

STUDY GUIDE: DISEC

**TOPIC: Curbing the Proliferation of Arms and Non-State Actor
Involvement in Proxy Conflicts in the Middle East**

LAMUN **XI**

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LAMUNXI

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE:

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first committee of the United Nations General Assembly, created in 1945 to address global peace, arms control and international security threats. It is one of the six main committees of the UN General Assembly and includes 193 UN member states.

It focuses on disarmament policies, non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, regulation of conventional arms, reducing global threats, and protecting global peace.

It works closely with expert bodies like the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

DISEC passes non-binding resolutions. While it cannot enforce mandates like the UN Security Council, its resolutions set the foundation for major international treaties and norms.

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

The Disarmament and International Security Committee or DISEC deals with things like disarmament and international security.

DISEC has to think about all the issues related to disarmament and international security that the General Assembly sends to it. This includes things like arms and other weapons that can cause a lot of harm. It also includes the illegal trade of weapons.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee also looks at how groups that are not part of a country's government are involved in conflicts. It thinks about how the spread of weapons affects the stability of a region. The Disarmament and International Security Committee considers ways to help a country get back in control like taking weapons from people, getting fighters to stop fighting and helping them become part of society again.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee makes suggestions and recommendations to the General Assembly which are important.

INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC:

The spreading of weapons without control along with the increasing power of groups has become one of the biggest dangers for peace in the Middle East now.

The uprisings in the area made governments weaker, let borders open and left places without leadership. In those places came groups with weapons, rebel forces and extreme organizations. These groups are given weapons and money by foreign countries. What started as fights, inside countries quickly became wars fought by others, where local problems are used to fight rivalries.

At its core, this issue has three parts:

1. Arms flooding the region: especially small weapons that are easy to smuggle and hard to track.
2. Non-state armed groups gaining power: groups that are not part of any official military, but control territory and people.
3. Proxy wars: conflicts where larger states support opposing sides instead of confronting each other directly.

This means that more civilians are killed and more families are displaced. The governments become unable to provide services to the people. This is a problem because the civilians and their families are the ones who are hurt the most. Peace efforts also keep failing because the weapons never stop coming. When non-state actors hold military power, states lose control. When wars are fought by proxies, they last longer and become harder to end.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Non-State Armed Group / NSAG:

An armed group that operates independently of a government and uses force to pursue political, religious, or territorial goals. These groups can take over land, question the power of the government and at times offer rules or help to people in the places where they have power.

Non-State Armed Groups have an impact on security around the world and the way countries communicate with each other. NSAG's can prolong conflicts, destabilize regions and sometimes attract foreign intervention.

For example: Hezbollah, Houthis

2. Proxy Conflict:

A conflict where external states support opposing sides within another country instead of fighting each other directly. Unlike a direct war where two or more states engage their own military forces against each other, a proxy conflict involves indirect engagement.

For example: Yemen and Iran support the Houthis (a non-state armed group in Yemen) , Saudi Arabia supports the government.

3. Arms Proliferation:

The spread and buildup of weapons, especially small arms, light weapons, missiles, and drones, often through legal and illegal channels. It is driven by geopolitical competition, state failures/collapses, black-market smuggling, and proxy warfare.

4. Illicit Arms Transfer / Arms Trafficking:

The illegal movement of weapons across borders to NSAGs through smuggling routes, black markets, and maritime routes. Although arms trafficking is widespread in regions of political turmoil, it is not limited to such areas, and for example, in South Asia, an estimated 63 million guns have been trafficked into India and Pakistan.

5. State Sponsorship:

When a state provides funding, training, weapons, or political support to a non-state actor in another country to advance its own interests. It works by allowing groups to build headquarters, training camps, or operate within a nation's borders.

6. State Fragility:

A state that cannot maintain control over its territory, borders, or monopoly on violence. Creates space for NSAGs to operate. State fragility causes police offices, courts, etc. to not work properly, shocks and stress like extreme poverty and vicious cycles like civil wars.

