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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Discussing disarmament in Africa specific to Non-State Parties.

DIPLOMACY —— DELIBERATION —— DISCUSSION

SSN-SNUC MUN 2023

UNGA DISEC

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We are proud to welcome you to the simulation of the United Nations General Assembly First Committee, The Disarmament and Security Council (UNGA DISEC) at SSN-SNUC MUN 2023. The quality of debate as well as general proceedings in committee depends on the level of contribution that each of you put forth, and if that is to be certified, then reading this background guide is a must.

In this committee, we expect you to pack a fairly significant knowledge of your country in general as well as domestic and international policies that your country has adopted over the years into your arsenal. Bearing in mind allies, adversaries and the general geopolitical scenario unfolding all over the world will go a long way in determining the key players in the committee.

We would like to make clear that this agenda is to discuss primarily the disarmament of Non-State Actors who carry illicit arms, specifically SALWs and NOT delve into unnecessary discussions of Nuclear Weapons.

Having said that, this background guide shall only serve as the first step towards your research and it is encouraged to further expand your realm of knowledge and understanding of the agenda by delving into the topics and sub topics mentioned in the guide and the references that have been provided for further research. This guide will in no way, hold up as a viable source in committee and is only addressed to be the pioneering point of your research.

Over the course of the conference, we expect each delegate to display the bearings of a true diplomat, respect the opinion of other delegates even in times of conflicting views and most importantly, come up with innovative and feasible ideas for the agenda being discussed.

Irrespective of whether this is your first time as a delegate or one of many conferences, we look forward to rigorous and passionate debates in the days to come. Feel free to contact the Executive Board in case of any doubts/query.

Good Luck! And may the force be with you.

DIPLOMACY —— DELIBERATION —— DISCUSSION

Introduction to the Committee: -

The United Nations General Assembly: First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) 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 Committee follows the mandate of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as detailed out in Chapter IV (Articles 9 to 22) of the UN Charter.

It 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 role of DISEC is outlined in Chapter IV, Article 11 of the United Nations Charter which states, "The General Assembly may consider the general principles of co-operation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and that may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both".

The UNGA DISEC makes valuable recommendations to the Security Council on all aspects of matters that place global peace at risk. Since the First Committee's legislative process incorporates the voice of each and every Member State to the UN, the resolutions produced are always respected and considered by the Security Council. These resolutions are also salient and recommendatory due to their normative nature.

Let's start off with something very basic.

Definition of small arms is a category of conventional weapons designed for personal use. Although definitions of small arms differ, the definition set by the 1997 UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms is often considered as a starting point. This category of weapons includes revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns and assault rifles, and light machine guns and their ammunition. Small arms are both durable and portable, and are long-lived, potentially with numerous users and re-users. They are mobile and relatively easy to conceal, making them easy to trade, move, hide or steal. Small arms are light, small and easy to use, even by small children. Police forces and private security companies use small arms across the world to maintain law and order.

Civilians use small arms for sport shooting or hunting, or in self-defense of people and property as well as in various cultural rituals. Small arms may be used to kill or maim an animal or person. They are 17 also used for causing submission

through their intimidating effect, for example in robbery, kidnapping and rape. Small arms are the only category of weapons not falling under government monopoly of weapons possession and use, and the majority of small arms worldwide are in private hands

Light weapons are larger and more military in design than small arms, and are carried by one person or a small crew. Light weapons include heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems; mortars of calibres of less than 100 mm, and light weapon ammunition.

Small arms and light weapons, abbreviated 'SALW', are often used interchangeably with 'small arms', especially in research on the effects of these weapons in conflicts. As will be made clear in chapter 3, historical sources do not use the term 'small arms', but use the term 'firearms'. All firearms fall under the definition 'small arms', and the terms are often used synonymously.

Depending on the part of the world you're analyzing, these words—disarmament, nonproliferation—ring quite different bells. It's obvious that in Africa, they're more related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) than in the Western world, where they are generally used to discuss nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. A 2002 UN study on disarmament and education makes clear the terms apply to both categories of weapons: "Disarmament and non-proliferation education should be a generic term covering both weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms."

