

YUNMUN XXX

Counter-Terrorism Committee

Topic 2: Foreign Terrorist Fighters

UN Security Council Resolution 2178, passed in 2014, defines foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) as “individuals who travel to a State other than their State of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict.”¹ According to the Security Council, terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and associated groups have attracted over 30,000 FTF’s from over 100 different countries in recent years.² Specifically, a growing number of young people are travelling to regions associated with terrorism, where they are influenced by extreme ideologies. Though men are statistically more likely to engage in terrorism, both women and men have been drawn to these regions and terrorist organizations in alarming numbers.

Many FTF’s have used passports from their home countries to return either to their countries of origin or to Member States. Particularly with an influx of refugees and asylum seekers to Member States from war torn areas, it is relatively easy for returning FTF’s to enter undetected. Once there, they are free to carry out attacks on behalf of terrorist organizations, or recruit others to join their ranks. Returning to lives as regular citizens in their countries of origin likely also precludes these FTF’s from being brought to justice for their terrorist actions abroad.

Increasing border security has proven to be one way to limit FTF movement. A 2015 analysis done by the UN Security Council showed that states have taken great strides in the past decade to strengthen border security and prevent foreign terrorist fighters from traveling, particularly at airports.³ Part of what allowed for this enhanced border security is many states utilization of INTERPOL’s (International Criminal Police Organization) biometric databases to screen

¹ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2178%20%282014%29

² <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/foreign-terrorist-fighters/>

³ <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/border-control/>

travelers. However, many states still lack clear policies to place security measures at airports and other border crossings designed to ensure the effective screening of travellers.⁴

Our committee will address the issue of how best to prevent FTF's from carrying out attacks in their countries of origin or other Member States, and perhaps how to stop them from reaching their terrorist destinations in the first place. How these FTF's should be treated if and when they do return should also be discussed in committee sessions. As with all issues related to terrorism, it is important to keep in mind possible violations to people's individual rights and freedoms in attempting to prevent attacks or bring perpetrators to justice.

Questions delegates should consider when writing position papers and working in committee sessions:

1. How should the distribution and status of citizenship be handled after an individual travels to a country linked with terror organizations?
2. How, if at all, should citizens be treated and scrutinized if they return home from a trip to a country with strong terrorist ties?
3. What efforts should Member States carry out to remove their citizens from terrorist organizations or to prevent them from traveling there in the first place?
4. What further steps can be taken to ensure border security to prevent FTF's from reentering their home countries or to monitor these individuals once they arrive?

Do not limit your research only to the topics mentioned above, these issues will springboard our discussions in committee sessions. I urge you to research this topic and your countries in depth so you can be prepared for the complex discussions we will be having.

Best of luck,

Shana Adler
Chair, Counter-Terrorism Committee
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⁴ <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/border-control/>