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General Assembly First Committee Background Guide 2026

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly First Committee (GA1). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Maria Anne Ruedisueli and Assistant Director Léo Jaussaud (Conference A), and Director Kiki Tamis-Noordman and Assistant Director Ahmed Y. Mustafa (Conference B). Maria studied Political Science and History at Alma College. She currently works for a publishing company as a Marketing Manager. Léo is completing a Master's degree in Geopolitics at the University of Reims in France and is currently studying at Laval University in Québec as an exchange student. He previously earned a Bachelor's degree in Geography. Kiki studied international, European, and Dutch law and completed a teacher's college program for primary education. She currently works as a legal professional in the Netherlands, combining her background in law and education with a strong interest in equality, peace, and human rights. Ahmed studies Politics and International Relations at Royal Holloway University of London and currently works as a Policy Advisor at the UK Parliament. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Vikram Sakkia (Conference A) and Nicole Fett (Conference B).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Strengthening International Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism Efforts
2. Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 PM ET on 1 March 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact the Deputy Secretaries-General at dsg.ny@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Maria Anne Ruedisueli, Director
Léo Jaussaud, Assistant Director
Conference A

Kiki Tamis-Noordman, Director
Ahmed Y. Mustafa, Assistant Director
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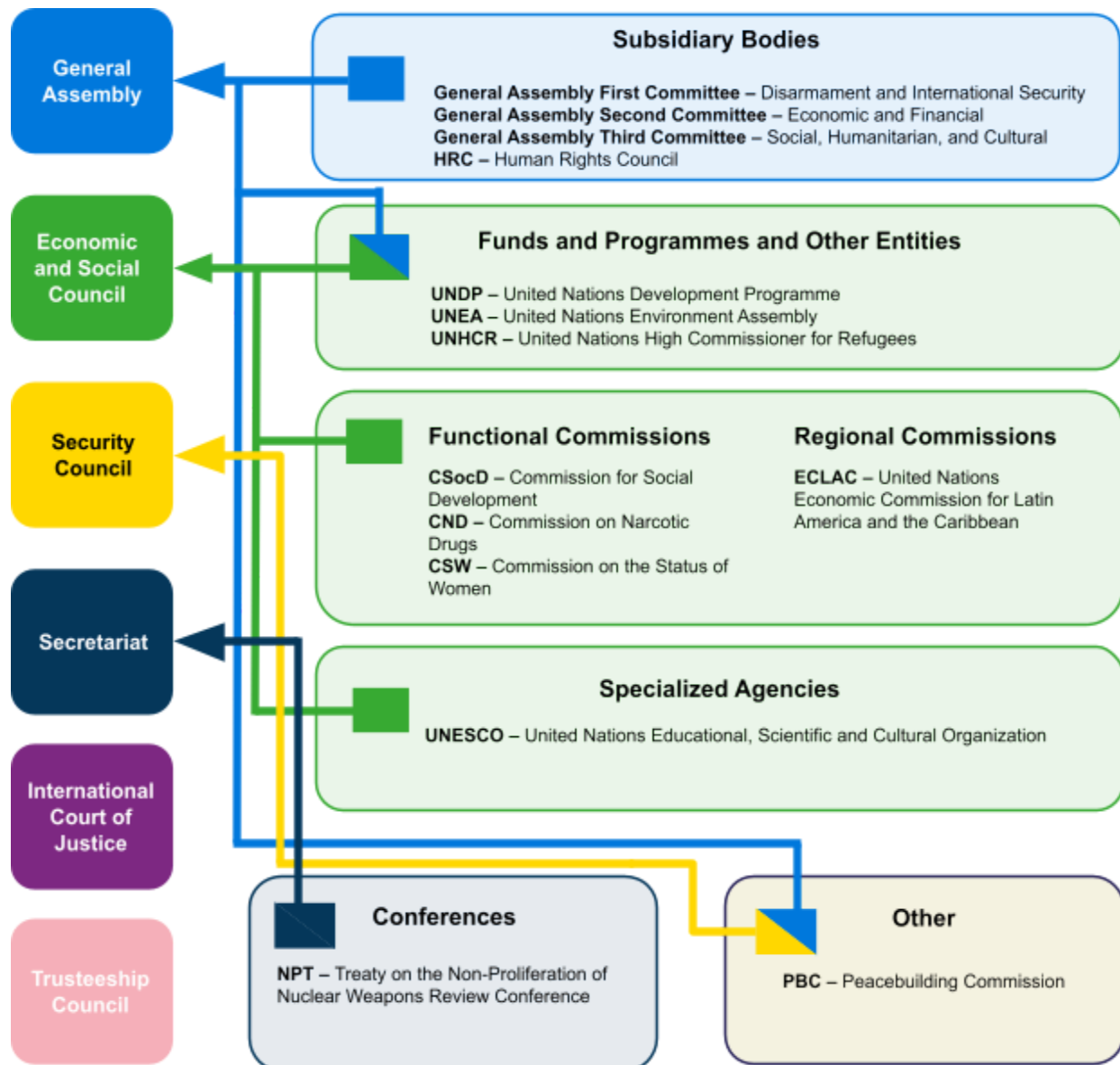
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The General Assembly is the main deliberative and policy-making body of the United Nations and one of the six principal organs established by the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ The work of the General Assembly is undertaken in subsidiary committees, each of which debates and adopts draft resolutions on their thematic areas and allocated agenda items.²

The General Assembly First Committee considers matters relating to disarmament and international peace and security.³ It considers agenda items under seven thematic clusters: nuclear weapons; other weapons of mass destruction; disarmament aspects of outer space; conventional weapons; regional disarmament and security; other disarmament measures and international security; and the disarmament machinery.⁴

Mandate, Function, and Powers

The General Assembly acts as a forum for dialogue and cooperation, providing general policy recommendations rather than carrying out operative tasks.⁵ Its policy recommendations are non-binding, and their implementation is conducted by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat, and other United Nations bodies, each of which independently align their work with General Assembly resolutions.⁶ The *Charter of the United Nations* provides the General Assembly with a broad mandate to discuss and make recommendations on any topic within the scope of the United Nations.⁷

The General Assembly adopts resolutions, which are formal documents expressing the agreement and will of the international community.⁸ The majority of these resolutions are adopted by consensus, meaning no vote is taken and no Member State has specific cause to object.⁹

In line with the *Charter of the United Nations*, the mandate of the General Assembly can be summarized as:

- The General Assembly **will generally**: make recommendations to Member States, the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and organs, United Nations specialized agencies, and other international actors; initiate studies and advance efforts to promote international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields and in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms; consider or request reports from other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies; establish United

¹ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 68.

³ Ibid. p. 69.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 69-70.

⁵ Ibid. p. 36.

⁶ Ibid. p. 52.

⁷ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 52.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 37, 52.



Nations observance days, create expert groups or commissions, formulate mechanisms for treaty negotiation, or refer an issue to the International Court of Justice.¹⁰

- The General Assembly **will not generally**: dictate the specific actions required for the implementation of policies it recommends, allowing Member States and other bodies to determine operational details; create new bodies, except for in those rare instances where ubiquitous international demand requires the consolidation of existing bodies or a concept and mandate have been fully developed, typically through years of negotiations; make recommendations on situations under consideration by the United Nations Security Council.¹¹

The First Committee's mandate is based on that provided to the General Assembly by the *Charter of the United Nations*.¹² The First Committee adopts around 50-70 resolutions each year, around half of which are adopted by consensus, after which they are sent to the General Assembly Plenary.¹³

Governance, Funding, and Structure

The General Assembly meets annually and is composed of all 193 United Nations Member States.¹⁴ It may also convene special sessions on a particular topic at the request of the Secretary-General, Security Council, or a majority of Member States.¹⁵ Observer status can be granted to intergovernmental organizations and states without full United Nations membership.¹⁶ In the General Assembly, each Member State has one equal vote and most decisions require a simple majority.¹⁷ As a principal organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is largely self-governing, determining its own agenda, procedures, officers, and subsidiary bodies.¹⁸ General Assembly meetings and events are funded through the United Nations regular budget.¹⁹

The First Committee's procedures are managed by its Secretariat and an elected Bureau.²⁰ The committee's Bureau assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions,

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 36; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; UNFOLD ZERO. *UN Bodies*. N.d.

