

DPSH MUN 2024

UNHRC

**UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
COUNCIL**



Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates!

We are very pleased to welcome you to the simulation of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at Delhi Public School, Hyderabad MUN 2024. It will be an honour to serve on your Executive Board for the duration of the conference. This Background Guide is designed to give you an insight into the case at hand. Please refer to it carefully. Remember, a thorough understanding of the problem is the first step to solving it.

However, remember 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.

Finally, we would like to wish you luck in your preparation. In case you have any questions, procedural or otherwise, please feel free to direct them to any member of the Executive Board and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any queries or concerns. We expect all delegates to be well-versed with the various nuances of the agenda and geared up for an intense debate, deliberations, and great fun.

We are looking forward to meeting you at the conference!

Regards,

Sai Preethi Polu
President
UNHRC

Alishaan Mirza
Vice President
UNHRC

Saanvi Patra
Rapporteur
UNHRC

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 the 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 the 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 in 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 the formal debate is acceptable from the following sources:

i) United Nations:

Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN body are held as credible proof to support a claim or argument. Multilateral Organizations: Documents from international organizations like OIC, NAFTA, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Criminal Court, etc. may also be presented as credible sources of information.

ii) 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.

iii) News Sources:

- a. Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in the council.
- b. 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.**

Committee and Mandate

Human rights are inalienable entitlements established not by law, but by human birthright, and the history of human rights has been shaped by all major world events and by the struggle for dignity, freedom and equality everywhere. However, it was only with the signing of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the subsequent establishment of the United Nations (UN) in the shadow of World War II, and the call to “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights,” where human rights finally achieved formal, universal recognition. The UN has remained committed to “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all” through charter-based and treaty-based mechanisms. Charter-based mechanisms derive from the provisions of the Charter, most commonly as subsidiary bodies like the Human Rights Council. Treaty-based mechanisms are the human rights covenants and conventions, along with their respective treaty bodies, which take the force of law and monitor the implementation of the provisions of the treaties. Recognizing the need to preserve and build on the Commission’s achievements and to redress its shortcomings, the HRC was created to ensure stronger system-wide coherence and preserve the value of human life “in larger freedom.” The Council was charged with, inter alia, assuming the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, promoting the full implementation of human rights obligations, responding to human rights emergencies, undertaking a universal periodic review, and making recommendations to States and the General Assembly (GA). Link to understand how UNHRC works – <https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-us/mandate-un-human-rights>

The syntax and structure of the resolution shall be explained on the second day of the conference. But for the sake of reference a draft resolution is being shared below:
[Draft resolution](#)

**** We will be thoroughly explaining the Draft Resolutions and the documentation part as a whole in the committee.**

Introduction

International armed conflict, defined by Common Article 2 of the Geneva Conventions, refers to "all cases of declared war or of any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties." This essentially means that war arises when there is the use of military force between states, regardless of a formal declaration by either side. As a result, conflict-affected areas are created. Conflict-affected areas (typically referred to as conflict zones) are generally identified by the presence of an international or domestic conflict, which disrupts political and social stability, in addition to widespread or serious human rights violations and institutional weakness or the collapse of state infrastructure. Non-state actors, such as political militias, criminal organizations, and international terrorist groups, are commonly understood as parties that enact violence targeting civilians, governments, and other states to achieve political or ideological aims and are regarded as the prominent parties in exacerbating the deteriorating conditions in conflict-affected areas. Terrorism and war threaten the very fabric of governance, disrupting peace, harmony, and cohesion between nations while simultaneously bringing grave humanitarian crises upon innocents who have no say in the foreign affairs of their respective nations. As noted in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter, "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." Despite such a precedent, there are several contradictory measures enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, among other legal norms, which facilitate and legitimize the necessity of engaging in warfare. The impact of terrorism has become increasingly concentrated, with ten countries accounting for 87% of total terrorism-related deaths. Over 90% of terrorist attacks and 98% of terrorism deaths in 2023 occurred in conflict zones, underscoring the strong link between conflict and terrorism.

Anatomy of a War



Article 51 of the United Nations Charter legitimizes the right to self-defence in response to armed attacks. It states: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security."

