

**Disarmament and International Security Committee  
(DISEC)**

**Background Guide**

**Chairs: Mohammad Al Zubaidi & Leen Jarbough**

**Emails:**

**[Mohammad.alzubaidi@amb.sch.ae](mailto:Mohammad.alzubaidi@amb.sch.ae)**

**[Leen.jarbough@amb.sch.ae](mailto:Leen.jarbough@amb.sch.ae)**



### **Introduction to the Disarmament and International Security Committee**

DISEC (Disarmament and International Security Committee) is a Part of the United Nations General Assembly First Committees and Founded in 1945.

DISEC was founded to discuss matters of international stability, security and international peace. With goals and interests established through the Charter of the United Nations, DISEC aims to establish general principles for the purpose of international cooperation for peacebuilding endeavors through disarmament and weapons control. As one of the most powerful avenues against weapon proliferation and general means of war and violence, DISEC is a committee in which all 193 member states can contribute.

The first committee is devoted to regulating international peace with an emphasis on varied means. There are working groups to disarmament and nuclear, chemical and biological weapons regulation, there's a focus on small arms and light weapons and illicit trade across the globe, as well as an effort to discuss preventative measures for diplomatic conflict resolution between nations. This, in turn, helps countries mitigate realities of international living like cyberattacks, terrorism, regional instabilities and prolonged periods of fighting without international intervention. To avoid combat through weaponization efforts and disarmament, DISEC champions international law, promotes respect for efforts and fosters transparency and communication between nations to help build trust.

Therefore, DISEC is an important aspect of the United Nations as a means to challenge international concerns for security. It brings nations together to talk about current threats facing their countries and appreciates realistic and idealized ways to combat these threats through weapon and conflict disarmament initiatives. Collaborative efforts through discourse provide a stabilizing atmosphere where DISEC and its championed ideals create universally appreciated effort to quell conflict in pursuit of sustainable peace and security.

## **I. Arms Control and Demilitarization of Non-state Actors in the Middle East**

### **Background and historical information on the topic**

One of the main connections to security in the Middle East over the years relates to the emergence of armed, non-state actors. Whether militias or rebel groups or extremist organizations, non-state actors have significant military strength and combat motivations. However, they exist outside the confines of national governance. Still, their access to firearms and other weapons through illicit trafficking or national portfolio raiding in war allows them to continue their battles, and the weakened institutions above them only compound the problem. Over time, this creates a transnational pattern of instability that undermines regional and international peace. Therefore, one means of

sustaining long-term stability is to deny arms proliferation and diminish their strength over time.

The emergence of non-state actors occurs, typically, over extended periods of war and decline. Major developments—such as the Iraq War (2003), Arab Springs, the Syrian civil war—trigger enough levels of political instability that, once ownership and governance reform is curbed, opportunities for power vacuums emerge, and these non-state actors grow, recruit new members, receive access to advanced weapons. Where the Arms Trade Treaty, the 2009 UN Security Council Report on Regulating the International Arms Trade seeks to sanction arms proliferation, effective governance of these statutes are lacking. Participants receive either humanitarian or military support through other transactions, countries fail to police their borders enough, guns cross international boundaries with little recourse and without the ability to address these nations' problems, it seems the worst, who were once the most vulnerable, have the opportunity to only get worse. This occurs for two reasons. For regional countries with weak borders, it's easy for weapons to travel and political tensions discourage proper monitoring or bans on arms transactions. In addition, without credible power and a corrupt ruling elite, enforcement efforts and good intentions are quashed. Finally, social and economic realities pressure many vulnerable individuals to seek sanctuary and income from these groups as unemployment rates have risen, poverty levels have soared, and national institutions have yet to gain any trust since revolutions. Current regional conflicts, which allow the open trading of weapons, strengthen these actors. Long-term consequences include widespread displacement, humanitarian problems, ongoing violence, and the chance of a governmental collapse. Reaching the goal of long-term peace and significant disarmament in the Middle East will continue to be a challenge if the supply of weapons and the issues that permit these groups to exist are not solved or at least addressed.

## **Past Actions**

The international involvement in disarmament in the Middle East and control of weapons in this region can be attributed to repeated times where armed groups exploited political instability, state weaknesses, and regional conflicts. With the dawn of a new millennium, weapons proliferation increased in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya, with a failure of governance structures in these countries, which allowed non-state actors access to weapons meant for state actors.

The advent of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) presented a critical challenge to global weapons control regimes. ISIS proved that non-state actors can leverage their illicit access to weapons and transform them into a full-fledged military force by capturing them on battlefields, diverting them from government stockpiles, and using trade routes across international frontiers. The United Nations Security Council established a series of enforceable resolutions in an attempt to impede ISIS's access to weapons, money, and fighters from other countries. UN-led probes demonstrated that a large part of ISIS's arsenal had come from improperly protected stockpiles in countries.

In Yemen, the rise of Ansar Allah, better known as the Houthis, drew international focus on the role of external arms transfer dynamics. The Security Council placed an arms embargo on identified individuals and groups in connection with the conflict because of their concerns over weapons and military technology passing to non-state actors. This can be considered an indication of increased acknowledgment of the fact that demilitarization did not have to be considered in a manner separate from regional security rivalries.

