



VMUN 2019

# Disarmament and International Security Committee

BACKGROUND GUIDE



## VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Eighteenth Annual Session | January 25–27, 2019

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Sameer Esmail and it is my pleasure to serve as your Director for the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) at VMUN 2019. I am currently a student in my senior year at Burnaby Mountain Secondary School. My Model United Nations career began four years ago, and since then my passion for politics and international affairs has grown immensely. Outside of Model UN, I serve as President of the Burnaby District Student Advisory Council and am heavily involved in political work, debate, volunteering, and humanitarian activities, including a recent trip overseas to Ecuador. In the future I hope to pursue further studies leading towards a career in humanitarian or diplomatic work.

At the upcoming iteration of VMUN, I encourage all delegates to step out of their comfort zones in all aspects of debate. Our committee will be discussing Religious Tension in the Middle East and Radicalization and Recruitment of Terrorists. These topics frequent global headlines and significantly affect international relations and strategic interests. Whether you have attended many conferences or your MUN career is in its infancy, I hope that this conference helps you develop academic and professional skills and increases your knowledge and understanding of pressing global crises. It is my hope and aim that delegates find this conference, and Model UN in general, to be highly transformative.

If you should have any questions or concerns prior to the conference, please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my fellow dais members. Thrisha, Stephanie, Winston, and I are beyond excited to welcome you to VMUN 2019 and we hope it will be a fulfilling experience for all of you.

Sincerely,

Sameer Esmail  
DISEC Director

# Position Paper Policy

## What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the Disarmament and International Security Committee, position papers are not mandatory but highly recommended, and required for a delegate to be considered for an award.

## Formatting

Position papers should:

- Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee
- Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
- Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

## Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on January 13, 2019.

Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper. Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is *disec@vmun.com*.

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# Religious Tension in the Middle East

## Overview

The Middle East is known for being a region of instability. A large part of this image is driven by the centuries-old religious tensions that have gripped the Eastern Mediterranean. The region is the birthplace of three of the world's most prominent and widespread religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and quarrels between and within these faiths have left the area in a state of perpetual conflict. The religious tension that has plagued the Middle East brings with it numerous ramifications, one of which being geopolitical rivalry, an issue that has resulted in strained diplomatic relations, proxy wars, militaristic intimidation, resource conflicts, and an endless power struggle. Major examples of this include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Saudi Arabia and Iran's ongoing "Cold War," fought through proxy battles.<sup>1</sup> These transpirations are cases of Jewish-Muslim conflict and Sunni-Shia conflict respectively. The Sunni and Shia are two distinct denominations of Islam which formed from varying beliefs on authority, namely the identity of the Prophet Muhammad's rightful successor. The widespread nature of the region's conflicts has created a disastrous situation for the population, with minorities persecuted harshly and innocent citizens frequently caught in the crossfire. Delegates must bear in mind the extensive international consequences of religious conflict in the Middle East, such as global superpower intervention or large-scale trade and resource battles. Furthermore, delegates should remain cognizant of the delicate network of alliances and underlying rivalries that characterize the Middle East, as well as the delicate position each nation holds. The debates about this topic will be incredibly important to achieving peace in the region, thus creating a more peaceful world.

As delegates navigate through such a delicate and intricate topic, it is important that they bear in mind the various implications of each decision that they make. That is to say, delegates should consider not only political resolutions, but also how religious cooperation and dialogue can be achieved in a manner through which future conflicts are avoided. Member States should also remain aware of the socioeconomic, militaristic, humanitarian, political, and religious realities of the global community, as well as the consequences of their actions in such dimensions. Moreover, it is important to remember the jurisdiction of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), in addition to its goals as set forth by the United Nations. These goals include the maintenance of international peace and security as well as the reduction and regulation of armaments with the objective of achieving greater global stability.<sup>2</sup>

## Timeline

**2000–1700 BCE** — Judaism, the first of the Abrahamic faiths, becomes prevalent in the Middle East.

**0–100** — Christianity, the second of the Abrahamic faiths, splits from Judaism and gains popularity in its own right.

**610** — Islam, the third of the Abrahamic faiths, is founded.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus, Jonathan. "Why Saudi Arabia and Iran Are Bitter Rivals." BBC News. November 18, 2017. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-42008809>.

<sup>2</sup> "Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)." United Nations. <http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/>.

**632** — The Prophet Muhammad dies. Divided in opinion over his rightful successor, Muslims splinter into the Shia and Sunni sects.<sup>3</sup>

**600s–1000s** — Islamic rule over the Middle East is characterized by tolerance for other religions. Peace and respect between faiths is maintained.

**1096–1291** — The Crusades are carried out by Christian knights, briefly resulting in the Crusader states in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**May 16, 1916** — The Sykes-Picot Agreement is signed; Britain and France designate their spheres of control in the Middle East.

**November 2, 1917** — Britain signs the Balfour Declaration, expressing its support for “the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people.”<sup>4</sup>

**September 23, 1932** — The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is proclaimed under the leadership of Ibn Saud following three decades of conquest on the Arabian Peninsula by the House of Saud.

**1929–1939** — A large-scale Jewish migration into British Palestine, a Muslim-majority region, takes place.

**November 29, 1947** — The UN General Assembly adopts the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, approving the creation of separate Jewish and Arab states, as well as an internationally-controlled Jerusalem, in the former British Mandate.

**1947, 1956, 1967, 1973** — The Arab-Israeli Wars (War of Independence, Sinai War, Six-Day War, Yom Kippur War) occur in the respective years listed.

**1979** — The Iranian Revolution places the Shia theocracy in power in Iran.

**November 9, 2004** — The Amman Conference brings together religious scholars from across the Islamic world in the spirit of tolerance and understanding.

**2014–present** — The rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) leads to escalation of terrorist-related violence worldwide.

## Historical Analysis

Religious tension in the Middle East can be drawn from several historical events dating back to the founding of the Abrahamic faiths; however, there were times when a state of relative peace had been established. For instance, during Muslim conquests of the Middle East and the falling Byzantine and Sassanid Empires, Islamic authorities showed great mercy to Jews and Christians in the territories they captured, treating them as equals. In fact, the Quran finds no difference between Christians, Jews, and Muslims, because all of these faiths bow to the same deity.<sup>5</sup> Jews even held high-profile roles in courts and participated in commerce merchants within the Muslim Fatimid Empire (909–1171), something that would be unthinkable in parts of the Muslim world today.<sup>6</sup> The first

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<sup>3</sup> “Muhammad - Biography.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad>.

<sup>4</sup> “Timeline: The Middle East Conflict.” Israeli–Palestinian Conflict | Al Jazeera. January 21, 2008. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2007/09/200852519252884626.html>.

<sup>5</sup> “Quran Verse (2:136) - English Translation.” The Quranic Arabic Corpus - Translation. <http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=136>.

<sup>6</sup> “Fatimids.” Jewish Virtual Library. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/fatimids>.

major conflict between these groups was the Crusades, in which Christian European kingdoms sent knights to fight Muslims and Jews to liberate the “Holy Land,” a place the kings believed to be theirs through divine will. However, the biblical Land of Israel and the historical Palestine, comprising the “Holy Land,” are significant to all three Abrahamic faiths, not just to Christians. The rise and fall of the Crusader states marked the beginning of strained relations between religions in the Middle East. Although the Ottoman era, which began after the Crusades, was one of religious freedom and tolerance, Muslim incursions into European territories pitted many Christian leaders against the Muslim world.<sup>7</sup> The idea that Islam could be a threat to the stability of the Christian world began to develop even after the fall of the Ottomans and in the aftermath of World War I.

The Shia-Sunni split dates back to the death of Muhammad in 632 CE.<sup>8</sup> Those who believed that Muhammad had appointed a successor followed his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, whom Muhammad had supposedly chosen at Ghadir Khumm. This group became known as the *shia* (party) of Ali. The second, much larger denomination, the Sunnis, believed that Muhammad had designated no successor and that the community should come to a consensus instead. Eventually, they designated Abu Bakr as caliph (Islamic steward and community leader). This group did not receive a title at the time, but they came to be known as the Sunnis, or those who follow the actions of the Prophet (*sunnah*). The Sunnis ruled over most historic Islamic caliphates; however, some notable exceptions were the Fatimid and Safavid Empires, both ruled by Shia leaders. Both the Sunni and the Shia have internal subdivisions within their various schools of thought and interpretations of faith; violence between them has not been uncommon over the centuries. The Shias hold majorities in southern Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, and some parts of Central Asia, while the Sunnis are largely dominant elsewhere in the Muslim world.