For Example: Yemen, Syria, Libya

7. Sovereignty:

A state's right to govern its own territory without external interference. Proxy wars and NSAGs directly undermine internal sovereignty. There is also external sovereignty in which a country is completely free from outside control. It has the right to run its own foreign policy, make treaties, and manage its global affairs without other nations telling it what to do.

8. DDR:

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration is a process that the United Nations uses. They collect weapons from DDR. Then they break up groups of fighters from this. After that the United Nations helps these fighters from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration to go back to living lives as civilians.

9. Arms Embargo:

A UN ban on the sale or transfer of weapons to a specific country or group. Enforced to stop arms from reaching NSAGs, stop violence by cutting off access to new weapons and ammunition and to weaken a country's military capabilities before a foreign intervention.

10. Regional Stability:

The overall security and balance in a region. Arms proliferation and proxy wars destroy stability by prolonging conflicts and causing spillover. It reduces the risk of conflicts that can spill over borders and destabilize entire regions.

11. Cross Border Spillover:

When conflict, refugees, or weapons from one country affect neighboring countries. These effects can cross national boundaries without direct intentional design by the originating nation.

12. Stockpile Management:

It is the oversight, maintenance, and safe disposal of military weapons, ammunition, and explosives. Stockpile management stops theft, leakage, or diversion of weapons into the hands of criminal groups or enemies.

13. Multilateral Cooperation:

States working together through the UN to solve security issues. Focuses on big issues that cross borders and affect everyone. Builds global stability, gives smaller countries a voice, and tackles massive crises no single nation can fix alone.

14. Spoilers:

Groups that block peace, DDR, or disarmament to keep fighting. They believe that a peaceful resolution threatens their power, interests, or survival, and they use violence or disruption to sabotage agreements.

15. State Sponsored Militias:

State-sponsored militias are armed groups that are not officially part of a country's regular military but receive support from that country's government. States use militias to fight indirectly without deploying their own soldiers, influence conflicts in other countries, support allies or ideological partners and avoid some of the political consequences of direct military intervention. For example: Houthis backed by Iran.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

1. Early Regional Disorder:

The 1916 Picot Agreement between France and Great Britain and the system of mandates divided the Ottoman Empire into new countries. These countries were created with limited consideration for existing political, ethnic, and sectarian divisions. This led to fighting within different governments which left gaps for internal armed groups to grow and rise.

The 1948 Israeli war resulted in many Palestinians becoming refugees and homeless. The rivalry between Israel and Palestine dates back to the 1917 Balfour Declaration which caused the Israelis to settle in Palestine and soon take over. In 1947, the UN divided the Palestinian land into two areas, one assigned to the European Jews and the other to the Palestinians. This partition plan led to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war which started the major rivalry between the two states.

2. The Cold War Arms Pipeline:

The United States of America and the Soviet Union, the two nations that fought the Cold War each had their group of countries that they supported.

The United States of America supported Israel, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The Soviet Union supported Egypt, Syria, Iraq and South Yemen as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This conflict made it very easy for massive amounts of weapons to be transported into the Middle East.

In 1979, the Iranian Revolution took place which was the locals' anger towards the Shah. This resulted in Iran supporting non-state proxies. Also, in 1979, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to funding and weapons being sent to the Afghan Mujahideen. This inadvertently helped create jihadist networks which would later appear in the Middle East region.

Hezbollah was founded in 1982 in Lebanon with support from Iran. It became a powerful militant group with capabilities similar to a state including military power. The Iran-Iraq War further entrenched the flow of weapons into the Middle East by external parties. Iraq received support from the Soviet Union and France financed by Gulf Arab states while Iran obtained arms

through unconventional channels. This war led to the whole region being left with a large number of weapons.

3. Post-Cold War Realignment and the Gulf Wars:

The 1990 invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and the 1991 Gulf War led to the multilateral effort to disarm the region. The UN imposed sanctions and a weapons-inspection regime on Iraq to remove its chemical, biological and advanced capabilities. Throughout the 1990s, Western countries continued to supply weapons to Gulf monarchies.