The latter, especially SALW, have plagued the African continent with a devastating impact on all areas of life and development; they have put Africa in the indescribable vulnerability that led Kofi Annan to call them Africa's "weapons of mass destruction." This is why, in Africa, the most important disarmament and nonproliferation efforts have been made in the field of conventional arms. Some interesting experiences exist and may be used in nuclear nonproliferation education, enabling Africa to play a key role in the efforts of the international community to move toward a world without the fear of nuclear disaster.

There is no agreed definition of what small arms control is or what it is not. In general, small arms control involves policies about who can own which arms under what conditions. At the national level, 'gun control' measures are aimed at creating central oversight of weapon possession and use, and may include, for example, the prevention of possession of certain types of weapons either among the general public or restricted access to individuals who are presumed to form a high-risk subset of the population. A record of previous criminal behaviour, for example, is a common factor in the classification of such group. Gun control is intimately connected with the social contract between citizens and the state, in which citizens give up their arms in exchange for the protection from the state–and other benefits resulting from political order. This makes arms

control a highly political and contested phenomenon, with wide diversity in different national and sub-national contexts. Hence, arms control is intimately connected with state building in the Weberian sense, in which the state becomes the only legitimate user of armed violence. In reality, small arms control is more complicated than the banning of civilian arms, as many states allow citizens to own guns for a number of reasons, while ruling out others. Arms control therefore has a civilizing mission, with an aim to prevent and pacify certain types of violent behavior.

Legal and illegal small arms One practical role for small arms control is to create a legal system which allows for a distinction between lawful and unlawful production, use and trade of small arms. The distinction between legal and illegal weapons is a dominant feature in the small arms discourse. Small arms are overwhelmingly problematized in terms of their illegal or illicit aspects and the terms 'legal', 'licit' and 'legitimate' are used interchangeably and attributed the same meaning. Practitioners, researcher and advocates in small arms policy normally make a clear distinction between legal and illegal ('illicit') small arms, implying a normative or legal distinction. Small arms are 'particularly susceptible to trafficking', in that they are 'fit' for theft from government stocks, army and law enforcement units, gun shops, and private citizens; as well as for 'ant trade'—the smuggling of legally bought arms into another country in small increments.

Krause originally called this the 'secondary circuit' of arms proliferation, and it is now commonly referred to as diversion. On the other hand, the right of both states and individuals to small arms is deeply rooted in national and international law. As an example, in September 2013 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2117, dedicated exclusively to the issue of SALW.

While noting the security implications caused by uncontrolled small arms, the texts also recognized 'that small arms and light weapons are traded, manufactured and retained by States for legitimate security, sporting and commercial considerations'. Small arms are thus only partially framed as a security challenge based on their technical specifications, but more so based on the illicit dimensions of small arms trade and use. The vast majority of small arms are produced legally; however, small arms are inherently prone towards diversion: they may be traded, distributed, owned, used, re-sold, deactivated or destroyed in a legal or illegal way. Each step of the life of a small arm outside of the regulatory framework of the particular country (or international law) would make the item or action of the owner illegal. In spite of the vulnerability associated with the small arms lifecycle, the problem is generally described as manageable. The role of arms control, according to the discourse, is to make this management more effective and efficient in order to counter diversion from the legal market–and so ensure the maintenance and future growth of the small arms market.

The African Story

In 2013 African Union (AU) member state representatives gathered at its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the Organization of African Unity was established in 1963, to celebrate the body's 50th anniversary. Amid the pomp and ceremony, the leaders sat down to reflect and tackle the tough questions: What progress have we made towards achieving of the objectives set by the AU looking forward, what is our proposed vision for Africa for the next 50 years? Furthermore, what is the biggest challenge to realizing the aspirations of our people? Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, then African Union Commission chairperson, had visited various countries collecting views from governments, civil society and the diaspora on what they felt was the most pressing issue facing Africa, one the AU should deal with.

Most agreed that conflict remains one of the biggest challenges facing Africa. The AU also sees conflict as one of the biggest impediments to the implementation of Agenda 2063. Of course, there were other challenges facing the continent, including poverty, inequality, unemployment, climate change, illegal financial flows, corruption, etc, yet conflict tops the list.

"Before leaving Addis Ababa, the AU leaders resolved not to pass the burden of conflict to future generations, so they adopted "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020" as one of the flagship projects of the wider developmental blueprint Agenda 2063," Ms. Aïssatou Hayatou, the AU "Silencing the Guns" operations manager, told Africa Renewal.

