafficking and to provide health protection for the community, but the resulting damages were immense. Certain areas of the world like Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan saw increased violence and corruption as a result of the war on drugs and the policy that was allied with it. Such policies have not only trapped these regions in the vicious cycle of addiction, poverty, and instability but also made the cycle continue till today.

Introduction to the Agenda

Current situation :

In the current scenario, talking about substance use and the illicit drug trade, the entire world faces a complex and a tough situation. Despite the fact that international treaties and local regulations are trying to both stop and ban drug production and distribution, the new trends that have appeared are making the already existing problems even worse. The general acceptance of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamines, fentanyl, and new psychoactive substances has resulted in a significant increase of drug markets in terms of both the death toll and the volume of drugs. One of the major contributing factors to the issue of homelessness in urban areas is substance dependence which has led to the closing off of access for those individuals through the health risks, violence, and social exclusion they face. Among those affected, women, children, and people from marginalized communities continue to face the greatest hardships as they deal with exploitation, trafficking, and forced recruitment by organized crime groups. On the other hand, drug trafficking has become increasingly complex as the networks are using the internet, financial strategies, and the movement of goods across borders which are making it tough for law enforcement and regulatory bodies. Health care systems are still not uniformly ready in terms of providing treatment, rehabilitation, and harm reduction that are easy to access especially in low and middle-income nations. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the Afghanistan war and the strife in Latin America has led to an increase in the number of poor people, the breakdown of social services, and the drug-affected population engulfment in vulnerabilities; hence the need for governments, NGOs, and international organizations to be very vocal in their advocacy for integrated strategies that through law enforcement, health-centered approaches, education, and social protection, yet gaps in coordination, funding, and human rights adherence continue to hinder effective global responses.

Introduction to the Agenda

Past UN actions:

1. Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)

The convocation devised the global manner of the control of narcotic drugs. It was meant to limit the manufacturing and the distribution of drugs to the medical and scientific use only.

Yet, it is still the backbone of the regulation of the drug policy worldwide.

2. United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988)

This convention greatly fortified the world-wide co-operation against drug trafficking. There were also new measures taken against money laundering and precursor chemical diversion.

Countries were instructed that any such trafficking activities would be considered as a criminal act.

3. Establishment of UNODC (1997)

It was in the year 1997 that the UN decided on the establishment of UNODC which would amalgamate drug control and crime prevention.

It was mainly through this cooperation, research, and technical support that Governments received better assistance.

Since then, UNODC has slowly but surely become the focal point of contact regarding drug and transnational crime issues.

4. UNODC World Drug Report (Annual)

The UNODC provides worldwide information on the production and consumption of drugs that is very detailed.

It is an aiding factor in the setting up of international responses and the making of policy on the basis of evidence.

The report indicates the direction of drug trafficking, violence and the consequences on public health as well.

5. UN System Common Position on Drug Policy (2019)

The document was a unifying force among all the UN agencies, thus allowing them to operate under a single drug policy.

It highlighted the issues of human rights, development and public health while downplaying that of punishment.

It was a sign of institutional agreement on the adoption of balanced drug control measures.

Key Terms

1. Substance Use Disorders (SUDs): Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are classified as a group of disorders that require medical intervention in case the patient suffers from a significant medical problem or mental distress caused by the repetitive use of drugs or alcohol. The impact of SUDs on human health is so immense and extensive worldwide – through physical and mental, social and economic, pathways. The UNODC mainly deals with SUDs offering preventive, treatment, and rehabilitation services as the major measure.

2. Illicit Drug Trafficking: Illicit drug trafficking is a broad term that encompasses all illegal activities related to drugs from planting and manufacturing through selling and distributing. Generally, these activities are controlled by international organized crime syndicates who have a huge network of operatives in many different countries. Drug trafficking groups, thus, lead to increased violence, corruption, and instability where ever they operate.

3. Transnational Organized Crime: Transnational organized crime is when the criminals operate as a well-organized group across different countries. These groups exploit the lack of law enforcement, war-stricken areas, and poverty. Among their illegal activities, drug trafficking is the most lucrative and disruptive one.

Key Terms

4. Criminalization: Criminalization is a term that signifies the legal structures wherein drug usage is punished through the means of arrests and imprisonment. The said frameworks usually consider enforcement, health, and social support in that order. The stigmatization that results from the excessive criminalization may limit the access to treatment services.

5. Public Health Approach: A public health approach is about treating drug abuse as a health and social problem rather than a pure criminal issue. It lays emphasis on prevention, early intervention, treatment, and policy based on evidence. This method not only intends to diminish harm but also to raise the health status of the whole population.

6. Drug Distribution Networks: Drug distribution networks are made up of all the processes and ways that are used to illegally move and sell drugs. These networks make use of violence, intimidation, and bribery to ensure their monopoly and reap maximum profits. One of the key points in reducing the world's drug problem is breaking these networks.

Key Issues

1. Criminalization vs. Public Health Responses

Most of the states are still focusing on punitive measures for the substance use issue from the legal perspective mainly. The result of this practice is that more people are imprisoned, the stigma associated with drug abuse is reinforced, and barriers to receiving treatment are created which are all equally serious consequences. The main obstacle is the change of the public's attitude towards an approach centered on health and based on human rights.

2. Homelessness and Housing Insecurity

Substance use and homelessness are two strongholds of vulnerability that are inextricably linked. People living without stable housing are the hardest group in terms of accessing healthcare and rehabilitation services. The problem of housing insecurity must be solved first if the recovery and reintegration are to be permanent.

3. Violence Against People Who Use Substances

To a very large extent, drug users are exposed to violence of all kinds- physical, sexual, and structural. Not only they suffer from the bad treatments of criminal groups but they also undergo the same treatment from intimate partners and through discriminatory policing.

4. Transnational Drug Trafficking Networks

The illegal drug market is held by international organized crime gangs that operate in different countries and thus, across borders. The same criminals also cause corruption, armed conflicts, and instability in the institutions. Without the help of international cooperation, it would be very difficult to totally break the supply lines.

5. Gender-Specific and Youth Vulnerabilities

Substance use is a problem that varies between women and young people. They are usually the ones most vulnerable to falling into exploitation, trafficking, and experiencing gender-related violence. The policies are mostly unable to identify and properly tackle these specific needs.

Major Parties

1. Mexico

The role of Mexico in the drug trade is significant; it is not only a producer but also a gateway country for opioids, coke, and pot to the U.S. The narcotics business is the main cause of the violence and corruption in society and, unfortunately, the locals suffer the most due to their proximity to the conflict area. The state's anti-drug policy has at times increased the violence without completely breaking up the criminal networks.

2. Colombia

Colombia continues to be a leading cocaine and coca-producing country. Drug trafficking has been, and still is, a source of financing for illegal armed groups, which in turn have caused a lot of social unrest and human rights violations. The current government is planning to cut production through eradication, providing alternative livelihoods, and international cooperation.

3. United States

The United States is the largest consumer of drugs in the world but, at the same time, is a major player in the worldwide anti-drugs campaign. The country's major challenge is to deal with the issues of opioid addiction, overdose, and even drug-related homelessness. However, it also offers its knowledge and support to other countries by conducting e.g. opiate interdiction, training, and policy advice.

4. Russia

Heroin from Central Asia and synthetic drugs pass through Russia and also it is a country that consumes these drugs. The situation of addicts, overdose deaths and that of drug-related crime are redoing in the country and at the same time, they are spilling over to other regions as well. The approach taken by the government is one that emphasizes criminalization a lot more than it does treatment and other harm reduction strategies.

5. Brazil

Brazil is an epicenter for cocaine and synthetic drugs in terms of both transit and consumption. Drug-related gang violence has become a major problem to the extent that it affects mainly urban communities and marginalized groups. The government has chosen a strategy combining law enforcement and social programs, but there are still debates on the effectiveness of this approach.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- What are the underlying issues being unprocessed?
- Does the answer point out the socioeconomic, health and structural factors associated with substance usage?
- Do poverty, the lack of housing, wars, and the unavailability of services get mentioned?
- How is the resolution striking the compromise between public health and law enforcement?
- Does it amalgamate prevention, treatment, and harm reduction together with trafficking control?
- Are enforcement measures corresponding to the situation and rights-based?
- Are the partnerships with local authorities and NGOs mentioned?
- In what ways does the resolution guarantee human rights?

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- Are the safeguards against discrimination, mistreatment, and use of excessive force mentioned?
- Does it see to it that the affected individuals have access to medical care and legal representation?
- Does the resolution provide for international cooperation and share intelligence?
- Are steps taken to inhibit the movement of drugs and the flow of money?
- Do they support the use of practices that are evidence-based?
- How will the guarantees be assured for the process of rehabilitation and reintegration?
- The resolution states access to treatment, vocational training, and social assistance as provided measures?
- Are non-custodial alternatives being considered?
- What is the implementation monitoring and evaluation process?
- Are there reporting, data collection, and accountability mechanisms that are clear and established?

