THE SITUATION REGARDING NON-STATE MILITARY ACTORS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Willian Moraes Roberto¹
Ana Carolina Melos²

ABSTRACT

The 21st century has seen an increase in the number of actions against the so-called non-state military actors, whose common features are: the fact of being organized groups operating outside state control; their use of force to achieve political objectives; the irregularity of its military actions, in opposition to the most common military doctrines of regular armies; among others. The Middle East, by its turn, is home of maybe the most important and internationally well-known non-state military actors of our time. Besides the wars triggered to fight the terrorist menace, against Al-Qaeda, for example, other non-state military actors have also been involved in conflicts, such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The UNSC, as guarantor of international security and peace, must address such pressing and polemic issue. This topic is relevant not only due to the high polarization that it involves – since one side tends to see all these groups as radical and terrorist actors at the same time that the other side claims the importance to differentiate between all kinds of such groups – but also by the fact that the UN must evaluate all the efforts that it have been taking in regard to non-state military actors, especially after this whole decade of conflicts involving the Middle East and these groups, also updating its approach to them in such region.

¹ Undergraduate student of International Relations, 8th semester, at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).
² Undergraduate student of International Relations, 6th semester, at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).
1 NON-STATE MILITARY ACTORS

The turn of the millennium and the first decade of the 21st century have witnessed a considerable increase in military conflicts involving non-state actors. This trend makes necessary to examine how these actors can be defined and how their existence threatens states’ sovereignty as well as which military dynamics are utilized by them to achieve their political and military aims. With such conceptualization, it will be possible to focus on the Middle East, one of the world’s regions which currently host some of the most important non-state actors known – namely Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas.

1.1 CONCEPTS OF NON-STATE MILITARY ACTORS

According to the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) (2011, 6), “most of today’s armed conflicts take place within states and are waged by at least one non-state military actor fighting state forces and/or other non-state actor”. This point to the importance of these types of military groups in contemporary political conflicts, as they are often among the most important parts in internal, regional and international disputes.

However, there is a lot of ambiguity when the concepts of non-state military actors are taken into consideration. The terms that are used to define these groups are controversial and reflect the beliefs of who is using them. For example, non-state military actors can be seen as “liberation movements”, “freedom fighters” or “revolutionaries” by some and, at the same time, as “rebels”, “insurgents” or “terrorists” by others. Generally, a state will label a non-state actors depending on the political issues involved – if they pose a threat to its own existence or its allies’, normally they will be defined as terrorists or insurgents; on the other hand, if they serve to delegitimize or weaken adversaries in the international arena, these groups might be named as liberation movements and freedom fighters.

Even though most researchers agree that there is no such thing as a universal definition of non-state military actors, DCAF (2011, 7) presents us with a synthetic and convincing one, which shall be taken into consideration: “[a non-state armed actor] is defined as any organized group with a basic structure of command operating outside state control that uses force to achieve its political or allegedly political objectives”. Also according to DCAF (2011), non-state military actors have some characteristics in common well beyond the usage of military means to achieve political aims, such as: linkages to physical territories, the propagation of identities and/or the provision of resources, as well as a need
for certain levels of relationship with the wider society where they are inserted in.

In relation to the territorial issue, the majority of non-state military actors originate inside a determined state, acting within it. However, they might also have the prospects of internationalizing themselves, with the possibility of having representations in other countries, as in the case of Hamas, or also operating clandestinely – this one often related to terrorist groups, as Al-Qaeda. In respect for their actions inside a state, the amount of territory that is under their control points to the level of success they might have acquired for their goals. Such situation can be maintained through local support – voluntarily or by coercion – and/or through foreign sponsors (DCAF 2011). Nonetheless, it must be noted that there might also be cases where non-state military actor’s objectives are only to cause insecurity and instability (terror) for political aims, without necessarily seizing territories for their control.

Non-state military actors also need to achieve a way to find resources in order to achieve their goals, such as weapons, uniforms, money and means of transportation and communication. These can be achieved through the local population’s support, foreign sponsors and/or through robbery and smuggling. Besides that, a non-state military actor may grant for its members or supporters additional services, such as security, the application of justice, provision of education and health, lands, among others examples (Skezely 2012) – as it has been done by Hezbollah, in Lebanon. This is exactly the kind of relationship that might develop between such groups and the locals.

Another important feature is their capacity of formulating an identity that is usually spread in order to attract volunteers with shared values and political thoughts. Such issue is also related to the groups’ necessity of having good relations to the wider society. According to Skezely (2012), even though coercion is the easiest way to achieve material goods, it is the marketing of the group’s mission and ideals that provides the most durable relationships with civilians and even the society in general. This is because it produces not only strong normative attachments between the group’s causes and the resource providers, but also the belief that the movement in question is the legitimate representative of a cause.

After all such characterization, it is of paramount importance to explore what can possibly be considered the main problem brought about by non-state military actors: the fact that their existence poses a threat to the modern concept of state, mainly its defining character, the monopoly of violence. As Max Weber has pointed out in the beginning of the 20th century:

Violence is, of course, not the normal or the only means available to the state. That is undeniable. But it is the means specific to the state. And the relationship of the state to violence is particularly close at the present time. In the past the
use of physical violence by widely differing organizations – starting with the clan – was completely normal. Nowadays, in contrast, we must say that the state is the form of human community that (successfully) lays claim to the monopoly of legitimate physical violence within a particular territory (Weber 1919 *apud* Berndtsson 2009, 5; emphasis on the original).

Therefore, the monopoly of violence can be seen as the main characteristic of the modern sovereign state, which in case sustains the state’s position as the main actor in the international system, being the only legitimate wielder of force Berndtsson (2009). This implies that the usage of force and the waging of war are understood as affairs essentially of the state. At the domestic level, it means that the state is the provider of protection for its citizens, implying that they shouldn’t care for their own safety (Berndtsson 2009).