The 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq was a turning point for non-state actors. The dissolution of the army led to all the weapons being scattered across the region. Later, al-Qaeda in Iraq was founded which later evolved into the Islamic Republic of Iraq and eventually ISIS.

4. The Arab Spring:

The 2011 uprisings destabilized regional states at once. In three cases the collapse of the state led directly to large-scale arms proliferation and proxy warfare. In Libya the 2011 uprising and NATO intervention led to the fall of Muammar Gaddafi. His government's arsenals were scattered, feeding trafficking networks across the Sahel and back into Syria. The UN imposed an arms embargo on Libya which was poorly enforced.

In Syria people were unhappy with Bashar al-Assad so they started fighting against him. Then other countries got involved. Gulf states and Turkey helped the people who were fighting against Assad. On the other side Iran, Hezbollah and Russia supported Assad. The United States trained a group called the Syrian Democratic Forces to fight against ISIS. This group was led by the Kurds.

After thirteen years of fighting, Syria is full of weapons and groups with guns which the government does not control.

In Yemen a group called the Houthi movement took control of the capital city Sanaa in 2014 and 2015. The government that was supposed to be in charge fell apart. A group of countries led by Saudi Arabia got involved in the fight. The United Nations said that no one could sell weapons to the Houthi leaders.

Even with this rule the Houthis still got weapons from Iran. The fight in Yemen is like a fight between Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Houthi movement is a group that's not part of the government but they control a lot of Yemen.

5. The Regional Non-State Actor Ecosystem:

By the 2010s a clear network had formed. Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza and the West Bank, the Houthis in Yemen and Iraqi militias, under the PMF umbrella. These groups are often referred to as Iran's "Axis of Resistance." The network is loosely coordinated through the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force.

Not every non-state actor in the region belongs to this network. The Turkish-backed Syrian National Army, the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces and various Salafi-jihadist groups operate independently. What unites all of them is the underlying mechanism in which a state or a coalition patron gives weapons or training to them.

6. Recent Escalation:

The last three years have seen a compression of every strand of this history into a single fast-moving sequence. The Hamas-led attack on Israel in October 2023 and the two-year Gaza war. The Houthis began striking Israel and Red Sea shipping in solidarity with Gaza prompting the Security Council to demand an end to attacks on merchant shipping. The US and UK forces struck Houthi targets repeatedly. Hezbollah and Israel escalated to open war in 2024 alongside the direct missile exchanges, between Iran and Israel.

On December 8, 2024 the Assad regime fell to an HTS-led offensive, which ended 14 years of civil war in Syria. Ahmed al-Sharaa became the leader and he was formally the President from January 2025. A new constitutional declaration was made in March 2025.

The collapse of the Assad regime's control over its arsenals led to an increase in arms trafficking into Lebanon. Armed factions in Syria also looted the arsenals. The new authorities have struggled to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate both foreign fighters.

In June 2025, Israel and Iran fought a war that lasted for twelve days. Israel struck nuclear and military sites on June 13 2025. Iran retaliated with hundreds of missiles and drones. The Houthis briefly joined in the fighting. The United States struck three nuclear facilities on June 21 2025. A ceasefire took hold by June 23-24 2025.

In October 2025, a US-brokered Gaza peace plan took effect. The plan was annexed to Security Council Resolution 2803 on October 10 2025. The Gaza peace plan ended the phase of the Gaza war. However, Hamas's disarmament has remained an issue. The disarmament process was supposed to happen in five stages over eight months. As of mid-2026 Hamas still controls half of Gaza and has resisted laying down its arms.

Conflict between Iran, Israel and The United States of America started again in 2026. The United States and Israel have been fighting Iran and its allies since 28 February 2026. This happened after the United States and Israel launched airstrikes that killed Iranian official, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. The United States and Israel did this while they were still talking to Iran about its program.