She added: "The objective was to achieve peace to allow for development across Africa."

The initiative was intended to achieve a conflict-free Africa, prevent genocide, make peace a reality for all and rid the continent of wars, violent conflicts, human rights violations, and humanitarian disasters. The leaders hoped to have all the guns silenced by 2020.

Since 2014, Africa has made progress in the quest for peace and security, mostly by strengthening continental response frameworks and institutions, as well as by working with the UN and other organisations on the ground. These initiatives have borne fruit. Over the past two decades, the guns have been silenced in previous hotspots such as Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Significant strides have been made in difficult cases such as Somalia and Sudan, according to the Addis Ababa-based Institute for Security Studies (ISS), and peace-building initiatives on the continent have also helped quell many potential flare-ups.

However, fighting is still observable in Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR), the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Lake Chad Basin, which includes Chad and parts of Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon.

Violent extremism in the Sahel and parts of the Horn and Eastern Africa is also a challenge. There are also threats from terrorism and transnational crime on the continent. Communal conflicts between herders and farmers over water and pasture; violent urban crime, and cultural practices such as cattle rustling are also of concern

because firearms have become the weapons of choice, replacing traditional and less deadly weapons. A 2017 study by Oxfam, The Human Cost of Uncontrolled Arms in Africa, estimates that at least 500,000 people die every year, and millions of others are displaced or abused as a result of armed violence and conflicts.

Destabilized by conflicts and armed rebellions This situation regarding nuclear weapons could appear idyllic had Africa not been destabilized for more than thirty years by conflicts and armed rebellions fed by the proliferation and illicit sale of SALW. With approximately 30 million weapons in circulation, there is currently no comprehensive, quantitative study, and it is almost impossible to obtain reliable statistics.

Africa represents only 7 per cent of international conventional arms transfers but remains a prime destination for illicit arms. The end result is a lot of fragile states, with debate on armaments and defence issues left to the political or military elites, the rise of criminal activities (in particular drug trafficking), endemic poverty, and a tenuous democracy. The availability of these weapons and the stronger links that seem to be developing among networks of nonstate actors could promote terrorist activities connected to uranium mining and nuclear technology, potentially facilitating the development of nuclear terrorism. International context Within Africa, the priority generally attached to nuclear issues is quite low; these issues are less pressing compared to the immediate threats posed by conventional weapons, specifically SALW, landmines, and cluster munitions. Consequently, these weapons garner more attention.

Considering its fragility, openness, and dependence on the rest of the world, as well as internal threats, Africa can be said to be at a crossroads. Despite being a major supplier of uranium, it still has a profound desire to remain out of the nuclear game. If it is to be successful, Africa needs assistance, support, and guarantees to continue its efforts toward nonproliferation. This calls not just for diplomacy and education but also for more attention by the international community.

Where do the guns come from?

Most of the weapons in Africa are imported. Official military expenditure in Africa stood at around $40.2 billion in 2018, with North Africa spending $22.2 billion and sub-Saharan Africa $18.8 billion, according to the ISS.

The top arms suppliers to Africa between 2014 and 2018 were Russia, China, Ukraine, Germany and France, and the largest recipients were Egypt, Algeria and Morocco, according to a study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database provides information on all international transfers of major arms (including sales, gifts and production under license) to states, international organizations and non-state groups.

Twenty-two African countries also manufacture various kinds of small arms and light weapons. Homemade artisanal weapons production is also prevalent on the continent, with those weapons reported to be fueling criminality in some countries.

While African countries can control the purchase of legal arms, it is difficult to track the illegal trafficking and flows on the continent. Porous borders and long coastlines also enable traffickers to smuggle small arms between countries. There are also concerns about how well national arms stocks are managed to ensure that the weapons do not end up in the wrong hands.

Which guns?

"Guns are the most popular weapon on the continent. They cause more deaths than bombs, grenades or mines. The AK-47 remains the most dangerous killing tool in Africa currently," says Ms. Hayatou, adding that a sizable chunk of the legally imported weapons in Africa are diverted illegally due to corruption.

Oftentimes government stocks are raided, or military troops or police officers are killed for their weapons. Of concern too are the substantial number of weapons coming out of Libya that were previously owned by the Muammar Gaddafi regime and that have now ended up in the Sahel. Many of these weapons are in the hands of separatist rebels in northern Mali.