Thus, the proliferation of non-state military actors poses a real threat to the modern concept of state sovereignty, raising concerns among all international community. The existence of actors inside the state that start to using violence by their own calls into question the idea that warfare is a state’s domain and also shakes conventional roles that are attributed to the state, such as security and defense.¹

Finally, the way that non-state actors wage military campaigns to achieve their political goals – through irregular warfare tactics must be addressed. Irregular warfare is usually conceived as

> ‘an armed conflict where the parts in it do not constitute big units, but small and many groups of actions, and whose ending is not decided through few great battles; on contrary, decision is searched and achieved through a huge number of small individual operations such as robbery, terrorism acts, sabotage, bombings and incursions’ (Heydte 1990, 37 *apud* Ferreira 2012, 15).

This way,

> It is [...] the war of the shadows, or ‘in practical terms, irregular warfare is every conflict conducted by a force that has no formal military organization and, overall, lacks institutional juridical legitimation. In other words, it a war waged by non-regular forces’ (Visacro 2009, 13 *apud* Ferreira 2012, 15).

Although having a non-regular and illegal character, non-state actors’ wars

¹ It is interest to note that this is not the first time that states have to face threats to its monopoly of violence throughout history. Nonetheless, it was their capacity to delegitimize such forms of non-state use of force and coercion and to put them under state’s control that has been central to the rise to prominence of the modern concept of sovereignty and statehood (Berndtsson 2009).
have allegedly political goals. Therefore, an irregular warfare perpetrated by non-state military actors that searches to retain legitimacy towards civilians, would be waged while caring to achieve political support – conquering people’s hearts and minds (Ferreira, 2012). This is the political dimension of the insurgence: the creation of linkages between the group and the population aiming that locals start to back the movement’s goals at the expense of the support previously given to the government. Such political vision presented by Ferreira (2012) is linked to the marketing strategy laid by Skezely (2012).

It was only after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to Ferreira (2012), and to Israel’s war against Hezbollah in 2006, that states’ military thinking stopped considering the fight against this kind of actors as a secondary activity.

The experience in the Middle East proved that irregular warfare preponderance in the 21st century is hardly a reversible trend: more and more, armed forces must be able to cope with non-conventional forces in overcrowded urban environments, under pressure from the media and the public opinion (Ferreira 2012, 29).

Therefore, there are many cases in which non-state actors’ actions will trigger instability and will clash with government forces – even more in the cases where these actors do not care about acquiring public support, focusing instead on coercion only. Thus, the UN must watch closely these situations not only in order to help maintain state control and public order, but also to address the current threats against the modern concept of statehood. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the UN to analyze this phenomenon and decide how and when to act in cases in which these groups do not act responsibly. It is necessary to balance between coercive approaches – sanctioning and/or elimination – and inclusive approaches – balancing, negotiation, inclusion to the state and capacity building – when dealing with this problem, as well as questioning if there must be a global universally accepted framework to deal with them or if the most appropriated way is to analyze case-by-case.

1.2 NON-STATE MILITARY ACTORS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: TERRORISM AND POLITICAL ISLAM

Now that concepts of non-state actors have been fully assessed, we must look upon the Middle East region, since it is there that the most well-known non-state actors are located; the same ones that have been involved in the most intense clashes between non-state groups and government armed forces during the first decade of the 21st century. Namely, we can point to the resurgence of
the terrorist phenomenon headed by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), as well as to the ascension to prominence of Hezbollah and Hamas in Lebanon and Palestine, respectively. Nonetheless, some previous considerations should be made in relation to terrorism and Political Islam.

Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas emerged in a context of rising Islamic movements in the 1970s, which are, according to Halliday (2005), transnational in ideology. All such endeavors were labeled as being part of the resurgence of Political Islam: the desire to rule politics not through a secular regime anymore, but together with the instrumentalization of Islam’s values for political aims, although with different nuances of this religious influence, with this varying from group to group (Hirschkind 1997).

Al-Qaeda, for example, since its creation, has tried to act transnationally, inspiring - through its ideology - Muslims to take upon the jihad and participate in struggles from one country to another. “That there is an ‘Islamic transnationalism’ is, therefore, unquestionable” (Halliday 2005, 241). However, as this same author affirms, if we take a look upon the origins and bases of these movements, it can be seen that the reasons for their rising is very much located within the society they are part of. The regional context is broader, being their rise, overall, an answer to the secular Arab nationalism’s failures which could not successfully modernize Arab countries and confront Israel in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and the subsequent subordination of these societies to the West (Visentini 2014). Nonetheless, the form that the movements have taken is mainly against the local state where they originated from. Islamic uprisings took form in Iran – even though this one managed to take control of the state itself –, Algeria, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and in the Palestinian territories.

Despite the common characteristic of local roots, when we analyze their evolution, it can be said that these non-state actors have evolved differently. On the one hand, Al-Qaeda has matured by adopting a transnational focus and Hezbollah and Hamas, in spite of transnational links, have grown national causes.

For all the transnational linkages that may exist, they [non-state actors and Islamic movements] confine their activities, and build their support, as much as nationalist

---

2 The most common claim of Islamist movements is the rejection of the Muslim world into different states – for them, this type of organization is a Western creation imposed to divide their common identity and weaken the original umma, the community of Muslim believers (Halliday 2005).