When the imperial powers of Britain and France imposed their colonial ambitions on the Middle East through the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916, they began to manipulate political and religious realities to serve their own interests. Even before this agreement, Britain exercised its influence by inciting an Arab revolt against Ottoman rule in the Hejaz. Ultimately, this act of colonialism led to the Saudi dynasty assuming control of the central Arabian Peninsula and enforcing its Wahhabist ideals, adhering to strict form of Sunni Islam. Shortly after the Sykes-Picot agreement, the British issued the Balfour Declaration and received a League of Nations mandate to govern the Palestinian territory. With power consolidated, Britain brought thousands of Jews to Palestine, establishing their “national home”; however, this angered the local Muslim population, seeing their centuries-old homeland being appropriated for the Jews. As such, the British government’s hasty actions in Palestine ultimately pitted two previously-peacefully-coexisting religions against one another. With violence on the rise, the UN agreed on a partition plan that would divide the small territory between the Jews and Muslims. A new border was established between the newly-independent state of Israel and the surrounding Arab nations. Four wars have occurred over the course of the last century between Israel and these states, with active occupations of Arab-Palestinian territories by Israeli forces continuing to this day.

Since the founding of Saudi Arabia in 1932 and the Iranian Revolution taking place in 1979, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have collectively achieved power and religious dominance in the Middle East. Back in 1979, the popular Iranian Revolution overthrew the Shah of Iran and installed a theocratic government that took hardline religious stances, relinquishing relations with the West. Today, with Iran as the largest Shia power and Saudi Arabia the dominant Sunni force in the Middle East, religiously-motivated violence and proxy conflicts are pervading the region.

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<sup>7</sup> Alkhateeb, Firas. "Non-Muslim Rights in the Ottoman Empire." *Lost Islamic History*. October 30, 2017. <http://lostislamichistory.com/non-muslim-rights-in-the-ottoman-empire/>.

<sup>8</sup> “Muhammad - Biography.” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muhammad>.

Religious minorities also play a role in Middle East's tensions. The Yazidis, Druze, Samaritans, Copts, Baha'is, and other minority groups have survived over hundreds of years; however, many larger or more-radical religious groups have persecuted and isolated these minorities, regarding them as non-believers and scourges to be eradicated. Yazidis in particular have been persecuted by the ISIL, which views Yazidis as "devil-worshippers."<sup>9</sup> Many of these groups have gone into hiding due to the threat of violence against their people over the last century. Delegates must keep in mind and address the persecution of these minorities, a plight that has persisted to this day.

The Saudis have a firm position against the Iranians, with diplomatic relations currently suspended over a dispute that began with the execution of a Shia cleric in Saudi Arabia, outraging many Iranians.<sup>10</sup> Iranian protests at the Saudi embassy in Tehran prompted the suspension of formal diplomatic relations that has yet to be lifted. The Saudis see Iran as a country that supports terrorism; as such, they engage in numerous proxy conflicts with it. Saudi Arabia currently supports the rebels in Syria and the Hadi government forces in Yemen, while Iran supports the Syrian government and the Houthi rebels in Yemen. The two nations have never directly fought, but proxy wars and campaigns of terror have been instigated by both sides. The Shia theocracy in Iran, similar to the Saudis, is quite strong in its religious authority. The two nations hold quite disparate approaches to governance that are primarily fueled by their religious differences.

Terrorism affiliated with radical sects of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity has also been a significant factor in growing tensions. Terror groups around the Middle East have selected specific quotes from holy texts in order to justify their violent methods of attaining religious order. It is, however, inaccurate to claim that religious violence is the fault of one religion or another. Rather, it is the culmination of European colonial influences, immigration, and years of historical changes in ideologies that have pitted religions against one another, and have even torn them apart from within.

## Past UN/International Involvement

Religious tensions in the Middle East have been influenced and altered by the involvement of international entities such as the United Nations. The present state of religious affairs would not exist if not for the intervention of supranational bodies throughout history, with the examples of the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The League of Nations was heavily involved in the creation of numerous mandates after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the signing of the *Treaty of Sèvres*, in which the Ottomans relinquished control of their territories in the regions of Mesopotamia, Hejaz, Palestine, Syria, and Transjordan. The League of Nations mandates were also complicit with and operated in conjunction with British goal of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>11</sup> The League's bias towards Britain and France was also quite evident—the mandates that the organization would create were closely linked to the areas of influence outlined in the Sykes-Picot agreement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Worrall, Simon. "Minority Religions in the Middle East Under Threat, Need Protection." National Geographic. October 26, 2014. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/10/141026-yazidis-middle-east-iraq-islamic-state-religion-world-ngbooktalk/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr: Saudi Arabia executes top Shia cleric." BBC. January 2, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35213244>.

<sup>11</sup> League of Nations. Palestine Mandate. [https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/Dateien/CouncilDocs/C-436-1922-VI\\_EN.pdf](https://biblio-archive.unog.ch/Dateien/CouncilDocs/C-436-1922-VI_EN.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> "Sykes-Picot Agreement." Encyclopædia Britannica. May 31, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement>.

The League's involvement is significant because it authorized the potential for the creation of Israel, the act of which has been, and continues to be, a source of the conflict between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East.

The League of Nations passed many mandates and resolutions, and granted Britain power over Mesopotamia, Transjordan, Palestine, and Kuwait, while the French received administration over Lebanon and Syria.<sup>13</sup> This, however, was thinly disguised as a mandate of the League as a whole, reflecting the influence of French imperial ambitions on the integrity of the League. The League also signed the Hejaz away to the Saudi Arabia, helping them rise to power and propagate a Wahhabist religious doctrine throughout the Arab world. Through their actions, League of Nations created a state of affairs that allowed colonial ambition to rule the Middle East and laid the foundations for radical ideologies to find their ideal breeding ground.

The United Nations has been even more influential in the religious spheres of the Middle East than the League of Nations, its predecessor, was. In General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) (*A/RES/181(II)*) (November 29, 1947), the British withdrawal from Palestine and the separation of the territory into two states, one Jewish and one Arab, was finalized.<sup>14</sup> This decision created the state of Israel and set the stage for ensuing violence between Muslims and Jews.

In Security Council Resolution 242 (*S/RES/242*) (November 22, 1967), there was an affirmation of the territorial integrity of all states surrounding Palestine and Israel and the call for an Israeli withdrawal of its forces from occupied territories. This resolution also recognized the existence of Palestine and the rights of Arab nations.<sup>15</sup>

In Security Council Resolution 478 (*S/RES/478*) (August 20, 1980), Israel was censured for its failure to comply with past resolutions concerning its settlements in Palestinian lands and its position that Jerusalem should be the capital of solely Israel. This served to affirm Palestinian territorial integrity and the importance of Jerusalem to all faiths.<sup>16</sup>

In Security Council Resolution 1397 (*S/RES/1397*) (March 12, 2002), there was a call for an immediate end to violence between Palestine and Israel and the introduction of a two-state solution idea. This was the first time a two-state solution was collectively agreed upon.<sup>17</sup>

In Security Council Resolution 1737 (*S/RES/1737*) (December 23, 2006), sanctions relating to nuclear weapons materials and equipment were imposed on Iran. Specifically, the freezing of assets of people and entities relating to Iran's nuclear weapons program, and the establishment of a UN committee to ensure Member States comply with sanctions measures were enacted. This action stalled Iran's development as a nuclear power and limited its influence in the region.<sup>18</sup>

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation brings together numerous Islamic nations from around the world to form a collective voice for the Muslim world.<sup>19</sup> Two departments of the OIC are essential in understanding of how the organization influences Middle Eastern affairs.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Tatlock, Christopher W. "UN Resolutions on the Mideast and North Africa." Council On Foreign Relations. September 21, 2011. <https://www.cfr.org/background/un-resolutions-mideast-and-north-africa>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. <https://www.oic-oci.org/home/?lan=en>.

The first is the Department for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, which manages the empowerment of the Palestinian people, the creation of a united Islamic front against Israeli aggression and violations of UN regulations, and the preservation of Jerusalem as a holy city.<sup>20</sup> The duties of this department focus on creating political efforts to push for Palestinian rights and national integrity, as well as exposing Israeli violations within Palestinian territories, specifically in Al-Quds (Jerusalem).<sup>21</sup> These activities proliferate antagonistic views of Israel, which may promote Islamic solidarity but also exacerbates the divide between the two groups.

The second department is the Directorate of Cultural, Social, and Family Affairs, which oversees matters of interfaith and intercultural dialogue.<sup>22</sup> The department leads events such as youth forums and cultural activities that bring together Muslims from around the world. In a sense, these events can bring together various sects and subdivisions of Islam in a manner of positive coexistence. The directorate's activities are ones that should be modelled and built upon not only within Islam, but in the religious framework of the Middle East as a whole.