¹¹ United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld Library. *Are UN resolutions binding?*. 2023; United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d.; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Welcome to the Human Rights Council*. 2024; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 70.

¹³ Ibid. pp. 68-70.

¹⁴ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *About Permanent Observers*. N.d.

¹⁷ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. p. 13.

¹⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017. pp. 13, 15, 44.

¹⁹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 409.

²⁰ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.



pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.²¹ The United Nations Secretariat assists the First Committee by delivering substantive and logistical support.²² The First Committee receives substantive and organizational support from three entities: the General Committee, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.²³

The First Committee also works in close cooperation with the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC).²⁴ The CD is an independent entity and the only recognized “multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.”²⁵ UNDC is a subsidiary organ of the First Committee and makes recommendations on various issues in the field of disarmament, and following up on past decisions.²⁶ Both the CD and UNDC report to the First Committee.²⁷ The General Assembly also jointly oversees the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development with the Economic and Social Council.²⁸

²¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.19)*. 2021. pp. 30-31.

²² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations. *The GA Handbook: A Practical Guide to the United Nations General Assembly*. 2017.

²³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Conference on Disarmament*. N.d.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

²⁸ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.



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United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *United Nations Disarmament Commission*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://disarmament.unoda.org/en/united-nations-disarmament-commission>

United Nations, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/07/un-women-the-united-nations-entity-for-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-women/>



1. Strengthening International Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism Efforts

Introduction

Terrorism continues to be a persistent and changing threat to global security and peace.²⁹ Although terrorism lacks a universally accepted definition, it is broadly understood to include acts intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians in order to intimidate a population or compel governmental action or restraint.³⁰ Counter-terrorism (CT) refers to the measures adopted by Member States, regional bodies, and international organizations to prevent and respond to acts of terrorism, often focusing on the root causes and strengthening the capacity of Member States to combat it.³¹ This can include the prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters, intelligence sharing, capacity-building, and multilateral coordination.³² According to the Global Terrorism Index, there were 3,350 terrorist incidents in 2023, resulting in 8,352 deaths, while in 2024, there were 3,492 terrorist incidents and approximately 7,555 deaths, indicating an increase in the attacks but a reduction in lethality.³³ New emerging threats are introducing complex challenges to Member States as terrorist groups exploit new technologies such as social media, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and the dark web, requiring non-traditional and unified CT responses across the globe.³⁴

An important aspect of modern CT, especially with emerging technology, is the possibility for these technologies to be used for benefit or harm.³⁵ Social media, AI, and cloud-based platforms can aid in the detection and even prevention of terrorist activity, but they are also susceptible to misuse by terrorist organizations for recruitment, financing, coordination of organizations, and spreading propaganda.³⁶ The *Delhi Declaration* (2022) and General Assembly resolution 79/239 (2024) on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security” emphasize the growing need for international cooperation in capacity-building and establishing norms in order to safeguard rights as well as counter threats.³⁷ Despite growing awareness and stronger frameworks, the international community continues to face persistent roadblocks in strengthening cooperation.³⁸ Rapid technological advancement has outpaced the ability of governments to regulate online spaces effectively, leaving gaps that terrorist

²⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *Countering terrorism*. 2025.

³⁰ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies: Law Enforcement Capabilities Framework for New Technologies in Countering Terrorism*. 2023. p. 7.

³¹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. N.d.

³² Ibid.

³³ Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. 2024. p. 11.

³⁴ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies: Law Enforcement Capabilities Framework for New Technologies in Countering Terrorism*. 2023. pp. 6-7, 15.

³⁵ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies: Guide for Establishing Law Enforcement Cooperation with Technology Companies in Countering Terrorism*. 2023. p. 20.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022. pp. 14, 24, 34; United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. p. 2.

³⁸ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy*. N.d.



groups could exploit.³⁹ At the same time, CT measures in some contexts risk undermining human rights and the rule of law.⁴⁰ Addressing these challenges requires global commitment to both innovation and accountability, ensuring CT efforts remain effective.⁴¹

The United Nations has been working towards developing global strategies to reinforce international cooperation in CT.⁴² In 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution 60/288 on “The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy” outlining the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS).⁴³ GCTS is built upon four pillars: addressing conditions conducive to terrorism, preventing terrorism, building Member States’ capacity to combat terrorism, and ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law.⁴⁴ Together, these pillars serve as a common reference point for international cooperation, ensuring that CT approaches continue to be comprehensive, coordinated, and in line with international norms, as well as continue to strengthen.⁴⁵ Reinforcing international cooperation in CT is vital to sustaining collective security, enhancing Member States’ capacity to address evolving threats, and ensuring that CT measures uphold the values enshrined in the Charter.⁴⁶

International and Regional Framework

Terrorism threatens the core principles of the United Nations, and underscores the need for a multilateral approach.⁴⁷ Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) calls for maintaining international peace and security through peaceful means and above all, as stipulated by Article 11, by way of cooperation between Member States and other actors.⁴⁸ In line with these guiding principles, the United Nations has progressively developed a CT agenda based on international law and cooperation.⁴⁹ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) (UDHR) is a historic key document from which national, regional, and international frameworks are built.⁵⁰ It advocates for the values in Article 3, notably the right to life, liberty, and security; values that are threatened by terrorism.⁵¹

³⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies: Guide for Establishing Law Enforcement Cooperation with Technology Companies in Countering Terrorism*. 2023. p. 20.

⁴⁰ United Nations, Security Council - Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Global survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions by Member States*. 2021. p. 204

⁴¹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies: Law Enforcement Capabilities Framework for New Technologies in Countering Terrorism*. 2023. pp. 6-7, 15.

⁴² United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288)*. 2006.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288)*. 2006.

⁴⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Warning Terrorist Threat Spreading to Increasing Number of Countries, Security Council Presidential Statement Stresses Need for Comprehensive, Consistent Counter-Strategy (S/PRST/2022/7)*. 2022. p. 4.

⁴⁸ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945.

⁴⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *About us*. N.d.

⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁵¹ Ibid. p. 2.



