



DISEC

DISARMAMENT & INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY COUNCIL

AGENDA

Addressing the Threats to International Security
Posed by Terrorism and Violent Non-State
Actors (VNSAs) with a special emphasis on the
Middle East and North Africa

LETTER FROM THE **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we extend our warmest welcome to you as participants of the Model United Nations conference hosted by CHIREC International School, Hyderabad. As members of the Executive Board of the DISARMAMENT & INTERNATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL (DISEC), you are about to embark on a journey of insightful deliberations and meaningful diplomacy.

We, the Executive Board of the DISEC, are honoured to have such a diverse and talented group of delegates representing a multitude of nations and perspectives. Your dedication and enthusiasm in addressing the crucial issue of "Addressing the threats to international security posed by Terrorism and Violent Non-state Actors with a special emphasis on the Middle East and North Africa" is highly commendable, and we do not doubt that your contributions will enrich the discourse and lead to innovative

solutions. In preparation for the conference, we kindly request that you familiarise yourselves thoroughly with the provided background guide, which outlines the context, subtopics, and key questions for consideration. Your well-informed insights and creative policy proposals are integral to the success of our committee's deliberations.

During the conference, we encourage you to actively engage in constructive debate, negotiation, and collaboration with your fellow delegates. Remember that diplomacy is not just about advocating for your nation's interests, but also about finding common ground and building consensus towards effective solutions. We do not doubt that your commitment to diplomacy and international cooperation will contribute to a fulfilling and enriching MUN experience. The Executive Board will be available throughout the conference to guide and support you in any way possible. Do not hesitate to approach us with your queries, concerns, or suggestions. We are here to facilitate your engagement and ensure a productive and enjoyable experience for all.

Lastly, we look forward to witnessing the outcomes of your deliberations and the resolutions you will collectively craft. Your dedication to advancing global security and disarmament is truly inspiring, and we are confident that your efforts will leave a lasting impact on the conference and beyond. Once again, welcome to the DISEC committee of the CHIREC International School Junior Model United Nations conference. Let us work together to uphold the principles of diplomacy, cooperation, and peace that the United Nations represents.

Regards,

Chairperson Vice-Chairperson Rapporteur
Rajas Agarwal Varun Lingamallu Vivaan Bhushan

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

1. Procedure: The purpose of incorporating procedural rules within any Model United Nations committee is to ensure a structured, fair, and efficient debate. This committee will operate in accordance with the UNA–USA Rules of Procedure, and Delegates are expected to be well-verses with these rules prior to the conference. The Executive Board will apply these rules impartially to maintain order and facilitate productive discussion.
2. Foreign Policy: Adherence to one's national foreign policy is the cornerstone of effective Model United Nations participation. Delegates must represent their assigned country's official stance with accuracy and consistency, ensuring that every speech, vote, and negotiation reflects real-world policy positions. Adherence to one's national foreign policy is the cornerstone of effective Model United Nations participation.

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3. Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board—comprising the Chair, Vice Chair, and Rapporteur—exists to guide, regulate, and facilitate the flow of debate, ensuring that proceedings remain substantive, respectful, and within procedural bounds. The Board does not impose opinions or dictate committee outcomes; rather, it encourages delegates to engage freely, present innovative solutions, and challenge opposing viewpoints. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants.

4. Background Guide: This Background Guide is intended solely as a reference tool to aid research and should not be cited as evidence during formal debate.

All claims made in committee must be supported by credible and verifiable sources. The following categories of evidence are deemed acceptable for substantiating statements and arguments:

- a. United Nations: Documents and findings by the United Nations or any related UN bodies are held as credible proof to support a claim or argument.
Multilateral Organisations: Documents from international organisations like OIC, NAFTA, SAARC, BRICS, EU, ASEAN, the International Court of Justice, etc., may also be presented as credible sources of information.
- b. United Nations and Multilateral Organisations: Documents, resolutions, and official reports released by the United Nations or any of its affiliated bodies, such as the UNSC, UNGA, UNHRC, UNODC, UNOCT, or UNDP, constitute primary sources of evidence. Reports and publications from other multilateral and regional organisations (including the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), BRICS, SAARC, and the International Court of Justice (ICJ)) are also recognised as valid and credible.

c. News Sources:

1. Reuters: Any Reuters article that clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council.
2. State-operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in 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.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is one of the six main organs of the UN and includes all 193 member states. It discusses and makes recommendations on global issues, from peace and security to human rights and development. The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), also known as the First Committee, focuses on maintaining international peace and security. It discusses global challenges like disarmament, nuclear threats, terrorism, and the control of conventional weapons.