This war is connected to a problem in the Middle East that started with the Gaza war. It came after the Twelve-Day War. Before this war the United States sent a lot of people to the region, which is the biggest buildup since the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. The United States said it started the war because of four main reasons:

1. **Preventing Nuclear Development:** President Trump stated that he wanted to stop Iran from acquiring or further developing nuclear weapons capabilities.
2. **Destroying Missile Capabilities:** The President of the US also wanted to eliminate Iran's ballistic missile infrastructure and arsenal.
3. **Cutting of Terrorist Proxies:** The US wanted to ensure that the Iranian regime can no longer fund, arm or direct proxy militant groups outside its borders.
4. **Annihilating the Iranian Navy:** The United States wanted to dismantle Iran's naval forces to secure global oil routes and regional waterways.

These US justifications for initiating the war resulted in anti-government protests in Iran. Many critics still reject these justifications saying that this act initiated a war of aggression and violated international law.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Islamic Republic of Iran:

In 2024, there was an exchange of missiles and drones between the two nations with Israeli bombings of Iranian targets in Syria followed by retaliatory attacks by Iran on Israeli territory. By April, both nations kept attacking each other until July when Fuad Shukr and Ismail Haniyeh were assassinated by Israel. Iran then hit back with attacks in October.

In 2025, the world saw the 12-Day War between Iran and Israel which lasted from 13th-24th July 2025. It began when Israeli forces attacked Iran in a surprise attack, assassinating prominent Iranian military leaders, politicians and civilians. Iran then retaliated with over 550 ballistic missile and 1000 suicide drones. The United States

2. United States:

The arms exporter in the world and the main military supporter of Israel and more and more involved in direct fighting rather than just selling weapons: US forces attacked Iranian nuclear sites in June 2025 then worked with Israel in the February 2026 campaign that killed Iran's Supreme Leader. Washington has worked hard to get Hezbollah, Hamas and Iranian-backed Iraqi groups to give up their weapons and helped create the October 2025 Gaza peace plan. Continues to use sanctions and pressure to stop Iran from helping its network in the region, while still being one of the biggest sellers of regular weapons to Gulf countries.

3. Russia:

A long-time supplier of weapons to Syria under Bashar al-Assad and to Iran, a P5 country that can stop decisions in the United Nations and has resisted rules on arms control that it thinks are made by the West. Russia's position in Syria has gotten complicated since Assad fell; it is now talking with the government to keep its military bases. Russia usually says the problems in the region come from actions not from how it gives out weapons.

4. China:

A growing supplier of parts that can be used for both military purposes, which the United Nations have found linked to Houthi weapons. China also buys a lot of oil which makes the sanctions less effective. Beijing often stays quiet about stopping action on arms issues in the Middle East, prefers the idea that countries should not get involved in each other's affairs and cares more about keeping the region stable for its oil and for the Belt and Road projects than for taking action.

5. France and the United Kingdom:

The remaining countries that sell weapons both of them sell high-tech weapons to Gulf countries even though they support the Arms Trade Treaty and have backed past bans (Libya, Iran). This is one of the examples of the conflict DISEC will have to deal with: the same countries that vote for bans are often found in reports as sources of weapons getting through or being allowed to move.

6. Iran:

The main leader in this situation: since the 1979 revolution. Kept a network of groups that are not part of the government. The "Axis of Resistance". As its main way to show its power in the region. This plan has been hit hard since 2024: attacks on its military sites, the killing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in February 2026 and a shaky ceasefire with the US in mid-2026 that is already having problems. Iran says its help for Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis and Iraqi groups is a way to fight against Israeli and Western attacks, not something that spreads weapons.

7. Israel:

The common target of the groups that are not part of the government in the region and during the 2024–2026 time the most active country in military actions having attacked Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis places in Syria and Iran itself (including the attack that killed Khamenei). Israel sees Iran arming these groups as a danger and prefers to use military attacks to reduce the enemy's power instead of using rules set by many countries and has pushed hard. Including more attacks on Lebanon. For the real confirmed ending of Hezbollah's weapons instead of just a paper deal.