Over the past decades, terrorism has been addressed by the Security Council and the General Assembly, both prioritizing international cooperation, capacity-building, and international law.⁵² In 1993, the World Conference on Human Rights adopted the *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action* (VDPA).⁵³ This milestone in the protection of human rights condemned all forms of terrorism and called for international cooperation.⁵⁴ Subsequently, the General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism* (1994), which emphasizes the need for further coordination amongst Member States to combat crimes connected to terrorism, such as money laundering, unlawful arms trade, or drug trafficking by implementing relevant international conventions on judicial assistance and extradition agreements.⁵⁵ Moreover, the declaration calls for more information sharing to prevent and combat terrorism, not only between Member States but with the United Nations to enhance the collection of data, such as existing national laws and regulations to combat and prevent international terrorism.⁵⁶ Both the VDPA and the *Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism* emphasize the need to act in accordance with the rule of law and human rights, while strengthening legal instruments at the national, regional and international level.⁵⁷

Building on these early international commitments, the following years saw the adoption of binding legal instruments and resolutions that further strengthened the global framework for countering terrorism and its financing.⁵⁸ The *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings* (1997) criminalizes the intentional use of explosives or other deadly devices in public spaces, government buildings, transportation systems or infrastructure.⁵⁹ In 1999, the General Assembly adopted the *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* (ICSFT), which calls on Member States to criminalize the financing of terrorism, hold those involved accountable, freeze or confiscate funds, and share relevant information.⁶⁰ In 2001, the Security Council adopted the landmark resolution 1373 on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.”⁶¹ The resolution calls on Member States to enhance international cooperation and take further measures to prevent the spread of terrorism by further criminalizing terrorism financing, refraining from supporting terrorism activities in any way, further strengthening border controls, intelligence sharing between police and customs agencies, and

⁵² United Nations, Security Council. *Condemnation of 11 September attacks against United States* (S/RES/1368). 2001. p.1; United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations* (S/RES/2625 (XXV)). 1970. pp. 6-9.

⁵³ United Nations, World Conference on Human Rights. *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*. 1993.

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Measures to eliminate international terrorism* (A/RES/49/60). 1995. pp. 1, 3.

⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

⁵⁷ United Nations, World Conference on Human Rights. *Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*. 1993. pp. 3, 5, 17; United Nations, General Assembly. *Measures to eliminate international terrorism* (A/RES/49/60). 1995. pp. 4-6.

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* (A/RES/54/109). 2000; United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts* (S/RES/1373 (2001)). 2001.

⁵⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings* (A/RES/52/164). 1997. pp. 3-4.

⁶⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* (A/RES/54/109). 2000. pp. 3-4; 8.

⁶¹ United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts* (S/RES/1373 (2001)). 2001. p. 1.



deepening judicial and administrative cooperation.⁶² In 2005, the *International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism* (2005) was introduced, addressing the deliberate use or spread of radioactive materials or attacks on nuclear facilities in order to kill, seriously injure, or cause major damage.⁶³ However, a number of Member States have not joined these conventions, and others have reservations, limiting their commitments.⁶⁴

The General Assembly guides the work of the United Nations and international CT efforts through four pillars outlined in the GCTS.⁶⁵ GCTS helped develop numerous plans and initiatives of action.⁶⁶ Since 2018, three United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States have been organized to discuss capacity-building, new technologies, and international cooperation in CT.⁶⁷ In 2017, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' report focused on the need to deepen international cooperation by inviting Member States to fully implement relevant international legal frameworks, and recalled that regional and subregional organizations are key to sustaining the CT strategy by utilizing their local knowledge and actions.⁶⁸ Following the report, the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact (GCTCC) was developed and was tasked, through the Coordination Committee, with the implementation of the GCTS.⁶⁹ For 2025, GCTCC has prioritized strengthening coordination between the United Nations and Member States to address CT gaps, including limited private sector involvement in countering the financing of terrorism.⁷⁰ The compact also highlights the importance of improving information sharing, technical assistance, and joint programming to ensure more consistent and effective implementation of the GCTS, while ensuring human rights and the rule of law are upheld across all efforts.⁷¹

Role of the International System

The General Assembly First Committee plays a central role within the United Nations system in addressing the root cause of terrorism through its mandate on disarmament and international security.⁷² It works to reinforce international norms through cooperation with international bodies and is well-positioned to lead efforts in aligning international legal frameworks, empowering capacity-building, and embedding human rights at the core of CT strategies.⁷³ Following the Secretary-General's 2017 report calling for a system-wide approach to combating terrorism, the General Assembly established the United Nations

⁶² United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/1373 (2001))*. 2001. pp. 1-4.

⁶³ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (A/RES/59/290)*. 2005. pp. 3-4.

⁶⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (A/RES/52/164)*. 1997. pp. 3-4; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (A/RES/59/290)*. 2005. pp. 3-4.

⁶⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288)*. 2006. pp. 7-8; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *About us*. N.d.

⁶⁶ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCT Annual Report 2023*. 2023. p. 4.

⁶⁷ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *2018 Counter-Terrorism Week*. N.d; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Second High-Level Conference*. 2021; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Third High - level Conference*. 2023.

⁶⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Capability of the United Nations to Assist Member States in implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/71/858)*. 2017. p. 14.

⁶⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *The compact*. N.d.

⁷⁰ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. *2024 Annual Report to the Secretary-General*. 2024. pp. 10, 16, 22.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

⁷³ Ibid.



Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) through its resolution 71/291 on “Strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.”⁷⁴ UNOCT now serves as the central hub for strengthening dialogue and coordination among officials, law enforcement, and intelligence units, notably through the United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States.⁷⁵ General Assembly resolution 73/305 (2019) on “Enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims’ of terrorism” called on UNOCT and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) to raise awareness about victims issues, capacity-building, and asked the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to assist Member States in strengthening the criminal justice system for victims.⁷⁶

UNOCT highlights the growing consensus that effective CT efforts must place human rights and the rule of law at their core, while strengthening international and regional cooperation.⁷⁷ The report highlights multiple existing platforms to meet these needs, such as the Counter-Terrorism Coordination Platform, an online space where Member States and entities can collaborate, find working groups and documents, as well as activity trackers or technical assistance recommendations.⁷⁸ The Coordination Compact Committee, which is within the UNOCT, discussed the growing terrorism threats in Africa and best practices to coordinate and integrate different approaches together at its tenth session in 2024-2025.⁷⁹ A recent UNOCT report recommends practical steps such as working with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), engaging with civil society, and addressing thematics in accordance with country-specifics.⁸⁰ GCTF, which was established in 2011 by 30 founding members, serves as a platform for cooperation, expertise-sharing, and strategy development.⁸¹ Additionally, UNOCT convenes events such as the 2023 CT Week, a biannual event gathering Member States and international partners, which hosted the Third United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States.⁸² The conference underscored the importance of multilateralism and institutional cooperation, stressing that sustainable CT requires multi-stakeholder engagement, with human rights, the rule of law, and good governance at its core.⁸³

Established in 2011, UNCCT provides technical and specialized expertise and assistance upon request by Member States while contributing to empirical research methodologies and best practices.⁸⁴ UNCCT

⁷⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/71/291)*. 2017. pp. 1-2.

⁷⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: eighth review (A/RES/77/298)*. 2023. p. 21.

⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Enhancement of international cooperation to assist victims of terrorism (A/73/L.88)*. 2019. p. 3.

⁷⁷ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNOCT 2024 Annual Report*. 2024. pp. 6, 10.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 7; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact*. N.d.

⁷⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNOCT 2024 Annual Report*. 2024. p. 3; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *The Compact, Coordination Committee and Working Groups*. N.d.

⁸⁰ Global Counter-Terrorism Forum. *About us*. N.d.; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNOCT 2024 Annual Report*. 2024. p. 6.

⁸¹ Global Counterterrorism Forum. *About us, Background and Mission*. N.d.

⁸² United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Events and Conferences*. N.d.; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *2023 Counter-Terrorism Week*. N.d.

⁸³ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Third High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies concludes with calls for reinvigorating multilateralism*. 2023. pp. 1-2.