3 Jihad is a legitimate struggle waged for Islamic people on behalf of their faith. It is a fight against those people who do not believe in the Islamic principles.
movements do, within particular spaces, that is, the boxes that are modern states\(^4\). Analysis over the 1980s and 1990s of, say, the Palestinian Hamas, or the Algerian armed groups, the Lebanese Hezbollah, or the Egyptian Jihad, shows that these were based in their respective countries. They may have involved pan-Islamist symbols, such as the struggle against “Zionism”, or they may have funding and arms procurement, and propaganda, networks abroad, but their emplacement was within their particular countries. Al-Qaeda was an exception, in some measure, to this; yet it too had its origins in revolt against specific states, notably Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and was able to base itself in another state, Afghanistan, because of the alliance it formed with the regime in that state, namely, from 1996, the Taliban (Halliday 2005, 242).

Another feature that must be taken into consideration is what is often labeled as terrorism. Kiras (n.d., 187) defines terrorism as “the sustained use of violence against symbolic or civilian targets by small groups for political purposes, such as inspiring fear, drawing widespread attention to a political grievance, and/or provoking a [...] response”. On that account, there is a clear search for the achievement of a political result from such usage of force. Al-Qaeda, specially, has evolved in a manner directly linked to this approach, having spread such practices to targets outside the region. Hezbollah and Hamas, on the other hand, also have used political violence, although not as the only strategy for their survival.

Finally, another issue related to political violence and terrorism must be addressed. Commonly, the labeling of an act as terrorist is often used as a manner to deny legitimacy to any political claim that the group in question might make, and not to identify the reasons why it has sought this approach.

[...] to identify and action by any group, state or non-state, as in violation of the rules of the war is not the same as to disqualify the legitimacy of the political claims such a group is making: for sure, acts of criminality lead inevitably to a decreasing sympathy for the causes of a group, but this distinction between method and legitimacy stands. The state wanting to condemn “terrorism” cannot so easily deny legitimation by concentrating on the methods of its opponents (Halliday 2005, 246).

\(^4\) It is also important to note that the states themselves will seek to direct transnational contestatory movements. Just like happened with communist states – mainly the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) and this type of movements, as well as in regard to secular Arab states and Arab nationalist movements in the 1950s and 1960s, “from the 1970s onwards rival Muslim states sought, in varying ways, to exert control over the Islamist movements operating in other states” (Halliday 2005, 243) as one more tool in their competition for influence in the Middle East, a trend that continues today, mainly between Iran and Saudi Arabia.
Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to note that the Middle East has not only these three groups that have been presented, namely Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas. In fact, the region presents a huge variety of non-state military actors, being these ones only the most well-know. Such actors are spread throughout the region’s territory, from Pakistan to the Arabian Peninsula, into Africa’s North. Apart from the ones already named, we can point out the existence of Al-Nusra, currently fighting in Syria, a franchise of Al-Qaeda, preaching a radical version of Islam. In the same territory, there were present less radical movements, with secular views, such as the Free Syrian Army. At the same time, ISIS, now the Islamic State (IS), operates in Syria and Iraq, ruling a territory where they proclaim to have formed a new Islamic caliphate. Others non-state military actors operate in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region – mostly at the Pakistani Federal Administered Tribal Areas, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Tehrik-i-Pakistan, or simply the Pakistani Taliban. Last but not least, Al-Qaeda is also present in the Arabian Peninsula through its other franchise, the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which operates in Yemen and is under currently attack of US drones for years.

Therefore, discussions regarding non-state military actors encompass a variety of groups in the region. Even though each one of them has its own peculiarities, commonalities may be found among some of these actors. The challenge is that, at the same time, differences exist between them, and this is what leads some countries to back specific non-state military actors, and, on the other hand, label another as fundamentalists and terrorist. Hereupon we choose to deepen our analysis on the most well-known non-state military actors’ cases, since they represent pivotal models of non-state military actors in this region, namely Hezbollah, Hamas and Al-Qaeda.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 TERRORISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST: AL-QAEDA’S FOUNDATION

Terrorism is not a recent practice as sometimes it is thought of. Terror has been used by different groups of people since the advent of humanity to perpetrate their ideals. In the Middle East, this practice is related to the expansion of Islamic Caliphates, initiated in the 7th century, after Mohammed’s death. In the 20th century, during the British Mandate5, the region saw an

---

5 With the end of World War I, the international system saw the fall of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, who has controlled the Middle East since the 15th century. As a consequence, there was established the British Mandate in the region, which was actually a result of the Sykes-
increase in the number of violent acts between Muslims and Jews – perpetrated by both sides – due to the fostered Jewish migration to the Palestinian territory (Del Roio 2004).

Nowadays, terrorist activities are often associated with the most fundamentalist brand of Islam – Wahhabism⁶, a sect of Sunni Islam, and also the official religion of Saudi Arabia (Roche 2012). Its original aims are to purify the Islamic religion from practices and innovations that deviate it from the fundamental principles established by the prophet Mohammed. Therefore, Wahhab’s main objective was to encourage people to embrace a more orthodox fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (Armanios 2003, 2). Wahhabist thinking is spread through special schools where boys are indoctrinated according to the principles of Quran, namely the Madrasas⁷ (Roche 2012; Bergen, Pandey 2005).

Nevertheless, the use of violence is not an inherent principle in Wahhabist teaching. Some authors hold that this practice has only become usual due to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, during the Cold War (Armanios, 2003, 3). The invasion mobilized an internal resistance force against the foreign power, which was headed by the mujahideen – a volunteer guerrilla group guided by Islamic principles, deeply influenced by Wahhabi thoughts, which saw their fight against the Soviets as their own jihad against an external occupier (Zalman 2014). These fighters had been financed mainly by the United States government⁸ in order to prevent the expansion of soviet influence towards the Persian Gulf. Such forces also counted with the support of Saudi Arabia – which financed volunteers

---

**Picot Agreement (1916),** which were negotiated secretly between France and England to make a partition of the Turkish territory even before the end of the war (Visentini 2012). It lasted until 1948, when the State of Israel was created.