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While the nature and circumstances around what constitutes an 'armed attack' remain vague, states continue to exploit the ambiguous nature of this article. In addition, the United Nations Security Council has the jurisdiction to handle threats to international peace under Article 39 of the UN Charter, which states: "The Security Council shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security." This essentially gives the Security Council the mandate to authorize military intervention, which directly coincides with the notion of collective self-defence and the responsibility to protect, as per the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "The responsibility to protect is a principle which seeks to ensure that the international community never again fails to act in the face of genocide and other gross forms of human rights abuse. "R2P," as it is commonly abbreviated, was adopted by heads of state and government at the World Summit in 2005 sitting as the United Nations General Assembly. The principle stipulates, first, that states have an obligation to protect their citizens from mass atrocities; second, that the international community should assist them in doing so; and, third, that, if the state in question fails to act appropriately, the responsibility to do so falls to that larger community of states. R2P should be understood as a solemn promise made by leaders of every country to all men and women endangered by mass atrocities. wherein states assist an ally through military support or by facilitating the provision of humanitarian aid.

While it is important to question the ethicality of the exercise or invokement of such legal instruments, it is also detrimental to ponder and distinguish between the necessity and the illegitimacy behind such actions, which the principles of jus ad bellum and jus in bello particularly outline. Jus ad bellum derives from the Charter of the United Nations, which declares in Article 2: "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations." Conversely, jus in bello refers to the regulation of measures during war, specifically the principles of precaution, proportionality, and distinction.

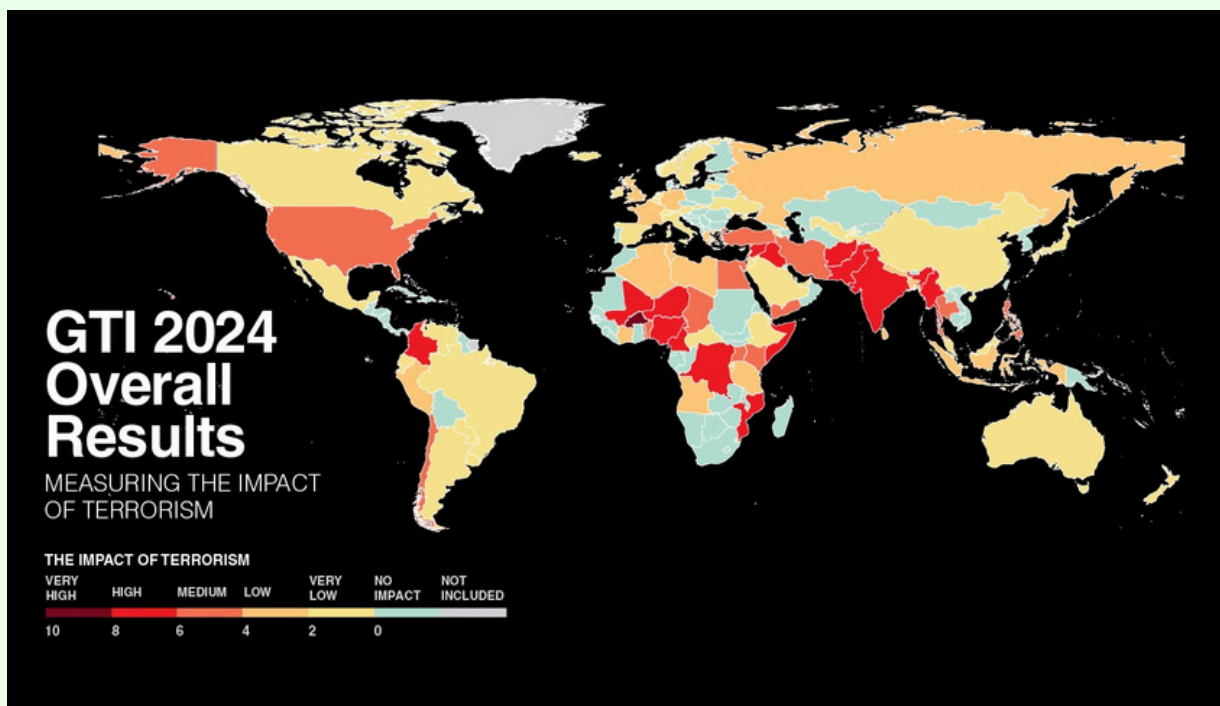
The principles of precaution refer to the parties engaging in warfare taking measures to ensure minimal civilian harm, injury to civilian life, and damage to civilian infrastructure, including the following measures:

- Utilizing weapons that cause the least amount of civilian harm and suspending attacks pre-emptively if it becomes apparent that they may cause disproportionate civilian damage
- Ensuring effective warnings are made to civilians before an attack is conducted
- Verifying that targets are military objectives

The principles of proportionality prevent attacks that might lead to incidental and collateral damage, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. And lastly, the principles of distinction require parties and their military artillery to differentiate between civilians, military objectives, and combatants.