Violent Non-State Actors

We shall also take effort and cognizance to understand Violent Non-State Actors in Africa as they are the primary users of these illicit weapons in majority of the cases.

Note: The following content is sourced from the DNI of the United States of America as the EB feels that it to be the most comprehensive source of documentation on these organizations. ALL COUNTRIES ARE REQUESTED TO DO THEIR DUE DILLIGENCE ON THESE ORGANIZATIONS FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE.

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM)—also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-Sinai Province—is the most active and capable terrorist group operating in Egypt. ABM—which pledged allegiance to ISIL in November 2014, becoming ISIL's Sinai Province—seeks the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic emirate and implementation of sharia in the Sinai

Province—seeks the destruction of Israel and the establishment of an Islamic emirate and implementation of sharia in the Sinai Peninsula. The group is based in the Sinai but in fall 2013 expanded its operational reach into Egypt's Nile Valley.

ABM emerged in 2011 when it claimed responsibility for a cross-border attack into southern Israel from the Sinai. Since 2011, ABM has carried out additional cross-border attacks, launched rocket attacks against Israel, and repeatedly bombed the gas pipeline in the Sinai that supplies natural gas to Israel and Jordan.

Following the August 2013 crackdown by Egyptian security forces on those protesting the ouster of President Muhammad Mursi, ABM launched a campaign of attacks against Egyptian government and security targets. ABM since then has claimed responsibility for several of the highest-profile and sophisticated attacks in Egypt, including an attempted assassination of the Egyptian Minister of the Interior, the downing of an Egyptian military helicopter in the Sinai with a surface-to-air missile, and several deadly vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks against Egyptian security installations.

ABM for the first time demonstrated its willingness to target civilians when it claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing on a tourist bus in the Sinai in February 2014, though ABM described the attack as targeting Egyptian economic interests. The group also claimed responsibility for an August 2014 carjacking in Egypt's western desert that killed a US oil worker. Since announcing its formal alignment with ISIL in late 2014, ABM has conducted several of its most lethal and sophisticated attacks to date and has continued to focus attacks primarily against Egyptian government and security targets. However, the group claimed responsibility for a June 2015 rocket and mortar attack against the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) base in the Sinai, the first terrorist attack against MFO facilities.

ABM has not made explicit threats against the West or Western targets in its official propaganda. However, the group views the West, and the United States in particular, as supporters of Israel and Egypt and expresses anti-Western sentiment in its rhetoric. Various social media accounts claiming association with the group have posted threats to US and other Western targets, although ABM has repeatedly denied a social media presence.

The Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin—commonly known as al-Shabaab—was the militant wing of the Somali Council of Islamic Courts that took over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006. Despite the group's defeat by Somali and Ethiopian forces in 2007, al-Shabaab—a clan-based insurgent and terrorist group—has continued its violent insurgency in southern and central Somalia. The group has exerted temporary and, at times, sustained control over strategic locations in those areas by recruiting, sometimes forcibly, regional sub-clans and their militias, using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers, and nongovernmental aid organizations. Since 2011, however, pressure from AMISOM and Ethiopian forces has largely degraded al-Shabaab's

control, especially in Mogadishu but also in other key regions of the country, and conflict among senior leaders has exacerbated fractures within the group. In 2013 al-Shabaab rivalries culminated in a major purge of opponents of now-deceased group leader Ahmed Abdi Aw-Mohamed.

As evidenced by the constant levels of infighting among leadership, al-Shabaab is not centralized or monolithic in its agenda or goals. Its rank-and-file members come from disparate clans, and the group is susceptible to clan politics, internal divisions, and shifting alliances. Most of its fighters are predominantly interested in the nationalistic battle against the FGS and not supportive of global jihad. Al-Shabaab's senior leaders remain affiliated with al-Qa'ida. The merger of the two groups was publicly announced in February 2012 by the amir of al-Shabaab and Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of al-Qa'ida. The group, however, has lost four senior figures—including Abdi—since September 2014, which may have hampered its communications with al-Qa'ida leadership.

Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for many bombings—including various types of suicide attacks—in Mogadishu and in central and northern Somalia, typically targeting Somali government officials, AMISOM, and perceived allies of the FGS. Since 2013 al-Shabaab has launched high-profile operations in neighboring countries, most notably the September 2013 Westgate mall attack in Nairobi, the May 2014 attack against a restaurant in Djibouti popular with Westerners, and the April 2015 massacre of university students in Garissa, Kenya. The Westgate attack killed 67 Kenyan and non-Kenyan nationals, and a siege continued at the mall for several days. The Garissa attack killed some 150 mainly Christian students.

Al-Shabaab is responsible for the assassination of Somali peace activists, international aid workers, numerous civil society figures, and journalists, and for blocking the delivery of aid from some Western relief agencies during the 2011 famine that killed tens of thousands of Somalis.

Ansar al-Sharia (AAS) groups in Libya emerged following the 2011 Libyan revolution. Their goal is to establish sharia and to remove US and Western influence from Libya. Ansar al-Sharia is most active in the Libyan cities of Benghazi, Darnah, Sirte, and Ajdabiya, but most likely operates elsewhere around the country as well. AAS works with regional extremist groups to train, conduct attacks, and amass weapons, and actively fights Libyan security services' efforts to assert control throughout the country. The term Ansar al-Sharia means "Partisans of Islamic Law."

On 18 June 2015, AAS released an audio statement naming Abu Khalid al-Madani as the group's new amir. The group's previous leader, Muhammad al-Zawahi, was killed while fighting in Benghazi in September 2014. Following Zawahi's death, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in Libya benefited from the defection of multiple AAS members.

Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi (AAS-B) and Ansar al-Sharia in Darnah (AAS-D) were most likely involved in the 11 September 2012 attacks against US facilities in Benghazi that resulted in the death of J. Christopher Stevens, the US Ambassador to Libya, and three other US citizens. The United States designated AAS-B and AAS-D as Foreign Terrorist Organizations in January 2014. The groups are also suspected of involvement in attacks and kidnappings targeting foreigners, including an assassination of an American teacher in Benghazi in December 2013.

Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AAS-T) was founded in 2011 by Saifallah Ben Hassine, also known as Abu Iyad al-Tunisi, after he was released from prison during the Tunisian revolution. In mid-2015, Bin Hassine was tried, found guilty, and sentenced in absentia by a Tunisian criminal court to 50 years in prison for his role in terrorist activities. AAS-T was blamed for inciting the storming of the US Embassy in Tunis on 14 September 2012, and has since been designated by the United States as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. AAS-T remains intent on conducting attacks against Western interests in spite of increasing Tunisian security capability and counterterrorism operations. AAS-T attempted suicide attacks against two tourist sites in October 2013 and in 2014 probably was plotting against Jewish targets and Western diplomatic missions in Tunisia.

Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb is an Algeria-based Sunni Muslim extremist group. It originally formed in 1998 as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), a faction of the Armed Islamic Group, which was the largest and most active terrorist group in Algeria. The GSPC was renamed in January 2007 after the group officially joined al-Qa'ida in September 2006. The group had close to 30,000 members at its height, but the Algerian Government's counterterrorism efforts have reduced GSPC's ranks to fewer than 1,000.

AQIM historically has operated primarily in the northern coastal areas of Algeria and in parts of the desert regions of southern Algeria and the Sahel, but in recent years has focused on expanding into Libya and Tunisia. AQIM employs conventional terrorist tactics, including guerrilla-style ambushes, and mortar, rocket, and IED attacks. The group's principal sources of revenue include extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and donations. In June of 2009, the group publicly claimed responsibility for killing US citizen Christopher Leggett in Mauritania because of his missionary activities. In 2011, a Mauritanian court sentenced a suspected AQIM member to death and two others to prison for the American's murder.

AQIM since 2010 has failed to conduct the high-casualty attacks in Algeria that it had in previous years. Multinational counterterrorism efforts—including a joint French-Mauritanian raid in July 2010 against an AQIM camp—resulted in the death of some AQIM members and possibly disrupted some AQIM activity. In 2011, however, AQIM killed two French hostages during an attempted rescue operation, and in 2013 killed one French hostage in retaliation for France's military intervention in Mali. AQIM continues to hold one South African and one Swedish hostage who were abducted in 2011, and in June 2015 released an English language video of the two.

In 2012, AQIM took advantage of political chaos in northern Mali, working with local Tuareg national elements to take control of major cities, including Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu. The Islamic militant group Ansar al-Din was formed to support the creation of an Islamic state in Mali ruled by sharia.