⁶ Wahhabism was originated in current-day Saudi Arabia from Imam Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab, an Islamic scholar from the 18th century. It evolved as a form to justify through the religion the unification of the whole Arabic Peninsula under one single power, instead of maintaining all Arabic tribes separated from each other. Muhammad bin Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia modern dynasty, partnered to Abdul Wahhab establishing a close relation between the monarchy and the Wahhab religion which still lives until nowadays (Armanios 2003).

⁷ Even though Wahhabism is a Sunni ramification of Islam, there are madrasas from different branches of this religion. These schools are associated to the training of new militants of fundamentalist terrorist groups. In Kashmir, for example, there are a significant number of madrasas where members of terrorist groups, which fight against Indian domain in the region, are coming. It is possible to observe the connection between the schools and the organizations that act in Kashmir: the group Hizb-ul-Mujahidin counts on students from five madrasas, including Jamia Madinatul Ilm, the only Quranic school in the region that indicates male and female students (Neves Jr, 2010, p. 240-241).

⁸ The US government contributed to the mujahideen struggle against the Soviet forces offering them portable shoulder-fired anti-aircraft systems – the “Stingers” (Katzman 2013).
to fight –, China, and Pakistan. It was this help that made possible for the mujahideen to put up the fight against the Soviet forces until they withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989 (Visentini 2012).

The end of Soviet presence in Afghanistan brought to surface differences among the groups that had fought against the Soviet Union. In fact, an agreement between the United States and the USSR accorded that both sides would cut off military aid to Afghan combatants (Kaztaman 2013, 3), which, subsequently, created a power vacuum in the country.

Afghanistan, then, became a scenario for different militia groups’ actions. Some of these kept being supplied by Saudi millionaires related to the spread of Wahhabism, being Osama bin Laden one example of them (Coll 2004, 71). Son of a rich family from Saudi Arabia, bin Laden was educated according to the most fundamentalist principles of Islamic tradition. Following his instructions, bin Laden used his family’s funds to finance the creation of his own organization: Al-Qaeda, which has its origins between 1988 and 1989, in the final period of the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.

The ideas from Sayyid Qutb, an Islamist intellectual born in 1906 in Egypt, were the most important inspirations for Al-Qaeda’s ideology. His thoughts are highly critical of some Muslim governments: for him, Arab countries such as Nasser’s Egypt and the Saudi monarchy were illegitimate Muslim governments which incorporated Western policies against the willing of their own people. Therefore, the struggle for the toppling of these regimes would be legitimate, a justifiable jihad (The Guardian 2001).

Another of bin Laden’s inspiration was Abdullah al Azzan, an intellectual architect – who also acted directly in the conflict – of the jihad against the Soviet Union (Rollins 2011), who, in fact, named Al-Qaeda (Chaliand, Blin 2007). Al Azzan is an important reference for the fundamentalist Islam struggle against Western influence and the Jewish expansion in the Islamic world (Emerson ?). After his death, Al-Qaeda and the Afghan jihad would follow another strategy in bin Laden’s hands, dodging some precepts preached by al Azzan (Chaliand,

---

9 It is essential, however, to point that before Al-Qaeda’s foundation, Osama bin Laden had participated in the fight against the Soviet forces when he financially supplied armed groups against the enemy.

10 Qutb, when younger, was sent to study for some years in the United States, having there a direct contact to the American way of life, in total opposition with the Islamic principles he had learnt in Egypt. After some years living in the US, Qutb came back to Egypt and joined the Muslim Brotherhood, which was expelled, in 1954, from the country with the rise of Nasser’s regime. In prison, Qutb wrote about everything he has seen in America and what he thought about Western and Jewish culture and habits and how these people would never be interested in the Islamic issue (The Guardian 2001).
At the same time Al-Qaeda was forming, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait took place, in 1990. Saddam Hussein’s actions brought to the Saudi Kingdom the fear of an occupation of its own territory which the monarchy could not defend. This consternation served as an impulse for Saudi Arabia to ask for help from the United States government, who rapidly moved troops to the Saudi country in order to guarantee not only the protection of an oil-rich ally, but also its presence in the region. It is also important to point out that bin Laden has offered Saudi Arabia military help in order to avoid Western presence is Islamic territory, but the House of Saud\textsuperscript{11} refused. Consequently, this is an important moment to understand the beginning of Al-Qaeda’s struggle against America (Almeida 2004a).

In Afghanistan, the power vacuum were being actually advantageous to Pakistan, who intended to settle itself as a power in Central Asia to minimize India’s influence in the zone. Based on this, Pakistan allegedly fostered a specific group in the neighbor country, the Taliban – an Islamic fundamentalist political movement. The lack of central power in Afghanistan provided room for the Taliban forces’ takeover of the country, which it ruled between 1996 and 2001. As soon as this new government came to power, it proclaimed Afghanistan an Islamic Emirate State, recognized only by Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (Katzman 2013, 47-51). The Taliban government undoubtedly followed Wahhabist principles: Sharia was completely adopted as Afghani law, and Madrasas were established as the only type of school in the country in order to indoctrinate Afghani children, except girls who were not allowed to attend the schools (Kaztman 2003, 5).

At the time, bin Laden was living for some years in exile in Sudan after being expelled from Saudi Arabia, due to his position against the monarchy’s alliance with Washington. In Sudan, he developed his first terrorist activities\textsuperscript{12}, focused on weakening the Gulf monarchies he considered corrupted by the Western influence (Chaliand, Blin 2007, 320). Here, it is very important to point out that bin Laden and Al-Qaeda undertook a struggle against not only non-Islamic governments, but also against all Islamic States whose governments were unclean thanks to Western influence, just like Saudi Arabia (The Guardian 2001).