⁸⁴ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCT Annual Report 2022*. 2022. p. 17; United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *Vision*. N.d.



was established by General Assembly resolution 66/10 on “United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre” to support Member States in their implementation of the GCTS.⁸⁵ For example, in 2018, UNCCT and the Arab Interior Ministers Council (AIMC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation on projects aimed at implementing the GCTS and advancing its four foundational pillars.⁸⁶ In 2024, they organized a capacity-building meeting on Strengthening Cross-Border Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Central Sahel held in Morocco with representatives from several African countries to tackle terrorist cross-border activities.⁸⁷ This meeting was organized in collaboration with the UNODC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), reflecting the system-wide approach.⁸⁸

The Security Council addresses CT through its Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and requires Member States to enhance border controls, criminalize terrorist financing, and improve international cooperation.⁸⁹ The CTC monitors the implementation of the Security Council directives aimed at countering terrorism, and is supported by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).⁹⁰ CTED conducts assessments and issues reports, such as Counter-Terrorism and Border Management in Africa, which identifies potential solutions to technical and capacity gaps that can be achieved via increased cooperation and integrated management.⁹¹ Security Council resolution 2370 on “Preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons” (2017) recommends CTC to continue working with UNOCT, UNODC, and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), in capacity-building with international and regional organizations.⁹² In 2019, the Security Council adopted resolution 2482 on “Preventing and combating terrorism, including terrorism benefitting from transnational organized crime,” which highlighted the links between terrorism and organized crime, urged joint research, financial information sharing initiatives, and adoption of legal instruments to facilitate cross-border investigations and prosecutions.⁹³

UNODC plays a critical role in establishing legal and criminal justice frameworks, as well as other international and regional actors in CT.⁹⁴ Through the UNODC Strategy (2021-2025), UNODC provides technical assistance to strengthen national legislation and judicial capacity, particularly on terrorism financing, cross-border crime, and links between terrorism and organized crime.⁹⁵ In 2015, the European Union (EU) published a joint statement emphasizing their cooperation with the United Nations and the

⁸⁵ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNCCT, Background*. N.d.

⁸⁶ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCT Annual Report 2023*. 2023. p. 4.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 16; United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Strengthening Cross-Border Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Central Sahel region: 3-Day Technical Workshop held in Marrakech, Morocco*. 2024.

⁸⁸ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Strengthening Cross-Border Security and Counter-Terrorism in the Central Sahel region: 3-Day Technical Workshop held in Marrakech, Morocco*. 2024.

⁸⁹ United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/1373 (2001))*. 2001. pp. 1-2.

⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 3; United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (S/RES/1535 (2004))*. 2004. p. 2.

⁹¹ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. *Counter Terrorism and Border Management in Africa: technical and capacity-related gaps*. 2024. pp. 7, 9, 14-15.

⁹² United Nations, Security Council. *Preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons (S/RES/2370 (2017))*. 2017. p. 3.

⁹³ United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by international terrorism and organized crime (S/RES/2482 (2019))*. 2019. pp. 3-5.

⁹⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Terrorism Prevention Branch: About us*. N.d.

⁹⁵ Ibid.



Global Counterterrorism Forum while engaging with the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.⁹⁶ Strengthening Resilience Against Violent Extremism in Asia (STRIVE Asia), a joint program launched by UNOCT in collaboration with the EU, addressing regional CT challenges in Asia through roadmaps, enhanced coordination, and information sharing across borders while developing tools to assess implementation of initiatives and their effectiveness.⁹⁷ In 2025, EU launched CT JUST: Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism, an initiative that aims to enhance the criminal justice chains in regions with structural weaknesses, such as improving the penitentiary systems on the nexus between poor detention conditions and the recruitment of terrorists.⁹⁸

Countering the Use of Emerging Technologies for Terrorist Purposes

Emerging technologies can support CT efforts, but can also be exploited by terrorists.⁹⁹ New technologies encompass a wide range of tools, including AI, drones, encrypted communications, blockchain/cryptocurrency, and cloud-based tools.¹⁰⁰ While some of these tools present a threat, others present a great opportunity for CT use because they facilitate the linking and tracking of terrorist activities while fostering cooperation between entities.¹⁰¹ Although AI has proven to be a key element in detecting terrorist activities, such as disinformation and radicalization due to predictive analytics, it also poses a threat for misinformation, fake news, and propaganda for terrorist purposes, while drones and cyberattacks are increasingly used by non-state actors to target critical infrastructures.¹⁰² For example, over a period of two years, 26 million pieces of content from terrorist groups were removed from the platform Facebook.¹⁰³

The United Nations system has increasingly focused on addressing the intersection of technology and terrorism, fostering global cooperation to counter online terrorist activities and enhance cybersecurity within the framework of the GCTS.¹⁰⁴ In 2015, the CTC held a special meeting in Madrid with over 400 participants from Member States and international and regional organizations, which produced the Madrid Guiding Principles on foreign terrorist fighters.¹⁰⁵ The Principles stress monitoring social media to counter terrorist recruitment online and call for greater collaboration among stakeholders, particularly local

⁹⁶ European Council. *Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Brussels, 12 February 2015 - Statement by the members of the European Council*. 2015.

⁹⁷ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCCT Annual Report 2023*. 2023. pp. 20-21.

⁹⁸ Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas. *CT JUST: Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism*. N.d; Fundación para la Internacionalización de las Administraciones Públicas. *Middle East, North Africa and Europe work to improve counter-terrorism capabilities in prisons*. 2024.

⁹⁹ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022. p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Beneath the surface: Terrorist and violent use of the dark web and cybercrime-as-a-service for cyber-attacks*. 2024. p. III.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. *Algorithms and Terrorism: The malicious use of Artificial Intelligence for terrorist purposes*. 2021. pp. 26-45.

¹⁰³ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism et al. *Countering Terrorism Online with Artificial Intelligence*. 2021. p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Launch of "Tech Against Terrorism" - a partnership between technology companies, governments, and UN CTED*. N.d.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Letter dated 15 December 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism addressed to the President of the Security Council*. 2015. pp. 1, 3-4, 6-7, 11-12.



communities and police agencies.¹⁰⁶ More recently, a partnership called Tech Against Terrorism between the CTED, governments, and technology companies is aimed at addressing the use of the Internet and particularly Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for terrorist purposes by developing a normative framework.¹⁰⁷ UNOCT has provided many initiatives to address the use of new technologies in CT through UNCCT, with the Cybersecurity and New Technologies programme adopted in 2020 after the seventh review of the GCTS.¹⁰⁸ The program is focused on enhancing knowledge, skills, and awareness related to new technologies in CT while protecting human rights within the GCTS framework.¹⁰⁹ For example, in 2021, two workshops were organized in Burkina Faso on the protection of critical infrastructures against terrorist cyber-attacks and the responsible use and sharing of biometric data in cooperation with agencies such as the International Telecommunications Union and UNODC.¹¹⁰

The evolution of terrorist threats through new technologies has led the international community to adopt successive declarations and strategies emphasizing cooperation, innovation, and respect for human rights.¹¹¹ Adopted in 2022, the *Delhi Declaration* highlighted the growing misuse of drones, crowdfunding platforms, virtual assets, and social media by terrorist groups for recruitment and emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between Member States, the private sector, and civil society.¹¹² In 2024, ten countries and the EU gathered in Seoul to formulate the *Seoul Declaration*, which underlines the need for global AI governance to address the risks of new technologies and strengthen cooperation in that domain.¹¹³ The General Assembly resolution 79/239 on “Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security” calls for responsible use of AI to avoid the proliferation to non-state actors of military AI application by fostering multilateral action, capacity-building, and sharing of best practices are key in CT efforts.¹¹⁴ The eighth review of the GCTS expresses great concerns about the growing use of emerging technologies, such as the weaponization of commercial drones, the use of 3D printing, virtual assets, or ICTs.¹¹⁵ The review stresses the need to adapt the GCTS to emerging threats with innovative approaches in capacity-building in line with new technologies.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations, Security Council - Counter-Terrorism Committee. Launch of “Tech Against Terrorism” - a partnership between technology companies, governments, and UN CTED. N.d.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Cybersecurity and New Technologies*. N.d.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNCCT Annual Report 2023*. 2023. p. 44.