Even outside of the League of Nations, the UN, and the OIC, there is still a significant amount of international involvement in the Middle East's religious affairs. For instance, the United States has voiced outspoken logistical and militaristic support of Israeli interests. The U.S. is also allied with Saudi Arabia, and Russia is allied with Iran. Saudi Arabia and Iran are engaging in their own "Cold War," with external influences playing a major role. The interests of foreign nations in the Middle East region are often politically, geographically, or resource-motivated; few enter the Middle East purely for religious aims. Nations and terrorist groups in the Middle East have capitalized on the political motivations and resource needs of Western powers to form alliances in their religious conflicts. In many cases, these Western powers unintentionally further violence and tension in the region.

## Current Situation

The Middle East's religious hostilities have peaked over the course of the last few years; thousands have been displaced as a result of the violence. In 2014, the level of religious hostility was 4 times the global median level, and 800,000 more people were displaced due to religion-related armed conflict than in 2013.<sup>23</sup> Some examples of the hostilities that exist today include terrorism, ethnic cleansing, the persecution of religious minorities, sectarian conflict, and transnational disputes such as the ongoing violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Religiously-motivated terrorism is one of the largest contributors to the abundance of strife in the Middle East today. Radical groups exist within all faiths, but in the Middle East, popularly strong religious views provide an ideal breeding ground for radicalism. One prominent such movement is Zionism, which seeks to protect the Jewish homeland. The Zionist approach to achieving success, however, has been one of immense bloodshed. Zionists have been known to commit hate crimes and acts of extremism, particularly against Palestinians, Christians, and Muslims. By April 2018, the number of hate crimes committed by Jewish extremists against Palestinians in the West Bank had exceeded the number of those committed in the entire year prior.<sup>24</sup> In June

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<sup>20</sup> Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs." Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. [https://www.oic-oci.org/dept/?d\\_id=17&d\\_ref=3&lan=en](https://www.oic-oci.org/dept/?d_id=17&d_ref=3&lan=en).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> "Directorate of Cultural, Social, and Family Affairs." Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. [https://www.oic-oci.org/dept/?d\\_id=17&d\\_ref=3&lan=en](https://www.oic-oci.org/dept/?d_id=17&d_ref=3&lan=en).

<sup>23</sup> Kishi, Katayoun, and Angelina E. Theodorou. "6 Facts about Religious Hostilities in the Middle East and North Africa." Pew Research Center. July 07, 2016. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/07/6-facts-about-religious-hostilities-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/>.

<sup>24</sup> Harel, Amos. "Sharp Rise in Attacks on Palestinians by Jewish Extremists in West Bank." Haaretz.com. April 22, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-shin-bet-sharp-rise-in-attacks-on-palestinians-by-jewish-extremists-1.6015038>.

2018, “outside a courtroom in the mixed Jewish-Arab town of Lod, some 20 young Jews danced and chanted in celebration of the grisly 2015 firebombing murder of an 18-month-old Palestinian baby, Ali Dawabshe, killed in his bed in the West Bank village of Duma.”<sup>25</sup> This type of violence by Zionist extremists has been on the rise, especially against Palestinians. However, targets have not been limited to one group; Christians have also been attacked. In June 2015, an arson attack was carried out on a church complex in Israel that caused USD 1.8 million in damage and left a Catholic monk in the hospital.<sup>26</sup>

Christian and Islamic traditions have helped cause the terrorism that is rampant in the Middle East as well. Organizations such as ISIL, as well as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates, are examples of active Muslim extremist groups that operate in the Middle East. ISIL has taken a more variegated approach to terrorism compared to Zionist tactics. The group has been capturing territory to create its purported caliphate in the Middle East, but it has also launched acts of terror in other areas of the globe. This alternate route is one that has caused great upheaval in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, where ISIL’s territory has developed. Christian extremists have been much less noticed by the West over the years due to an obvious bias, but have indeed been active; one notable attack was the arson attack on Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem in 1969.<sup>27</sup> Instances of modern Christian terrorist activity are also seen outside of the Middle East, including in Canada, the United States, Europe, Lebanon, and Africa, with one of the most notable active groups being the Lord’s Resistance Army in Central Africa.<sup>28</sup> Thus, radicalized terror or extremist groups are entities quite prevalent among all faiths in the Middle East, and delegates will undoubtedly need to find a way to mitigate and counter their impacts.

Another very pressing issue in the Middle East is ethnic cleansing and the persecution of minority religious groups. One group in particular, the Yazidis, have often been victims of such attacks. In several instances, ISIL has entered Yazidi communities to execute the men and capture the women for sexual exploitation.<sup>29</sup> The practice of buying and selling women and girls as sex slaves has become commonplace among soldiers, and repeated physical abuse and violence against captives is not uncommon; families are torn apart daily.<sup>30</sup> The systematic killing and abuse of the Yazidi community can be considered an act of ethnic cleansing and a crime against humanity. Unfortunately, the Yazidis are not the only religious minority being persecuted in the Middle East. Samaritans, Druze, Zoroastrians, Baha’is, and Copts are also among those attacked. Discrimination and violence against minorities are extensive problems that delegates must evaluate and address.

Significant internal violence in many states is also the result of religious discontent and religiously-biased regimes. The Shia-Sunni split, for example, is evident in many Islamic countries, as sectarian violence and political turmoil can often be a by-product of the aforementioned divide. Iran and Saudi Arabia, largely Shia and Sunni respectively, are often at odds; Ayatollah Khomeini and his revolutionary Shia theocracy in Iran clashes with Saudi royalty and the strict Sunni Wahhabist outlook. Saudi Arabia and Iran are backed by U.S. and Russian aid,

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<sup>25</sup> Burston, Bradley. "Zionism's Terrorist Heritage | Opinion." Haaretz.com. June 27, 2018.

<https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-zionism-s-terrorist-heritage-1.6217633>.

<sup>26</sup> Lawler, Andrew. "Jewish Extremists' Attacks Rattle Christians in Holy Land." National Geographic. May 16, 2016.

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/12/151224-israel-jewish-terrorism-arson-christian-church-multiplication/>.

<sup>27</sup> Hasan, Hanaa. Remembering the arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque. August 21, 2017.

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20170821-remembering-the-arson-attack-on-al-aqsa-mosque/>.

<sup>28</sup> "Uganda's brutal Lord's Resistance Army: Timeline." The Citizen. April 25, 2017. <https://citizen.co.za/news/news-africa/1497040/ugandas-brutal-lords-resistance-army-timeline/>.

<sup>29</sup> Karadsheh, Jomana, and Chris Jackson. "Bringing ISIS to Justice for Crimes against Yazidis." CNN. October 11, 2017.

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/11/middleeast/isis-yazidi-war-crimes-tribunal-investigation/index.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

respectively, and the two engage in proxy conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and potentially Lebanon.<sup>31</sup> Iraq is a prime example of where the Shia-Sunni divide is most evident, having a Muslim population that is 65% Shia and 35% Sunni.<sup>32</sup> The power balance between them has shifted many times—the Sunni leader Saddam Hussein was in power for a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but a Shia government backed by Iran is currently in power. Many Sunnis in the country feel underrepresented and have attempted to topple the government in Baghdad by joining militant groups, several of which have received Saudi support. Iraq is a key figure in the struggle between the Saudi and Iranian spheres of influence, and by extension, the Sunni and Shia circles as a whole. The divide between Sunni and Shia must be bridged if religious violence is to truly end in the Middle East.

One of the largest hotspots of religious violence in the world is the Israeli-Palestinian front. The Palestinian territories are divided into the West Bank, under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and the Gaza Strip, controlled by Hamas. However, these authorities do not have full military control over their territories; rather they maintain civic control, while Israel is the dominant military authority. Israel's current relationship with both Palestinian groups is very fragile; as such, border skirmishes and airborne attacks are far from uncommon. The main area of contention in the West Bank is the encroachment of Israeli settlements into Palestinian territories. Many local families have been displaced because Israeli forces advance these new settlement projects into territory that the PLO believes to be under their rightful jurisdiction. Issues of water resource availability on both sides of the border and control over aquifers that cross border lines have also become a major point of conflict.

Similarly, fights also arise in the Gaza Strip; incendiary devices being shot over the border is increasingly common, as is corresponding Israeli retaliation. Israel currently controls international land, sea, and air movement into Gaza, effectively isolating it from the outside world.<sup>33</sup> The blockade on Gaza gives Israel significant leverage over the region's 1.4 million residents, and as a result, Gaza has become extremely impoverished and dependent on Israel for survival.<sup>34</sup> Many diplomatic efforts have been attempted in the past by the UN and Western powers in order to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine. Delegates must examine these past efforts and contemplate new methods to find a successful solution.