Nonetheless, after an unsuccessful murder attempt against then Egypt president, Hosni Mubarak\textsuperscript{13} - another enemy -, in 1995, Al-Qaeda’s leader was

\textsuperscript{11} Saudi Arabia’s royal family (Almeida 2004a).
\textsuperscript{12} As a very rich man, bin Laden has also invested his money to develop infrastructure in Sudan which contributed to the passivity of the local government to his terrorist acts (Chaliand, Blin 2007, 318).
\textsuperscript{13} Mubarak was considered by different Islamic groups as a traitor of Palestinian cause because of all his political maneuvering in an attempt to achieve peace with the Israeli state (BBC Brasil 2011).
expelled from Sudan by the local government. Hence, owing to the general international situation, bin Laden decided to move to Afghanistan. There, he would be protected by the new regime of the Taliban, which would turn out to be an important ally for Al-Qaeda. Arriving at Kabul, bin Laden issues his first fatwa\(^\text{14}\) in Afghan territory, giving a final warning for American forces to leave Saudi Arabia, where they had been since 1990. (Chaliand, Blin 2007, 320).

The Taliban administration gave bin Laden the liberty he needed to act. The fact is that the Taliban did not have “funds and technical and administrative know-how” (Chaliand, Blin 2007, 321) to manage its new Afghan state. But that was exactly what bin Laden had to offer. Due to this partnership, the Taliban authorized the reopening of training areas for Al-Qaeda’s volunteers – a practice from the time of the Soviet invasion, when mujahideen used such places to develop their militia force. More and more volunteers came to these fields to participate actively to the struggle against the Western Alliance forces in the region (Chaliand, Blin 2007, 321). It is from this moment on that bin Laden initiated his real struggle to defeat the United States – seen as the major supporter of the corrupt Muslim countries, in bin Laden’s point of view. He and his organization believed they could defeat the United States as the muhajideen had done against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. It was only necessary to draw their enemy to the Middle East, where it would be defeated, as had previously happened to the Soviets (Almeida 2004b).

In 1998, he issued his second fatwa whereupon he convoked Muslims to fight against this common enemy, killing them, regardless of distinctions between militaries and civilians targets. Thereby, others fundamentalist Islamic groups came to join Al-Qaeda’s ideals on the fight against Americans. A number of terrorist attacks against Americans and their allies were perpetrated during the 1990s as a preparation\(^\text{15}\) for something bigger which was coming (Chalian, Blin 2007, 321-325): the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, in September 11, 2001, which caused a general shock in the international public opinion and gave the precedent to the US administration to inaugurate its Global War on Terror (Deutsche Welle 2013).

---

14 A Fatwa is a legal opinion pronounced by a important jurist according to the Islamic law – Sharia (Hallaq 2013).

15 In 1998, an Arab journal in London published a letter from some fundamentalist Islamic leaders, including bin Laden. The document pointed three reasons why the Islamic people would raise a war against Western: t the US military presence in Saudi Arabia, the sanctions imposed to Iraq – seen as the most powerful Arab State –, and the expansion of Israel in the Palestinian territory. Therefore, the letter talks about the necessity of destroying “Americans and its allies”, delegating responsibility to all Muslim people to undertake this jihad. The doctrine launched by this document can be seen as the impulse that would be put in practice in the September 11th attacks (Almeida 2004b).
2.2 THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL ARMED ISLAMIC GROUPS: HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH

2.2.1 HEZBOLLAH

Hezbollah is an Islamic group created amidst the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990) for a variety of reasons. The first reason was the civil war itself, which was a legacy from the Turkish Ottoman Empire domination, ended with World War I, and the subsequent French administration\(^\text{16}\) (Bustillo 2011, 69). In French hands, Lebanon was administrated by Maronite Christians, which always tried to quash all the Arab presence in the country, denying Lebanese people’s Muslim origins and acting according to Western demands (Bustillo 2011, 71). Lebanon became independent from France in 1943, and the new government organized a system based on religious sectarian differences, in the benefit of the Maronites and at the expense of Muslims (Countries Quest 2006).

In addition to this, the creation, in 1948, of the Israeli State in the Palestinian territory (UNSC 1948) created a brand new situation in the Middle East. Palestinian people started to migrate to near Arab states, with Lebanon receiving a significant amount of refugees (Carreras 1991, 192). These Palestinians, located in Lebanon’s southern territories, used the country’s territory to strike Israeli targets. This scenario contributed to worsen the internal conflicts between Christians and Muslims, and in 1975 the civil war started, opposing major Lebanese groups due to Palestinian acts in its territory (Carreras 1991, 192-193). Subsequently, in 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon aiming to crush the Palestinian movement there. Hezbollah was born as a reaction of this invasion and due to Western support for such Israeli actions.

Hezbollah’s creation is very closely related to the Iranian thinking of unifying all the Islamic peoples in only one Islamic State, the \textit{umma} (“Muslim nation”), something expressed in the Iranian Revolution of 1979\(^\text{17}\). In fact, the new regime in Iran sought to expand its revolution to other countries. Syria, which had allied with revolutionary Iran, permitted the entrance of Iranian Revolutionary Guards into Lebanese territory in order to Tehran help Damascus to fight off Israel from

\(^{16}\) The Mandates System was established by the League of Nations in the end of the World War I in order to divide, among the victorious countries, the territories belonging to the states which lost such war. Thereby, Ottoman Empire’s territories were shared, and Lebanon was transferred to French administration (Monteiro n.d.).