In 2013 AQIM suffered setbacks in northern Mali following the French-led military intervention in the region, which caused them to lose control of the major cities there and resulted in the deaths of a number of key personnel. As of 2015, however, AQIM was regrouping in parts of northern Mali and conducted a number of attacks on UN forces in the region.

Since 2011, dissident groups of AQIM members broke away to form MUJAO (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa) and al-Mulathamun Battalion and its subordinate unit al-Muwaqi'un Bil-Dima ("Those Who Sign With Blood") led by former AQIM battalion leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar. In August 2013 these groups merged to form al-Murabitun and officially formalized the groups' ties; their stated goals are to "unite all Muslims from the Nile to the Atlantic in jihad against Westerners" and to curb French influence in the region. In 2014 and 2015 additional AQIM members split from the organization to join groups affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

Boko Haram, which refers to itself as "Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad" (JASDJ; Group of the Sunni People for the Calling and Jihad) and "Nigerian Taliban"—other translations and variants are used—is a Nigeria-based group that seeks to overthrow the current Nigerian Government and replace it with a regime based on Islamic law. It is popularly known in Nigerian and Western media as "Boko Haram," which means "Western education is forbidden" (the word boko is a holdover from the colonial English word for book). The group, which has existed in various forms since the late 1990s, suffered setbacks in July 2009 when clashes with Nigerian Government forces led to the deaths of hundreds of its members, including former leader Muhammad Yusuf.

Abubakar Shekau

ABUBAKAR SHEKAU

In July 2010, Boko Haram's former second-in-command, Abubakar Shekau, appeared in a video claiming leadership of the group and threatening attacks on Western influences in Nigeria. Later that month, Shekau issued a second statement expressing solidarity with al-Qa'ida and threatening the United States. Under Shekau's leadership, the group has continued to demonstrate growing operational capabilities, with an increasing use of improvised explosive device (IED), vehicle-borne IED (VBIED), and female suicide attacks against a wide range of targets. The group set off its first VBIED in June 2011. On 26 August 2011, Boko Haram conducted its first attack against a Western interest—a vehicle-bomb attack on UN headquarters in Abuja—killing at least 23 people and injuring more than 80. A purported Boko Haram spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack and promised future targeting of US and Nigerian Government interests.

Boko Haram's capability increased in 2014, with the group conducting near-daily attacks against Christians, security and police forces, the media, schools, politicians, and Muslims perceived as collaborators. Boko Haram continued to raise its international profile in 2015, pledging allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in March and publicly using the name "ISIL-West Africa Province" and similar variants—and conducting simultaneous suicide bombings in N'Djamena, Chad, in June—the first such attack in that country's capital.

Boko Haram's violence—including the kidnapping of 276 schoolgirls in Borno State, Nigeria, in April 2014—brought international condemnation and in February 2015 provoked a large regional CT offensive against the group that displaced it from the majority of its strongholds in Nigeria. Nonetheless, Boko Haram remains resilient, conducting attacks in neighboring Cameroon, Chad, Niger, as well as Nigeria, emphasizing the threat it poses to Western and regional interests.

The Lord's Resistance Army is a Ugandan rebel group currently operating in the border region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), and South Sudan. Joseph Kony established the LRA in 1988 with the claim of restoring the honor of his ethnic Acholi people and to install a government based on his personal version of the Ten Commandments. Kony claims to channel various spirits who direct him to oust Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni; however, under Kony's leadership, LRA soldiers conduct violence for the sake of violence, primarily against civilians, rather than fighting to advance a political agenda.

The LRA has its roots in the conflict between the Acholi tribe of northern Uganda and other tribes in southern Uganda that began during Idi Amin Dada's regime (1971-1979). Power changed hands between two equally ruthless Acholi leaders after Idi Amin was overthrown, but the Acholi were forced to flee back to the north when Museveni seized power in 1986. Alienated Acholi troops subsequently formed a less extreme Holy Spirit movement to counter the Ugandan government. However, following their defeat in 1988, a more violent movement—the LRA—emerged under Kony. LRA soldiers quickly gained a reputation for murder, torture, rape, and mutilations aimed primarily at Acholi communities, as well as abducting tens of thousands of children over the years to use as sex slaves and child soldiers.