8. Saudi Arabia:

Led the group fighting the Houthis since 2015. It is still Iran's main rival in the region though it made peace with Tehran in 2023. As the fight between Iran, Israel and the US grew in 2026 reports from the Gulf suggest that Riyadh and its neighbors are trying more to stay out of a war they did not start focusing on changing their economy to be more varied instead of fighting.

9. Turkey:

Supports the Syrian National Army. Has become one of the closest partners of Syria's new government giving it a lot of power over how (and if) Syria's fighting groups are brought together or stopped. Ankara is also focused on keeping groups (the SDF) under control, which it sees as connected to Kurdish fighters and it is a major maker and seller of weapons, especially drones.

10. Qatar:

Often acts as a helper (talks for a Gaza ceasefire back channels between the US and Iran) and has some leaders of groups that are not part of the government including the outside office of Hamas and usually prefers to solve problems with talks instead of fighting.

11. United Arab Emirates:

A practical country that reduced its role in Yemen after 2019 but has been named in United Nations reports about breaking the Libya arms ban; made peace with Israel in 2020 and is still worried about both Iran and groups that follow political Islam preferring calm and changing its economy to be more varied.

12. Egypt:

A main helper in Gaza (controlling the Rafah crossing talks for a ceasefire) with an interest in stopping problems from spreading. Like refugees or fighting groups. Into the Sinai and a

long-time peace agreement with Israel that makes its attitude in the region careful and focused on keeping things stable.

CORE ISSUES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

1. States Giving Weapons to Non-State Groups:

When a state provides weapons to a non-state group. It is usually because it is cheaper and the state does not have to take responsibility for its actions. Iran has provided varying forms of support to Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iraqi armed groups with this. Similar forms of external support were also provided by Gulf states and Turkey during the Syrian civil war and The United States also provided weapons and other forms of support to the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

This creates a significant enforcement challenge, as restricting weapons transfers to non-state armed groups may be ineffective when external state sponsors continue to provide support. The supplying state may seek alternative channels through which to maintain the flow of weapons.

2. Weak System for Enforcing Rules:

The United Nations has monitoring and enforcement mechanisms designed to assess states' compliance with international obligations. Iran and Syria are examples of countries which have violated various international obligations. Both states have also played significant roles in the region's arms trade.

It means that the rules are not being enforced. Strengthening these measures requires stronger mechanisms for ensuring compliance with established rules. Adding rules is not the only requirement for a stronger system but assuring that these rules are also enforced is necessary

3. Weapons Following State Collapse:

When a state collapses, its weapons stockpiles may remain vulnerable to other nations or groups stealing them. This very thing happened in Libya and Syria and still is an ongoing issue. The weapons from these countries are being used to fuel conflicts in countries and it makes the situation worse. Even after a conflict ends, the issue does not stop there as the spread of weapons still needs to be stopped.

4. Non-State Groups:

Non-state armed groups increasingly obtain weapons not only from external states but also manufacture weapons independently. It becomes harder to stop these external states because they

obtain the parts needed to manufacture these weapons from all over the world, not just one area. An example of this is the Houthis.

Not only the stoppage of weapons entering countries is required but also the parts used to manufacture the weapons need to be stopped as well.

5. Non-State Groups Acting Like Governments:

Some non-state groups act like governments and control territory. The Houthis in Yemen provide an example of this movement. These groups are large organizations and not just militias. It can become more difficult to determine which actors should be engaged in negotiations; the non-state actor or the recognized government.

6. Disarming Non-State Groups

It becomes more difficult to disarm non-state groups due to their control on the weapons they have. These groups see their weapons as essential to their security and survival. This challenge is evident in conflicts involving arms conflicts in Lebanon and Gaza. Armed groups in these regions are difficult to disarm.

7. Rapid Escalation of Proxy Conflicts:

Proxy conflicts can involve multiple states and non-state actors. The Iran-Israel conflict is an example of this matter. What began as direct hostilities between key parties rapidly expanded to involve additional regional and international actors.

