



Perspective: Countering Terrorism

For Prelims: UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC-CTC), FATF

For Mains: Terrorism, Challenges to Terrorism and Certain Points to Focus on

Why in News?

Recently, India hosted the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee's (UNSC-CTC) meeting which was **attended by representatives of all 15 UNSC members**.

- In addition to the terror threats of emerging technologies terrorism is still **one of the gravest threats to humanity**.
 - The advent of technology had **dramatically changed the nature of attacks** and of recruitment by terror groups.

What is UNSC-CTC?

- It was **established by Security Council** resolution 1373 which was adopted unanimously on 28th September 2001 **in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US**.
- The Committee **comprises all 15 Security Council member**.
 - **Five permanent members:** China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly.
- The Committee was **tasked with monitoring implementation of resolution 1373** which requested countries to implement a number of measures **aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities** at home and around the world.
- This includes taking steps to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freezing any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, **denying all forms of financial support for terrorist groups**, suppressing the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists and **sharing information with other governments on any groups practicing or planning terrorist acts**.

What are Emerging Challenges for India?

- The use of emerging technologies for spreading terror is an **issue of increasing concern across the globe**.
- While one of the terrorists of the 26/11 strike was captured alive, prosecuted, and convicted by the Supreme Court in India, the key conspirators and planners of the 26/11 attacks **continue to remain protected and unpunished**.
- China's putting a hold on UNSC sanctions **against Pakistan-based terrorists on multiple occasions weakened the Security Council to act in some cases**.
- Over the years, terrorist groups have diversified their funding portfolio. They have also **begun to exploit the anonymity of new and emerging technologies** such as virtual currencies for fund-raising and finances.

- Pakistan was put on the [Financial Action Task Force's \(FATF's\)](#) so-called **grey list in June 2018** for a lax regime in countering money laundering and terror funding. The [FATF removed Pakistan after more than four years at the plenary in October 2022](#).
 - Discussion over the delisting of Pakistan from last year coincided with a trend of rising terror attacks in Kashmir.

What is Terrorism?

- **About:**
 - Any person who commits an offense, with the purpose of the conduct is **to intimidate a population or to compel a Government or an international** organization to do or abstain from doing any act, which causes:
 - Death or serious bodily injury to any person; or
 - Severe damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or
 - Damage to property, places, facilities, or systems resulting in or likely to result in a major economic loss.
- **Indian Initiatives to Tackle Terrorism:**
 - In the wake of the terror attack, several steps were **initiated to streamline the security set-up**.
 - Coastal security was given high priority, and it is with the Navy/Coast Guard/marine police.
 - A specialised agency to deal with terrorist offences, the [National Investigation Agency](#), was set up and has been functioning from January 2009.
 - The [National Intelligence Grid \(NATGRID\)](#) has been constituted to create an appropriate database of security-related information.
 - Four new operational hubs for the National Security Guard have been created to ensure rapid response to terror attacks.
 - The **Multi-Agency Centre**, which functions under the Intelligence Bureau, was further strengthened and its activities expanded.
 - The Navy **constituted a Joint Operations Centre** to keep vigil over India's extended coastline.
- **Global Efforts:**
 - The **United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)** leads and coordinates an all-of-UN approach to prevent and counter-terrorism and violent extremism.
 - UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) under UNOCT, **promotes international cooperation in the fight against terrorism** and supports the Member States in implementing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
 - The **Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB)** of the United Nations Office onb plays a significant role in international efforts.
 - It works to assist the Member States, upon request, with the ratification, legislative incorporation and implementation of the universal legal framework against terrorism.
 - The FATF which is a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society.

What are the Challenges in Countering Terrorism?

- **Terror Funding: Poor understanding of ML/TF (Money Laundering /Terror Funding) threats** and risks.
 - **Inability to adequately identify, assess and mitigate ML/FT risks.**
- **Old Data Analytics:** Traditional risk assessment tools do not allow data to be analysed at a large scale, **limiting the potential for correlations and analysis** to generate a more fine-grained picture of the risks.
- **Other Factors:**

- **Lack of coordination** between international organisations and the huge burden of legislations created.
- **Weaknesses in national regulatory schemes.**
- **Informal transfer and movements of assets** across national boundaries
- **High costs of implementing the risk approach** for private non-state actors (financial and non-financial institutions).

What are the Certain Points to Focus on?

- **Terror Financing:** Effective and sustained efforts at countering terror financing are the essence of the issue of countering terrorism.
- **Cooperation:** Normative efforts at the UN need to be coordinated through collaboration with other fora like the FATF and the Egmont Group.
 - International cooperation and coordinated efforts against terrorists and their sponsors, including through dismantlement of terrorist safe havens, sanctuaries, training grounds and financial and ideological as well as political support structures, are critical imperatives to defeat this menace.
 - Terrorism's **links with transnational organised crime**, illicit drugs and arms trafficking are now well established.
- **Transparency:** Need to ensure the effective and transparent functioning of the Security Council sanctions regime and make sure that they are not rendered ineffective for political reasons.
- **Technology:** Over the years, terrorist groups have diversified their funding portfolio. They have also begun to exploit the anonymity afforded by new and emerging technologies such as virtual currencies for fundraising and finances.
- **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT):** Its major objectives included having a universal definition of terrorism so that all the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** members can adopt it into their own criminal law, banning all terror groups, prosecuting all terrorists under special laws and making cross-border terrorism an extraditable offense worldwide.
 - **In 1986, India proposed a draft document on CCIT** at the UN. However, it is yet to be adopted by the UNGA

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What solutions do you suggest to curb this growing menace? What are the major sources of terrorist funding? **(2017)**