## Possible Solutions and Controversies

### United Nations Peacekeeping

This solution would involve the establishment of UN peacekeeping operations in areas of the Middle East facing religious instability, including frontiers like Israel's borders with Gaza and the West Bank. Existing operations in Lebanon and Syria on their borders with Israel could also see increases in manpower and equipment in order to limit border tensions between Jewish and Arab states.<sup>35</sup> However, these operations would be not ideal for regions such as Yemen and the central part of Syria where violence is uncontrolled and would pose significant danger to peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, peacekeeping can also be counterproductive. The intervention

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<sup>31</sup> Newton, Creede. "Saudi-Iran Proxy Wars: In Pursuit of Regional Hegemony." Israeli-Palestinian Conflict | Al Jazeera. November 14, 2017. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/saudi-iran-proxy-wars-pursuit-regional-hegemony-171113110353492.html>.

<sup>32</sup> "The Sunni-Shia Divide." Council on Foreign Relations. February 2016. <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide#!/sunni-shia-divide>.

<sup>33</sup> "Crisis Guide: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/interactives/crisis-guide-israeli-palestinian-conflict>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Middle-east Peace Operations." United Nations. [http://www.un.org/ar/peacekeeping/publications/yir/2003/Middle-East\\_peace\\_operations.htm](http://www.un.org/ar/peacekeeping/publications/yir/2003/Middle-East_peace_operations.htm).

of outside forces can sometimes further exacerbate the sentiments of oppression felt by local populations, and peacekeepers may even be barred entry by local military.

### **Pluralistic Political Structures**

This solution would entail the adoption of governance systems in which power is shared between various sectarian groups. Democratic elections in conjunction with balanced representation in government would allow each group to exercise the political power it is entitled to. With the active mediation of the government and supplementation of government ministries with UN organs, this structure could create a stable government that works collectively to achieve the goals of the country. Similar to the confessional arrangement that is the hallmark of Lebanese politics, such a system would allow not only Sunni and Shia factions to be represented in government, but also a variety of political groups, ensuring that discourse is present, and that one group does not monopolize power. However, if disagreements between various groups in government persist, this option may result in detrimental paralysis and inaction.

### **Forum for Dialogue**

This solution would consist of the creation of a forum in which government and religious officials from all different backgrounds, faiths, and regions could convene to share ideas and outline common goals. The aim of such a forum would be similar to that of the Amman Conference, where a collective understanding was developed between the various Islamic schools of thought that participated, both Shia and Sunni, so that religious views are not used as ammunition in war.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the Amman Conference ended with a joint statement condemning violence and calling for peace. If all parties are able to realize that laying down their arms is wise, long-term peace processes could more easily be constructed and implemented. Delegates who pursue such a diplomatic path of discourse should identify how such a forum will be designed, decide who its participants should be, and set achievable goals. It is important to remember that solutions should not be overly ambitious and should aim for smaller, more realistic milestones to reach a larger goal. Nations and certain factions will be stern in their opinions; thus, the ability of DISEC and the forum it creates to bring states together through common ideas will be imperative to the success of a diplomatic solution.

## **Bloc Positions**

### **Israel**

What will undoubtedly be at the forefront of Israeli foreign policy is its indispensable territorial and security control. In recent months, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been stern in his view that Israeli settlements in the West Bank should be protected and remain in Israeli hands.<sup>37</sup> Netanyahu has also been quite vocal in that Jerusalem, the so-called “eternal and indivisible capital” of Israel, should not be partitioned or leave full Israeli control.<sup>38</sup> The hardline coalition government in Israel is unlikely to be swayed in its demands, which include full

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<sup>36</sup> "The International Islamic Conference, Amman, Jordan." The Institute of Ismaili Studies. September 07, 2006.

<https://iis.ac.uk/news/international-islamic-conference-amman-jordan>.

<sup>37</sup> "Any Future Peace Deal Needs to Protect Illegal Israeli Settlements, Demands Netanyahu." Alaraby. June 11, 2017.

<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/6/11/netanyahu-demands-potential-peace-deal-protect-illegal-israeli-settlements>.

<sup>38</sup> "Netanyahu Says Any Peace Deal with Palestinians Must Recognise Jerusalem as Israeli Capital." The Independent. December 07, 2017. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/jerusalem-latest-netanyahu-peace-deal-israel-palestine-capital-trump-demand-news-updates-a8095856.html>.

recognition of Israeli sovereignty as a Jewish state, the ending of terrorist financing, and undivided control over settlements and Jerusalem.

### **Palestine and Arab States**

Palestine and its Arab backers, on the other hand, believe that Israel should recognize Palestinian territorial integrity, and withdraw all Israeli settlements in Palestinian lands. Major points of contention include the fact that both Palestine and Israel see Jerusalem as their rightful territory and see territory used occupied by internationally-condemned Israeli settlements as their own. Palestine is also requesting the release of its prisoners in Israeli jails and the right for its citizens to return to their homelands, which may actually be within present Israeli boundaries. Given the absence of a Palestinian delegation in the committee, its Arab allies will play a major role in advocating for these issues. Equality of Jewish and Arab states and the elimination of a Western bias towards Israel have been important areas of focus that the Arab states which back Palestine have consistently striven to address.

### **Iran and Allied States**

The Iranian theocracy has proven to be incredibly harsh in its crackdown on any dissent and religious freedom that strays from its Twelver Shia ideology. The government is also engaged in a proxy war against Saudi Arabia, the two nations' diplomatic ties severed. A close ally of Iran, Russia has been outspoken in its support for Palestine and Iran in their respective disputes. Russia has been a major financial supporter of Iran and has assisted logistically in fighting its proxy wars, particularly in Syria, where it has provided active assistance to the Assad government.

### **United States of America**

The United States' position has been well established over the years, and the present Trump administration has been even more vociferous in upholding its stance. The U.S. is the largest backer of the Israeli regime, providing military, political, and resource-related aid to the country. The Saudis are also a significant U.S. partner, with massive arms deals signed between them. The U.S. maintains these relations to uphold its strategic position in the Middle East, especially with respect to oil resources, and to further its counter-terrorism initiatives.

## Discussion Questions

1. What approach should be taken to control and eliminate religiously-motivated acts of terror? Should terrorists be negotiated with or countered with equal force?
2. What forms of protection can be offered to minority groups facing persecution? What efforts can be made to enforce UN legislation on human rights?
3. What differences and issues divide the Shia and Sunni sects of Islam? What efforts can be made to bridge this schism?
4. What are the demands of all actors involved in the Israel-Palestine dispute? How can these demands be incorporated into a long-term peace plan?
5. How would nations in the Middle East react to UN mediation or peacekeeping efforts? Can the UN appear as an unbiased third party?
6. To what degree can DISEC's jurisdiction be leveraged to end religious hostilities?

## Additional Resources

The International Islamic (Amman) Conference:

<https://iis.ac.uk/news/international-islamic-conference-amman-jordan>

Interactive Timeline of Palestinian History:

[https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestineremix/timeline\\_main.html](https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/palestineremix/timeline_main.html)

The Sunni-Shia Divide (Council on Foreign Relations):

<https://www.cfr.org/interactives/sunni-shia-divide#!/sunni-shia-divide>

The Religious Root of Conflicts in the Middle East (Pulitzer Center):

<https://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/egypt-religious-root-conflicts-middle-east>

UN Resolutions on the Middle East and North Africa:

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-resolutions-mideast-and-north-africa>

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# Radicalization and Recruitment of Terrorists

## Overview

In an era where terrorist attacks have become frequent global occurrences, military and intelligence operations are being directed towards identifying where and how terrorists are radicalized and recruited. In order to lower the number of terrorists being radicalized, recruitment and training methods must be counteracted. Many terrorist networks operate within small, interconnected cells all over the world, making them increasingly difficult to track down. However, the more dangerous threat is the internet's utility in recruiting terrorists. These methods are widespread among many types of extremists, be white supremacists, Wahhabis, Naxalites, Zionists, or those who belong to any other terrorist group. Weak restrictions on internet security, a lack of stringent regulations, and the proliferation of the dark web are all enabling the recruitment of terrorists, placing the safety of the entire world at risk.

It is of the utmost importance that delegates understand the need to find and assess solutions to this issue in a non-discriminatory and open-minded manner. In a resolution passed on November 25, 2015, the European Parliament stated that "terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any specific religion, nationality or civilization."<sup>39</sup> In order to address this issue effectively, governments must engage in a collective response that spans international borders and covers the many platforms on which radicalization and recruitment occur. These platforms include social media, the dark web, physical training grounds, public and private gathering spaces, as well as private residences.

