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BACKGROUND GUIDE Council on Combating Insurgency

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Topic I: Improving state capacity to preempt the threat posed by socially- and politically marginalized ethnic and religious groups, particularly as it relates to support for or recruitment into extremist groups.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

The lack of National identity caused by racial divide and cultural beliefs leaves groups such as Nomads, Tuaregs, Houthis, Kurds, Amazonian, Yazidi, Ahwaz, and Shiites misrepresented socially and politically. This misrepresentation can often lead to conflict. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published an article on Tuesday, September 20th 2016 concerning the sacred gate of Sidi Yahia in Timbuktu. In 2012, armed extremists pulled the sacred gate out of a mosque and damaged it. With cultural traditions dating back to the 15th century CE, the gate had both a symbolic and historic significance. UNESCO's Director General Irina Bokova hoped that the reconstruction of the sacred gate along with the reconstruction of the mausoleums of Timbuktu, and the International Criminal Court trials given to the perpetrators would send a message to extremists.¹ Yet, the destruction of these monuments in the first place shows the cultural divide and varying perspectives considering the heritage of Mali. Financial Times writer Martin Wolf suggested that three of the biggest challenges to countering terrorism include: Perceived injustice, collective inaction, and indifference. The publication asserts that utilizing short-term actions coupled with long-term strategies is the key to diminishing possible devastating effects.²

The threat of increased terrorist recruitment as a result of marginalization can be further explained by examining the progression of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). As AQIM established itself in Mali, concern grew in west Africa in countries such as Morocco and Tunisia, as they felt threatened by the potential contamination of indigenous groups.³ Furthermore, this fear emerged from the belief that the root of vulnerability stems from social disadvantages such as political marginalization and poverty. Vulnerable groups can be described as "politically irrelevant" as they neither shape national political agenda or garner government attention.⁴ These underrepresented groups in Mali are often those of nomadic livelihoods. Moreover, the argument can be made that Tuaregs resort to smuggling activities because, "In times of poverty, people resort to desperate means."⁵ In fact, the deputy commission chairman of Mali, Amadou Bocoum stated, "Cigarette, fuel and weapon smuggling is carried out by the population

¹ Assomo, Lazare Eloundou. "UNESCO Welcomes Restoration of Sacred Gate of Sidi Yahia in Timbuktu." United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization. UNESCO, 20 Sept. 2016. Web. 25 Sept. 2016.

² Lee, Bernice. "Managing the Interlocking Climate and Resource Challenges." *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1994) 85.6 (2009): 1101-116. Web.

³ Cronin, Audrey Kurth. "The Evolution of Counter-terrorism: Will Tactics Trump Strategy?" *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1994-) 86.4 (2010): 837-56. Web.

⁴ Raleigh, Clionadh. "Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States." *International Studies Review* 12.1 (2010): 69-86. Web.

⁵ Keenan, Jeremy. "Al-Qaeda Terrorism in the Sahara? Edwin Dyer's Murder and the Role of Intelligence Agencies." *Anthropology Today* 25.4 (2009): 14-18. Web.

(especially the desert nomads) and it is difficult to consider them as bandits as it is their only source of income and allows them to survive.”⁶ When politically irrelevant groups become more desperate and their government will not prioritize their needs, a gap is created that extremist organizations are eager to fill. Terrorist organizations already recruit from vulnerable populations, and they will continue to utilize this tactic to their advantage unless the needs of the vulnerable are addressed.

B. History in the Arab World

The Arab World contains many underrepresented populations. Examining the history of the Kurds in Syria is helpful to understanding the origins of these populations, and the scope of problems that they face. The Ottoman Empire significantly influenced Arab outlook on Kurds—especially in Syria. As a result of attaining independence from France, many Arab nations promoted sentiments of Arab nationalism. As the Kurdish agha class opposed the Arab Revolt in 1916, Arab feelings of hostility grew towards the Kurds. However, the agha class did not represent the beliefs of all Kurds, as many had supported Ottoman decentralization and Syrian independence. Nevertheless, overtime the notion that all Kurds supported imperial powers had developed. The fact that the French government later supported these minority groups to better impose its divide and rule policy did not help to clarify that there was a disagreement amongst Kurds. Moreover, the Kurds continued to display opposing sentiments concerning the French’s policy of decentralization in Syria. While some Kurds stood with Arabs against French rule, others tribes such as the Christian and Aghas enjoyed their increased local power. Syrian Kurds were not only divided concerning their position on French rule, but they were divided geographically as well. The Syrian Arab population grew even more hostile towards the Kurds, as the French recruited marginalized groups in Syria to join its Levantine Security Forces and impose French control. Communal and ethnic tensions were further exacerbated as a result of these French actions. Syrian Arabs associated the Kurds with separatism and communal tension because of their partial support for decentralization. In response, many Kurds became hesitant to cede their newly found power to the establishment of an Arab Administration in Damascus. Nevertheless, after receiving its independence in 1946, Arab nationalism soared. At the same time, the negative impacts of past colonialism were not addressed. Consequently, the Kurds found themselves to be an anomaly as a minority that did not fit in with the new identity of Syria. Anti-Kurdish propaganda released during Nasser’s rule of Egypt only increased negative sentiments throughout the region towards the Kurds.⁷ The marginalization of groups such as the Syrian Kurds remains a problem in the region today. One component that has shown to be significant in the marginalization of the Kurds is misperceptions of their position on colonial rule in the past. As a result, tensions between Arabs and Kurds have escalated tremendously, while the underlying miscommunications remain unaddressed.