Precedent in armed political groups influenced international attitudes. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, whilst being a primarily political and social group, had become linked with armed breakaway factions and militancy in particular during times of political instability. Their treatment by the government in Egypt, with banning and security operations, highlighted how governments have frequently chosen to resolve such threats through national means rather than an international arms control strategy when dealing with ideologically driven non-state actors.

Analogous situations exist in relation to other groups. For example, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Türkiye, Iraq, and Syria has waged an armed struggle with the Turkish government for decades. The international labeling of the PKK as a terrorist organization by various countries and international bodies created a motive for counterterrorism operations to disrupt their weapons procurement efforts. Such instances have shaped the international understanding of demilitarization, which is hardly attained by military means in a short span of time but rather through political channels.

## **Current Situation**

Current situations show that non-state armed actors continue to be an important part of Middle Eastern security dynamics, with many of them enjoying established military capacity and political influence. Hezbollah in Lebanon is one such case where this non-state armed actor continues to operate and function in Lebanon with a well-established weapons arsenal, despite heightened global calls for a monopoly on the use of force being enjoyed solely by the state.

A case in point is Hamas in the Gaza Strip, where it functions as both a governing institution and an armed organization. The part of Hamas which is armed has access to rockets, drones, and illegal weapons, which shows the strength of non-state actors when it comes to overcoming sieges and observation through local production and smuggling. The cycle of conflict can thus solidify the militarized nature of such a space in a way that complicates disentanglement between control of weapons and other humanitarian imperatives.

In Yemen, the Houthis continue to be one of the most heavily armed non-state actors in this region. Their possession of ballistic missiles, drones, and advanced weapons systems drew major international attention, especially concerning the transfer of military technology to non-state actors. The Yemeni experience highlights how protracted conflict can lead to a culture of massive possession of weapons and hamper demilitarization efforts despite attempts towards a cease-fire. In Iraq and Syria, there are remnants of ISIS in a decentralized manner, using small arms and explosive devices left over from previous phases of conflict. At the same time, different militia forces are in possession of weapons, under different and disputed legal systems, with a blurring of state and non-state control. This makes it difficult to distinguish a monopoly on force under international law.

The PKK continues to operate in various parts of southeast Türkiye and northern Iraq, maintaining armed activities notwithstanding persistent military pressure. The presence of this organization in these regions exemplifies how geographic characteristics, cross-boundary mobility, and unresolved political disputes can facilitate non-state actors in maintaining weapons arsenals. In Egypt, by contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood remains a factor in domestic security, with the government pursuing control policies to preclude a recurrence of an armed splinter. Taken together, these cases illustrate that in the current

challenge of arms control in the Middle East, beyond rooting out a specific terrorist organization, a more entrenched armed movement operating in a complex political and social setting has to be considered, where demilitarization and governance have to become an overriding objective.

## **Questions a Resolution Should Answer**

1. How should the international community define and distinguish non-state armed actors in the Middle East in order to ensure consistent application of arms control and demilitarization measures?
2. What concrete steps can Member States take to prevent the illicit transfer, diversion, and stockpiling of weapons by non-state actors, particularly small arms and light weapons?
3. How can existing United Nations arms control and counterterrorism frameworks be more effectively implemented to address non-state actors operating across borders?
4. What measures can reduce the incentives for non-state actors to retain arms, including addressing security vacuums, political exclusion, and economic instability?
5. How can demilitarization efforts be sequenced in active-conflict settings to avoid destabilization while gradually reducing armed capabilities?
6. What role should disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs play in ensuring that former members of non-state armed groups do not return to armed activity?
7. How can accountability for illicit arms trafficking and external support to non-state actors be strengthened without undermining state sovereignty or humanitarian operations?
8. What mechanisms should be established to monitor compliance and evaluate the long-term effectiveness of arms control and demilitarization initiatives in the region?

## **Reference List:**

*DISEC: Disarmament & International Security Committee | IMUNA | NHSMUN | Model UN.* (n.d.). IMUNA | NHSMUN | Model UN.

<https://www.imuna.org/nhsmun/nyc/committees/disecc-disarmament-international-security-committee/>

The Role of Non-State Actors in Arab Countries after the Arab Uprisings. (n.d.).

<https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-role-of-non-state-actors-in-arab-countries-after-the-arab-uprisings/>

Marinou, C. (2025, March 18). Rebels, militias and terrorists: the Non-State agents in the Middle East. iMEDD Lab.

<https://lab.imedd.org/en/rebels-militias-and-terrorists-the-non-state-agents-in-the-middle-east/>

Durac, V. & University College Dublin. (2015). Crisis and new agenda of the Arab States. Mediterranean Yearbook, 37–38.

<https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/The-Role-of-Non-State-Actors-in-Arab-Countries-after-the-Arab-Uprisings.pdf>

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2170 (2014)

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/2170\(2014\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2170(2014))

United Nations Security Council Resolution 2199 (2015)

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/2199\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2199(2015))

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006)

[https://undocs.org/S/RES/1701\(2006\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1701(2006))

United Nations Security Council – Yemen Sanctions Regime

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/2140>

UN Office for Disarmament Affairs – Small Arms and Light Weapons

<https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/>

UNDP – Armed Violence Reduction and Disarmament

<https://www.undp.org/roles/arms-control-and-disarmament>

International Institute for Strategic Studies – Hezbollah and Regional Armed Groups

<https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-dossiers>

United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee – ISIL (Da'esh)



<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/content/isis>

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Yemen Overview

<https://www.unocha.org/yemen>