The fight against terror cannot be won by simply invading nations where syndicates operate, especially when terror operations primarily exist underground in the majority of nations. Instead, the fight against terror must address the root of the problem, being the underlying operations that further radicalization of individuals around the world who are eventually recruited to join terrorist networks.

## Timeline

**December 1979–February 1989** — The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan, prompting Saudi Arabia and the United States to back local guerrilla forces against the Soviets. The U.S. provides finances and arms to tribal forces, from which terrorist groups would subsequently emerge.<sup>40</sup> The Soviet-Afghan war would last for nine years.

**September 11, 2001** — The September 11 attacks on the United States occur in New York and Washington, destroying the World Trade Center and damaging The Pentagon. The Bush administration launches the War on Terror in response; U.S. forces attack the very troops they financed in Afghanistan years ago.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> "European Parliament Resolution 2017/C 366/08." Official Journal of the European Union. November 25, 2015. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015IP0410&from=EN>

<sup>40</sup> "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the US Response." Office of the Historian - US Department of State. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/soviet-invasion-afghanistan>.

<sup>41</sup> "9/11 Attacks." History.com. <https://www.history.com/topics/9-11-attacks>.

**March 19, 2003** — U.S. President Bush announces the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom to oust the Iraqi government; however, this action would soon be used as justification for future terrorist activity in the Middle East.<sup>42</sup>

**September 8, 2006** — The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, an instrument advancing global, national, and regional counter-terrorism capabilities, is adopted by the UN General Assembly with consensus.<sup>43</sup>

**December 2011** — U.S. forces withdraw from Iraq.<sup>44</sup> Local insurgents holding grudges against the U.S. launch attacks against their government, with one such insurgency later developing into the terrorist group ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant).

**July 2013** — The International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) Counter Terrorism Fusion Centre establishes a program dedicated to addressing foreign terrorist fighters.<sup>45</sup>

**September 24, 2014** — Security Council Resolution 2178 (S/RES/2178) is adopted, attempting to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters.<sup>46</sup>

**November 25, 2015** — The European Parliament passes Resolution 2017/C 366/08 on the prevention of radicalization and recruitment of European citizens by terrorist organizations.<sup>47</sup>

**June 22, 2017** — European Union leaders reaffirm their cooperation in fighting online radicalization and improving information sharing.<sup>48</sup>

**July 7, 2017** — G20 leaders issue a joint statement on counter-terrorism, addressing concerns regarding foreign terrorist fighters, terrorist financing, and internet-based radicalization. The leaders also committed to improving intelligence intercommunication and implementing international counter-terror strategies.<sup>49</sup>

## Historical Analysis

Although the origins of terrorism cannot be traced back to a singular point in history, accounts of early terrorism date back to the first century, when Jewish zealots took up armed resistance against their Roman rulers, adamant

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<sup>42</sup> Glass, Andrew. "Bush announces launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 19, 2003." Politico. March 18, 2017. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/bush-announces-launch-of-operation-iraqi-freedom-march-19-2003-236134>

<sup>43</sup> "UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy." United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

<sup>44</sup> Glass, Andrew. "Bush announces launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, March 19, 2003." Politico. March 18, 2017. <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/bush-announces-launch-of-operation-iraqi-freedom-march-19-2003-236134>

<sup>45</sup> "Counter-Terrorism Fusion Centre." International Criminal Police Organization. <https://www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/Terrorism/Counter-Terrorism-Fusion-Centre>.

<sup>46</sup> "Security Council Resolution 2178." United Nations Security Council. September 24, 2014. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2178%20%282014%29](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2178%20%282014%29).

<sup>47</sup> "European Parliament Resolution 2017/C 366/08." Official Journal of the European Union. November 25, 2015. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015IP0410&from=EN>.

<sup>48</sup> "Timeline: foreign terrorist fighters and recent terrorist attacks in Europe." European Council. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/fight-against-terrorism/foreign-fighters/history-foreign-fighters>

<sup>49</sup> "G20 Leaders' Statement on Countering Terrorism." European Union. July 7, 2017. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-17-1955\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-17-1955_en.htm).

that they should be ruled divinely alone.<sup>50</sup> These terrorists attacked their enemies using concealed daggers.<sup>51</sup> During the industrial era, France's Reign of Terror was an example of a perpetual state of terror in mainstream society.<sup>52</sup> In the post-World War II era, terrorism slowly began to develop as a means for nationalist and anti-colonial movements to gain publicity, as well as expedite their independence processes.<sup>53</sup> The use of terrorism as a tactic to pressure governments or simply as a means to demonstrate force became common after the Second World War; for instance, the Khmer Rouge and the Viet Cong are examples of movements which used acts of terror as a violent method of achieving political aims in Cambodia and Vietnam, respectively.<sup>54</sup> Radicalization and recruitment became much easier as people rallied around a collective objective and witnessed the success of terrorism in achieving groups' aims.

"Radicalization is not necessarily a bad thing," says psychiatrist Cécile Rousseau, who explains that "it has always been linked to social transformation."<sup>55</sup> Rousseau's perspective explains radicalization as a means of indoctrinating a person into believing something, ranging from social matters to the oppression of a religion. General societal disapproval of people with strong differing beliefs may push those individuals towards violent acts in pursuit of the agenda they believe in, potentially giving rise to insurgencies, which are active revolts or uprisings. According to Martha Crenshaw, a professor of political science at Stanford University, terrorism is a "political behaviour resulting from the deliberate choice of a basically rational actor."<sup>56</sup> Crenshaw's view presents the idea that terrorists could, in fact, have rational motives, contrary to the extremes that media outlets often propagate. The causes of terrorism that Crenshaw identified include situational factors such as "conditions that allow the possibility of radicalization and motivate feeling against the 'enemy', and specific triggers for action."<sup>57</sup> Terrorism may also develop to pursue strategic aims including "political change, revolution, nationalists fighting an occupying force, minority separatist movements, recognition or attention to advertise their cause, [disrupting and discrediting] the process of government, [influencing] public attitudes [such as] fear or sympathy, or provoke a counter-reaction to legitimise their grievances."<sup>58</sup> Finally, individual motivations are cited as a cause, questioning the character of terrorists and what pushes them to violent action.<sup>59</sup> This view offers insight into the reasoning behind radicalization itself—that terrorists are not mindless instruments of violence, but rather a group of logical, albeit extreme, individuals. Delegates should take note of the example of the colonial Western oppression of African and Asian societies that has taken place for decades, and how that could, as "motivate feeling against the enemy," resulting in the proliferation of present-day international terrorism.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan marked a turning point not only in the Cold War but also in the development of terrorism. In the decade that followed, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia both armed and sponsored guerilla fighters in Afghanistan, known as the Mujahideen, in an attempt to regain control of Afghanistan from

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<sup>50</sup> Roser, Max & Nagdy, Mohamed & Ritchie, Hannah. "Terrorism." Our World in Data. January, 2018. <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Jenkins, John Philip. "Terrorism." Encyclopaedia Britannica. October 26, 2018.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism>

<sup>55</sup> "THE HISTORY OF RADICALIZATION IS ABOUT ABOLISHING INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY." Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. [http://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/m\\_features/the-history-of-radicalization-is-about-abolishing-inequalities-in-society](http://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/m_features/the-history-of-radicalization-is-about-abolishing-inequalities-in-society).

<sup>56</sup> Roser, Max & Nagdy, Mohamed & Ritchie, Hannah. "Terrorism." Our World in Data. January, 2018. <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

the Soviet-backed government and ensure that communism was kept out of South Asia.<sup>60</sup> Years later, the same fighters that the U.S. had financed formed terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda, later backed by the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda operatives carried out the infamous terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. During the War on Terror launched by the Bush administration, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and Iraq to depose local governments and eradicate terrorist cells. However, Al-Qaeda survived the war, and ISIL rose to power in Iraq and Syria. U.S. intervention overthrew the tyrant President Saddam in Iraq, and the authoritarian Taliban government in Afghanistan; however, among the populations in these countries, the U.S. and its allies were seen as occupiers and were criticized for interfering extensively in the affairs of other nations. These angered people became more susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups because they felt marginalized and exploited by Western forces. Such groups achieved these goals through technology, using website and social media to draft fighters from around the world, even from nations including the U.S. and its developed allies. Many of these fighters returned home to the West to carry out attacks, becoming so-called “homegrown” terrorists.