Correlation between terrorism and conflict zones

Terrorism is prominent in conflict zones, as the lack of proper governance, in addition to political instability, creates extremely vulnerable and excruciating circumstances for a nation, which non-state actors generally exploit. Such environments give terrorist organizations the opportunity to conduct military operations, hold rallies to propagate their agendas, and recruit emotionally distraught innocents who are in an active state of siege. According to Interpol reports, “Terrorist groups incite individuals, often young people, to leave their communities across the world and travel to conflict zones, primarily in Iraq and Syria and increasingly in Libya.” The way recruits are targeted and radicalised has shifted, with a greater focus on social media and other digital channels.



Global Terrorism Index showing the impact of terrorism in 2024 (It is noteworthy that terrorism is more prominent in conflict areas such as Israel)

Case study - Houthis and Yemen

The Houthis are an armed political and religious group that make up Yemen's Shia minority. They are a large clan originating from Yemen's northwestern Saada province who practice the Zaydi form of Shiism. Zaydis make up around 35% of Yemen's population, and a Zaydi imamate ruled Yemen for 1,000 years before being overthrown in 1962. The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah (Supporters of God), emerged in the 1990s under the leadership of Hussein al-Houthi. After his death in 2004, the movement has been led by his brother Abdul-Malik al-Houthi.

The Houthis are often accused by the United States and its allies of being an Iranian-backed group, and they have declared themselves part of the Iranian-led "Axis of Resistance" against Israel, the United States, and their allies, along with groups like Hamas in Gaza and Lebanon's Hezbollah. As of now, the Houthis control Sanaa (the capital) and the northwest of Yemen, including the Red Sea coastline, where the majority of Yemen's population lives. They run a de facto government in these areas, collecting taxes and printing money, while the internationally recognized government of Yemen is based in the southern port of Aden.

In response to the war in Gaza, the Houthis have launched drones and missiles towards Israel. The Houthis' primary aims are to gain international recognition of a Houthi-led government in Yemen, secure military control in the north and oil-rich eastern region, and establish a government favourable to their political and ideological views. Due to this notion, the Red Sea has now become an active conflict zone, it has recently experienced a huge surge in regional tensions due to increased attacks by pirates on many commercial ships/vessels.

The attacks are mostly concentrated near the Bab Al-Mandab strait causing significant losses to both time and money due to rerouting of ships. These attacks are a part of larger geopolitical conflicts affecting this vital route. According to analysts the commercial fleet movement through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea fell by more than 60% from December 18th to January 7th compared to the same period last year. The number of TEU's or twenty-foot equivalent units fell from 3.3 million to just under 1.3 million in the matter of 3 weeks as the shipping vessels have opted for a safe passage by circling around Africa to get to Asia.

Case Study – Israel Palestine conflict

For the better part of the past 70 years, the Israel-Palestine conflict has left the Middle East in a state of absolute misery, characterized by callous bloodshed and horrendous crimes violating international humanitarian law on both sides. This situation has disrupted the political hierarchy of both regions and, in turn, further exacerbated the seemingly never-ending battle over sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the right to self-determination. The stance of relevant actors remains divided, which is why this conflict persists, as no legal instruments with appropriate jurisdiction are being utilized to reach a mutually beneficial resolution.

Even if the international community successfully encapsulated the events into a brief description, it would fail to elaborate on the various aspects of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The situation is not merely about land occupation or ethnic variations; instead, it is an overly drawn-out power struggle between the two parties that overlaps on ethnic, religious, and geographical grounds.