¹¹⁰ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *The United Nations holds two workshops with Burkina Faso on the use of new technologies to counter terrorism*. 2021. pp. 1-2.

¹¹¹ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024; United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: eighth review (A/RES/77/298)*. 2023.

¹¹² United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Delhi Declaration on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes*. 2022. pp. 1-5.

¹¹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea. *Seoul Declaration for safe, innovative and inclusive AI by participants attending the leaders’ session of the AI Seoul Summit*. 2024. pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Artificial intelligence in the military domain and its implications for international peace and security (A/RES/79/239)*. 2024. p. 2.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy: eighth review (A/RES/77/298)*. 2023.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 8; 14.



Promoting Human Rights and Rule of Law in Counter-Terrorism Efforts

Implementing CT strategies upholds human rights and breaks the circle of resentment and radicalization.¹¹⁷ Resentment and radicalization can be fueled by poor detention conditions, lack of rehabilitation, unfair or discriminatory justice, and deprivation of nationality.¹¹⁸ The eighth biannual review of the implementation of the GCTS advocated for further safeguard mechanisms to monitor the development and implementation of human rights and rule of law measures in CT.¹¹⁹ While such measures greatly depend on the willingness of Member States within their national legislation, cooperation in such a field can lead to a more efficient and harmonized legislation at the regional and international levels while raising awareness.¹²⁰

The Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (PRR) aims to improve accountability while tackling terrorism recidivism with a gender and human rights-based approach.¹²¹ An example of PRR action is the training of 20 officials from Iraq on the protection of individual rights for individuals associated with terrorism, and the improvement of the Jeddah 1 Rehabilitation center for returnees.¹²² The PRR also strengthened regional cooperation in Central Asia through the creation of a platform dedicated to coordination efforts with experts, United Nations agencies, governments, and civil society.¹²³ The programme encompasses many United Nations Agencies in line with the system-wide approach, such as UNODC, UNCCT, CTED, the United Nations Development Program and the EU.¹²⁴

Upholding human rights and the rule of law in CT efforts poses numerous challenges, but enhanced cooperation could be the key to unlocking more effective responses.¹²⁵ A major obstacle to embedding human rights and the rule of law in CT efforts is the absence of a universally agreed-upon definition of terrorism.¹²⁶ Member States typically define terrorism in their national legislation.¹²⁷ This ambiguity has, in some cases, been used by Member States to justify restrictions on fundamental freedoms such as peaceful assembly, political opposition, or dissent, raising concerns about potential misuse of CT measures.¹²⁸ The lack of harmonization of national legislations reduces the efficacy of global CT efforts.¹²⁹

¹¹⁷ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *High-Level International Conference on Human Rights, Civil Society and Counter-Terrorism Outcome Document*. 2022. p.12.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *Plan to Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*. 2016. pp. 4-5; United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCT Annual Report 2023*. 2023. pp. 32-34.

¹¹⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/77/718)*. 2023. p.16.

¹²⁰ United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre. *UNCCT Annual Report 2022*. 2022. pp. 94-95; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *International Cooperation*. N.d.

¹²¹ United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *Global Programme on Prosecution, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration*. N.d.

¹²² United Nations, Office of Counter-Terrorism. *UNOCT 2024 Annual Report*. 2024. pp. 33-34.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. *Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategies*. N.d.

¹²⁵ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Global survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions by Member States*. 2021. p. 204; United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism*. 2008. p. 3.

¹²⁶ United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism*. 2008. p. 3.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 40-41.

¹²⁹ Ibid.



Security Council resolution 2617 on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks” (2021) renewed the mandate of the CTED, and reiterated that civil society, academia, think tanks, youth, and women play an important role in effectively combating terrorism through the promotion of the rule of law and human rights.¹³⁰ In 2021, the CTED’s Global survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 highlights the vague definition of terrorist acts and underscores the need for independent mechanisms to monitor compliance with human rights and the rule of law, by the need to expand activities in that domain.¹³¹

Conclusion

The persistent and evolving nature of terrorism requires a coordinated and adaptable international response.¹³² Terrorist organizations have diversified their tactics, expanded their reach, and used emerging technologies to advance their agendas.¹³³ The need to address the root causes of terrorism and strengthen existing mechanisms is greatly increased by these developments.¹³⁴ The General Assembly First Committee plays an important role in this process by advancing disarmament measures, fostering dialogue among Member States, and promoting transparency.¹³⁵ These efforts are most effective when they are supported by consistent sharing of best practices and respect for the rule of law.¹³⁶ Building global resilience requires balancing security measures with the protection of human rights, ensuring that international CT efforts remain within the scope of law, and ensuring the protection of the most vulnerable Member States.¹³⁷

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What institutional or legal frameworks can be strengthened to prevent the proliferation of terrorist groups? How can the General Assembly First Committee support international cooperation in CT efforts? What role can regional and subregional organizations play in improving information-sharing and best practices? How can Member States ensure CT strategies remain consistent with international law, especially human rights and humanitarian law? What policy measures can be adopted to stay ahead of emerging technologies and their potential use in cyberterrorism? How can United Nations bodies and international actors ensure that their efforts are effective and non-duplicative?

¹³⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks Letter from the President of the Council on the voting outcome (S/2021/1107) (S/RES/2617)*. 2021. pp. 2, 5-6, 11.

¹³¹ United Nations, Security Council. Counter-Terrorism Committee. *Global survey of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and other relevant resolutions by Member States*. 2021. pp. V, 58, 195.

¹³² Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Terrorism Index 2025: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. 2025. p. 2.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 80.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p. 3, 48.

¹³⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.



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2. Women, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control

“Strengthening the role of women and diversity of voices in disarmament will advance our collective goals in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.”¹³⁸

Introduction

The topic of women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control lies at the intersection of international security and human rights.¹³⁹ Disarmament refers to the reduction of existing weapon stockpiles, while non-proliferation aims to prevent the spread of weapons, especially weapons of mass destruction, to states or non-state actors that do not yet possess them.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, arms control focuses on regulating the development, transfer, and use of weapons through international and regional frameworks that promote transparency, stability, and accountability.¹⁴¹ Meaningful participation, as referenced in United Nations frameworks, involves the full, equal, and effective engagement of individuals in peace and security processes.¹⁴² In this context, the United Nations applies an inclusive definition of women, recognizing all individuals who self-identify as women, within its peace and security agenda.¹⁴³

Disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control are central to international peace and security, aiming to reduce the risks of armed conflict and promote long-term stability.¹⁴⁴ Their success depends not only on technical compliance but also on inclusivity, legitimacy, and sustainability.¹⁴⁵ Women’s participation strengthens these outcomes by bringing diverse perspectives, addressing humanitarian impacts, and fostering broader community engagement.¹⁴⁶ Gender-balanced approaches have been linked to more durable peace agreements and more responsive policy frameworks.¹⁴⁷ Integrating gender perspectives is

¹³⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Gender*. 2024.

¹³⁹ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021. p. 219; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Gender and Disarmament Hub*. 2025.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Disarmament*. 2024.

¹⁴¹ United Nations, General Assembly, Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (A/RES/2373 (XXII)). 1968; North Atlantic Treaty Organization. *Arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in NATO*. 2023.

¹⁴² United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024.

¹⁴³ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. *General Recommendation No. 33 on women’s access to justice (CEDAW/C/GC/33)*. 2015. p. 3; United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (A/HRC/38/43)*. 2018; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *LGBTIQ+ Equality and Rights. Internal Research Guide*. 2022.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly, Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (A/RES/2373 (XXII)). 1968; United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. 2018; United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Disarmament*. 2024; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Sustainable Development*. 2025.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s Support to Women’s Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.



therefore not only a matter of equity but also a strategic imperative for effective disarmament policy.¹⁴⁸ At the national level, 98 Member States have adopted a Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) action plan, though only 32% include explicit references to disarmament and arms control.¹⁴⁹ This shows that participation gaps persist even where formal commitments exist.¹⁵⁰

Despite longstanding advocacy by civil society and growing international support, women remain underrepresented in disarmament negotiations, policymaking, and decision-making processes.¹⁵¹ While women's participation in disarmament diplomacy has increased from less than 10% in the 1980s to approximately 35% in 2022, as of 2019, women still only represented 31% of participants in multilateral forums and just 20% of delegation heads, showing persistent gaps, especially in leadership roles.¹⁵² In formal peace processes, the proportion of women among mediators, negotiators, and signatories has remained below 15%.¹⁵³ These gaps reflect structural and normative barriers that hinder meaningful and inclusive participation.¹⁵⁴ Addressing them is not only essential for fulfilling human rights commitments but also critical to the effectiveness of peace and security processes.¹⁵⁵ In the face of rising global security threats, gender-inclusive arms control frameworks are more necessary than ever.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁸ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Sustainable Development*. 2025.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Gender*. N.d; Reaching Critical Will. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Dalaqua et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Still Behind the Curve: Gender Balance in Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Diplomacy*. 2019; Reaching Critical Will. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024.

¹⁵² Ibid; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Embedding Fairness: Boosting Efficacy & Innovation in Nuclear Weapons Diplomacy*. 2025; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Gender and Disarmament Hub*. 2025.

¹⁵³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid; United Nations General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (A/RES/79/57)*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid; United Nations General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (A/RES/79/57)*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (A/RES/79/57)*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.



International and Regional Framework

The obligation of including women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control is rooted in the foundational principles of the United Nations, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law.¹⁵⁷ The *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) identifies the promotion of human rights without distinction as to sex as one of its core purposes, while the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) affirms equal rights and the right to participate in governance.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, the *Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War* (1949) includes protections for women in armed conflict.¹⁵⁹ Building on this foundation, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995) established a global commitment to advancing gender equality and called for the integration of women's perspectives in peace, security, and disarmament processes.¹⁶⁰ These instruments form the normative basis for advancing women's participation in disarmament and arms control.¹⁶¹

Only in recent decades has the meaningful participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control gained formal recognition as a critical element of inclusive security and sustainable peace.¹⁶² This recognition is reflected in several binding and non-binding instruments, beginning with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on "Women, peace and security," which stresses the importance of full and equal participation, and urges Member States to promote women's involvement in peace and security-related processes, including disarmament.¹⁶³ Building on resolution 1325, this evolution reflects a wider shift within international frameworks towards inclusivity and the acknowledgment of gendered impacts in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.¹⁶⁴

Over the past decade, major international arms control treaties have started to explicitly recognize gendered dimensions of armed violence and arms transfers.¹⁶⁵ General Assembly resolution 65/69 on "Women, disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control" called on Member States to promote women's equal participation in disarmament discussions and to integrate gender perspectives into arms control efforts.¹⁶⁶ This resolution helped create momentum for a more inclusive and responsible global arms framework, paving the way for the negotiation of the *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT), adopted in 2013 as the first legally binding instrument to regulate the international trade of conventional arms.¹⁶⁷ As of today, 142

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945; *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*. 1949.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A (III)). 1948.

¹⁵⁹ *Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*. 1949.

¹⁶⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1). 1995.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Dalaqua et al. United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Still Behind the Curve: Gender Balance in Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Diplomacy*. 2019.

¹⁶³ United Nations, Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security* (S/RES/1325(2000)). 2000.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/65/69). 2010; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/67/48). 2012; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/69/61). 2014.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Gender-Responsive Arms Control, Ending Impunity Key to Reverse Record Level of Sexual Violence against Women, Girls in Conflict Zones*. 2024.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) (A/RES/67/234 B). 2013.



Member States have signed the ATT, and 113 have ratified it.¹⁶⁸ Under article 7(4), States parties are required to assess whether arms exports could be used to commit or facilitate serious acts of gender-based violence, including violence against women and children.¹⁶⁹ The *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW), adopted in 2017, notably acknowledges the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls and encourages their active participation in disarmament negotiations.¹⁷⁰ Its preamble, for example, recognizes the long-term health effects of ionizing radiation on women, underscoring how gender perspectives strengthen disarmament efforts by promoting accountability and addressing humanitarian consequences.¹⁷¹

By recognizing the connection between gender equality, inclusive participation, and the prevention of armed violence, international frameworks underscore the importance of women's involvement in disarmament and arms control for sustainable peace and security.¹⁷² These frameworks are closely aligned with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).¹⁷³ SDG 5 underscores the importance of women's full participation in peace and security processes, especially given their continued underrepresentation in disarmament and arms control negotiations, and their disproportionate exposure to the effects of armed violence.¹⁷⁴ SDG 16 promotes inclusive governance and the reduction of violence, both of which are essential to effective disarmament and arms control, and can be strengthened by the integration of women's perspectives.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, States parties to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) are obligated to integrate gender perspectives to ensure women's participation in all phases of conflict prevention and resolution.¹⁷⁶ They must also take measures to eliminate discrimination and promote women's involvement in public and political life more broadly.¹⁷⁷ General Recommendation No. 30 further clarifies that these calls extend to all areas of peace and security, including disarmament.¹⁷⁸ Collectively, these instruments demonstrate a growing commitment within international bodies and Member States to

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (A/CONF.229/2017/8). 2017.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (A/CONF.229/2017/8). 2017; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Gender and disarmament Hub*. 2025.

¹⁷² United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. 2018.

¹⁷³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025*. 2022.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goals Report*. 2023.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180). 1979.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. *General Recommendation No.30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations* (CEDAW/C/GC/30). 2013.



address gender inequality and ensure inclusive participation in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control.¹⁷⁹

Role of the International System

The General Assembly First Committee, mandated to address disarmament and international security, has addressed gender perspectives through a series of resolutions.¹⁸⁰ Since 2010, the Committee has adopted biennial resolutions on “Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control,” the first of which called for the systematic inclusion of gender perspectives in disarmament processes and reaffirmed the commitment to addressing gender-based violence in this context.¹⁸¹ Notably, this resolution supported the development of a gender-based criterion in the ATT, which ultimately established a legal precedent for linking arms control to gender-related risks.¹⁸² Subsequent resolutions have encouraged Member States to improve the equitable representation of women in negotiations, collect gender-sensitive data, and incorporate inclusive practices into arms control frameworks.¹⁸³ These resolutions have also facilitated input from civil society actors, underscoring the Committee’s role in fostering multi-stakeholder cooperation.¹⁸⁴ As the body directly responsible for guiding deliberations on this topic, the General Assembly First Committee serves as the primary forum for Member States to consider measures that promote women’s participation in disarmament processes.¹⁸⁵

Other United Nations bodies and agencies have complemented the General Assembly First Committee’s efforts by promoting gender perspectives in disarmament policies and building technical capacity.¹⁸⁶ The

¹⁷⁹ United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. *Treaty on the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (A/CONF.229/2017/8). 2017.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/71/56). 2016; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/73/46). 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/75/48). 2020; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/77/55). 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/79/57). 2024.

¹⁸¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)* (A/RES/67/234 B). 2013.

¹⁸² United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. 2018.