It is also important to mention the gross mischaracterization of Muslims and immigrant communities in Europe and North America—media outlets and vote-seeking politicians have depicted outsider communities as a hotbed of violence and terrorism. Ironically, this marginalization has only furthered terrorism within Western nations due to a buildup of anger within such communities at their mistreatment. Equally, emboldened white supremacists and conservative nationalists continue to be strong in their condemnation of other races and religions. The Quebec City, Canada mosque shooting by a white supremacist on January 29, 2017 is just one recent example of Islamophobia.<sup>61</sup> This violent act took many innocent lives, also demonstrates how even fear of terrorism itself can radicalize a person to commit an act of terror.

Recent data on terrorist attacks collected by the Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland show a spike in attacks after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, proving how the last 10 years have been a watershed in terms of terrorist activity.<sup>62</sup>

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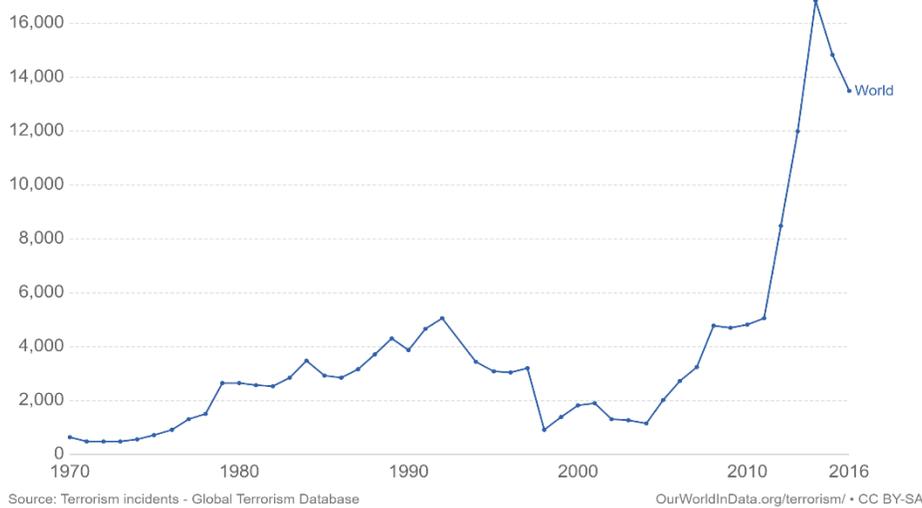
<sup>60</sup> Mourad, Suleiman A. “How the US Creates Terrorism.” *Jacobin Magazine*. May 4, 2017. <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/05/islamophobia-isis-al-qaeda-juan-cole>.

<sup>61</sup> Montpetit, Jonathan. “Scenes from the nightmare: Inside the Quebec City mosque shooting and the critical 12 hours that followed.” *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*. January 28, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-city-mosque-attack-shooting-what-happened-1.4507768>.

<sup>62</sup> Roser, Max & Nagdy, Mohamed & Ritchie, Hannah. “Terrorism.” *Our World in Data*. January 2018. <https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>.

## Number of terrorism-related incidents

The total number of terrorism-related incidents per year. The source defines a terrorist attack as: "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation."



*Annual global terror-related incidents since 1970.*<sup>63</sup>

History has shown the origins of radicalization and the reasons why people use terrorism as a means of advocating their beliefs. It is the role of delegates to determine how positive governance and foreign policy can end terrorist radicalization and recruitment worldwide, and whether or not militaristic solutions are an effective route.

## Past UN/International Involvement

Resolution 1269 (S/RES/1269) of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was passed on October 19, 1999, condemning acts of terrorism in all forms and making detailed calls to action for the global community.<sup>64</sup> It called on all nations to fully implement international conventions on terrorism and coordinate global efforts against the scourge, including intelligence sharing and collective security efforts. This resolution was an acknowledgement by the Security Council of the risks and dangers posed by terrorism. Soon after the September 11 attacks, Resolution 1373 (S/RES/1373) was passed by the UNSC on September 28, 2001.<sup>65</sup> The resolution's intent was to limit the spread of terrorism by political, economic, and financial means. This meant refraining from providing any type of support to terrorists directly or indirectly, including financial aid, political cover, and intelligence. This resolution also created the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council. Collectively, these resolutions aimed to unite the international community against terror and lead to specific, strong restrictions on terrorist support.

### Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee

The Counter-Terrorism Committee has found particular success in fighting terrorism. The committee acts as a supervisor for Member States to ensure their compliance with implemented resolutions and advises nations on

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> United Nations. Security Council Resolution 1269, 1999, October 19. <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1269>.

<sup>65</sup> "Security Council Resolution 1373." United Nations Security Council. September 28, 2001. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/557/43/PDF/N0155743.pdf?OpenElement>.

the trends prevalent in the realm of terror. Not only does the committee's directorate run expert assessments on Member States, but it also provides technical counter-terrorism assistance to them. The committee has numerous focus areas, including foreign terrorist fighters, as well as information and communications technologies.<sup>66</sup> These two facets are of great significance in the fight against online radicalization and the foreign fighter phenomenon, which pose risks in countries where fighters originate and train. This committee is the main organ delegates should look to for additional guidance on the topic of radicalization and recruitment, taking note of its work on these issues in the past and the potential future avenues for DISEC to pursue.

### **General Assembly Resolution 70/291**

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/291 (*A/RES/70/291*) details the action of the Assembly against radicalization and recruitment of terrorists. The resolution is critical because of its non-militaristic approach; significant because military intervention only further destabilizes nations while also giving justification for terrorists to radicalize others. This resolution includes specific solutions that can limit violent extremist trends and their root causes. These methods, which include education programs, youth empowerment initiatives, international-law enforcement, extradition cooperation, and the prohibition of financial and political support, all demonstrate potential avenues through which delegates can brainstorm ideas for their own solutions.<sup>67</sup> This resolution should serve as the backbone of delegates' understanding of how to constructively address radicalization and recruitment. It should be noted however, that although this resolution garnered widespread support, certain nations continue to fund terrorism and there is little-to-no growth in positive youth development strategies. If delegates choose to revise and modify these ideas, they should provide plans for the implementation and sustainability for such goals.

### Current Situation

The threat posed by terrorism is greater now than ever before. In order to limit and suppress the growth of terrorist organizations, states around the world must focus on preventing the recruitment of their own citizens into terrorist organizations.

The trends outlined in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), a report by the Institute for Economics and Peace, describe how conflict and political terror are driving forces behind terrorism. According to the report, "the overwhelming majority of terrorism occurs in countries that fall into two categories: countries involved in an armed conflict, or countries with high levels of political terror. In 2016, 99% of all deaths from terrorism and 96% of all attacks globally occurred in countries in these two categories."<sup>68</sup>

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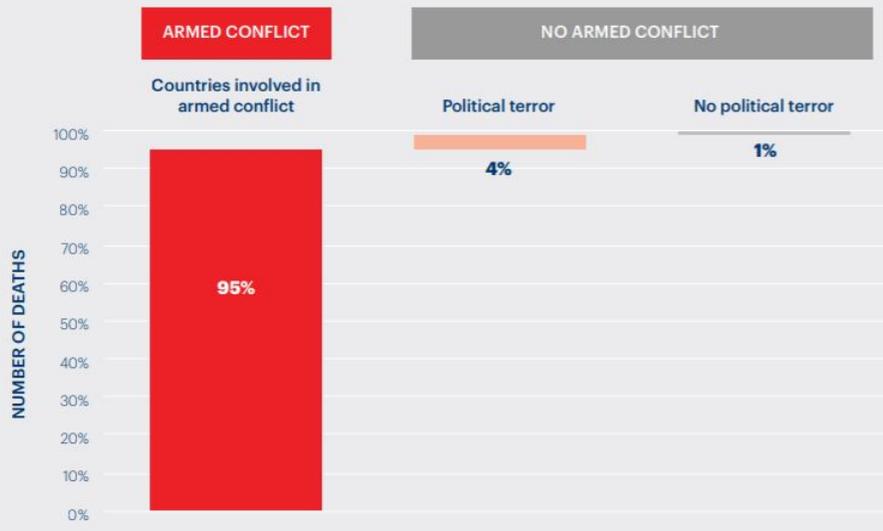
<sup>66</sup> "Focus Areas." United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee. <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/>

<sup>67</sup> "Resolution 70/291." United Nations General Assembly. July 19, 2016. [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/291](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/291).

<sup>68</sup> "Global Terrorism Index." Institute for Economics and Peace. 2017. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%202017%20%284%29.pdf>.