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Agenda 2: Addressing the causes of cybercrime and terrorism financing through digital and financial networks

Introduction to the Agenda

Cybercrime and terrorism financing are crimes that are committed for a range of reasons, including financial gain, the desire for power and control, receiving ransom and even identity theft. This has become a pressing issue in recent years, driven by the rapid technological advancements and their exploitation, along with the global challenges associated with detection and regulation. Naturally, this has given rise to a growth in international concern regarding the causes behind such crimes.

Historical Context

The world's first cyberattack occurred in 1834, when some civilians hacked into the French Telegraph System to steal financial market information from Napoleon's semaphore telegraph.

The most recent major cyberattack was when a ransom attack forced a U.S energy company to shut down its entire fuel distribution pipeline in 2021. This threatened gasoline and jet fuel distribution across the U.S east coast, forcing the company to pay nearly \$5 million to the hackers in order to restore their pipeline.

Cybersecurity has been an ongoing struggle for many years, even after so many resources have been used towards it, governments and organizations are yet to agree upon policies to establish as a base to stabilize the concept of cybersecurity, technology, and many more aspects that are interrelated and pose their own issues when trying to establish strong security. Technology seems to be one of the strategic factors driving the increasing use of digital and financial networks by terrorist organizations and their supporters for a wide range of purposes including recruitment, propaganda, incitement to commit acts of terrorism and the gathering and dissemination of information for terrorist purposes.

Specifically, UNODC draws upon its specialized expertise on criminal justice systems responses to provide technical assistance in capacity building, prevention and awareness-raising, international cooperation, and data collection on cybercrime. In connection with the development of the present publication, UNODC convened 2 expert group meetings in Vienna, in October 2011 and February 2012, to provide a forum for counter-terrorism practitioners, from a geographically diverse group of Member States to share their experiences relating to the use of networks for terrorist purposes, in order to strategize and approach these pressing issues.

Introduction to the Agenda

Current Situation

Countering the financing of terrorism is a highly complex endeavor that involves many different actors. UNODC supports Member States with a wide variety of responses, ranging from legislation and international policy, to operational level responses. The member states of the United Nations have reached a significant milestone by agreeing on the first draft of the organization's international convention against cybercrime. While this achievement marks a crucial step forward, it remains subject to challenges that continue to be debated among the negotiating parties. The convention aiming to combat cybercrime and terrorism financing has used extensive and collaborative efforts in enhancing international cooperation to address the mounting challenges in cyberspace. They set out a binding international legal framework that fosters cross-border cooperation and contributes to strengthening global cybersecurity efforts.

Moving forward, the United Nations has decided to put effort towards enhancing coordination and cooperation between different countries, and conduct regular reviews to monitor evolving technology and emerging cyber threats that could lead to major terrorism crimes through digital and financial networks.

Key Terms

- **Financial Action Task Force (FATF):**

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an intergovernmental organisation designed to combat money laundering (AML), terrorist financing (CFT), and other threats to the global financial system. Established in 1989 by the G7, FATF sets international standards and fosters the practical implementation of legal, regulatory, and operational measures to protect financial systems from exploitation.

- **Virtual Assets (VAs):**

Virtual assets (crypto assets) refer to any digital representation of value that can be digitally traded, transferred or used for payment. It does not include digital representation of fiat currencies.

- **Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP):**

Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASPs) are entities which provide a platform on which the exchange of virtual assets or fiat currencies can take place. They may also transfer virtual assets, administer them, or oversee their sale.

- **Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT):**

AML/CFT procedure refers to the set of rules that governs international efforts against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Key Issues

1. Virtual Assets (VAs) and Cryptocurrency:

Regulation on newer methods of online transactions such as cryptocurrency, virtual assets, NFTs, etc is disjointed, which paves the way for cyber criminals and bad actors to take advantage of these systems to facilitate transactions anonymously. This can be used by terrorist organizations to enable fast, low-cost and international transfers without leaving behind a paper trail. They may use this to solicit funds, move money across borders, finance acts of terror, etc. While on the surface blockchain technology is transparent, criminals often find measures to obscure the source and destination of illicit money. Furthermore, if the funds are found on blockchain wallets, it can often be difficult to find the person, or organization behind it, due to the aforementioned anonymity provided by cryptocurrencies.

2. Jurisdictional gaps:

Countries are not equal in their enforcement, legal frameworks and regulatory standards when it comes to AML/CFT controls. Individuals and organizations wishing to finance terrorism can take advantage of this by strategically routing funds through countries with less stringent enforcement and AML/CFT controls.

