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Q19

'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · GS II · 15 marks · International Institutions

Important International institutions, agencies and fora - their structure, mandate.

Core demand of the question

- State the Counter-Terrorism Committee's origin and associated bodies
- Evaluate effectiveness in listing, reporting and capacity-building
- **Mark limits:** definition, P5 politics, human rights and new finance tech
- Keep the tone evaluative, not a United Nations brochure

Revision summary

The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee was born of Resolution 1373 to monitor the global counter-terror legal order.

The Executive Directorate, the 1267 ISIL/Al-Qaida sanctions, and Resolution 1540 form the associated cluster.

- **Gains:** binding duties, listings, capacity visits, aviation and finance norms.
- **Limits:** no common definition, permanent-member naming politics, rights abuse, new financing tech, no army.

The **Financial Action Task Force** is separate and often hurts more than a Committee letter.

The machine is a floor of laws, not a cure for a divided Council.

Introduction

After 11 September 2001 the Security Council used Chapter VII to tell every State to starve terrorists of money, haven and arms (**Resolution 1373**). The **Counter-Terrorism Committee** was created to watch that order. Associated bodies - the Executive Directorate, the ISIL and Al-Qaida sanctions list, **Resolution 1540** on weapons of mass destruction - built a global bureaucracy of lists. The threat is real. The effectiveness is partial, political and paper-heavy.

Body**The machine**

1373 is binding on all United Nations members, not only on a few treaty parties.

- **Peg:** The Committee and its **Executive Directorate** assess laws, visit with consent, and match needy States with donors for border, aviation and financial capacity.

- **Peg:** The **1267 / 1989 / 2253** list still constrains travel and freezes assets of named ISIL and Al-Qaida affiliates.
- **Peg:** **Resolution 1540** covers non-State access to weapons of mass destruction - a related but distinct file.
- **Peg:** **Financial Action Task Force** standards rhyme with this architecture and often bite harder on banks.

What it does well

Some plots have been made harder. That is not nothing.

- **Peg:** A worldwide legislative checklist now exists where, before **2001**, many States had no terror-finance offence.
- **Peg:** Aviation security and passenger-name norms moved because Council pressure met the International Civil Aviation Organization.
- **Peg:** Capacity visits and donor matching are the unglamorous half of mitigation.

What it cannot do

The Committee is a committee of a divided Council.

- **Peg:** There is no agreed United Nations definition of terrorism; one State's fighter is another's listed name.
- **Peg:** Permanent-member politics decide when a listing moves; the Committee does not command troops and cannot stop a client of a veto.
- **Peg:** Special rapporteurs keep warning that 1373 was used to crush dissent; financing has moved to crypto, hawala and social media faster than listing cycles.
- **Peg:** Lone actors sit awkwardly on an ISIL-shaped list; regional organisations do the arrests. Effectiveness is high on the legislative checklist, medium on capacity, low on the politics of naming.

Flow diagram

Res 1373 -> CTC and CTED and CTED
 CTC and CTED -> Capacity and reports
 1267 list -> Freeze travel
 P5 politics politics -> Naming gap
 CTC and CTED -> Naming gap
 Res 1540 WMD -> CTC and CTED

Conclusion

The Counter-Terrorism Committee and its cluster built a worldwide legal floor after 1373. They help States write laws and freeze some names. They do not define terrorism, command force, or override a veto. Against a significant threat, that is useful infrastructure - not a victory.

Facts & figures

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001)

Chapter VII decision requiring all States to criminalise terror finance and deny haven - the Committee's mandate.

Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

Expert directorate that assesses member-State implementation for the Committee.

1267 / 2253 sanctions regime

Targeted sanctions - asset freeze, travel ban, arms embargo - on listed ISIL and Al-Qaida names.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540

Obligations on States to keep weapons of mass destruction from non-State actors - associated, not identical, to the Committee's 1373 watch.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Separate standard-setter whose grey lists often bite harder than a Committee assessment letter.

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