**FIGURE 4.2** PERCENTAGE OF DEATHS FROM TERRORISM THAT OCCURRED IN COUNTRIES IN CONFLICT AND WITH POLITICAL TERROR, 2016

Conflict drives terrorism: 99% of terrorism occurs in countries in conflict or with high levels of political terror.



Source: START GTD, Political Terror Scale, IEP calculations

*Terror-related deaths in conflict-hit versus stable regions.<sup>69</sup>*

Since terrorism is more rampant in areas where armed conflict and political terror exist, it is evident that in order to curb radicalization and recruitment in those regions, DISEC must work at the grassroots level of society to address the underlying root causes.

The report also found that “there are multiple paths to radicalization and individuals can exhibit both high and low levels of education, income, religious or political knowledge.”<sup>70</sup> Further, it noted that “relative deprivation can also be a driver of terrorist recruitment as it leads to the creation of an ‘us versus them’ mentality.”<sup>71</sup> Essentially, terrorists do not stem from any single socio-economic, political, or religious group, but are more often the result of perceived disenfranchisement. Overall, report reinforces the understanding that radicalization can come from a variety of sources and that radicals do not all fit a single mould.

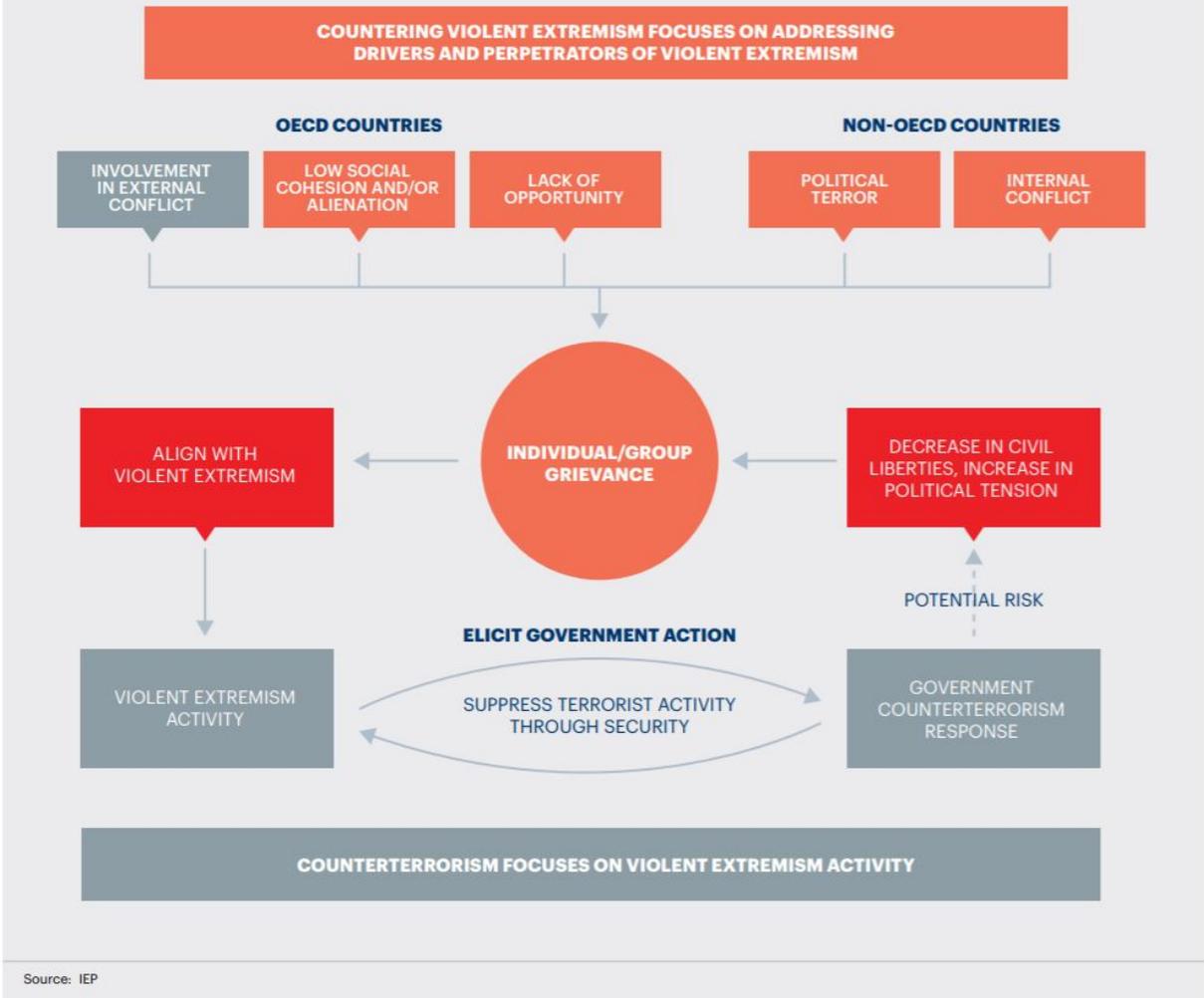
<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

**FIGURE 4.3** SYSTEMS MAP OF GTI CORRELATES

This is a visual representation of the key correlations with the GTI from over 5,000 socio-economic datasets. Arrows depict flows of influence.



Source: IEP

*Illustration of the cyclical nature of terrorism.<sup>72</sup>*

The causes outlined above showcase a chaotic cycle of how internal and external conflict, social barriers, and limited rights, freedoms, and opportunities lead many individuals to align themselves with violent extremism, also demonstrating the impact that security measures have on perpetuating terrorism. Terrorists are radicalized and recruited in large part for the reasons listed above; however, the ability for terrorist organizations to utilize social media and recruit online should not be underestimated. Terrorists are becoming increasingly innovative, especially in overseas recruitment. The foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) trend is also one of particular interest as it poses a threat to civilians not just where the terrorist organization operates, but also in the fighter's country of origin. In Europe in particular, the Global Terrorism Index reports that the total number of FTFs lies between 3,900 and 4,300 people with an estimated 30% of these individuals returning to their country of origin.<sup>73</sup> One

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

large contributor is Russia, which in 2015, made up a staggering 8% of all ISIL fighters.<sup>74</sup> While ISIL may be on the decline, the FTF threat is still significant among numerous terrorist organizations.

Terrorist organizations are recruiting new members from all over the world. The Maoist Naxalite insurgency in eastern India is one such movement that was ranked as the fourth-deadliest terror outfit according to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism.<sup>75</sup> In a report released by the United Nations, Naxalite terrorists were found to be recruiting children in the Indian states of Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to fight local security forces.<sup>76</sup> The UN report also described a lottery system used by the Naxalites to conscript child soldiers, constituting forced recruitment radicalization.<sup>77</sup> Another wing of terrorism is based on white supremacy and far-right movements in the United States and Europe. In an article by The Guardian, an incident was described in “July 2008, [where] Jim Adkisson walked into a Unitarian Universalist church in downtown Knoxville during a performance of a children’s musical, armed with a 12-gauge shotgun. He opened fire, killing two people and wounding seven more.”<sup>78</sup> For years, mainstream media in the West failed to recognize the rise in white supremacist terrorism that Adkisson’s act exemplifies. Hate speech, police and judiciary bias, and political polarization allow for the rise of this type of terrorism by perpetuating rhetoric that fuels radical beliefs. Radicalization and recruitment come from organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and the Westboro Baptist Church, and even far-right media outlets, where news stories serve as pseudo-propaganda to a vulnerable audience.

International policing organizations and governments have a difficult task in preventing radicalization of terrorists in the future, grappling with innovative tactics and emerging terror trends. A new path must be forged by the delegates of DISEC to address evolving methods of radicalization and recruitment.

## Possible Solutions and Controversies

### Foreign Non-Interventionism

As one solution, Member States could resolve to avoid imposing their political and economic interests overseas and engage in positive relations with all nations. Overseas wars justified by security threats continue the trend of terrorism development by destabilizing the state of affairs in the target country. These interventions and wars should be substituted for fair economic trade policies without political pressure, as well as assistance in the growth of social development across international borders. Social development should include supporting the growth of free speech, democracy, and equality to align with UN principles. The theory behind this solution is that the increased stability in security and quality of life will reduce the amount of radicalization and recruitment that can take place. However, delegates may have differing views about how they wish to implement such a policy without infringing on the sovereignty of other nations.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Chauhan, Neehaj. “Maoists fourth deadliest terror outfit after Taliban, IS, Boko Haram.” Times of India. September 16, 2016. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Maoists-fourth-deadliest-terror-outfit-after-Taliban-IS-Boko-Haram-Report/articleshow/54354196.cms>.