3. Insider Threats and Corruption:

Insider threats occur when employees, or individuals affiliated with financial institutions misuse their access to internal systems in order to further criminal objectives. In this context, they can be used to intentionally weaken safeguards in order to launder or route illicit money. This may be done in a number of ways such as providing insiders back doors to bypass controls that flag suspicious activity, suppressing alerts that would report suspicious activity, introducing malware or phishing attacks, etc.

4. Technological Exploitation and Innovation:

Innovation in technology has also resulted in its criminal exploitation. Dark web markets have facilitated the trade of illicit goods and services, encrypted messaging platforms have allowed for terrorist coordination on an international level, and artificial intelligence has amplified cyberattacks. This increased privacy and anonymity has proved to be a double-edged sword, benefiting individuals, but hindering government interception of crime and acts of terror.

Major Parties

- **United States of America:**

The United States has one of the world's most developed AML/CFT regulation, providing comprehensive legal framework to hinder money laundering and the funding of terrorism. Multiple US agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and National Security Agency (NSA) play key roles in implementing AML/CFT regulation. Required information is provided to them by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). FinCEN also Perseus business that fail to maintain proper AML standards through civil litigation.

- **United Kingdom:**

The UK has a robust framework for AML/CFT that works against terrorist financing and financial crimes. The Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2018 allows the country to administer its own measures, independent of EU law. The country also criminalizes terrorist financing and uses sanctions and asset freezing to stop the flow of illicit funds. The UK has also participated in joint partnerships with countries such as the United Arab Emirates. Notably, Abu Dhabi hosted a delegation from the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) to tackle illicit financial flows between countries.

- **China:**

China's cybercrime landscape is complex and vast, ranging from financial fraud to intellectual property theft. China's rapid economic growth, large internet user base, weak civil governance and limited cybersecurity advocacy has created an environment allowing cybercrime to thrive. Some of these issues have transcended the nations borders and have come up in trade and diplomatic relations especially with the United States and other developed countries. Concerning AML/CFT, while China is a member of FATF, it has gaps which authorities are continually working to fill.

Major Parties

- **Iran:**

Iran is country that is on the FATF black list since due to its strategic deficiency in AML/CFT regulation. It first committed to reforming its financials system in 2016 but has failed to stick to its action plan. The FATF has stated that Iran will remain on the list until its full Action Plan is complete. Working towards the goal, Iran's Expediency Council conditionally approved joining the Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism (CFT), agreeing to adhere to the convention as long as it does not contradict its constitution or laws.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea:

The DPRK is considered one of the most high-risk state for AML/CFT globally, being on the FATF black list since 2011. The country not only fails to properly enforce its AML/CFT regulations, but sometimes tolerates or even directs financial crime and money laundering. North Korean hackers have previously set up business in the United States with the intent of infecting developers that work in the cryptocurrency industry with malicious software. This was carried out by a subdivision of the Lazarus Group, an elite team of hackers directly sponsored by the state.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

Since the early 2000's, the United Nations has become involved in dealing with cybercrime and international security problems. Since the resolution submitted by Russia in 1998 to resolve possible international threats through technology, there have been annual reports on the issue of cybersecurity. In the last decade or so, the topic has seen the most action from the United Nations as it has become an issue of greater concern to the world. While actions against cybercrime progressed slowly, in December 2018, the General Assembly established two processes, an Open-ended Working Group and a Group of Governmental Experts, to discuss and tackle the current issues on cybersecurity during the period of 2019 to 2021.

The United Nations' last actions were this past 2021. The GGE put together a consensus report agreeing on the use of international laws in cyberspace, the international collaboration to make the ICT infrastructures more secure and overall, the first strong foundation on how to address cyber threats and attacks.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- What actions can be taken to improve national cybersecurity in countries with limited technological resources?
- How can countries cooperate to track cross border transactions that are related to terrorism financing?
- What role can an international body like UNODC play in building softwares for countries that lack the funds to combat cybercrime and terrorism financing?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that terrorism financing schemes are not disguised as non-governmental organized charities?
- How can governments make cryptocurrency transactions less anonymous in order to monitor cybercrime, whilst still protecting individual privacy rights?
- What drives people towards crime through digital and financial networks, and what preventative policies can reduce this?
- How can identification and verification systems allow criminals to conceal their identities, and how can they be improved?
- What strategies can countries develop to ensure they can effectively respond to and recover from cyberattacks or incidents of terrorism financing?
- How can financial transparency serve as a verification step to detect signs of illegal and terrorist-motivated transactions?
- What strategies can ensure small businesses are protected from being exploited for money laundering?

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