¹⁸³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/71/56). 2016; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/73/46). 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/75/48). 2020; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/77/55). 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/79/57). 2024.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/73/46). 2018; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/75/48). 2020; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/77/55). 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control* (A/RES/79/57). 2024.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Disarmament and International Security (First Committee)*. N.d.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and gender*. N.d; United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security* (S/RES/1325(2000)). 2000; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. 2021. p. 1; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations



United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) has implemented initiatives such as the Global Project on Gender and Small Arms Control and the Women Scholarship for Peace program, which has trained participants from the Global South in disarmament and arms control diplomacy.¹⁸⁷ UNODA, through its Gender Policy (2021–2025), commits to integrating gender perspectives across all its activities.¹⁸⁸ Its yearbooks provide an annual report on progress made in this perspective and recommendations for the First Committee for their annual session.¹⁸⁹ The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has supported Member States in developing national action plans on WPS, a number of which explicitly reference disarmament and arms control.¹⁹⁰ The Human Rights Council has likewise contributed through reports highlighting the gendered impact of arms flows, particularly in relation to small arms and light weapons.¹⁹¹ They also recommend measures to expand women's roles in arms transfer monitoring and policymaking.¹⁹² Together, these efforts demonstrate the broader United Nations system's commitment to addressing gender gaps in peace and security.¹⁹³

Regional organizations have also advanced gender equality in disarmament, often tailoring their approaches to local political and cultural contexts.¹⁹⁴ The African Union's Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) includes provisions affirming women's right to peace and calls on States parties to ensure their inclusion in peace and security governance.¹⁹⁵ The League of Arab States adopted a regional action plan on WPS in 2015, which encourages Member States to enhance women's participation in conflict resolution and post-conflict recovery.¹⁹⁶ The European Union's 2018 Strategic Approach to Women, Peace and Security outlined the need for inclusion of gender perspectives in disarmament and arms control policymaking.¹⁹⁷ The

Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. p. 1; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and gender*. N.d.; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *2022 OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security: Training on Arms Control and Disarmament*. 2022.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. 2021.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes*. 2022; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁹¹ United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Impact of Arms Transfers on Human Rights: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/44/29)*. 2020.

¹⁹² United Nations, Human Rights Council. *Report of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity (A/HRC/38/43)*. 2018.

¹⁹³ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and gender*. N.d; United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. 2021. p. 1; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021.

¹⁹⁵ African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. 2003.

¹⁹⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Women. *Executive Action Plan Protection of Arab Women: Peace, and Security 2015-2030*. 2015.

¹⁹⁷ Council of the European Union. *Council Conclusions on Women, Peace, and Security*. 2018.



Association of Southeast Asian Nations adopted its first Regional Action Plan on WPS in 2017, setting a foundation for gender inclusion in regional peace and security efforts.¹⁹⁸ The updated 2022 plan built on this progress by introducing clearer monitoring mechanisms and stronger commitments to overcome training and recruitment barriers that continue to limit women's participation in peace processes.¹⁹⁹

Civil society organizations and international campaigns have played a significant role in advancing inclusive approaches to disarmament and amplifying women's voices.²⁰⁰ The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, through its Reaching Critical Will program, has consistently monitored and reported on United Nations disarmament forums, providing technical analysis and advocating for stronger integration of gender perspectives.²⁰¹ The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, secured recognition of the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons in the TPNW.²⁰² The Control Arms Coalition mobilized civil society actors worldwide to advocate for the adoption of the ATT, which includes Article 7(4) on preventing gender-based violence.²⁰³ The International Committee of the Red Cross has contributed by documenting the humanitarian impacts of arms transfers and promoting the consideration of gender-sensitive approaches in arms control discussions.²⁰⁴ Together, these actors have influenced treaty negotiations and held governments accountable for implementation, working to ensure that international commitments translate into tangible progress.²⁰⁵

Barriers for Women's Engagement in Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Arms Control

Women's meaningful engagement in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control processes remains limited as a result of major social, cultural, and institutional barriers.²⁰⁶ A significant barrier lies in persistent gender norms that equate leadership in weapons and security with men, thereby diminishing women's perceived authority and expertise in technical policy domains, such as arms control.²⁰⁷ They are also under-represented on delegations, expert panels, and negotiating teams, due to national government

¹⁹⁸ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security*. 2022.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021.

²⁰¹ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Disarmament*. 2025; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Women, Peace and Security*. 2025.

²⁰² International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. *ICAN International structure*. 2024; United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (A/CONF.229/2017/8)*. 2017.

²⁰³ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Arms Trade Treaty (A/RES/67/234 B)*. 2013; Reaching Critical Will. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Gender, Intersectionality, and Disarmament*. 2024.

²⁰⁴ International Committee of the Red Cross. *International Humanitarian Law and Gender-Based Violence in the Context of the Arms Trade Treaty*. 2019; International Committee of the Red Cross. *Gendered impacts of armed conflicts and implications for the application of IHL*. 2022; International Committee of the Red Cross. *International Humanitarian Law and a Gender Perspective in the Planning and Conduct of Military Operations*. 2024.

²⁰⁵ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021.

²⁰⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes*. 2022.

²⁰⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes*. 2022.



structures and multilateral disarmament forums frequently lacking gender parity mechanisms.²⁰⁸ This institutional imbalance is compounded by limited access to education, networks, and capacity-building opportunities, especially in states affected by, or recovering from, conflict.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the inadequate collection of gender-specific data by governments and international organizations hinders efforts to accurately measure progress and effectively address the barriers women continue to face in these areas.²¹⁰ These structural limitations, exacerbated by restricted access to professional networks and specialized technical training, significantly reduce women's capacity to fully and sustainably engage in arms control discussions, policy-making, and treaty implementation.²¹¹

Ensuring women's full participation in peace and disarmament processes is essential for achieving agreements that are both effective in implementation and lasting in effect.²¹² A comprehensive review by UN Women highlights that women's engagement not only increases the likelihood of reaching an agreement but also substantially enhances the execution and durability of peace and conflict resolution frameworks.²¹³ Recognizing this connection, Member States and international actors have placed greater emphasis on programs that strengthen women's skills and participation in arms control and disarmament, translating global commitments into practical policy measures.²¹⁴ Illustrating these efforts, the *Women Scholarship for Peace* program, launched by UNODA with support from non-governmental organizations, has trained women in disarmament diplomacy, arms control, and non-proliferation.²¹⁵ Alongside other UN-supported initiatives, it demonstrates how targeted education and awareness-raising contribute to translating global gender commitments into practical expertise and participation in disarmament processes.²¹⁶

Case Study: Women's Participation in Arms Control and Conflict Mediation in Yemen

Yemen ranks 172nd out of 193 countries in UNDP's Gender Inequality Index, highlighting persistent gender gaps in political participation, education, and economic empowerment.²¹⁷ This ranking is reflected in the fact that only 1% of parliamentary seats are held by women.²¹⁸ Similarly, women make up just 6% of the labor force.²¹⁹ Moreover, male guardianship over women's mobility, marriage, and legal capacity is imposed by deeply ingrained cultural norms and conservative interpretations of Sharia law, the body of

²⁰⁸ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Gender*. 2024.

²⁰⁹ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Still Behind the Curve: Gender Mainstreaming in Multilateral Disarmament Forums*. 2022.

²¹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes*. 2022.

²¹¹ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *The United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. 2021.

²¹² Krause et al. *Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace*. 2015.

²¹³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, Peace, and Security*. 2022.

²¹⁴ United Nations, Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. 2018.

²¹⁵ Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. *Scholarship for Peace and security in the OSCE area*. 2025.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Report 2025*. 2025. p.296.

²¹⁸ Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 (UNW/2021/2)*. 2021.

²¹⁹ Ibid.



Islamic law derived from religious texts and interpreted by scholars.²²⁰ Additionally, laws such as the 1992 Yemeni Personal Status Law institutionalize gender discrimination by restricting women's rights, such as the right to free movement without a male guardian's consent.²²¹ In addition to this, a protracted civil conflict, ongoing for more than a decade, has intensified the proliferation of weapons and its impact on civilians.²²² The widespread availability and use of ballistic missiles and small arms have disproportionately affected women and children, exacerbating insecurity and displacement, disrupting access to education and essential services, and entrenching long-term marginalization.²²³ Since the outbreak of Yemen's civil war in 2015, women and girls have faced escalating violence linked to arms flows and impunity, as shown by data from the Yemen Polling Center.²²⁴

Despite this unstable climate, Yemeni women's organizations, including the Yemen Women Union, became involved in local arms governance through mediation at the tribal level.²²⁵ Hundreds of women gained technical expertise in humanitarian law and arms tracking through training sessions arranged by UN Women and the UNODA Women Scholarship for Peace.²²⁶ With the help of these programs, Yemeni women mediated ceasefires in Taiz and Hodeida after the 2018 Stockholm agreement.²²⁷ These women-led disarmament initiatives at the local level illustrate that the involvement of women in peace processes is not only a normative goal but also a practical strategy to reduce the proliferation of weapons through ceasefire monitoring and community supervision.²²⁸

With the help of international organizations and civil society, Yemeni women have actively engaged in peacebuilding projects and local weapons control.²²⁹ Local women's organizations play an increasingly active role in peacebuilding and arms control, illustrating the vital role that women can play in complex conflict contexts.²³⁰ Organizations such as the Peace Track Initiative and Yemen Women Union have taken the lead in efforts to reduce the number of weapons in communities severely impacted by conflict, and have mediated community-level discussions.²³¹ Correspondingly, women have led informal disarmament campaigns focused on reducing small arms proliferation, raising awareness of their humanitarian impact, and negotiating with local armed groups to foster safer communities.²³² Women made up about 30% of participants in civil-society-led peace talks at the community level in 2019, up from less than 10% before UN Women and partner organizations got involved and backed capacity-building programs.²³³ Additionally, Yemen's first-ever WPS National Action Plan was developed with significant

²²⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen (S/2021/79)*. 2021.

²²¹ Oxfam International. *The Gendered impact of explosive weapons use in populated areas in Yemen*. 2019.

²²² Mansour et al. Peace Track Initiative. *Yemen WPS National Action Plan*. 2020.

²²³ Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe. *Scholarship for Peace and security in the OSCE area*. 2025.

²²⁴ Heinze et al. Social Development Direct. *Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen*. 2018.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *2022 OSCE-UNODA Scholarship for Peace and Security: Training on Arms Control and Disarmament*. 2022.

²²⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Crisis Upon Crisis: Impact of the Recent Escalation on Women and Girls in Yemen*. 2025.

²²⁸ Oxfam International. *Speaking up: the role of Women in building peace in Yemen*. 2023.

²²⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Equality: Challenges in Yemen*. N.d.

²³⁰ Heinze et al. Social Development Direct. *Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen*. 2018.

²³¹ Mansour et al. Peace Track Initiative. *Yemen WPS National Action Plan*. 2020.

²³² Oxfam International. *Speaking up: the role of Women in building peace in Yemen*. 2023.

²³³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women's leadership and Political participation*. 2025.



input from Yemeni women's organizations such as the Yemen Women Union, aligning Yemen's initiatives with the goals set out in global frameworks.²³⁴

International and regional organizations have created specialized plans to incorporate women into frameworks for arms regulation and disarmament in Yemen's long-running conflict.²³⁵ Two prominent organizations, the Peace Track Initiative and Yemen Women Union, have put this National Action Plan into practice by creating women-led mediation groups that supported local ceasefires and facilitated disarmament negotiations in conflict-affected areas.²³⁶ They played key roles in community discussions that addressed the misuse of small arms and the protection of civilians.²³⁷ In addition, they actively collected data on arms trafficking and worked with tribal elders to arrange local arms handovers.²³⁸ The Yemen case study also demonstrates how civil-society collaboration can integrate women into arms control frameworks, even amid institutional collapse.²³⁹

Conclusion

Although progress has been made, women's participation in disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control remains limited, with structural and normative barriers such as bias, limited expertise, and instability continuing to undermine inclusivity and effectiveness.²⁴⁰ Across multilateral disarmament forums and peace negotiations, women are still underrepresented, even though empirical research consistently shows that gender-diverse participation leads to more durable and legitimate outcomes.²⁴¹ Over the past two decades, the United Nations system has worked to mainstream gender perspectives into arms control frameworks, while civil society and regional organizations have advanced this agenda through advocacy and policy innovation.²⁴² Taken together, these efforts and studies demonstrate that addressing gendered experiences of armed violence is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic necessity for achieving effective disarmament and sustainable peace.²⁴³

²³⁴ United Nations, Security Council. *Women and Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; Oxfam International. *Speaking up: the role of Women in building peace in Yemen*. 2023.

²³⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Yemen*. 2022.

²³⁶ Mansour et al. Peace Track Initiative. *Yemen WPS National Action Plan*. 2020.

²³⁷ Yemen Policy Center. *A rethink is needed to revitalize the peace process in Yemen*. 2023.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Heinze et al. Social Development Direct. *Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen*. 2018.

²⁴⁰ United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Still Behind the Curve: Gender Balance in Arms Control, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Diplomacy*. 2019; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

²⁴¹ Ibid; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Gender and Disarmament Hub*. 2025; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Embedding Fairness: Boosting Efficacy & Innovation in Nuclear Weapons Diplomacy*. 2025.

²⁴² United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and gender*. N.d; United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. 2021; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2024; United Nations, General Assembly. *Women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control (A/RES/79/57)*. 2024; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes*. 2025.

²⁴³ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and gender*. N.d; United Nations, General Assembly. *The Arms Trade Treaty (A/RES/67/234 B)*. 2013; Reaching Critical Will. Women's International



Equal participation of women is vital to building a resilient and inclusive global security system.²⁴⁴ Achieving this requires sustained political will, reliable data collection, targeted capacity-building, and inclusive multilateral cooperation.²⁴⁵ The 2030 Agenda, particularly SDGs 5 and 16, reinforces this approach, as evidence shows that gender equality contributes to stronger institutions, reduced violence, and more sustainable peace outcomes.²⁴⁶ The case of Yemen highlights both the urgency and potential of this agenda: while women have often been excluded from formal arms control and mediation efforts, civil society initiatives demonstrate their ability to advance conflict resolution and humanitarian disarmament.²⁴⁷ This example underscores the broader truth: only through equal participation can disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control deliver sustainable peace and security.²⁴⁸

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: how can gender perspectives be more effectively integrated into disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control processes? In particular, how can barriers such as bias, cultural norms, and limited expertise be addressed through education and capacity-building? What role should the General Assembly First Committee play in fostering stronger cooperation with civil society, regional actors, and other United Nations bodies? Finally, how can Member States draw on existing frameworks, such as the WPS agenda, the ATT, and the SDGs, when considering measures to advance inclusive disarmament at the international level?

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²⁴⁴ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325(2000))*. 2000; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *UNODA Gender Policy (2021–2025)*. 2021; United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. *Embedding Fairness: Boosting Efficacy & Innovation in Nuclear Weapons Diplomacy*. 2025. p. 6.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015; United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *Disarmament and Sustainable Development*. 2025.

²⁴⁷ Heinze et al. Social Development Direct. *Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen*. 2018; United Nations, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Yemen*. 2022.

²⁴⁸ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security (S/RES/1325 (2000))*. 2000; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Women, Peace and Security*. 2024.



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