THE MANDATE OF **DISEC**

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

INTRODUCTION

Terrorism and violent non-state actors (VNSAs) have become major threats to international security. These groups operate outside the control of governments and often use violence to achieve political or ideological goals. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been especially affected by terrorism and instability due to wars, weak governance, and ideological extremism. This agenda focuses on understanding how terrorism affects international peace and what steps countries can take to counter these threats while promoting stability and human rights.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TERRORISM IN THE MENA REGION

The MENA region has faced terrorism for decades. During the Cold War, many conflicts were influenced by foreign powers. Later, the Iraq War (2003), Syrian Civil War (2011–2024), and Arab Spring (2011) weakened several states, allowing extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda to grow. Economic inequality, unemployment, and poor governance also led to frustration among youth, making them vulnerable to radicalisation.

VIOLENT NON-STATE ACTORS IN THE MENA REGION

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains one of the most volatile areas in the world due to the proliferation and persistence of violent non-state actors (VNSAs). These groups, operating outside formal state control, have become central players in both regional conflicts and global security dynamics. They range from ideologically motivated terrorist organisations to armed militias and transnational criminal networks, each exploiting weak governance, sectarian tensions, and foreign interventions to gain influence.

Defining VNSAs in the Regional Context

In the MENA context, VNSAs encompass a broad spectrum of entities, including terrorist organisations, insurgent groups, paramilitary forces, and proxy militias supported by external actors. Unlike traditional state militaries, these groups often operate in fragmented territories, fund themselves through illicit economies, and maintain legitimacy among certain local populations through the provision of basic services or ideological alignment.

Prominent VNSAs in the Region

a. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS):

Emerging from the remnants of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS capitalised on the chaos following the Iraq War and the Syrian Civil War to declare a “caliphate” in 2014. At its peak, it controlled territory roughly the size of the United Kingdom and governed over 8 million people. Although its territorial control collapsed by 2019, ISIS cells remain active across Iraq, Syria, and North Africa, continuing to conduct attacks and spread propaganda through online networks.

b. Al-Qaeda and Its Affiliates:

Al-Qaeda maintains a strong presence across the MENA region through branches such as Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria. These groups have adapted their strategies to local contexts, focusing less on global jihad and more on embedding themselves within civil conflicts, local governance structures, and tribal dynamics.

c. The Houthis (Ansar Allah):

Originating as a Zaydi Shia revivalist movement in northern Yemen, the Houthi insurgency evolved into a major regional actor following its takeover of Sana'a in 2014. Backed militarily and politically by Iran, the Houthis have engaged in protracted conflict against the Saudi-led coalition, contributing to one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Their use of drones and ballistic missiles has raised serious concerns about the proliferation of advanced weaponry among VNSAs.

d. Hezbollah:

Operating primarily in Lebanon, Hezbollah is a Shia political and militant organisation with significant military capability, regional influence, and Iranian support. While it holds parliamentary seats and provides social services, it is also designated as a terrorist organisation by several Western and Arab countries. Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian Civil War and its confrontation with Israel illustrate the increasingly blurred line between state and non-state military actors in the region.

e. Armed Militias in Libya:

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has witnessed the rise of dozens of armed groups controlling fragmented territories. Key players include militias aligned with the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Tripoli and the Libyan National Army (LNA) under Khalifa Haftar. These militias control oil fields, ports, and borders, often engaging in human trafficking, arms smuggling, and illicit trade, which undermines both national sovereignty and regional security.

Root Causes and Enabling Conditions

The persistence of VNSAs in MENA can be attributed to a combination of governance failures, economic marginalisation, sectarian divisions, and foreign interference. Weak state institutions, particularly in post-conflict environments such as Libya, Syria, and Yemen, have left vast ungoverned spaces where VNSAs thrive. External powers, through direct military intervention or proxy warfare, have further complicated conflicts by arming or funding competing factions. Moreover, high youth unemployment and poor socio-economic conditions provide fertile ground for radicalisation and recruitment.

Impact on Regional Security and Stability

Terrorism has caused massive destruction and instability in the MENA region. Millions of people have become refugees, and countries like Syria, Yemen, and Libya have faced economic collapse. Terrorism disrupts trade, weakens governments, and also fuels regional rivalries – for example, the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Implications for International Security

The activities of VNSAs in the MENA region extend far beyond regional borders. Their control of territory, access to advanced weapons, and involvement in global terror networks pose direct threats to international peace. The spread of foreign fighters, the use of chemical weapons by extremist groups, and cross-border terrorism have drawn in global actors, including the United Nations, NATO, and regional coalitions. In addition, the humanitarian toll, including mass displacement, civilian casualties, and economic collapse, has placed immense strain on neighbouring countries and international aid systems.

FINANCING OF TERRORISM

What is Financing of Terrorism?