C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Yildiz, Kerim. “Syrian History: 1918-2005.” In *The Kurds in Syria: The Forgotten People*, 27-42. Pluto Press, 2005. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt18fs50d.8>.

Comprehensive resolutions are necessary to addressing the long history of conflict between various ethnic and religious groups throughout the region. In the past, issues of common concern have been addressed throughout the Arab League with frameworks that facilitate cooperation and an increase in dialogue.⁸ One component of a solution may include: Appointing legitimate representatives that foster the aspirations and perspectives of the marginalized population. For instance, Saudi Arabia has taken action to improve the representation of women by appointing Hoda Helassi to the country's Consultative Council.⁹ While official representation is impactful in satisfying the desire for recognition amongst various groups, states may also consider implementing new counterinsurgency policies to deter the ability of extremist groups to recruit these populations.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- Has your country historically underrepresented any ethnic or religious groups in its political system? Which groups have received little to no representation?
- How do your state's current policies address the needs of vulnerable groups?
- How does your country define extremism, and which extremist groups are the biggest threat to your country?
- What resources is your country able to contribute to the League-wide fight against terrorism?
- How does sectarianism affect the political system in your country?
- How has your country preempted the threat posed by socially- and politically-marginalized ethnic and religious groups? Has it been effective?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- How can the League comprehensively combat insurgencies while still respecting the sovereignty of each individual nation?
- What collective actions can be taken to promote regional security?
- How can the League evaluate the success of its proposals in this resolution?

IV. Additional Resources

[Africa Security Brief](#)

⁸ Browsers, Michaëlle. "The centrality and Marginalization of Women in the Political Discourse of Arab Nationalists and Islamists." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 2, no. 2 (2006): 8-34.
doi:10.2979/mew.2006.2.2.8.

⁹ Hennessy-Fiske, Molly. "Why Gulf Arab Leaders are Welcoming Trump's Transactional Foreign Policy," *Los Angeles Times*, 2017.

This publication by the African Center for Strategic Studies gives a detailed account of the growing terrorist group AQIM, and its threat to West Africa. The work discusses a few main themes crucial to the understanding of AQIM's existence. First of all, it acknowledges that AQIM is becoming increasingly more integrated with criminal networks and local communities in the Sahel. Secondly, it asserts that counterterrorism strategies are neither coordinated or comprehensive. Thirdly, it suggests corrective actions in policy and security forces to combat the progression of AQIM. An increased frequency of arrests, bombings, kidnappings, and attacks in the Sahel suggest that AQIM is gaining traction in the region of West Africa. Recent attacks show a more sophisticated intelligence-gathering capability and operational capacity. AQIM has been growing its relationships with rebel groups, criminal organizations, and drug traffickers giving them the ability to undermine the state from within. This is especially dangerous given the fact that efforts to confront terrorist groups in the region are short lived. The fact that AQIM has been most active in the largely desert Sahel region suggests that the physical environment plays a role in their success. AQIM is able to grow because of the lack of government presence in the region. With few counterterrorist strategies it can focus on growing its roots by projecting itself as a protector of local communities. AQIM consistently condemns government wrongdoings such as civilian casualties caused by raids. Moreover, the group is strategic in not inadvertently making moves damaging to communities' interests in the Sahel. Through its illegal activity, AQIM has been able to generate income and create jobs for many Malians. As vulnerable populations are looking to better their lives, turning to AQIM is often a route they choose to pursue. Ironically, poor economic conditions within the country to begin with can be attributed to the group and its affect on the tourism industry. Nevertheless, in 2006 AQIM made over \$70 million in ransoms from kidnappings, and has since gotten into the more lucrative business of cocaine trafficking. Some entrepreneurial Malian officials receive cuts of AQIM's income further complicating counterterrorism efforts and further strengthening AQIM's ties. This publication comprehensively explains the techniques that has made a terrorist organization successful in some western countries of the Arab world. Delegates can reference this situation as an example of how one extremist regime is influencing vulnerable populations. Furthermore, delegates can utilize this example to compare and contrast the extent to which the tactics of one terrorist regime are utilized by other extremist organizations throughout the Arab League.

[Al Queda in West Africa](#)

This article gives an additional perspective on the threat that Al Qaeda affiliates pose to West Africa. It emphasizes how porous borders between countries have enabled the groups to conduct attacks on cafes, hotels, and a beachside resort. It uses al-Shabab and Boko Haram as examples of terrorist organizations that spread to neighboring states to

emphasize the threat of AQIM on West Africa. Just as Boko Haram spread from Nigeria to Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, AQIM has not only spread from Algeria to Mali, but has carried out attacks in Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast as well. Although its main power bases are in Mali and Algeria, AQIM has recently attacked locations hundreds of miles away from these bases. This success is partially attributed to the fact that AQIM has thrived in Mali specifically. AQIM has taken advantage of young men in central and northern Mali that feel ignored by their own government. The West Africa director for human rights, Corinne Dufka, explains that jihadists work to fill voids left by the state and exploit government neglect. Delegates may find this publication useful in their proposition of counterterrorism strategies. How can delegates improve state capacity to narrow the extent to which state voids can be exploited?

Topic II: Formulating solutions to the problems posed by separatist movements, including but not limited to Kurds and Houthis.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Throughout the years, the League has increasingly dealt with the rise of separatist movements. Each separatist movement posed a threat to territorial integrity, national and regional security, stability, and the safety of populations. Currently the League must consider solutions for the modern separatist's movements of the Kurds and the Houthis. Both groups have different purposes and in different conflicts, however, the League has yet to decide as a whole, what they plan to do to with these movements after the resolution of the conflicts in Yemen and Syria.

B. History in the Arab World

The MENA region has a long history of combating separatist movements, the movements were very different in their goals and methods, but all want to be independent states. In the 80's you had the South Lebanon separatist movement, which sparked war and warranted international intervention. The cost of the war both short and long term were tragic. Separatist movements like that of the Kurds have been striving for independence since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Some separatist movements getting violent and overtaking cities and governments such as the Houthis in Yemen

The Kurds are a large group who live in areas across Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. They have long worked to become an independent state of Kurdistan which was promised to them after WWI, but did not manifest itself. The Kurdish population makes up 7 to 10 percent of the Syrian Population and 15 to 20 percent of the Iraqi population. Since 2013, they have fought against ISIS, who targeted Kurdish enclaves¹⁰. They have continued to send Peshmerga forces in to defend Kurdish lands against ISIS with great success.

More recently in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, Houthi Rebels seized the Yemeni capital of Sana'a in a coup d'état. This sent Yemen into a spiraling new civil war. The Houthi separatists have claimed that the Hadi government did not honor previous peace agreements and was not an ally of all Yemenis. The civil war prompted a humanitarian crisis on par with that of Syria, South Sudan, and Iraq¹¹. Following the successful coup and deteriorating situation, the Saudi government reached out to Gulf Cooperation

¹⁰ "Who are the Kurds?" BBC News. March 14, 2016. Accessed July 08, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29702440>.

¹¹ Laub, Zachary. "Yemen in Crisis." Council on Foreign Relations. April 19, 2016. Accessed July 08, 2017. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis>.

Council (GCC) nations for support while it goes into a military intervention to aid the internationally recognized Hadi government.

C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future

In the past, action has been taken by the League to counter separatist movements, especially once it has begun military action. The council must consider new ways of addressing the modern separatist movements. Considerations should be made for the humanitarian crises these conflicts can pose as well as the aid that can be provided by these separatist movements. The council must seek to protect the interests of its member nations while also seeking to aiding to stop the crises in these nations.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- What separatist movements are active in my country?
- What movements were active in the past?
- Has my country been involved in situations regarding separatist movements whether combatting or supporting?
- What steps has my country taken to combat separatist movements?
- What steps has the league already taken to combat separatist movements, and can I build off of them?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- To what extent is the League responsible to handle separatist movements?
- How does the council propose to combat separatist movements while respecting each country's sovereignty?
- What long term and short term solutions to the problems posed by separatist movements does your resolution propose?

IV. Additional Resources

- [Encyclopedia Britannica- Kurds](#)

This article presents some more historical information about the Kurds and its different factions.

- [Who are the Houthis in Yemen?](#)

This article gives more details on the civil war in the Yemen and the Houthi movement.

Topic III: Mitigating the extent to which extremist organizations are able to obtain illicit means of funding, with a focus on both the suppliers and consumers of the goods.

I. Introduction

A. General Background

Every organization needs money or funding in order to survive and provide services to its consumers and extremist organizations are no different. Many of these organizations have extensive networks that provide services much like governments to their members. While they do receive some legal funds, such as donations from current members, the vast majority of money terrorist organizations receive is from illicit activities. The fastest and most efficient way to gain access to large amounts of money is illegal trade of whatever is the most accessible. For example, the Taliban in Afghanistan as exploited the large opioid fields, to make an estimated \$150 million annually.¹² Other organizations such as Al-Shabaab in Somalia conquer and sale natural resources usually used by the government. Al Shabaab is reportedly making approximately \$80 million or about one third of the expected revenue from illicit charcoal trades.¹³ If illicit trade is not an option or it is not providing enough funding, many extremist organizations turn to kidnapping and ransom. One report states that Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) was figured to make \$20 million between 2011-2013, through hostage trade. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was estimated to make \$45 million in 2014.¹⁴ In short, extremist organizations are finding ways to fund their organizations, therefore it is important to cut their illicit means of funding.

B. History in the Arab World

Illicit funding has allowed extremist groups to continue to grow and thrive throughout the region. Once these organizations were able to establish themselves through initial funding from members, many set up extensive networks of illicit trade and financing to help continue to fuel their growth and recruitment. These continue to be critical for extremist organizations as it is their primary means of capital.

Daesh has become the most prevalent organization with an expansive illicit network. Their funding is obtained through many means including extortion, control of oil fields,

¹² Keatinge, Tom. "Finances of Jihad: How Extremist Groups Raise Money." *BBC News*. BBC, 12 Dec. 2014. Web. 05 July 2017.

¹³ "Adopting Resolution 2182 (2014), Security Council Extends Mandate of African Union Mission in Somalia for One Year, Amends Sanctions Regime | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *United Nations*. United Nations Security Council, 24 Oct. 2014. Web. 05 July 2017.

¹⁴ Keatinge, Tom. "Finances of Jihad: How Extremist Groups Raise Money." *BBC News*. BBC, 12 Dec. 2014. Web. 05 July 2017.

kidnapping for ransom, extortion of goods, extortion of goods, and grass roots funding.¹⁵ Daesh was able to control and create this network due to instability present within the country and maintain its network by maintaining and creating more chaos and conflict.

Extremist illegal trade networks harm the League as a whole as they take steal capitol and goods from state governments. In addition, they put citizens, aid workers, and economies at risk. Conflict, chaos and instability created throughout the region allowed these extremist organizations to flourish financially.

C. Finding a Solution to the problem: Past, Present, Future

It is the responsibility of this council to find ways in which to stifle the access to illicit funds these organizations can obtain. Member states should consider ways to protect natural resources, historical sites and citizens from being used in illicit trade. In addition, the council should look at ways to monitor abuse of nonprofit organizations to provide extremist organizations with access to funding.

II. Questions to Consider in Your Research

- How has my country been affected by the spread of illicit trade networks and funding of extremist organizations?
- What is my country currently doing to curb illicit funding of extremist organizations?

III. Questions a Resolution Might Answer

- What universal guidelines can be set for combating illicit funding of extremist organizations moving forward?
- What can League member states do to shut down existing illicit trade routes?

IV. Additional Resources

[Tracking Down Terrorist Financing](#)

This link can be a potentially good source into looking further into the financing extremist organizations. It provides further, more in depth background into how these extremist organizations are funded. It is also an extremely good source because it will give good ideas to coming up with a resolution, as well as, additional links for better understanding the issue and how it might effect your country.

¹⁵ "Financing of the Terrorist Organisation Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)." FATF Report. February 2015. Accessed July 8, 2017. <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/reports/Financing-of-the-terrorist-organisation-ISIL.pdf>.

The IMF and the Fight Against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism

This source comes from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in regards to the tactics used by extremist organizations to launder their money to make it seem legal. This is an extremely important tactic to the various extremist groups because it makes their money more difficult to track. This will better educate the various delegates on the flow of money by these extremist organizations.

FATF Action on Terrorist Finance

This has the potential to be a good guide for what the Arab League could do moving forward to prevent the funding of extremist organizations. These guidelines were made by the organization known as Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), which is comprised of 36 members from across Europe, North and South America, Asia, and the GCC countries. However, that document is more expansionary to the entire world rather than the MENA region. Therefore, it can be used as a baseline for where to start the resolution. When reading this it is important to look at what can be improved? Also, what can be done differently because this is focusing specifically on the MENA region.