

HMDC Presents... TERRORISM: Part 3 (International Efforts)

HMDC Presents... Special Session on Terrorism: State Sovereignty and Intervention (Research Report, December 2026)

Prepared for HMDC Forensics delegates attending Harvard Model United Nations Online, December 5-6, 2026. Every fact below comes from a page or official document that was opened and read in October 2026. Each evidence entry repeats its publication and date so the source is always visible.

WHAT OUR CHAIRS WILL FOCUS ON

Harvard tells us that this committee is a special session of the General Assembly about terrorism, and that the October and December sessions look at different questions. In December, we will study state sovereignty, which means a country's right to control its own land, and we will ask when it is fair and necessary for other countries to step in. Our job as delegates is to work together on a full plan against terrorism that keeps a balance between international law and each state's sovereignty. Harvard describes this as "balancing international law and state sovereignty," so every idea we bring should speak to both sides of that balance.

(Harvard Model United Nations, HMUN Online Committee Page, Last Accessed: October 2026)

<https://www.harvardmun.org/special-session-online>

The parts of this report that match that focus most closely are Sections 1B to 1E (the four ways states and the UN use force or invite help), Section 2B (the rules on sovereignty and force) and Section 2E (consent and the exit of UN missions).

How we use this report: This report already follows the December focus closely, so most of it is useful in committee. Recruitment, which appears in Sections 1A and 1F, and online extremist content, in Section 3D, belong mainly to Harvard's October session, so we treat them as background only. We use those facts when they help answer the December question, for example to show that heavy force can push people toward armed groups, but we do not build our speeches or resolutions around them. Our priority is always the same question: when may other countries act inside a state, and who should decide?

PART 3, INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS

Outside the UN itself, many organisations work on terrorism across borders: treaties, military coalitions, regional organisations, financial watchdogs, police networks and partnerships with technology companies. Some of these act with a host state's consent, some help states build their own capacity, and some work entirely without troops. Single-country domestic policy is left to each delegate's own country research.

3A. TREATIES

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Last Accessed: October 2026: Nineteen international treaties cover specific terrorist acts

Tagline: Listing nineteen counter-terrorism treaties Source: According to... United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/international-legal-instruments> Fact: It states... that 19 international legal instruments target specific acts, including aircraft hijacking (1970), hostage-taking (1979), terrorist bombings (1997), terrorist financing (1999) and nuclear terrorism (2005). Each treaty covers one type of act rather than terrorism as a whole. This means... states have agreed many times on banning specific acts, but never on one comprehensive treaty. These treaties also rely on states prosecuting or handing over suspects, which is an alternative to military intervention.

United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee (statement of the European Union), October 6, 2025: Europe is building a common regional definition of terrorism

Tagline: Agreeing a regional definition first Source: According to... United Nations General Assembly Sixth Committee (statement of the European Union), October 6, 2025 Link: https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/80/pdfs/statements/int_terrorism/01mtg_eu.pdf Fact: It states... that the Council of Europe recently adopted an Amending Protocol that changes the definition of terrorist offences in its Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS 196), and that once it enters into force it will give Europe "a common pan-European definition of terrorism." The EU invited other states to consider this framework. It also noted that the EU's rules on terrorist content online, in force since 2022, require platforms to remove terrorist content within one hour, with safeguards for freedom of expression. This means... if the whole world cannot yet agree on one definition, regions can agree first and then offer their text as a model. Delegates could propose that the committee study regional definitions, such as Europe's and the African Union's 1999 convention, as building blocks for the long-delayed global convention.

