



UNSC

**ADDRESSING THE THREATS POSED BY
NON-STATE ACTORS**

I. Committee Background

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the primary bodies of the United Nations (UN) that aims to maintain international peace and security. Established in 1945, the council holds the authority to create legally binding decisions, authorize peacekeeping missions, impose sanctions and are tasked with the overall protection of human rights. When necessary, they hold the power to approve military action to restore international stability.

The Council is composed of 15 members, five of which are permanent (China, France, the Russian Federation, UK and US) and 10 of which are non-permanent elected members for two-year terms. The UNSC plays a significant role in shaping the global response to emerging threats and as of recently (due to their application of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) has been focusing on combining sustainability, peace and security. Throughout its history it has evolved from only addressing traditional inter-state conflicts to now being responsible for confronting modern threats including the complexity of threats that non-state actors may hold.



II. Introduction to the Topic

Non-state actors (NSAs) are individuals or organizations that have a significant political, economic, or military influence but are not officially affiliated with a state government. Some more widely known NSAs are ISIS, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban (before 2021), Boko Haram, Hezbollah, and other global criminal organizations. NSAs take advantage of the advancements in globalization and technology, while also exploiting weak points in state authorities in certain regions. NSAs have been able to extend their global reach beyond national borders through global communication strategies like online recruitment, and through accessing technologically advanced weapons (which has been facilitated over the years). NSAs oppose state sovereignty and investigate conflict - holding major political influence in certain conflict zones throughout the world.



Houthi fighters brandish weapons in Yemen – Mohammed Huwais/AFP/Getty Images

Non-state actors have a global impact and pose significant threats to global peace and security. Terrorist organizations exploit political instability and use warfare tactics to gain control of territories and even entire countries like in Iraq and Syria during the rise of ISIS. Insurgent and Separatist groups prolong civil wars and undermine peacebuilding efforts, aiming to remain in conflict for as long as possible to remain in control and oppose the government (as can be seen in Yemen or the Democratic Republic of Congo). Furthermore, cyber non-state actors and criminal networks have moved these threats to a global scale through their use of organized cyber-attacks and the illegal trade of resources such as weaponry and drugs. These systems destabilize the economy and threaten both the government and public safety. The UNSC has passed several resolutions and laws to oppose and put a stop to these NSAs, such as Resolution 1373 (2001), involving counterterrorism after 9/11, or Resolution 2178 (2014), which addresses foreign terrorist organizations. Despite these efforts, NSAs have continued to adapt and exploit the gaps in international surveillance and enforcement.

PRIVATE MILITARY GROUPS AND UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

The ongoing war in Ukraine has highlighted how private military groups and foreign fighters can affect a conflict's direction and intensity. The Wagner Group, one of the most well-known examples, has been involved in combat operations, online campaigns and even resource extraction in occupied territories. Groups like such makes it hard to differentiate between state and non-state actors as they work with government approval while still maintaining a private identity. Additionally, the situation in Ukraine demonstrates that non-state actors no longer include terrorist or insurgent groups but can also be commercial or politically motivated forces that alter the balance of power in war zones. By non-state actors complicating international law, the UNSC must question who is responsible for their actions and how can they respond if they are backed by a permanent member state.



Fighters in Israel-Gaza war /Al Jazeera/Getty Images

TERRORISM AND GLOBAL NETWORKS

One of the most visible threats from non-state actors comes from terrorist organizations. Groups like Al-Qaeda, ISIS and their local units have shown how ideologies and digital communication can unite followers across the globe.

After its formation during the Soviet Afghan War, Al-Qaeda became a transnational network that inspired a variety of other extremist groups in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. New branches continue to launch attacks and spread propaganda online.

These groups pose major challenges as they:

- Exploit ungoverned regions (like the Sahel or Afghanistan) to train and operate freely
- Use cryptocurrency, drug trade and smuggling to fund their operations
- Spread their extreme ideologies rapidly through online platforms

ARMED MOVEMENTS AND REGIONAL TENSIONS

In the Middle East, non-state actors such as Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis have become central in regional conflicts. These groups often hold both military and political power which allows them to influence overall stability in the region. The recent escalation in Israel and Gaza shows how their actions can trigger large-scale violent and international crises. As the organizations are often backed by foreign states, they receive advanced weaponry and give them the ability to control territories.

The UNSC has repeatedly attempted to negotiate ceasefires and provide humanitarian aid, but divisions among major powers often limit the Council's ability to act efficiently. Issues in the Middle East are of many examples of how non-state actors can complicate peace processes and initiate instability.

III. Essential Questions / Key Issues

1. How can the international community define and categorize None State Actors under international law?

The lack of clarity when classifying different NSAs creates legal challenges when responding to these threats. It is important for the UNSC to consider what classifies as a NSA while also deciding whether they can be held accountable under the same standards as states.

2. What measures can be taken to improve international cooperation in counteracting terrorism and global crime?

International surveillance, the sharing of intelligence, action plans and unified sanctions are inconsistent between different regions and countries. The UNSC has to explore different action plans and frameworks to coordinate these solutions without breaching national sovereignty.

3. How can member states prevent the movement of resources and financing of Non-state Actors?

The majority of NSAs operate through illegal trading, cyber attacks and theft, and donations from outside sources. Finding ways to prevent the financing of these organizations and destabilize their connections is key for the UNSC.

4. What role should technology and cyber governance have in addressing the threats made by Non-state actors?

Cyber warfare and online transmissions has played a huge role in the rise and planning of NSAs, and has opened up a whole new set of threats and risks. The UNSC must determine how to set new technological defenses and mechanisms for digital monitoring and accountability without violating privacy rights.

5. How can peacekeeping and post-conflict efforts address regions that are affected by Non-state Actors?

Sustaining peace largely depends on government reforms, social programs, and reintegration efforts. The UNSC has to consider adaptive peacekeeping programs for post-conflict regions.

IV. Countries List

1. USA
2. UK
3. China
4. Russia
5. France
6. Algeria
7. Denmark
8. Greece
9. Guyana
10. Pakistan
11. Panama
12. Republic of Korea
13. Sierra Leone
14. Slovenia
15. Somalia
16. Japan
17. Germany
18. Congo
19. Sudan
20. Indonesia
21. Australia

V. Sources

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