\(^{17}\) The Iranian Revolution took place in February 11, 1979, when a popular rebellion rose against Shah Reza Pahlevi regime, which had perpetuated in power for decades in a totally non-democratic state organization, counting strongly on Western powers support. The rebellion got success and the Iranian Republic was established, under Ayatollah Khoemini’s control (Almeida 2014).
Lebanon. Therefore, war-torn Lebanon was a fertile ground for the expansion of Iranian thinking: siding with Hussein Musawi, and with the supervision of Syria, Tehran managed to form Hezbollah as its own model (Hirst 2010, 178). This close relation to Iran is also due to Hezbollah’s Shia origins (same as Iran’s), the Muslim sect that lived in Southern Lebanon, the most war affected part of the country.

Hezbollah is also the result of a split in AMAL, an Arab acronym for Lebanese Resistance Detachment, which was a Shia militia founded in 1975 by Sayyid Musa al-Sadr – closely related to Syria, which has historically interfered in Lebanese affairs since they both became independent from France in 1943. AMAL opposed the Palestinian occupation of Lebanese territory, which it saw as an aggressive movement by Palestinian forces, thus not opposing vehemently the Israeli invasion in 1982, since it was ultimately responsible for the Palestinian’s departure from Lebanon (Kennedy 2009, 9). Only after they had left, AMAL forces called for the establishment of a National Salvation Committee in order to replace the Palestinians in the struggle against the Israeli siege of West Beirut18, alongside the Lebanese army. Nevertheless, the participation of a pro-Israeli Maronite leader in the committee caused a scission among more radical Muslim members, which disagreed to ally with the Maronites, seen as pro US and Western intervention in Lebanon – one of these was Hussein Musawi.

Thus, arranged by AMAL’s dissident Musawi and with the help from Iran, Hezbollah was created as a new organization to fight against Israel’s occupation (Rostami-Povey 2010, 106-107; Kennedy 2009, 10). Hezbollah soldiers served as a Shia movement to expel the Israeli forces from Lebanese territory, also serving as a special force that Khomeini delegated to fight against Israel, one of the enemies of post-1979 Iran. It is important to point out that the existence of Israel is not only the reason that solidified Khomeini’s arguments of an Islamic transnational project, but also what legitimates Hezbollah’s attacks against Israeli people (Hirst 2010, 177-178).

The Lebanese Civil War came to an end in 1990 and the Taif Agreements were signed, structuring a framework of pacific coexistence between the different religious sects in Lebanon (Bassel 2006). In addition to that, the accord also encouraged the dismantling of all armed militias in the country which had been created during the war. Nevertheless, Hezbollah was authorized to keep its armed forces as a resistance organization in order to protect the Lebanese territory from future Israeli attacks. In fact, Hezbollah was the only militia with such right granted and this was, once again, due to Israeli actions: Israel did not

18 The siege of Beirute was an Israeli campaign against the Lebanese capital, in 1982, in order to destroy the PLO forces in the country, install a pro-Israel government and, then, consolidate the Israeli occupation in Palestinian territories – West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. (Chagnollaud 2014; Kennedy 2009, 11).
exit Lebanon after the siege of Beirut; since 1985, it withdrew to South Lebanon where it established a “security zone” (Saseen 1990). Since Israeli forces were still occupying a large portion of Lebanese territory, and Hezbollah structured itself in the South, the reason for its existence was not over: there was still an Israeli presence to be fought against. Also, Syrian and Iranian support managed to keep the group well-functioning.

In 1992, the rise of Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah in Hezbollah’s command, after the assassination of Sheikh Abbas Musawi by Israeli forces, brought to the organization’s scenario brand new characteristics. Given the current fact, Nasrallah declared “We say to Jews: the language of force is the only one between us. Leave our soil”, further exacerbating the relations with Israel (Hirst 2010, 244). Nonetheless, it was also in Nasrallah’s hands that Hezbollah took another important step in its history, a watershed one: it conduced the group to participate on legal Lebanese political system in order to be an active part of the country’s political process. At the same time, the organization adopted a social program directed to Palestinian refugees in Lebanese territory, as well as built social network to Shia populations and to other religious sects that lived in the Southern regions (Hirst 2010, 245).

Hezbollah eventually has “became the country’s largest political organization” (Hirst 2010, 245): in 1992, during the parliamentary elections, the organization won 12 seats in the Lebanese Parliament (Rostami-Povey 2010), and already in 1998, on the Municipal electoral process, Hezbollah got surprising victories “in the Dahiya and other important areas of the country” (Hirst 2010, 245).

Nevertheless, the engagement of Hezbollah in the Lebanese political process did not stop its use of political violence against its declared enemies, thus being accused of terrorist attacks. It was credited to Hezbollah attacks on American and French targets in 1983 and 1984, as well as the bombing of the Israeli embassy in Argentina at Buenos Aires, in 1992, which killed 22 people (Karmon 2006). Inside Lebanese territory, during Israel’s occupation of Southern Lebanon, Hezbollah’s tactics were mainly of guerrilla nature, such as suicide bombings, hit-and-run attacks and kidnapping of Israeli soldiers (Gaub 2013). Tel Aviv launched two operations in the 1990s to cripple Hezbollah, in 1993 and 1996 – Operation Accountability and Operation Grapes of Wrath, respectively. Nonetheless, they not only were not able to damage the group significantly, but also served to justify and legitimate the continuous existence of the non-state armed Islamic organization in the region, stimulating their jihad against Israeli occupation of Lebanon (Hirst 2010, 249).

