

CANMUN 2025

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# BACKGROUND GUIDE



**INTERPOL** International Criminal Police Organization

## *Letter from the Executive Board*

Dear delegates,

It gives us incredible delight to invite you all to the academic simulation of INTERPOL.

We trust this experience improves your public speaking abilities and that you find out about a squeezing world issue that convolutes the existence of numerous individuals in our nation just as abroad. Please consider that the following guide, as the name suggests, is merely to provide you with the background of the agenda and cannot serve as a credible source of information. Your real research lies beyond this guide, and we hope to see some strong content and debate come our way. The agenda at hand is vast and complex, and a successful discussion on it would entail the collective participation of all of you. It shall be your prerogative to decide the direction in which you want to take this committee. The background guide is designed to help everyone understand the basic things about the agenda, and we strongly recommend that you research various things on your own. We also suggest understanding how various rights get affected (legally). Please don't be taken aback by the research, foreign policy and other details of the allotted country. Before coming to the meeting, it is vital to break the agenda into more modest subtopics and pose inquiries to yourself about the plan. Making chits and directing gathering points previously would give you an edge. That said, we also want you to understand that a Model UN is more about collaboration and coming together to solve global issues than a competition. We sincerely hope that the entire committee comes with the right spirit to this conference. It is also crucial to enhance your leadership skills and lobbying capacity since we would give equal importance to overall participation in the committee. We would be using the UNA-USA rules of procedure to facilitate this simulation.

Take the initiative to research properly. PLEASE READ THE GUIDE. While it is a clear agenda, it is still open to interpretation, and there shall be no direction of debate that shall be provided by the Executive Board. Delegates are required to direct the council at all stages unless stagnation occurs. The agenda of an MUN is a beautiful experience and is not as difficult as it may seem. We hope to see a great level of effort and enthusiasm from you all so that we all can take back a great experience.

Regards,

Chairperson: Mithun C

Vice Chairperson: Prishaa Dharmarha

Moderator: Neel Karthik Anand

# Beginner's Guide to Model UN

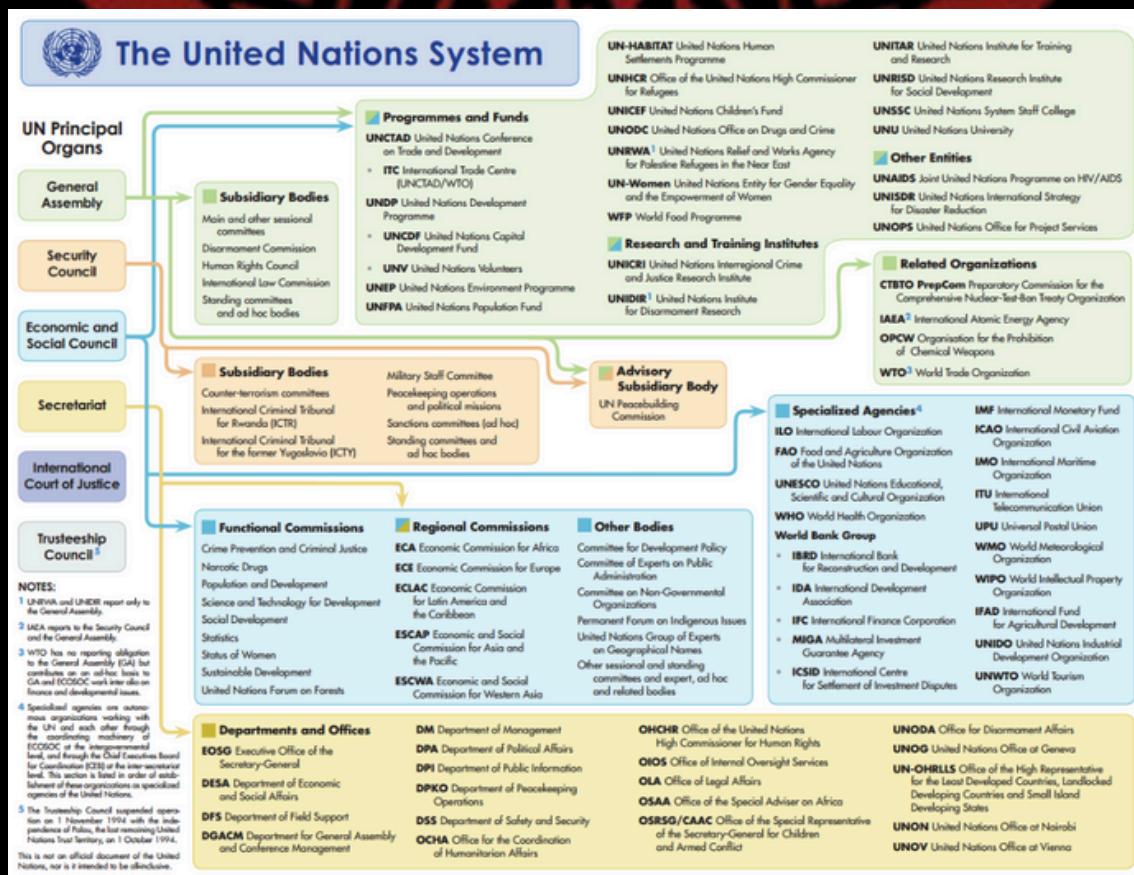
## Question 1: What is the United Nations?