<sup>76</sup> “Naxalites recruiting kids in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, says UN Report.” Times News Network. July 2, 2018. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/naxalites-recruiting-kids-in-jharkhand-chhattisgarh-says-un-report/articleshow/64820273.cms>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Neiwert, David. “Alt-America: the time for talking about white terrorism is now.” The Guardian. November 26, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/26/alt-america-terrorism-rightwing-hate-crimes>

## **Youth Development Strategies**

Delegates could expand on the ideas of the General Assembly in Resolution 70/291 and continue to establish global youth development strategies to educate youth on the security risks of joining armed groups, the quandaries of recruitment officers on social media, and the development of tolerance and respect for all people and cultures. Such a strategy could limit radicalization in many nations, but the jurisdiction of the DISEC must be kept in mind, as the strategy must show a direct correlation to international security in order to fall within the committee's jurisdiction.

## **Intelligence Sharing**

This solution would involve using frameworks such as INTERPOL or direct intergovernmental channels to share data from counter-terrorism databases across borders. Delegates should outline the specific types of data being shared. For example, deciding on whether or not global data regarding potential recruitment locations and websites should be shared, or only data relevant to that particular country. Delegates may also consider whether or not a third party should handle the transfer of data, bearing in mind both the benefits and drawbacks of such. Moreover, the scale of intelligence sharing as it correlates with matters of national security in many nations must be considered, as well as the willingness of countries to share security data. The theory behind this solution is that sharing intelligence can lead to a more rapid identification and elimination of places where radicalization and recruitment can occur, thus attacking the problem closer to its source.

## **Platform Censorship**

This solution would involve nations enforcing limitations on the content of websites and social media pages and taking down those that do not comply with prescribed restrictions. The theory behind this solution is that monitoring and controlling what is published online will allow law enforcement to restrict content that could contribute to radicalization. Delegates must decide what types of content should be restricted, whether it be content promoting violence or articles expressing dissent for the government or a particular group. Infringement on freedom of speech is another aspect of censorship that must be kept in mind. This is especially important to consider because protecting freedom of speech and ensuring people have an outlet to voice their concerns could reduce the need for those individuals to resort to terrorism. Delegates must decide on how such restrictions should be framed, understanding that the committee may not impose a binding solution. Overall, in this solution, delegates must act with caution to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to limit radicalization and recruitment while refraining from undermining freedom of speech, opinion, or expression.

## **Counter-Terrorism Operations**

This solution would involve an increase in military or police personnel, equipment, and intelligence capabilities in relation to counter-terror units. The increase in resources would be coupled with an intensive militaristic crackdown on terrorist targets around the world. These targets could include potential radicalization locations, training areas, and safe havens both in developed and developing nations. The idea behind this solution is that the abilities of terrorist organizations to operate, radicalize, and recruit would be greatly diminished by severe military action. However, this gives rise to the question of how the use of military force will further enable terrorists to justify their cause and recruit more individuals, and how it could destabilize a region, causing the population to resort to terrorism as an outlet for their grievances. Delegates should be mindful of the cycle that was demonstrated in the Global Terrorism Index diagram and how military force could perpetuate it. Delegates must decide if the risk of later emergence of terrorism is worth the immediate benefits reaped by military counter-terror operations.

## Bloc Positions

### **India and Allied States**

The Republic of India has suffered from terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists, Sikh nationalists, and Naxalite-Maoist groups. The Indian government has one of the largest anti-terror campaigns in the world as well as one of the strictest legal systems that aims to deter terrorism and crack down on any illicit operations. India's position is to be more lenient towards the use of military force and police operations, being a strategy already employed. India and its allies, such as Nepal and Israel, will by no means allow terrorist radicalization and recruitment to be dealt with in a weak-handed manner and will advocate for a more robust solution including both long-term and short-term action.

### **China and Allied States**

According to the United States Institute of Peace, "Beijing's primary response to international terrorism has been to strengthen its domestic counterterrorism capabilities by passing and implementing new national security and counterterrorism laws."<sup>79</sup> China regards the Uyghur separatist movement in its northwest as unlawful and has started a violent crackdown on dissent in the region. With this policy, the region has been destabilized, leading to a further rise in violent incidents. China also has stringent regulations on internet use, corresponding with potential committee action on website content. Overall, China has clearly used a forceful approach when dealing with terrorism and threats to the state but may not have considered its adverse accompanying effects. China and its allies, including Pakistan and many nations in Central Asia and Africa, will continue to advocate for a policy of more stringent regulations, sacrificing small cuts to freedom of expression in favour of civilian safety.

### **Russia and Allied States**

The Russian Federation has taken action against numerous terrorist organizations, especially ISIL. A staggering 8 percent of ISIL fighters were Russian nationals; thus, the Russian government has a strong stake in stopping the trend of terrorist recruitment within its borders. Russia would likely be open to a solution that is more focused on preventing recruitment in the immediate future, such as internet content restrictions or stronger military intervention. Russian intelligence can also provide a crucial link to many Middle Eastern nations where terrorist cells operate. However, Moscow is also alleged to maintain ties with terrorist groups including Hezbollah and the Taliban, supposedly serving covert geopolitical motives.<sup>80</sup> Overall, along with its neighbouring nations in the Caucasus, Russia takes a harsh and militaristic stance against terrorist radicalization and recruitment.

### **Middle Eastern States**

Iraq was one of the main bases of ISIL for many years, though the territory the group controls in the country has since been significantly reduced. Iraq and Syria are also prominent examples of the cycle of violence and terrorism identified by the Global Terrorism Index. With violence having plagued much of Iraq and Syria's modern history, the nations have been transformed into a large breeding ground for terrorism. The Syrian regime, however, is alleged to have sponsored acts of terrorism in certain cases. Most of these nations would ideally prefer military intervention against terrorism; however, a pugnacious military agenda will only serve to destabilize the social, economic, and political status quo, creating a power vacuum for terrorism. Having seen

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<sup>79</sup> Murphy, Dawn. "China's Approach to International Terrorism." United States Institute of Peace. October 2, 2017. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/10/chinas-approach-international-terrorism>.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

such examples in their region, these states may wish to shift from a militaristic focus towards one of positive socio-economic development. However, they would remain unlikely to reduce security operations due to the high risks of current situations.

### **United States of America**

The current U.S. administration has expressed a desire to eliminate terrorism and has already taken steps to bolster its military. In particular, President Trump has shown that he is unafraid to call certain rights and freedoms into question in order to achieve his aims. If the United States was to favour a policy limiting radicalization by using military force and internet restrictions, the nation will likely do so extensively. Given past incidents of internet-based homegrown radicalization, the United States is likely place particular emphasis on platform censorship, though equally considering the impacts on fundamental freedoms in non-democratic states.

### **Western States**

The nations of Western Europe are especially familiar with terrorist attacks but will likely focus more heavily on social development and the defence rights and freedoms when creating solutions. Though these nations have effective counter-terrorism units, governments such as that of Emmanuel Macron in France wish to adopt long-term solutions that reduce the prevalence of the numerous factors which birth terrorism. Along with most other Western states, Canada and Australia also have similar terror-prevention policies and will look to limit long-term activity while ensuring a safe status quo for their citizens.

## Discussion Questions

1. How can DISEC, given its jurisdiction, effectively influence foreign and domestic policies affecting the radicalization and recruitment of terrorists worldwide?
2. How does your nation define the terms “radicalization” and “terrorism”?
3. What past action has your nation taken against radicalization, recruitment, and terrorism in general domestically and abroad? To what degree have those actions been successful? Is there potential for those actions to be scaled to an international level?
4. What are some factors that lead individuals to become radicalized and recruited into terrorist organizations? What past action has been taken to limit these factors and what still needs to be done?
5. Does your nation favour a heavily-militaristic approach or one which is more restrained? Does your nation view military force as a stabilizer or a destabilizer in the long-term elimination of terrorism?
6. Does your nation consider censorship of websites that facilitate radicalization a viable solution? How important are freedoms of expression, opinion, and speech to your nation?
7. To what degree is your nation willing to open its intelligence operations to data sharing?
8. How does terrorism impact your nation? What stake does your nation have in finding a solution to radicalization and recruitment of terrorists worldwide?

## Additional Resources

Global Terrorism Index 2017:

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%202017%20%284%29.pdf>

Radicalization & Recruitment Articles (Combating Terrorism Center):

<https://ctc.usma.edu/topics/recruitment-radicalization/>

How to Stop Online Radicalization (CNN):

<https://www.cnn.com/2017/06/05/opinions/how-to-stop-online-radicalization-ahmed-opinion/index.html>

Preventing Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism: A Community-Policing Approach (OSCE):

<https://www.osce.org/atu/111438?download=true>

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