In 2008, following Kony's refusal to sign a negotiated peace agreement, Ugandan, DRC, and southern Sudanese armies launched a joint military offensive, "Operation Lightning Thunder," against the LRA in northeastern Congo. As a result, the LRA broke up into smaller, more mobile groups and spread out in the border region, making them even more difficult to locate.

In January 2015 Dominic Ongwen, an LRA general wanted for war crimes, was apprehended by US forces and is awaiting trial at the International Criminal Court in the Hague. Ongwen is one of five commanders, including Kony, indicted by the ICC in 2005. Kony's whereabouts are unknown, although he is believed to be hiding in Kafia Kingi, a Sudanese-controlled enclave on the border of the CAR and South Sudan. Kony is also believed to be in poor health. Defectors from the LRA have

reported that Kony has diabetes, while it has also been alleged the warlord has AIDS.

The LRA is now thought to number between 200 and 300 fighters. In recent years the group has carried out attacks in the DRC, South Sudan, and the CAR. Although the group is reportedly in decline, the LRA abducted 121 people and killed at least three others between April and June 2015, according to the UN.

Veteran extremist Mokhtar Belmokhtar in August 2013 merged his al-Mulathamun Battalion with Tawhid Wal Jihad in West Africa (TWJWA) to form al-Murabitun, which seeks to "unite all Muslims from the Nile to the Atlantic in jihad against Westerners" and "liberate Mali from France," according to the group's public announcement. The merger formalized an already close relationship between two of the most active terrorist groups in North and West Africa. The two groups—both offshoots of al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)—conducted numerous attacks against Westerners in North and West Africa prior to their merger, including the January 2013 attack on the I-n-Amenas gas facility in Algeria that killed nearly 40 Westerners, including three Americans. In mid-2015, there were conflicting press reports that Belmokhtar had been killed.

In 2015 the group reaffirmed its allegiance to Ayman al-Zawahiri and restated its intent to continue to attack France and its allies. In May 2015 a portion of al-Murabitun's Mali-based cadre pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, although Belmokhtar publicly rejected the pledge.

French CT operations have killed multiple senior leaders and dozens of rank-and-file members of al-Murabitun—including titular leaders Abu Bakr al-Masri and Ahmed el-Tilemsi—in Mali since November 2013, possibly preventing the group from carrying out a high-profile attack in the region. In March 2015 al-Murabitun conducted its first attack in Bamako, Mali, with an operation targeting a nightclub that killed two Westerners and three Malian nationals, and in May 2015 the group claimed credit for the kidnapping of a Romanian citizen in Burkina Faso.

Al-Mulathamun Battalion and its subordinate unit al-Muwaqi'un Bil-Dima ("Those Who Sign With Blood"), led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, splintered from AQIM in fall 2012 due to leadership disputes. Belmokhtar fought with the mujahidin in Afghanistan as a teenager and trained with al-Qa'ida, where he lost an eye mishandling explosives. He returned to Algeria in the mid-1990s and joined the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). By the late 1990s, Belmokhtar seized control over lucrative trans-Saharan smuggling routes, reportedly earning millions by trafficking cigarettes. Belmokhtar helped set up the Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC) splinter faction in 1998. GSPC evolved into AQIM in 2007.

TWJWA, also known as the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), was founded in late 2011 as an offshoot of AQIM and has coordinated terrorist attacks across North and West Africa. Since the French-led intervention in Mali began in mid-January 2013, TWJWA has conducted a majority of the attacks targeting French and African forces in the vicinity of Gao and Kidal, using suicide bombings, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, and landmines.

Al-Murabitun, an Arabic phrase meaning "The Sentinels," invokes a medieval dynasty of the same name—known in English as the Almoravids—that originated as a religious and military movement and whose nomadic founders emerged from present-day Western Sahara in the mid-11th century. The Almoravids ruled much of northwest Africa and southern Spain for nearly 100 years, professing a rigorous Islamic creed and imposing a strict form of sharia on the peoples they conquered.

We will not be providing a "Questions a resolution must answer" as we hope the committee can come to a consensus on what "Questions" they wish to answer.

However, assuming you skipped past a majority of the BG just to read the last few lines alone, here's some important points you must know.

1. **Diplomacy is my number one priority. You are in the capacity of a delegate and must act like one during the duration of the conference.**
2. **Go back and read the parts you skipped. They were probably important.**

Regards,

The Executive Board.