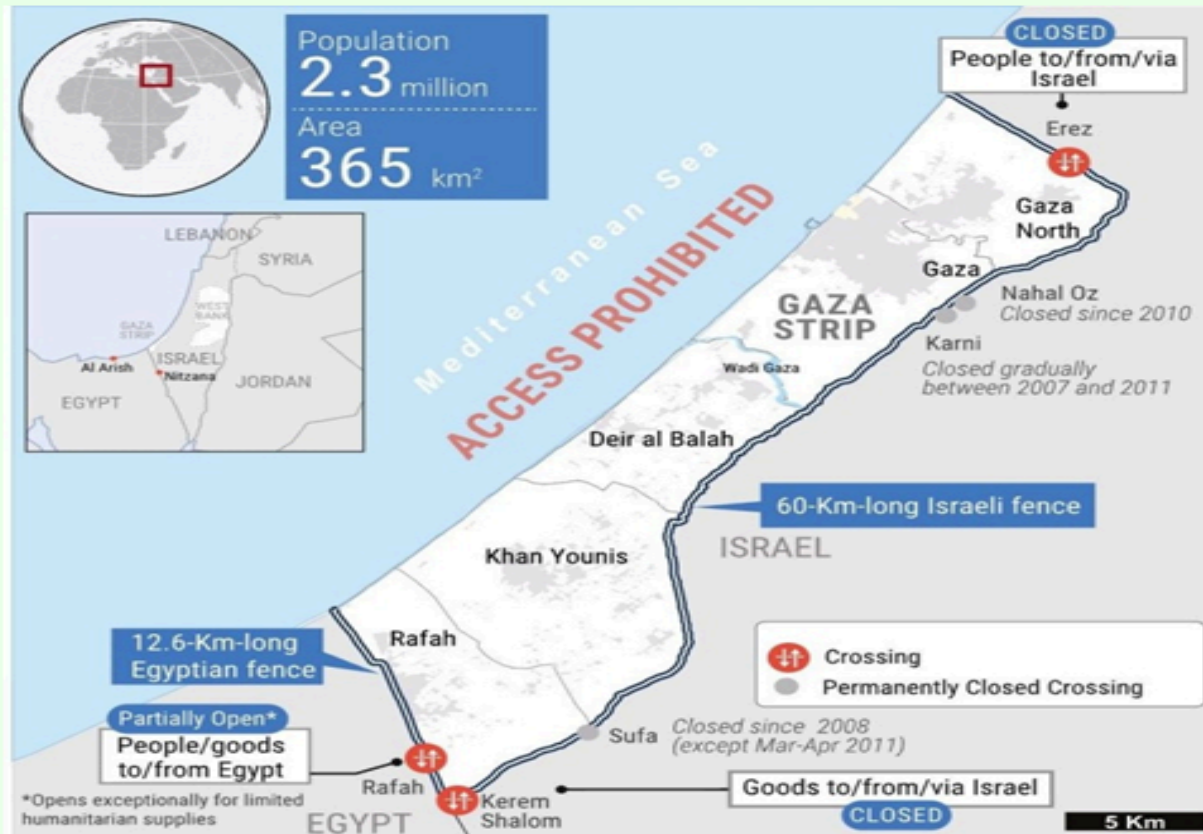
At the dawn of the new decade, tensions between the West, Israel, and Palestine seemed to have heightened, particularly after the USA stated that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was legal. Everything came to a head on October 7, 2023, when the terrorist organization known as Hamas, which has served as the democratically elected ruling party of Gaza since 2006, orchestrated the largest terrorist attack since 9/11. Following this, Israel officially invoked Article 51 of the UN Charter, thus beginning its siege in pursuit of the destruction of Hamas, which has now turned Gaza into an active war zone.

After October 7, this macro-characterization of Gaza's civilians as a population of human shields has reached unprecedented levels, with Israel's top-ranking political and military leaders consistently alleging that civilians are either Hamas operatives, "accomplices," or human shields among whom Hamas is "embedded." In November, Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs defined the residents of the Gaza Strip as human shields and accused Hamas of using the civilian population in this manner. The Ministry defines armed groups fighting from urban areas as deliberately "embedded" in the population to such an extent that it "cannot be concluded from the mere fact that seeming 'civilians' or 'civilian objects' have been targeted that an attack was unlawful." The conflict has brought devastating consequences to the people of Gaza. From October 7, 2023, to January 10, 2024, the following casualties have been reported:

- 63,264 injuries reported in the occupied Palestinian territory, with 59,167 injuries in the Gaza Strip alone.
- 70% of the casualties were women and children.
- Over 7,780 persons are missing, and 85% of the population has been displaced.
- 4,097 injuries and 2,334 displacements reported in the West Bank, and 612 injuries in Lebanon.
- 1,386 fatalities and 9,038 injuries reported in Israel, with the majority occurring during the October 7, 2023, attacks or from injuries in the aftermath.
- The WHO reported that the number of children under age 5 who are acutely malnourished has jumped from 0.8 percent before the hostilities in Gaza to between 12.4 and 16.5 percent in northern Gaza.