Terrorist financing involves the solicitation, collection or provision of funds with the intention that they may be used to support terrorist acts or organisations. Funds may stem from both legal and illicit sources. More precisely, according to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, a person commits the crime of financing of terrorism "if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and willfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, to carry out" an offense within the scope of the Convention. The primary goal of individuals or entities involved in the financing of terrorism is therefore not necessarily to conceal the sources of the money but to conceal both the financing and the nature of the financed activity.

What is Money Laundering?

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

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

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

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

Similar methods are used for both money laundering and the financing of terrorism. In both cases, the actor makes an illegitimate use of the financial sector. The techniques used to launder money and to finance terrorist activities/terrorism are very similar and in many instances identical. An effective anti-money laundering/counter financing of terrorism framework must therefore address both risk issues: it must prevent, detect and punish illegal funds entering the financial system and the funding of terrorist individuals, organisations and/or

activities. Also, AML and CFT strategies converge; they aim at attacking the criminal or terrorist organisation through its financial activities, and use the financial trail to identify the various components of the criminal or terrorist network. This implies putting in place mechanisms to read all financial transactions and to detect suspicious financial transfers.

How are Corruption and Money Laundering linked?

Anti-corruption and anti-money laundering work are linked in numerous ways, and especially in recommendations that promote, in general, transparency, integrity and accountability.

Recommendation 6 of the FATF 40+9 Recommendations and Paragraph 7 of the Methodology for Assessing Compliance with the FATF 40+9 Recommendations are particularly relevant to anti-corruption efforts. The essential connections are:

- Money laundering (ML) schemes make it possible to conceal the unlawful origin of assets. Corruption is a source of ML as it generates large amounts of proceeds to be laundered. Corruption may also enable the commission of an ML offence and hinder its detection since

it can obstruct the effective implementation of a country's judicial, law enforcement and legislative frameworks.

- When countries establish corruption as a predicate offence to a money laundering charge, money laundering arising as a corrupt activity can be more effectively addressed. When authorities are empowered to investigate and prosecute corruption-related money laundering, they can trace, seize and confiscate property that is the proceeds of corruption and engage in related international cooperation.
- When corruption is a predicate offence for money laundering, AML preventive measures can also be more effectively leveraged to combat corruption.

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

INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COUNTER- TERRORISM RESPONSES

At the international level, the United Nations coordinates through the **UNOCT** and the **UNCTC** to assist countries with intelligence sharing, border control, and counter-terrorism laws. **The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS** also helped reduce the presence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Regionally, organisations such as the **Arab League**, **African Union (AU)**, **European Union (EU)**, and **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** have taken significant steps to improve cooperation. The Arab League promotes the **Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (1998)**, whereas the AU and EU support training, information exchange, and joint security efforts. The GCC emphasises regional intelligence sharing and counter-radicalisation initiatives throughout the Arabian Peninsula

EXISTING FRAMEWORKS AND INITIATIVES TAKEN

1. United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC):

The CTC was formed under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) to monitor how countries implement measures to fight terrorism. It encourages states to share intelligence, improve border control, and criminalise terrorist financing.

2. UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) (2017):

Established to coordinate global UN efforts against terrorism, the UNOCT supports countries through training programs, strategies to prevent radicalisation, and assistance for victims of terrorist attacks. It also helps member states build stronger national counter-terrorism frameworks.

3. UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006):

In 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which outlines a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating terrorism. The strategy includes four pillars- addressing the root causes of terrorism, preventing and combating terrorist acts, strengthening nations' response capacities, and

ensuring all actions respect human rights and international law.

4. Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

The FATF is an international body that sets global standards to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. It works with governments to track illegal financial flows, improve banking transparency, and ensure that funds are not used to support terrorism. Many MENA countries follow FATF recommendations to strengthen their financial systems and prevent terror funding.

5. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999):

This convention focuses on cutting off financial support to terrorist organisations. It requires countries to make it illegal to fund terrorism and to cooperate internationally to track, freeze, and seize such funds. It also promotes stricter banking regulations and global information sharing to stop the flow of money to extremist groups.

6. International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997):

The Convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1997 and entered into force in 2001. The Convention criminalises terrorist bombings and requires states to take measures to prevent and suppress such acts.

CASE STUDIES

1. Syria

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, provided an entry point for extremist forces like ISIS and Al-Nusra Front to rapidly grow. ISIS seized large parts of eastern Syria and established its "caliphate", causing mass displacement and violence. Although the group lost most of its territory by 2019, its ideology and sleeper cells still threaten regional peace.

2. Iraq

After the 2003 U.S. invasion, Iraq witnessed severe political instability and sectarian divisions. These tensions led to the rise of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which eventually turned into ISIS. Iraq, with international support, militarily defeated ISIS in 2017, but terrorism continues through smaller extremist networks and insurgent attacks.

3. Yemen

The Yemen civil war between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi rebels has made Yemen one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. Terrorist organisations like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and ISIS exploited the opportunity

to increase their influence by targeting both civilians and military areas.

4. Libya

Following the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya collapsed into chaos as rival governments and militias competed for control. Terrorist organisations, including ISIS affiliates, exploited the instability by establishing bases and profiting from human trafficking and illegal arms trade.

5. Egypt

In Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, ISIS-affiliated militias have attacked security forces and civilians. The Egyptian government launched aggressive military campaigns that reduced the threat, but sporadic violence continues. Egypt also plays a central role in regional peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts.

RELEVANT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

1. UNSC Resolution 1267 (1999):

It established the Al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, which was later expanded to include ISIS. It mandates all UN member states to freeze the funds of individuals and entities associated with these groups, ban their travel, and stop the supply of arms to them. It was one of the first major international measures aimed at combating terrorist financing and travel.

2. UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001):

Adopted after the 9/11 attacks, this historic resolution created a worldwide legal standard for combating terrorism. It urges all states to criminalise terrorist financing, enhance border security, exchange intelligence, and refuse a terrorist haven. It also established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to oversee implementation.

3. UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004):

This resolution targets the prevention of WMDs - nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons - from falling into the hands of non-state actors.

All states are bound to enhance domestic law, border controls, and export controls to prevent these weapons from reaching terrorists.

4. UNSC Resolution 1624 (2005):

This resolution addresses the incitement of terrorism. It calls for nations to prevent and prohibit the spread of extremist ideologies that promote violence, while encouraging tolerance, education, and dialogue. It also emphasises that counter-terrorism measures should be in line with human rights and international law.

5. UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014):

Passed in response to the rise of ISIS, this resolution targets foreign terrorist fighters- those who travel abroad to join extremist groups. Member states are urged to prevent the recruitment of such fighters, enhance border controls, and exchange passenger information in order to prevent the cross-border movement of such fighters.

6. UNSC Resolution 2396 (2017):

This builds on Resolution 2178 by strengthening international cooperation against relocating or returning foreign terrorist fighters. It encourages the use of biometric data, information-sharing systems, and watchlists to track suspects while upholding human rights.

7. UNSC Resolution 2462 (2019):

This newer resolution strengthens international efforts against terrorist financing. It reiterates that nations should criminalise all means of financial support to terrorism, be it through ransom payment, donation, or cryptocurrency. It also calls for transparency in the financial system and cooperation among the member states.

CONCLUSION

The emergence of violent non-state actors in the Middle East in recent years is correlated with the growing weakness of many states in the region. States with low levels of legitimacy are unable to maintain the loyalty of many within their populations. When such states resort to repression, they typically provoke opposition. Similarly, when states exclude significant elements of their populations through neglect, lack of capacity or some other form of discrimination, they can create the conditions within which violent non-state actors emerge. Where the State fails to provide security or other basic services, violent non-state actors can move in to provide alternative governance, services and collective goods, thus increasing their own legitimacy in the process. The weakness of central state institutions in Libya and Yemen, together with the exclusionary and repressive practices of the State in Iraq and Syria, have combined with other factors to prompt the emergence of an array of violent non-state actors that pose a significant threat to domestic and regional security.

However, the structural context from which violent non-state actors emerge makes appropriate policy responses, on both the domestic and international levels, more difficult to construct.

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

This has already been visible for some time in the cases of Hamas in Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Each of these non-state actors has enjoyed the support of Syria and, especially, Iran while retaining significant autonomy over their behaviour. Likewise, the conflicts in Syria, Libya, Iraq and Yemen have drawn an array of regional actors into the fray in support of one involved group

or another. The UAE and Qatar have backed conflicting sides in Libya. Saudi Arabia, several Gulf states, Turkey and Iran have all been associated with different armed groups in the Syrian conflict. Iran supports Shia militias fighting ISIS in Iraq and supports the Houthis in Yemen in the face of Saudi opposition.

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

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMA)

1. How should the word “Terrorist” be defined, considering that there is no universally agreed-upon definition?
2. How do the Non-State Actors acquire modern weapons? Does any member state supply Small Arms and Light Weapons to them?
3. How can the UN and member states better prevent the funding and arming of VNSAs?
4. What steps can be taken to prevent radicalisation and recruitment of youth?
5. How can international cooperation improve intelligence sharing?
6. How can we better identify and prevent state-sponsored terrorism?
7. How can VNSAs be plucked at the grassroots level, i.e, at their grooming stage?

8. What sort of Counter Terrorism measures can be proposed for this geographical location?