The United Nations is an international organisation founded in 1945 to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and promote social progress, better living standards and human rights in 51 countries. The United Nations has 6 principal organs.

The UN has 4 main purposes:

- To keep peace throughout the world;
- To develop friendly relations among nations;
- To help nations work together to improve the lives of poor people, to conquer hunger, disease and illiteracy, and to encourage respect for each other's rights and freedoms;
- To be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations to achieve these goals

## PRINCIPLE ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS



***Question 2: What is considered to be valid evidence in the Model United Nations?***

**News Sources:**

1. REUTERS – Any Reuters article that makes mention of the factor is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in the council.

<http://www.reuters.com/>

1. 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, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are:

2. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/>

3. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>

4. BBC (United Kingdom) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

**Government Reports:**

These reports can be used in a similar way to the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country:

1. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (<http://www.state.gov/index.htm>) or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (<http://government.ru/en/department/94/events/>)

2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.meia.gov.in/>), People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.meia.gov.in/>), People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>), France (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>), Russian Federation ([http://www.mid.ru/brp\\_4.nsf/main\\_eng](http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng))

3. Reports by the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations(<http://www.un.org/en/members/>)( Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative)

Multilateral Organizations like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN(<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC([http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/)), etc.

**UN Reports:**

All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

1. UN Bodies: Like the SC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>), GA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>), HRC (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx> ) etc.

2. UN-affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp> ), etc.

3. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm> ), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.icccpi.int/Menu/ICC>)

### ***Question 3: How to prepare for the Model United Nations? An Overview:***

#### **General Research and Preparation Guidelines**

There are three consistently significant parts of representative planning. They are useful, meaningful, and positional planning. Practical readiness outfits the representatives with essential apparatuses, including a comprehension of the guidelines important to acting on the board of trustees. The meaningful component gives preparation of explicit data on the subject regions. At long last, positional planning requires the understudies to embrace viewpoints that are not their own. In light of this, the EB gives three instruments to help you: this Guide to Delegate Preparation, Background Guides, and position papers. Together, these will guarantee you will be prepared for the gathering. Past perusing and understanding the material we have given, the more pragmatic experience you can gain through banter, goal composing, making introductions, and so forth, the more ready you will be.

#### **Meaningful Preparation**

The Background Guides are a consequence of broad exploration and effort concerning the Executive Board and are the establishment of considerable groundwork for every advisory group. We recommend that you read them, talk about them, and read them once more. On the off chance that an agent has not perused and ingested the data in the Background Guide, the person won't contribute adequately to the board. An ambitious beginning on the Background Guides will empower you to completely comprehend the subjects and start to tissue out your thoughts. Advise yourself that you should go about as policymakers, dissecting and shaping the data you have gotten into arrangements and goals. Conversations with different representatives will likewise assist you in fostering your thoughts. While the Background Guide will give a large portion of your meaningful readiness, autonomous exploration is valuable, fulfilling and important for a fruitful gathering.

#### **Positional Preparation**

We expect representatives to receive the situation of a particular country throughout the UN representation. This is a vital component of the "global" experience of a model UN as it powers representatives to analyse the points of view, issues, and arrangements of one more country at an exceptionally major level. It is additionally quite possibly the most troublesome part of MUN because understudies should go up against the natural inclinations of their own public viewpoints and authentic data. The position papers are the focal point of positional planning before the meeting. Albeit generally short, we request that you invest energy and exertion in investigating and keeping in touch with them. Materials arranged by the EB are not intended to fill in for your exploration. All things being equal, they ought to give a beginning stage, motivating you to ask yourself inquiries about the current issues. The best-arranged agents are those who accept the given materials as the start of their exploration and dig further into the theme regions. Past these materials are a large group of data administrations, starting with United Nations sources. UN's assets regularly have ordered measurements, outlines, and charts which you may discover supportive in understanding the issues. Most UN reports communities convey records of UN gatherings; maybe the most ideal approach to comprehend your nation's position is to see it iterated by its diplomat