ROOT CAUSES

1. Borders from the Past and Weak Governments:

A lot of countries in this region had their borders decided by countries without thinking about the people who already lived there. When these countries became independent, they were given governments. In some places, like Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria, the government was never really in control. It could not keep people safe or provide services to everyone. This created a problem with security and governance. Non-state groups, rather than the government, were able to fill this gap.

2. Politics Based on Sect or Religion:

Some countries in this region organize their politics around sect or religion. For example, Lebanon has a system where power is shared among religious groups. Iraq also has a system where political positions are divided among ethnic and religious groups. This makes it easy for other countries to support and arm groups, based on their religion or sect. It also makes it hard to disarm these groups because some people see them as the ones who can protect their community.

3. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has persisted for decades and has not been solved. Not only Palestinian groups like Hamas, but also other groups like Hezbollah and the Houthis use this conflict to justify their actions. As long as this conflict remains unresolved, it will continue to provide a reason for groups to exist and fight.

4. Competition Between Iran And Saudi Arabia:

Iran and Saudi Arabia have been competing with each other for influence in the region for decades. They support groups in the region often based on whether they are Shia or Sunni. This competition is not only about religion but also about who will be the most powerful country in the region. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia support non-state groups because it allows them to have influence without having to directly confront each other.

5. Poverty and War Economies:

In some conflict-affected states, joining an armed group may be one of the few available sources of income. Armed groups can generate revenue through smuggling, extortion, and other illicit activities. Even if external sources of funding and weapons are restricted, the group may continue to survive through internally generated sources of revenue.

6. Global Arms Trade:

The Middle East is one of the largest arms-importing regions in the world. Saudi Arabia is one of the region's largest arms importers. The United States is a major supplier of arms to the Middle East. The United States and other countries such as France, Russia and China have economic and strategic interests in continuing arms exports to the region. This creates an incentive for these countries to keep selling arms even when such transfers may contribute to regional instability.

7. No Regional Security Organization:

The Middle East lacks a proper security organization capable of effectively resolving conflicts and preventing armed confrontations. Unlike Europe, which has several regional institutions designed to promote security and cooperation, the Middle East relies on countries and external powers to resolve disputes. This can contribute to prolonged instability and recurring conflict.

8. Ideological Movements:

There are two ideological movements in the region. One is the concept of exporting revolutionary ideology, historically associated with Iran. The other is certain jihadist movements, which reject the current borders and governments in the region. Both ideological frameworks can provide non-state armed groups with broader motivations for continued mobilization. This helps explain why some of these movements have persisted over extended periods. The Palestinian conflict and the competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia are examples of regional issues that contribute to the proliferation of non-state armed groups.

KEY CONSEQUENCES

1. Humanitarian Consequences:

Civilian Casualties and Displacement: Proxy conflicts (Syria, Yemen, Libya) have produced some of the largest displacement crises since World War II, straining host countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey) and international aid systems. **Erosion of IHL Protections:** Weak accountability for violations of international humanitarian law can allow attacks on hospitals, siege tactics, and the recruitment of child soldiers to continue with limited consequences.

Long-Term Trauma and Generational Effects: Protracted conflict disrupts education, healthcare, and psychosocial development for entire generations.

2. Security Consequences:

Weapons Leakage and Diversion: The diversion of weapons to unintended actors expands the number of armed groups capable of sustaining violence and contributes to prolonged instability across conflict-affected regions — the classic example is small arms and MANPADS from Libya's collapse flowing into Mali, the Sahel, and Syria.

Prolongation of Conflict (“Proxy War Trap”): Prolonged proxy warfare results in increased civilian casualties, displacement, infrastructure destruction, and delays in achieving sustainable peace — this is a key reason Syria and Yemen dragged on for a decade-plus.

Empowerment of Non-State Actors Relative to States: The growing military capabilities of non-state armed groups can weaken the state’s monopoly on the use of force, undermine national institutions, and complicate post-conflict disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR).

Escalation Risk Between Patron States: Proxy conflicts can escalate into direct confrontation between sponsoring states, increasing the risk of wider regional war. (for example: Iran-Saudi rivalry, Yemen, Iran-Israel tensions and Lebanon/Syria/Gaza).

3. Political Consequences:

State Fragmentation and Loss of Sovereignty: Governments in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq have all seen their territorial authority fractured, with militias controlling parts of the country outside central government reach.

Undermining of Ceasefires and Peace Processes: The presence of multiple armed non-state actors can result in fragmented peace processes, repeated ceasefire violations, and prolonged political instability, making comprehensive settlements extremely difficult (a persistent problem in Libya and Yemen).

Normalization of Non-State Governance: groups like Hezbollah or the Houthis increasingly perform quasi-state functions (services, taxation, local governance), entrenching their legitimacy and making eventual reintegration into a unified state harder.

4. Economic Consequences:

Illicit Arms Economies: The emergence of self-sustaining illicit arms economies can strengthen criminal networks, reduce state control over economic activity, and divert resources away from legitimate economic development.

Regional Economic Damage: Destruction of infrastructure, disrupted trade routes (e.g. Red Sea and Bab-el-Mandeb, shipping threatened by Houthi attacks), and diverted state budgets towards security rather than development.

Sanctions Regimes and Their Side Effects: Weakly enforced arms embargoes can reduce confidence in international sanctions regimes while allowing continued weapons proliferation and imposing economic costs on civilian populations.

5. International/Normative Consequences:

Weakening of Existing Arms Control Frameworks: Proxy war dynamics expose gaps in instruments like the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and UN arms embargoes (Libya embargo violations are a textbook case), reducing global confidence in enforcement mechanisms.

Erosion of UN Security Council Unity: Political divisions among the P5 can result in prolonged Security Council deadlock, limiting the international community's ability to respond collectively to regional conflicts (Russia/Iran vs. US/Gulf states in Syria, for instance).

Precedent-Setting for Future Conflicts: Unresolved consequences here (impunity, weapons diffusion) create templates other regions may follow.

PAST UN ACTIONS

1. Normative Frameworks:

- UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (PoA, 2001): The instrument that commits states to prevent the illegal production, transfer and buildup of small arms.
- International Tracing Instrument (ITI, 2005): This adds rules to the PoA by setting standards for marking, keeping records and tracing weapons back to their origin. This is particularly relevant to the agenda because tracing weapons can help identify how arms reach militias and other non-state armed groups involved in proxy conflicts in the Middle East.
- Arms Trade Treaty (ATT, 2013 entered into force 2014): This is the treaty that legally binds countries to control the international trade of conventional arms. It requires states to check the risks of exporting arms including the risk of them being used by non-state groups. This is directly relevant to the Middle East because arms transferred to states in conflict-affected areas can be diverted or subsequently reach non-state armed groups and contribute to proxy conflicts.

2. Security Council Thematic Action:

- Resolution 2117 (2013) focused on the transfer of dangerous buildup and the wrong use of small arms and light weapons.
- Resolution 2220 (2015) was adopted on May 22, 2015. It focuses on the threat of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in modern armed conflicts, aiming to prevent their illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation, and misuse.
- Resolution 2616 (2021) asked for use of the PoA and ITI including checking exports of weapons parts to countries that are under embargoes. It also supported keeping a list of all weapons and using marking and registration systems when embargoes are in place along with programs to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate fighters.

QARMA (Questions A Resolution Must Answer):

- How will this resolution be different and more effective than past UN actions? Compare them.
- How can Non-Governmental Organizations help solve this issue without violating national sovereignty?
- How do we protect civilians while targeting NSAGs?
- What counts as Illicit Arms Proliferation versus Legal Arms Transfers in the Middle East?
- What happens to states or groups that violate this resolution?
- How will you stop weapons from ending up in the hands of non-state actors?
- How will you prevent arms embargoes from being violated?