---

19 Nasrallah comes to power after the assassination of the elected secretary-general, Sheik Abbas Musawi, by Israeli forces in February 1992 (Hirst 2010, 243).
2.2.2 Hamas

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), founded in 1964, was the first non-state actor to represent the Palestinians, which aimed to guarantee the existence of an independent Palestinian State aside from the Israeli occupation (NAD-PLO 2014). Fatah, which was founded in 1965 by Yasser Arafat, is actually the main political and military branch inside the PLO, which took its control when Arafat came to power in the organization (Halliday 2005, 121). It is this faction that nowadays keeps the most part of dialogues between the Palestinian cause and Israel – which is the main reason for its animosity with Hamas, as it will be described (Abu-Amr 1993, 13).

Hamas is also a Palestinian organization, which was created in 1987 in the Gaza Strip, during the first Intifada, as an Islamic Palestinian movement against the Israeli occupation (Abu-Amr 1993, 5). This group is actually a Muslim Brotherhood’s ramification in Palestine, which is an organization formed in Egypt that represents one of “the most powerful movement advocating pan-Islamism” (Jawad 1997, 146). From this moment on, Hamas emerged as a group that viewed military struggle against Israel as legitimate, since it occupied Palestinian territory for years: for these Palestinians, negotiations with Israel were not capable of altering the status quo. Article 13 of Hamas founding Charter, which was issued in 1988, states that the group considers previous peace initiatives with Israel a “waste of time and acts of absurdity” (Abu-Amr 1993, 12). Moreover, as an Islamic movement, Hamas has sought to gather inspiration from the revolution in Iran and from Hezbollah’s creation to counter Israel’s occupation and build an Islamic state in Palestine. In fact, Article 15 of Hamas Charter clearly points to its original thoughts against Israel and Hamas’ need to fight against it: “The day that enemies usurp part of Muslim land, jihad becomes the individual duty of every Muslim” (Mirault 2010).

Almost in parallel to the beginning of the Intifada and the creation of Hamas as an Islamic movement in opposition of Israel, the PLO was trying to negotiate with the Israelis for a solution to the Palestinian issue. Actually, in its beginning, Fatah has waged guerilla tactics against Israeli forces in the occupied areas (Halliday 2005, 121), something that led to clashes between

---

20 The organization was actually created by the Arab League and acted under some Arab States’ control and is the first one created to fight for the Palestinian rights and the constitution of a Palestinian State (Halliday 2005, 121).

21 The Intifada was the term used to designate the popular reaction which took place in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank as a response to the Israeli occupation and its violence.

22 Actually, it is important to keep in mind that the Palestine issue is considered much more than just an Arab problem. It involves in the same objective all the Islamic community around the world, thus justifying the Pan-Islamist credentials generally used in relation to Palestine.
the Israeli Army and the PLO also in Jordan and Lebanon. In fact, the 1982 Israeli invasion into Lebanon was driven mainly to expel Palestine forces from this country, which was almost completely successful. Thus, at 1987, Fatah had already spent several years in the military fighting against Israel. Thereby, in 1988, in Algiers, the leaders of PLO gathered and decided to recognize the State of Israel and the United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which established in both cases, among other issues, the withdrawal of Israel forces from the occupied territories (Visentini 2012, 58; UNSC 1967; UNSC 1973).

Nonetheless, for Hamas followers, such proximity between the PLO and Israel would lead to nothing, since armed jihad was the main approach to be used in the fight to recover their Palestinian territory. Following such principles, Hamas understood that when the PLO accepted to negotiate with Israel and recognized the existence of the Israeli State, the Palestinian people was put in a step back in relation to its rival, given the fact that the recognition is not reciprocal – which means that, for Israel, there is no Palestinian State yet. Considering that Israel would always start negotiations in a position of force, Hamas considered that the only way to deal with the situation were through the destruction of the Jewish country. This way, during all the 1990s, Hamas would vehemently oppose Fatah’s instance on negotiating with Israel – the group would never recognize the Oslo Accords of 1993, which they saw as a victory for the Israelis, when they got a lot from the Palestinians without giving anything in exchange (Abu-Amr 1993, 13).

For achieving its results, Hamas organized its armed branch for the commitment of attacks against Israeli people in order to perpetrate the Islamic jihad. It chose firstly to target military structures and soldiers, having adopted guerrilla tactics during the First Intifada, which were used inside the occupied territories. However, in 1993, Hamas made his first attack with suicide bombings, targeting a bus station in the Jordan Valley, an important change to its previous behavior. This attack was considered a terrorist action, which prompted Western countries, as well as Israel, to classify the organization as a terrorist group. Hamas, besides the use of suicide attacks, also fired short-range rockets and other kind of weapons against Israeli territory (Reis 2011).

Actually, Hamas uses the argument of Palestinians’ self-defense to justify its actions. The decision to use suicide bombing attacks rests on the fact that, for Palestinians, these “guerilla tactics” are the only available method applicable against Israel. While Israeli forces count on a conventional army, Hamas needs to fight with limited resources, which makes shocks between the two forces totally disproportional. Israel's argument about its own attacks against Palestinians consists in prevention acts to anticipate Hamas attempts against Jewish people, which means that both of sides
utilizes the same reason to justify their acts: self-defense (Honorato 2009).

On the other hand of its strategy, Hamas developed an important welfare network provision to the Palestinian population who lives in the Gaza Strip. Services offered ranges from education and health to culture and sport. This way, Hamas managed to achieve popularity among its own people in order to build up legitimacy for its demands, something that would expand on the following years (Rostami-Povey 2010, 171-172).