## Explicit assets to research include:

- ***Yearbook of the United Nations***: The Yearbook is a decent beginning stage for your examination. The Yearbook will provide general data on what has been done on your theme during a specific year. It likewise gives exceptionally accommodating references to past articles and goals.
- ***United Nations Chronicle***: This magazine gives you general data on the procedures of the UN. Watch out for exceptional reports on your theme region, which will advise you about the point and the countries' situations on it.
- ***UN Document Index***: This record for all UN reports comes in three distinct renditions: UNDI (1950- 1973), UNDEX (1970- 1978), and UNODC (1979-present). Contingent upon which of the three you are utilizing, you will track down a subject record, a nation file, and an alphanumeric rundown of all reports distributed (this is helpful because each panel has its novel alphanumeric prefix and accordingly you can track down every one of the records put out by a board of trustees during a specific year paying little heed to the particular theme).
- ***UN Resolutions***: This arrangement is both significant and extremely simple to utilise. The record is aggregated from 1946, which implies that you need to just check the most current list to track down every one of the goals on your point that the UN has at any point passed.
- ***Other UN Sources***: Depending on the subject, there may be extra pertinent UN sources. Check for books and exceptional reports put out by the WHO. Past United Nations sources, notwithstanding, are general wellsprings of data. Explore your school and nearby libraries. Look at diaries, periodicals, and papers for more current sources. Remember to ask the curators for help.
- ***Books***: Up-to-date books are probably going to give you a profundity and exactness that is hopeless from UN sources or periodicals. Try to check library postings for bound materials. Book research, in any case, can take a decent arrangement of time, so use prudence when choosing books.
- ***Periodicals***: Periodicals are valuable for straightforward, current data on points (the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature and InfoTrack fill in as a record for these materials). Try not to anticipate that they should supply you with the profundity of data you will require for the Conference.
- ***People***: A regularly ignored source; individuals can help you extraordinarily in your exploration. A few groups to remember are bookkeepers, individual agents, personnel counselors, and your board of trustees' Director, Moderator, and Assistant Directors. Not only can these individuals help you discover what you are searching for, but they may likewise suggest new sources that you had not thought of. Try not to spare a moment to call or email your advisory group Director.
- ***Embassies and Consular Offices***: Contact the government office or consular office of the country that you are addressing. These spots are happy to help you in your exploration via mailing factual information and other unclassified data.

(This is just a suggested pattern, you can research your way, individual differences make us all special, but these suggestions may aid you in understanding where to start.)

1. Start from knowing:

- a. United Nations
- b. Your committee
- c. The mandate of the committee (functions and powers)
- d. Bodies it works with
- e. The final result of your committee
- f. Funding channels

2. Know your Agenda:

- a. Historical background
- b. Current trends
- c. Future aims
- d. International legal instruments

3. The agenda covers the following areas:

- a. Political
- b. Economic
- c. Social
- d. Technology and its role
- e. Arms and army strength
- f. Legalities

g. Impacts and implications of (a-z) on historical background, current trends, future aims and international legal instruments.

**Note:** International legal instruments apply to Nations for them to reach individuals; they should be incorporated in domestic law as individuals are subjects of it, i.e. domestic law applies to citizens. So it is crucial to understand the relationship between the two and bridge the gap for effective implementation.

4. Know your country:

a. Historical background, Current Trends, and Future aims of the agenda from your country's perspective.

b. Political, Economic, Social, Technology and its role, Arms and army strength and Legal aspect related situation in your nation. (emphasis on High-value resources, crisis, support services, governance, political system and administrative conditions)

- c. Membership and participation in a regional organisation
- d. International organisations other than the UN
- e. Allies and non-allies (friends and enemies) of your nation

**NOTE:** Research alone is not enough, as it would be simply reading out from the internet what is needed is to "Analyse", i.e. to present your understanding of the research.

#### Addendum 1: Nature and Proof of Evidence

Documents from the following sources will be considered as credible proof for any allegations made in committee or statements that require verification:

- Reuters: Appropriate Documents and articles from the Reuters News agency will be used to corroborate or refute controversial statements made in committee.
- UN Documents: Documents by all UN agencies will be considered sufficient proof. Reports from all UN bodies, including treaty-based bodies, will also be accepted.
- National Government Reports: Government Reports of a given country used to corroborate an allegation on the same aforementioned country will be accepted as proof. The documents stated above will hold a binding nature for the establishment.

Other sources like Wikipedia, Amnesty International, or newspapers like the Guardian, and so on

One will not be accepted as credible proof, but may be used for a better understanding of any issue and even be brought up in debate, if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a government or a delegate.

## **Introduction to INTERPOL**

The International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) is a major intergovernmental body established in 1923 that facilitates international law enforcement collaboration by enabling communication and providing access to global crime data. With 196 member countries, INTERPOL is one of the largest organisations of its kind, connecting police networks worldwide to improve the investigation and prosecution of crimes. It offers access to essential databases, including records on fingerprints and stolen property, through its General Secretariat, which manages daily operations from its headquarters in Lyon, a global innovation complex in Singapore, and various regional offices. The General Assembly, INTERPOL's governing body, meets annually to make decisions, while each country hosts an INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB) that acts as the main contact point for the General Secretariat. The Executive Committee, composed of representatives from member countries, oversees INTERPOL's activities between these assemblies, implementing decisions and guiding operations. Specialised units within INTERPOL focus on various crime types, such as cybercrime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and terrorism, collaborating with experts to address emerging threats. As crimes become increasingly international, INTERPOL's role in facilitating global coordination is crucial. It provides a platform for police cooperation across borders, even between countries without diplomatic relations, and engages with governments to foster collaboration while maintaining political neutrality and adhering to national laws.

The International Policing Body, commonly referred to as INTERPOL, was founded in 1923 as a body to address crimes from an international perspective. While policing bodies would regularly cooperate before this time, there was no official framework at this scale. The objectives of INTERPOL are best laid out in Articles 2 and 3 of the organisation's constitution:

### **Article II**

Its aims are: (1) To ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"; (2) To establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.

### **Article III**

It is strictly forbidden for the Organisation to undertake any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character. While the media has regularly portrayed INTERPOL as a policing body itself, this is false. The organisation has no agents and lacks any jurisdiction in enforcing laws anywhere. Instead, the organisation serves to coordinate policing efforts between local bodies. If, for instance, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service tracked a person of interest to Germany, they may lack the language skills or logistical knowledge to continue the investigation. INTERPOL serves to coordinate the efforts of international bodies so that investigations can continue across these informational divides.

## **I- 24/7 Database**

Central to INTERPOL is its I- 24/7 database system. This highly encrypted network allows all member policing bodies to access the criminal databases of other member bodies. This allows domestic forces to easily develop an understanding of criminals and their histories in other nations.

## **Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)**

Interpol promotes the standardised collection of criminal fingerprints to help identify and target potential people of interest. Interpol's AFIS collects and centralises fingerprint data and facilitates the transmission of data upon request.

## **ASF Stolen/Lost Travel Documents (SLTD) Database**

In order to reduce the efficacy of using stolen travel documents globally, Interpol hosts a server containing information on invalidated identification documents. The database helps field officers with innumerable cases of fraudulent travel documents. As of August 2006, the database contains almost 12 million records.

## **Operations**

INTERPOL has also served to coordinate operations to take down global criminal operations.

INTERPOL 's capacity to allocate resources and provide coordinated, consistent communication across policing institutions allows such operations to be swiftly organized and put in motion. This coordination would be more difficult – if not impossible – without such an existing organisation. Examples of such operations are discussed in the topic breakdowns.

## **Notice System**

A set of notices has been developed to be shared between policing bodies to share information. There are 8 notices in total, 7 colour-coded, which serve to inform the international community of information regarding criminal activity. Any member country may request to have a notice published on INTERPOL 's internal website ( only accessible to

authorities). The governing body of INTERPOL will then publish said notice if it is found to meet the principles of the organisation. The committee is recommended to use a combination

of some or all notices when finding solutions to the topics at hand.

*Red Notice:* Perhaps the most controversial of notices within the framework, the red notice is

the closest thing to an international arrest warrant that may exist. The notice is used to notify

other policing bodies to immediately locate and arrest an individual to be then extradited to

*Green Notice:* This notice is published to warn the international policing community about an individual who may be deemed a threat to public safety.

*Yellow Notice:* Published to request the identification of a person who fails to comply in identifying themselves, or who is unable to identify themselves.

*Black Notice:* Published to obtain information on unidentified bodies.

*Orange Notice:* Published to warn of a person, place, or event that may be deemed a threat to public safety.

*Purple Notice:* Published to notify international bodies of certain methods, tactics, or locations in which criminal activity may be occurring.

*Interpol-United Nations Security Council Special Notice:* Used to inform the policing community that a given individual is under international sanctions.

## **Mandate of the INTERPOL**

INTERPOL's mandate includes all areas of criminal law, with a particular focus on the following crime areas: corruption, crimes against children, cybercrime, drugs, environmental crime, financial crime, firearms, fugitive investigations, maritime piracy, organised crime, pharmaceutical crime, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, trafficking in illicit goods, vehicle crimes and a work of art.

Adopted in 1956, the Constitution is INTERPOL's main legal instrument. It establishes the fundamental rules and principles by which the Organisation operates. It defines the structure and roles of each INTERPOL body together with its mandate, which is:

- To ensure and promote the widest possible mutual assistance between all criminal police authorities within the limits of the laws existing in the different countries and in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To establish and develop all institutions likely to contribute effectively to the prevention and suppression of ordinary law crimes.

INTERPOL's mandate significantly supports global counter-terrorism efforts through various initiatives and frameworks designed to enhance international cooperation and intelligence sharing among its member countries. Such as:

## **1.Intelligence Sharing and Coordination**

INTERPOL acts as a global hub for intelligence on transnational terrorist networks. Its Counter-Terrorism Directorate collects, analyses, and disseminates information on suspected terrorists and their activities, enabling member countries to identify foreign terrorist fighters and prevent their movement across borders. This is crucial given the complexity and immediacy of the current global terrorism threat, which includes well-coordinated terrorist cells and lone actors operating unpredictably.

## **2.Alerts and Notices**

INTERPOL issues various types of alerts, known as Notices, to facilitate international law enforcement collaboration. For instance:

Red Notices are issued for individuals wanted by national authorities, seeking their provisional arrest.

Blue Notices gather additional information on a person's identity or activities related to a crime.

Green Notices provide warnings about individuals who have committed crimes, while Yellow Notices help locate missing persons.

These Notices enhance situational awareness and enable timely responses to potential Threats.

## **3.Global Databases and Tools**

INTERPOL maintains several databases that are vital for border management and counter-terrorism efforts. These include:

A Nominal Database containing personal and criminal history data.

A Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database, which helps identify fraudulent travel documents often used by terrorists.

A Travel Documents Associated with Notices Database, which aids in tracking individuals of interest.

The secure communications network, I- 24/7, allows law enforcement agencies in member countries to access these databases in real-time, enhancing their operational capabilities at borders and during investigations.

## **4.Incident Response Support**

In the event of a terrorist attack, member countries can request assistance from INTERPOL's Incident Response Team. This team provides investigative and analytical support, helping to coordinate responses and share expertise among affected nations.

## **5.Strategic Frameworks**

INTERPOL has developed a five-year Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that aims to maximise the use of its policing capabilities. This strategy includes creating infrastructure and resources to assist member countries in effectively tackling transnational terrorist activities. Additionally, INTERPOL collaborates with various international organisations, including the United Nations, to reinforce global counter-terrorism efforts and ensure a cohesive approach to security challenges.

By leveraging its unique position and resources, INTERPOL plays a pivotal role in enhancing global efforts to combat terrorism, facilitating cooperation among law enforcement agencies worldwide, and providing critical support in addressing the evolving threats posed by terrorists organizations.

## **Powers and Functions of the INTERPOL**

INTERPOL has identified four core powers and functions on which to concentrate its efforts and resources:

1.Secure global police communications services - INTERPOL manages a global police communications system known as I- 24/7 which enables police in all of its member countries to request, submit and access vital police data instantly in a secure Environment.

2.Operational data services and databases for police - INTERPOL manages a range of databases with information on names and photographs of known criminals, wanted persons, fingerprints, DNA profiles, stolen or lost travel documents, stolen motor vehicles, child sex abuse images and stolen works of art. INTERPOL also disseminates critical crime-related data through its system of international notices. There are seven kinds of notices, of which the most well-known is the Red Notice, an international request for the provisional arrest of an individual.

3.Operational police support services - INTERPOL has six priority crime areas; corruption, drugs and organized crime, financial and high-tech crime, fugitives, public safety and terrorism, and trafficking in human beings. INTERPOL also operates a 24-hour Command and Coordination Centre to assist any member country faced with a crisis situation, co-ordinate the exchange of information and assume a crisis-management role during serious incidents.

4.Police training and development - INTERPOL provides focused police training initiatives for national police forces, and also offers on-demand advice, guidance and support in building dedicated crime-fighting components. The aim is to enhance the capacity of member countries to effectively combat serious transnational crime and terrorism. This includes sharing knowledge, skills and best practices in policing and the establishment of global standards for combating specific crimes.

5. Neutrality and Non-Interference - INTERPOL operates under a principle of political neutrality, meaning it does not engage in activities related to political, military, religious, or racial matters. This allows it to facilitate cooperation even among countries with strained diplomatic relations.

6. Global Advocacy - As the voice of global law enforcement, INTERPOL advocates for police interests at the international level, collaborating with other organizations such as the United Nations to enhance global security efforts.

## Introduction to the Agenda

Formulating international policing strategies to combat terrorism and other security challenges in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region is a critical matter, considering the complex landscape of threats and the need for effective cooperation among nations. The MENA region has experienced significant challenges related to terrorism, including the rise of extremist groups, cross-border movements of foreign fighters, and the use of advanced technologies for recruitment and planning.

### Current Landscape of Terrorism in MENA

The MENA region has seen a notable decrease in terrorism-related deaths in recent years, with a reported 87% decline since 2016, as highlighted by the 2020 Global Terrorism Index. This improvement can be attributed to effective operations against terrorism. Countries like Algeria have implemented successful border control measures and disengagement programs. Despite these advancements, terrorism remains a threat, making ongoing international cooperation and strategic planning to address both current and emerging challenges extremely necessary.

### Importance of International Cooperation

The transnational nature of terrorism means that effective measures against terrorism require collaboration across borders. INTERPOL emphasises the need for member countries to share intelligence, conduct joint operations, and establish secure communication channels. The organisation plays a pivotal role in facilitating these efforts by providing databases, issuing notices for wanted individuals, and coordinating training programs for law enforcement agencies.

The formulation of international policing strategies to combat terrorism in the MENA region requires a comprehensive approach that includes intelligence sharing, capacity building, legal clarity, community engagement, and addressing socioeconomic challenges. By fostering collaboration among nations and leveraging the resources and expertise of organisations like INTERPOL and the United Nations, the MENA region can enhance its resilience against terrorism and other security challenges. The agenda not only aims to improve regional security but also contributes to global peace and stability.

## Overview

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains a critical focus of global security due to its volatile mix of terrorism, political instability, organized crime, and human trafficking. This region's significance is heightened by its vast energy resources and geopolitical importance, making the security threats emanating from it a concern for the entire world. According to the 2023 Global Terrorism Index ( GTI), the MENA region accounted for approximately 43% of all global terrorism-related deaths, reflecting the severe and persistent threat posed by groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and regional militant organizations. These entities exploit the region's weak governance, porous borders, and socio-economic disparities to establish strongholds, recruit fighters, and launch both local and international attacks. The roots of terrorism in the MENA region are complex and multifaceted. Historical grievances, political instability, socio-economic inequalities, and external interventions have all played a role in fostering extremist ideologies. The Arab Spring of 2011, which began as a movement for political reform, led to widespread instability across the region. In Syria, the resulting civil war created a power vacuum that allowed the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to seize significant territory—at one point controlling an area equivalent to the size of the United Kingdom. Although ISIL's territorial hold has been largely dismantled, its ideology continues to inspire terrorist activities both within the region and globally. The ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and Libya have exacerbated the security situation, creating environments where non-state actors and criminal networks thrive. The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) reported over 1,000 terrorist incidents in the MENA region in 2022, resulting in more than 7,000 casualties. These attacks were primarily concentrated in conflict zones but have also impacted relatively stable countries like Tunisia and Egypt, illustrating the pervasive nature of the threat. Human trafficking and smuggling networks, facilitated by the region's chaos and weak law enforcement, further destabilize the area. The proliferation of arms, both legal and illicit, fuels violence and entrenches criminal networks. In response, the international community, led by INTERPOL, is working to develop coordinated policing strategies that transcend national borders. These strategies include enhancing intelligence sharing, building local law enforcement capacities, disrupting financial networks that support terrorism, and fostering international cooperation. Success in these efforts requires a balanced approach that integrates diplomatic efforts, economic development, and the promotion of good governance, all while respecting the sovereignty of the nations involved.

# Key Security Challenges

## Terrorist Financing and Arms Smuggling

Terrorist financing in the MENA region is a complex and multifaceted issue. Terrorist groups exploit a variety of sources, including illicit trade, extortion, kidnapping for ransom, and donations from sympathetic entities. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that illicit financial flows in the MENA region amount to over \$60 billion annually, a significant portion of which is suspected to be funnelled to terrorist organisations. The region's porous borders, particularly in conflict zones like Libya and Syria, exacerbate the problem, enabling the smuggling of arms and other contraband.

A 2022 report by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) highlighted that traditional methods of financing, such as hawala networks, remain prevalent in the region, making it difficult to track and interdict funds. The report also pointed out that terrorist groups like ISIL and Al-Qaeda have increasingly turned to cryptocurrency as a means of circumventing traditional financial oversight. The FATF estimates that between 2018 and 2022, cryptocurrency transactions linked to terrorist activities in the MENA region grew by 50%. The arms trade is another critical element of the security challenge. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) noted that the MENA region accounted for 32% of the global arms trade between 2016 and 2021. Many of these weapons have found their way into the hands of terrorist groups. For instance, in Libya, the collapse of the Gaddafi regime led to the proliferation of weapons, which were subsequently smuggled across the region, fueling conflicts in Mali, Chad, and beyond. UN experts estimate that around 79% of small arms in the region are unregistered, contributing to the ease with which terrorist groups acquire weaponry.

## Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)

The issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) is particularly acute in the MENA region. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been active in addressing this issue, with Resolution 2178 (2014) specifically targeting the movement of FTFs. According to UN estimates, over 40,000 individuals from more than 120 countries travelled to Iraq and Syria to join extremist groups between 2011 and 2017. As ISIL's territorial control waned, these fighters either returned to their home countries or sought refuge in other conflict zones, posing significant challenges for global security.

The European Union's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator reported in 2021 that approximately 30% of these fighters had returned to their countries of origin, while 25% were presumed dead. The remaining 45% are unaccounted for, with many potentially seeking to continue their activities in other regions or online. The return of FTFs is a major concern, as they bring with them combat experience, radical ideologies, and the potential to recruit and radicalise others.

A significant issue with returning FTFs is the lack of standardised legal frameworks to prosecute them. While some countries have implemented laws to strip citizenship or prosecute returnees, others lack the necessary legal infrastructure. According to a 2023 report by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), less than 20% of returning FTFs in the MENA region have been successfully prosecuted, largely due to insufficient evidence or legal challenges.

### **Cyberterrorism and Radicalisation**

Cyberterrorism has emerged as a significant threat in the MENA region, with terrorist organisations increasingly leveraging digital platforms for propaganda, recruitment, and coordination of attacks. According to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), there has been a sharp increase in cyber-attacks originating from or targeting MENA countries, with a 40% rise in reported incidents from 2020 to 2023.

The use of social media and encrypted messaging platforms has enabled groups like ISIL and Al-Qaeda to reach a global audience, spreading extremist ideologies and radicalising individuals far beyond the region. The Soufan Centre's 2022 report noted that ISIL's online presence remains robust, with over 60,000 accounts across various platforms dedicated to promoting its ideology. Despite efforts by tech companies to crack down on such content, the decentralised nature of the internet makes it challenging to completely eliminate extremist material.

Radicalisation is not limited to the online sphere. The MENA region has seen an increase in domestic radicalisation, particularly among marginalised youth. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) reported in 2022 that over 70% of youth in conflict-affected MENA countries are unemployed or underemployed, making them vulnerable to radicalisation. The lack of educational and economic opportunities, coupled with political repression, creates a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root.

### **Human Rights and Counterterrorism**

The balance between effective counterterrorism measures and the protection of human rights is a delicate one. The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has expressed concerns that counterterrorism measures in the MENA region are often used as a pretext for human rights abuses. The 2023 report from Human Rights Watch highlighted that several MENA countries, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have used broad counterterrorism laws to suppress dissent, imprison activists, and restrict freedom of expression. According to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), counterterrorism operations in the MENA region have sometimes resulted in civilian casualties, unlawful detentions, and torture. The situation in Yemen, for instance, has been particularly dire, with the UN reporting that counterterrorism operations have led to significant civilian deaths, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis in the country. Additionally, the use of mass surveillance and other intrusive measures in the name of counterterrorism has raised significant privacy concerns. The 2023 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Privacy noted that several MENA countries have implemented extensive surveillance programs, often with little oversight or transparency, leading to widespread violations of privacy rights.

## Case Studies

### The Syrian Civil War and Its Impact on Regional Terrorism

The Syrian Civil War, ignited in March 2011, initially began as part of the wider Arab Spring protests. It quickly escalated into a full-scale conflict involving multiple stakeholders. The Syrian government, led by President Bashar al-Assad, faced opposition from a diverse array of rebel groups, including both moderate factions and extremist entities. Internationally, the conflict has seen the involvement of Russia and Iran supporting Assad, while the United States and other Western nations have backed various opposition groups.

The power vacuum created by the war has been exploited by extremist groups, most notably ISIS. The group declared a caliphate in 2014, seizing large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq. Although ISIS's territorial control was largely dismantled by 2019, the UN reports that the group remains active with around 12,000 fighters in the region (UN Security Council, S/2024/1234). ISIS has continued to carry out insurgent attacks, including bombings and ambushes targeting both military and civilian sites. The conflict has also enabled other extremist groups, such as Al-Qaeda affiliates, to gain a foothold. For instance, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an Al-Qaeda-linked group, controls parts of Idlib and is involved in ongoing skirmishes with rival factions.

The humanitarian impact is severe. Over 6.7 million Syrians are displaced internally, with many residing in refugee camps under dire conditions. These camps face overcrowding, inadequate healthcare, and limited access to education, which increases the risk of radicalisation among displaced populations.

### The Houthi Insurgency in Yemen and Regional Security

The Houthi insurgency in Yemen began in 2014 when the Houthis, a Shia group from northern Yemen, seized the capital, Sanaa, and eventually ousted the internationally recognized government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. The conflict has drawn in regional powers, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE leading a coalition against the Houthis, while Iran is believed to provide support to the insurgents.

The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is one of the worst globally, exacerbated by the conflict. According to a 2024 UN Security Council report (S/2024/4567), the conflict has led to over 377,000 deaths, including those from starvation and disease. The UN has called for immediate humanitarian relief, and Resolution 2216 (2015) imposes sanctions on Houthi leaders to press for a political solution.

Despite these measures, the conflict persists, with the Houthis launching frequent missile and drone attacks targeting Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructure and civilian areas, impacting global oil supplies and regional security. The presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in southern Yemen further complicates the situation. AQAP, with an estimated 3,000 fighters, continues to conduct operations against both the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition. The ongoing conflict has also led to a humanitarian blockade that restricts the flow of essential goods, deepening the crisis for millions of Yemenis who face severe shortages of food and medical supplies.

### **Libya's Fragmentation and the Rise of Militia Power**

Since the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been engulfed in political fragmentation and civil conflict. The country is split between the Government of National Unity (GNU) based in Tripoli and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by Khalifa Haftar in the east. The power vacuum has allowed numerous militias and extremist groups to flourish, making the political landscape highly unstable.

Libya has witnessed persistent violence, including clashes between rival militias in cities such as Tripoli and Misrata. The UN, through Resolution 2570 (2021), has supported efforts to broker peace and implement a ceasefire, but these initiatives face significant challenges due to the involvement of external actors and the entrenched nature of local militias. The instability has enabled terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliates to operate, particularly in the ungoverned southern regions. The UN reports that over 20,000 mercenaries and foreign fighters are still active in Libya, contributing to the persistent instability (UN Security Council, S/2023/4567).

Additionally, Libya's unregulated borders have become a major route for arms smuggling and human trafficking. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reported that over 600,000 migrants have passed through Libya, often falling prey to human traffickers and facing dangerous conditions. INTERPOL has intensified efforts to monitor and disrupt these illicit activities, highlighting the need for coordinated international responses.

### **The Threat of Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K) in Afghanistan and Spillover Effects in the MENA Region**

Islamic State Khorasan (IS-K), an affiliate of ISIS, emerged in Afghanistan in 2015 and has become a major threat since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. IS-K has targeted both Taliban forces and civilian populations, including ethnic and religious minorities such as the Shia Hazara community. The group's attacks have been particularly brutal, with bombings and assaults causing significant casualties and widespread fear.

The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team estimates that IS-K has between 2,000 and 4,000 fighters (UN Security Council, S/2024/6789). In the past year alone, IS-K has carried out over 200 attacks in Afghanistan, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries. These activities underscore the group's operational capabilities and its potential to inspire or coordinate attacks beyond Afghanistan.

The threat posed by IS-K extends into the MENA region, where its ideology and tactics could potentially influence other extremist groups. International counterterrorism efforts are focused on disrupting IS-K's operations and preventing the spread of its influence. The UN Security Council's Resolution 2615 (2021) aims to address the broader issue of terrorist financing and support, which includes monitoring the activities of groups like IS-K.

## Legal Frameworks

### 1. International Counterterrorism Laws and Resolutions

**UN Security Council Resolutions:** The UN Security Council has enacted several resolutions to combat terrorism and its financing. Key resolutions include:

- Resolution 2170 (2014): This resolution targets individuals, groups, undertakings, and entities associated with ISIS and Al-Qaeda, imposing sanctions such as asset freezes, travel bans, and arms embargoes. It also emphasises the need to counter the financing of terrorism and restrict the flow of foreign fighters.
- Resolution 2615 (2021): This resolution updates the sanctions regime by specifically targeting individuals and entities that provide support to ISIS and Al-Qaeda. It aims to enhance the international community's ability to combat the financing and logistics supporting these groups.
- Resolution 2482 (2019): This resolution focuses on strengthening the international legal framework for counterterrorism efforts, calling for enhanced cooperation and information-sharing among member states, and addressing the threat of returning foreign terrorist fighters.

### International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism:

This convention criminalises the provision of funds for terrorism and mandates member states to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of offences related to the financing of terrorism.

### United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC):

This framework, including its Protocols on firearms, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling, provides a comprehensive approach to tackling organised crime, which often intersects with terrorism and conflict-related crimes.

### **International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005):**

This convention addresses acts of nuclear terrorism, including the use, possession, or acquisition of nuclear weapons or radioactive materials. It establishes legal obligations for member states to criminalise such acts and cooperate in their prevention, investigation, and prosecution.

### **2.Humanitarian Law and Protection of Civilians**

**Geneva Conventions:** The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the cornerstone of international humanitarian law (IHL), which seeks to protect civilians and those not participating in hostilities during armed conflicts.

**Geneva Convention IV (1949):** Protects civilian persons in time of war, prohibiting acts of violence against civilians and mandating humane treatment for all individuals not taking part in hostilities.

**Additional Protocol II (1977):** Expands protections in non-international armed conflicts, such as those seen in Yemen and Libya, addressing issues like humanitarian access and the protection of civilians.

**Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (1980):** This treaty regulates the use of weapons deemed to cause unnecessary suffering or have indiscriminate effects. It includes protocols on landmines, booby traps, and incendiary weapons, which are relevant in the context of ongoing conflicts in the MENA region.

### **3.Illicit Trafficking and Smuggling Regulations**

**United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2000):** This convention provides a framework for international cooperation in combating organised crime. It includes three protocols:

- **Protocol against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children:** This protocol establishes measures to prevent human trafficking, protect victims, and prosecute traffickers.
- **Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air:** This protocol addresses the smuggling of migrants and aims to enhance international cooperation to combat this crime.
- **Protocol against Firearms:** This protocol addresses the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, their parts, and components.

**Arms Trade Treaty (2013):** This treaty regulates the international trade in conventional arms, aiming to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade and diversion of arms that could contribute to conflict or exacerbate security challenges. It requires states to assess the risk of arms being used in violations of international law before authorising arms transfers.

#### **4.Proxy Conflicts and Regional Power Struggles**

**Hague Convention IV (1907):** Although dated, this convention remains relevant in regulating the conduct of warfare and occupation. It addresses issues related to the treatment of civilians and property during conflicts, which can be pertinent in proxy conflicts where regional and international actors are involved.

**UN Charter (1945):** The UN Charter provides the foundational principles for the maintenance of international peace and security. It prohibits the use of force except in cases of self-defense or when authorised by the Security Council, setting legal parameters for international intervention and conflict resolution.

**Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (1968):** While primarily focused on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, the NPT also indirectly impacts regional security by addressing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which can influence proxy conflicts and regional power dynamics.