In addition, it is important to note that due to either collateral damage or a shortage of electricity, about 14 hospitals and 51 public health centres were forced to stop operating, leading to only 60% of hospitals and 30% of public health centres remaining operational in Gaza. Moreover, a United Nations-coordinated partnership of 15 international organizations and UN agencies investigating the hunger crisis in Gaza reported on March 18, 2024, that "all evidence points towards a major acceleration of death and malnutrition." The partnership indicated that in northern Gaza, where 70 percent of the population is estimated to be experiencing catastrophic hunger, famine could occur anytime between mid-March and May.

Conflict zone in the occupied region of Gaza



Past Actions by the UN and International Response

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the form of a resolution and an annexed Plan of Action (A/RES/60/288) is composed of four pillars, namely:

1. Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.
2. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism.
3. Measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard.
4. Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

Moreover, the United Nations Security Council throughout the years has adopted several resolutions which address the glooming threat of terrorism with a special emphasis on groups such as the Al-Qaeda and Daesh (ISIS):

1. [Resolution 1373](#) (2001): Created the Counter-Terrorism Committee to monitor implementation of counter-terrorism measures by member states
2. [Resolution 2178](#) (2014): Calls for member states to enhance national laws to prevent citizens from traveling to conflict zones for terrorism-related activities.
3. [Resolution 2249](#) (2015): Adopted in response to the Paris attacks, it urges member states to take all necessary measures to combat the threat posed by Daesh, including military action.
4. [Resolution 2253](#) (2015): Focuses on combating the financing of terrorism, encouraging states to track suspicious financial activities and freeze the assets of designated individuals and entities.
5. [Resolution 2347](#) (2017): Addresses the links between the illegal trade of cultural property and the financing of terrorism

Questions a Resolution must Answer (QARMA)

1. How does the resolution define Human rights violations due to terrorism in conflict zones?
2. What specific forms or manifestations of these issues will the resolution address?
3. Which groups or communities are recognized as affected by these issues?
4. Are there specific regions, countries, or contexts where these problems are particularly prevalent?
5. What are identified as the root causes or contributing factors to Human rights violations due to terrorism in conflict zones?
6. How does the resolution propose to address these underlying causes?
7. What international laws and conventions are relevant to combating these issues?
8. How will the resolution reinforce the implementation of existing laws and possibly suggest the development of new legal frameworks?
9. What preventive measures does the resolution suggest to stop Human rights violations due to terrorism before they escalate?
10. How will these strategies be implemented at the local, national, and international levels?
11. What strategies will be employed to raise awareness about the harms of terrorism, extremism and human rights violations?
12. What mechanisms will be put in place to monitor incidents of Human rights violations due to terrorism?
13. How will these incidents be reported, and to whom?
14. What measures will ensure that victims of Human rights violations due to terrorism in conflict zones receive adequate support and justice?
15. What consequences or actions will be taken against those who perpetuate or fail to act against Terrorism and other related intolerances?
16. How will the resolution foster international cooperation in the fight against Human rights violations due to terrorism in conflict zones?
17. What role will international organisations play, and how will cross-border initiatives be coordinated?
18. What resources will be allocated to implement the strategies outlined in the resolution?
19. How will funding be raised, managed, and distributed?
20. How will the effectiveness of the resolution's strategies be evaluated over time?

Relevant resources for further reading:

1. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/global-terrorism-index/#/>
2. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15396.doc.htm>
3. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/war-and-terrorism>
4. <https://www.un.org/en/un75/new-era-conflict-and-violence>
5. <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism>
6. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_77646.htm
7. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2024-03-24/Expert-Terrorism-will-expand-from-conflict-zones-1setScJnfBS/p.html>
8. <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/gt2040-home/emerging-dynamics/international-dynamics/the-future-of-terrorism>
9. <https://www.africanews.com/2024/02/02/un-experts-terrorist-threat-is-high-in-africa-conflict-zones-and-afghanistan-and-rose-in-e/>