3 STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

3.1 THE RESURGENCE OF AL-QAEDA

The September 11 attacks unleashed the US-lead Global War against Terrorism, which was first expressed through the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2011, where Washington aimed to take the Taliban out of power as well as to purge Al-Qaeda from Afghani territory. The group’s forces in Afghanistan crumbled rapidly in the face of US forces and military equipment. At the same time, a huge number of countries joined the global coalition against terrorism, with the United Nations in the process of elaborating guidelines to combat terrorism. Having lost its Afghan network at that time, Al-Qaeda dispersed itself, no longer being a coherent structure able to provide fully training as well as safe haven for jihadists. Although weakened, Al-Qaeda was not dead. Taking advantage of its close links within the Pakistani tribal zones – a place where Islamabad’s security forces barely enforced anything –, the movement repositioned itself geographically, and its key leaders flew to Pakistan (Chaliand and Blin 2007).

At the end of the 2000s, the US focused its strategy to target and kill Al-Qaeda leaders through drone strikes. Several key figures in the group’s chain of command were in fact killed through this way. However, the major blow to al-Qaeda came in 2011 with Osama bin Laden’s killing by US Special Operation Forces in Pakistan. It was hoped that the terrorist group would disband and gradually disappear. Nonetheless, the group’s message soon after bin Laden’s death was clear:

Are the Americans able to kill what Sheikh Osama lived and fought for, even with all their soldiers, intelligence, and agencies? Never! Never! Sheikh Osama did not build an organization that would die with him, nor would end with him (Maher and Neumann 2012, 3).
Al-Zawahiri then assumed the role as al-Qaeda’s top leader, who continued to spread the message, rallying supporters and providing inspiration for the jihad continuation.

Soon after, the Arab Spring shook the Middle East. Al-Qaeda was enthusiastic about it, since the corrupt regimes that they were fighting against were now being toppled by spontaneous popular uprisings. However this was exactly the problem for the terrorist network: they played no role in unfolding these popular movements. Therefore, as Maher and Neumann (2012) points out, al-Zawahiri tried to turn the tide arguing that if the events escalated so quickly and turned to mass revolts that was because the broader political context was flawed, corrupted, as Al-Qaeda had always spoken against. Nonetheless, such approach was not able to spread and it failed to gather enough attention or support.

In Tunisia, the Ennahda Party reached the government, as well as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, both Islamist movements with legal parties that had disputed elections. Instead of igniting revolutions, they just assumed power on the existing political order, something that Al-Qaeda had traditionally criticized. However, in 2013, a coup d’état took the Muslim Brotherhood out of power in Egypt and the Syrian uprising was at a stalemate. The argument for taking power through legal means was then soon dissolved, and Al-Qaeda affirmed once more that they had been right since the beginning, that only through radical changes Islamist parties could reach power.

The instability in the region, this far, has proved to be a breeding ground for Al-Qaeda and other terrorist movements that franchised with al-Zawahiri’s group. One of the consequences of the uprising in Libya, for example, was the empowerment of Islamist groups in the Sahel, mainly in Mali, due to the traffic of light and heavy weapons coming from Libyan territory since the fall of Qadaffi, going to the hands, in particular, of the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Political turmoil in Yemen strengthened also the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), especially in its north-western provinces (Maher and Neumann 2012).

However, the main comeback of Al-Qaeda can be traced to Syria and Iraq. The civil war in Syria and the huge amount of jihadists that came into Syrian territory revived one of Al-Qaeda’s most violent branches: Al-Qaeda in Iraq, now renamed as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). This was enabled especially after the US withdrawal from Iraqi territory in 2010 without having stabilized the country (The Economist 2013). In Syria, specifically, an Islamist radical front has been fighting against the al-Assad regime, the front al-Nusra. Their aim would be “destroying the century-old borders of the region, tearing down the hated Sykes-Picot borders drawn by London and Paris in the aftermath
of World War I” (Rieder 2014). Also, Al-Qaeda’s Lebanese branch, the Abdullah Azam Brigades, is trying to import the Syrian civil war into Lebanon, in order to turn the whole Levant (Lebanon, Syria and Iraq) into a corridor for Al-Qaeda (Rieder 2014).

In 2014, ISIS successfully took control of Fallujah and Ramadi, two cities of the Anbar province in Iraq, one of the places where US troops lost more men during the Iraq invasion. Only after the Iraqi central government asked for equipment reinforcements to the US did Baghdad managed to retake control of that region. Today, as Alani (2014) affirms, it can be said that the conflict in Syria spilled-over to Iraq and combatants from both countries are merged into the ISIS, transiting between Syrian-Iraqi borders almost freely, reinforcing al-Qaeda after many years of absence. This major comeback brings apprehension about the future of Middle East, mainly now that US has scheduled its depart from Afghanistan by the end of the year (NATO 2014), raising fears that Al-Qaeda and its franchised branches might come back to the land where they were expelled from in 2001.

3.2 HEZBOLLAH’S EVOLUTION AND ADAPTATION

Since Israel’s withdrawal from South Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah has faced several challenges, although keeping its general identities: an Islamist movement, a political actor, a resistance movement and a user of political violence.

The loosening of Hezbollah’s Islamist credentials is a process related to the group’s decision of taking part in the democratic legal process of Lebanon, since 1992, as it has already been seen. Since then, Hezbollah left aside its initial goal of toppling the current political order to install an Islamic republic mirroring the one that exists in Iran. Furthermore, the group has stopped to demand the abolishment of the sectarian system in use by the Lebanese state23. Even though it remained calling itself a Shia movement, Hezbollah sold its image as a group that extends acquired benefits for all religious sects. In fact, what is left of Hezbollah’s Pan-Islamist is mainly related to its ties to Iran and Syria, as well as its support for the Palestinians, which is indeed a support against a common enemy, namely Israel (Gaub 2013).

Since 1992, the group has already participated in five parliamentary and three municipal elections, which is an important step in the direction of abandoning its initial Shia inward-looking policy. As a matter of fact, