



## Terror Groups in the Middle East

**For Prelims:** [Hezbollah](#), [Middle east](#), [Iran-Iraq War](#), [Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant \(ISIL\)](#), Kurds.

**For Mains:** Militant groups in the Middle East, India's stand on these groups, India's foreign policy towards key Middle Eastern countries.

[Source:DH](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, [Israel attacked the Hezbollah](#) which is one of the militant groups fighting in the [middle east](#). This attack brought several militant groups of the middle east into limelight.



### What are the Various Terror Groups of the Middle East?

- **Hizbollah**
  - **About:**
    - It is a **Shiite Muslim political party** and militant organisation located in Lebanon, known for **operating as “a state within a state.”** Its paramilitary wing, the **Jihad Council**, commands the most powerful armed force in Lebanon.

- Hizballah's **Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO)**, also referred to as the External Security Organization or Unit 910, is a highly **compartmentalised unit responsible for conducting overseas terrorism operations**, particularly against Western targets.
- Hizballah identifies **Israel and the United States as its primary adversaries** and has been involved in operational activities within its homeland. 🇱🇧
- **Aim:**
  - Hizballah possesses state-like **military capabilities**, including air defense systems, missiles, precision-guided missiles, rockets, and unmanned aircraft systems.
  - The group is dedicated to maintaining its strategic partnership with **Iran, supporting the Syrian regime**, and consolidating its power within Lebanon while opposing Israeli interests and striving to **expel US forces from the Middle East**.
    - Since its inception it aimed to eliminate the state of Israel.
- **Territory of Influence:**
  - **Operates throughout Lebanon** with relative impunity.
  - Worked with Iranian officials to provide training and other military support to Shia militants in **Iraq, Syria, and Yemen**.





- **United Nations Stand:**
  - The UN **considers Hezbollah a terrorist organisation** and a major threat due to its military capabilities and involvement in both regional conflicts and global terrorism.
- **Badr Organization**
  - **About:**
    - It is an **Iraqi Shia Islamist and Khomeinist political party** and paramilitary group.
    - Originally known as the Badr Brigades or Badr Corps, the organization was **formed in 1982** as the military wing of the **Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI)**, a Shia Islamic party based in Iran.
  - **Aim:**
    - The Badr Brigade was **established with the support of Iranian intelligence** and **Shia cleric Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim**, with the **primary objective of opposing Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime** during the **Iran-Iraq War**.
    - After the **2003 US-led invasion of Iraq**, a large portion of Badr Brigade **fighters joined the Iraqi army and police forces**, becoming an integral part of Iraq's security apparatus.
    - The Badr Organization **gained prominence again in 2014** due to its active involvement in combating the **Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)** as part of the **Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)**.
    - Its **role within Iraq's paramilitary framework has been significant**, contributing to national security, particularly through their association with the PMF, which operates under the Iraqi government's oversight .
  - **Territory of Influence:**
    - **Baghdad** and Southern **Iraq**.
  - **United Nations Stand:**
    - The **UN views the Badr Organization as destabilizing due to its** Iranian links, sectarian violence, and negative impact on Iraq's governance and regional stability.
- **Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)**

- **About:**
  - ISIS is a **Salafi-jihadist group** responsible for numerous terrorist attacks worldwide, resulting in thousands of deaths and injuries.
  - In 2004, an Iraqi extremist network led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi merged with al-Qa'ida to **form al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI)**, which Zarqawi led until his death in 2006.
  - In 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi took over the group and **expanded its operations into eastern Syria by 2011.**
  - **In 2013, AQI rebranded itself as ISIS**, and in 2014, the group severed ties with al-Qa'ida, declaring itself a caliphate while seizing significant territory in Iraq and Syria.
  - In 2019, an international coalition expelled ISIS from its last stronghold in Syria, but the **group continues to operate covertly in both Syria and Iraq.**
- **Aim:**
  - ISIS employs a variety of tactics, including **targeted killings, IED attacks, ambushes, military-style assaults, kidnappings, and suicide bombings** in Iraq and Syria.
  - The group encourages its followers worldwide to carry out operations in their own countries using easily accessible weapons.
  - The organization **primarily targets military forces and civilian defense groups in Iraq and Syria.**
  - ISIS frequently attacks government personnel and infrastructure, as well as **foreign aid workers and civilians perceived to be opposing its ideology or interpretation of Islamic law.**
- **Territory of Influence:**
  - Based primarily in **northern and eastern Syria and northern Iraq.**




- **United Nations Stand:**
  - The **UN has labelled ISIS a terror organisation and a global threat**, condemning its brutal violence and numerous casualties.
- **India's Stand:**
  - India categorically **condemns and banned ISIS** and organisations affiliated with it.

#### ▪ **Boko Haram**

- **About:**
  - Boko Haram **seeks to eliminate Western influence and establish a Salafi-Islamist state** in its area of operations.
  - Since its **formation in 2002**, Boko Haram has been responsible for an estimated 50,000 deaths and the displacement of over 2.5 million people.
  - The group was **previously affiliated with al-Qa'ida and ISIS** but currently operates independently of both.
  - **After 2021, many members defected to ISIS-West Africa** or surrendered to local authorities.
- **Aim:**
  - Boko Haram frequently employs **small arms to carry out attacks against civilians and regional security forces.**
  - The group conducts kidnappings to secure ransoms and gain access to medical services.
  - It has utilized untrained kidnapping victims, including women and children, as suicide bombers.
- **Territory of Influence:**
  - Northeast **Nigeria** and southeast **Niger**, also conducts operations in **Cameroon and Chad.**
- **United Nations Stand:**
  - Boko Haram is recognized by the UN as a **terrorist organisation.**

#### ▪ **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**

- **About:**

- The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), also known as **Kongra-Gel**, is a **militant Marxist-Leninist Kurdish separatist organisation** founded in 1978 with the aim of establishing a **unified, independent Kurdistan**.
- The PKK seeks to **control Kurdish regions in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey** to promote Kurdish rights and recognition.
  - The group's stated objective is to **create a confederation of semi autonomous Kurdish regions**.
- Historically, the PKK has based its headquarters in Iraq and primarily targeted Turkish interests in the Kurdish-majority southeastern region of Turkey.
- Turkish security forces in southeastern Turkey have driven most of the **PKK's activities into Iraq and Syria**.
- **Aim:**
  - The PKK employs a combination of **guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics** in its operations.
  - The group utilizes a range of weapons and methods, including IEDs, car bombs, grenades, small arms, mortars, suicide bombings, and kidnapping operations.
  - The PKK conducts attacks **primarily against Turkish and Turkish-supported forces in northern Iraq and Syria**, as well as Turkish personnel and infrastructure in southeastern Turkey.
  - The group also employs unmanned aerial vehicles and man-portable air defense systems in its assaults.
- **Territory of Influence:**
  - Northern Iraq and southeastern **Turkey**.
  - Affiliated groups operate in northern **Syria**, northern **Iraq**, and western **Iran**. 
- **United Nations Stand:**
  - The UN has addressed the **PKK's actions as part of broader counter-terrorism discussions**, recognizing its militant activities primarily against Turkish interests .
  - The group is often viewed within the context of **regional instability and its implications for Turkey's security policies** .
- **India's Stand:**
  - India does not have a specific policy targeting the PKK. However, it recognizes the challenges posed by separatist movements.

**Drishti Mains Question:**

Discuss how militant organisations in Middle East are a threat to regional peace and security?

**UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Prelims:**

**Q. 'Hand-in-Hand 2007' a joint anti-terrorism military training was held by the officers of the Indian Army and officers of Army of which one of the following countries? (2008)**

- (a) China
- (b) Japan
- (c) Russia
- (d) USA

**Ans: (a)**

## **Mains**

**Q.** Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India-Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries. Discuss with suitable examples. **(2015)**

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