3B. MILITARY AND SECURITY COALITIONS

Global Coalition Against Daesh, Last Accessed: October 2026: Ninety partners joined the coalition against ISIS

Tagline: Uniting ninety partners against ISIS Source: According to... Global Coalition Against Daesh, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://theglobalcoalition.org/en/mission/> Fact: It states... that the coalition, formed in September 2014, has 90 partners and works on five lines of effort: military support to local partners, stabilising liberated areas, countering propaganda, stopping foreign fighters (in line with Resolution 2178) and cutting ISIS financing. It says it supported the military defeat of ISIS in Iraq and Syria. This means... this is the largest counter-terrorism coalition in history. It operated in Iraq with consent but in Syria without the government's consent, so it is the clearest test case for the sovereignty debate.

African Union, Last Accessed: October 2026: The African Union may intervene in a member state for grave crimes

Tagline: Allowing intervention for grave crimes Source: According to... African Union, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://au.int/en/psc> Fact: It states... that the African Union Peace and Security Council was created by a protocol adopted July 9, 2002 and has 15 members. With the Commission Chairperson, it can recommend to the AU Assembly intervention in a member state over war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity under Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act. It is also tasked with making sure counter-terrorism conventions are implemented. This means... African states have already agreed that sovereignty has limits in grave situations. This regional rule is a model delegates may cite when debating intervention rules.

Council on Foreign Relations, July 29, 2026: Three Sahel states formed their own alliance and left ECOWAS

Tagline: Leaving ECOWAS for a new alliance Source: According to... Council on Foreign Relations, July 29, 2026 Link: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel> Fact: It states... that Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger formed the Alliance of Sahel States, signed a mutual defence pact in September 2023, and formally left the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in January 2025, turning toward Russia and away from Western partners. This means... regional cooperation in West Africa has split. Any plan that relies on ECOWAS will not reach the three states most affected by terrorism unless it also engages the new alliance.

International Crisis Group, May 8, 2024: The European Union funded African troops through the European Peace Facility

Tagline: Funding African troops through Europe Source: According to... International Crisis Group, May 8, 2024 Link: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/qna/africa/mozambique/what-future-military-intervention-mozambique> Fact: It states... that the European Peace Facility gave 15 million euros in non-lethal equipment to the southern African mission in Mozambique and 20 million euros to Rwanda's deployment, with EU members divided over renewing the Rwandan funding. This means... outside funders shape which interventions happen and how long they last. Delegates may propose clearer rules for donor funding of regional missions.

Institute for Security Studies, January 27, 2025: The Lake Chad regional force is under strain

Tagline: Straining a regional task force Source: According to... Institute for Security Studies, January 27, 2025 Link: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/decades-of-security-cooperation-under-threat-in-lake-chad-basin> Fact: It states... that the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), set up in 1994 by the Lake Chad Basin Commission and reactivated in 2014 with African Union backing to fight Boko Haram, has stopped the group from taking more territory and disrupted its bases. However, Boko Haram attacks in late 2024 killed at least 81 people in Mafa, Nigeria, and more than 40 soldiers in Barkaram, Chad. Chad threatened to leave the force in November 2024, Niger has suspended active participation since its July 2023 coup, and the force lacks money, troops and equipment. This means... a regional force built on agreement between neighbours can work, but it weakens when governments change or feel others are not sharing the burden. Delegates can propose stable funding and political support for such forces.

3C. PREVENTION, FINANCE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT NETWORKS

Global Counterterrorism Forum, Last Accessed: October 2026: Thirty-one members work on civilian counter-terrorism skills

Tagline: Building civilian counter-terrorism skills Source: According to... Global Counterterrorism Forum, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.thegctf.org/About-us/Background-and-Mission> Fact: It states... that the forum was launched in 2011, has 31 members, and aims to reduce terrorist recruitment and increase countries' civilian capabilities for dealing with terrorist threats, in support of UN efforts. It inspired three institutions: Hedayah, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) and the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IJ). This means... much international counter-terrorism work is about courts, prisons and prevention rather than armies. These bodies offer help that does not challenge sovereignty.

Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, Last Accessed: October 2026: A global fund pays for local prevention projects

Tagline: Funding local prevention projects Source: According to... Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.gcerf.org/about-us/> Fact: It states... that GCERF supports local initiatives that address the drivers of violent extremism, giving grants of up to three years to locally registered organisations that coordinate community groups. It also offers one-year urgent grants and a fellowship for small women-led organisations. Past recipients include groups from Bangladesh, Kenya, Kosovo, Mali and Nigeria. This means... money can go directly to communities at risk, with the host state's agreement, rather than to foreign troops. This fits the UNDP evidence that prevention costs far less than conflict.

Financial Action Task Force, Last Accessed: October 2026: The FATF sets global rules against terrorist financing

Tagline: Blocking money for terrorism Source: According to... Financial Action Task Force, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/the-fatf/what-we-do.html> Fact: It states... that the FATF has 38 members and more than 200 jurisdictions have committed to its standards. It studies how terrorists raise and move money, sets global standards and assesses whether countries act effectively. Countries that repeatedly fail can be placed under "increased monitoring" (the grey list) or named high-risk (the black list). Russia's membership was suspended on February 24, 2023. This means... the FATF pressures states to act against terrorist money inside their own borders, using reputation and economic cost rather than force.

INTERPOL, Last Accessed: October 2026: INTERPOL shares data to identify terrorists and stop their travel

Tagline: Sharing police data across borders Source: According to... INTERPOL, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Terrorism> Fact: It states... that INTERPOL uses biometric and battlefield data to identify terrorists, shares alerts about networks, uses its databases to stop terrorist travel, and runs regional projects including in the Sahel. A September 2026 operation used new data-analysis tools to identify 126 terrorism suspects. This means... police cooperation lets states arrest suspects across borders through legal channels. This supports the RAND finding that policing ends more terrorist groups than military force.

BBC News, October 12, 2026: A Lockerbie bombing suspect says he was illegally taken from Libya to face trial in the United States

Tagline: Questioning how suspects cross borders Source: According to... BBC News, October 12, 2026 Link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3qjndjlk1e0o> Fact: It states... that Abu Agila Mas'ud, charged by the United States in 2020 over the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 that killed 270 people, told a Washington court he was seized by an armed Libyan militia and handed "hooded and bound" to FBI agents in December 2022. His lawyers call this an unlawful rendition that showed "an utter disregard for Libyan law and sovereignty" and want the case thrown out. The United States Justice Department replies that, under United States law, the way a defendant is brought to court does not remove the court's power to try him, and that the militia's actions cannot be blamed on the United States. An INTERPOL red notice was in force at the time, and his trial is due to begin in January. This means... even law-enforcement routes, which are usually seen as respecting sovereignty, can be disputed when a suspect is removed without a clear extradition process. Delegates can propose that the resolution support lawful extradition and "prosecute or extradite" rules as the normal way to bring suspects to justice across borders.

3D. ONLINE EFFORTS

Christchurch Call, Last Accessed: October 2026: Governments and companies committed to removing terrorist content online

Tagline: Removing terrorist content online Source: According to... Christchurch Call, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.christchurchcall.org/> Fact: It states... that the Christchurch Call was created after the March 15, 2019 mosque attacks in New Zealand to stop terrorist and violent extremist content online while protecting human rights and an open internet. It includes more than 56 governments, more than 20 online service providers and a civil society advisory network, working on 25 commitments. This means... terrorism also crosses borders online. Cooperation between states and companies is a way to act against it without any physical intervention.

Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, September 2, 2026: More than forty platforms work together against extremist content

Tagline: Joining platforms against extremist content Source: According to... Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, September 2, 2026 Link: <https://gifct.org/about/> Fact: It states... that GIFCT is a technology-led nonprofit founded in 2017 to stop terrorists from exploiting digital platforms. It became independent after the 2019 Christchurch attacks and now includes more than 40 platforms beyond its founders. This means... private companies play a growing role in counter-terrorism. Delegates may ask how governments and the UN should oversee their decisions.

3E. REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

International Crisis Group, Last Accessed: October 2026: A Togolese initiative brought divided West African states back to talks

Tagline: Restarting regional talks in West Africa Source: According to... International Crisis Group, Last Accessed: October 2026 Link: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel> Fact: It states... that a Togolese initiative brought West African states, the central Sahel states and key foreign partners back into talks after years of discord, and that Algeria and Mali announced steps in 2026 to repair relations that had worsened sharply since 2023. Niger and Benin are also exploring reopening their border. This means... diplomacy between neighbours is restarting, which could allow cross-border cooperation that respects each state's sovereignty. The committee can support these efforts in its resolution.

International Crisis Group, March 20, 2026: Several states tried to mediate between Pakistan and Afghanistan

Tagline: Mediating a cross-border conflict Source: According to... International Crisis Group, March 20, 2026 Link: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/stm/asia-pacific/afghanistan/afghanistan-and-pakistan-trade-fire-conflict-takes-dangerous-turn> Fact: It states... that Türkiye and Qatar brokered a ceasefire between Pakistan and Afghanistan on October 19, 2025, followed by talks in Istanbul and informal discussions with Saudi mediation. The ceasefire collapsed on February 21, 2026, after Pakistani airstrikes on alleged TTP targets. Crisis Group recommends that the mediators (Qatar, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and China) coordinate closely, that the Taliban give written guarantees against cross-border attacks backed by verification, and warns that an unconditional crackdown on the TTP is unrealistic. This means... mediation and verification offer an alternative to cross-border strikes. The committee can support monitoring mechanisms and neutral mediators instead of, or alongside, military action.

KEY VOCABULARY

1. **Sovereignty:** a state's right to control its own territory and decisions without outside interference.
2. **Non-intervention:** the rule that states must not interfere in the internal affairs of other states, found in Article 2 of the UN Charter and the 1970 Friendly Relations Declaration.
3. **Use of force:** military action by one state against or inside another; banned by Article 2(4) of the Charter except in narrow cases.
4. **Self-defence (Article 51):** the right of a state to use force after an armed attack, until the Security Council acts.
5. **Chapter VII:** the part of the UN Charter that lets the Security Council make binding decisions, including authorising force, to restore peace.
6. **Non-state actor:** a group that is not a government, such as a terrorist group, militia or rebel movement.
7. **"Unwilling or unable" doctrine:** the contested claim that a state may strike a non-state group in another country if that country will not or cannot stop it.
8. **Intervention by invitation:** foreign military help that enters a country because its government asked for it (consent).
9. **Safe haven:** an area where a terrorist group can operate and train without being stopped.
10. **Targeted sanctions:** measures, such as asset freezes and travel bans, aimed at specific people or groups rather than whole countries.

11. **Responsibility to Protect (R2P):** the 2005 commitment that states must protect their people from mass atrocities, with collective action through the Security Council if they fail.
 12. **Repatriation:** returning people, such as detained foreign fighters' families, to their home country.
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When a terrorist group attacks from another country, under what conditions, if any, may the victim state use force there without that country's permission?
 2. Should the UN recognise, limit or reject the "unwilling or unable" doctrine? Who should decide whether a state is "unable"?
 3. If a host government invites foreign forces, should the UN set conditions on those forces, such as human rights rules and reporting duties, even when the forces are not UN troops?
 4. How should regional missions, such as the African Union mission in Somalia, be funded, and who should pay the 25 percent that Resolution 2719 leaves open?
 5. Evidence shows that abuses by security forces push people into terrorist groups. How can an intervention plan protect civilians and hold abusers accountable?
 6. Should the UN finally agree on a single definition of terrorism? How would it stop governments from labelling peaceful opponents or criminal groups as terrorists to justify force?
 7. What should happen to the people, including children, still held in camps in north-east Syria, and who is responsible for them?
 8. When should a foreign or UN presence end, and how can the international community avoid a security gap when it leaves?
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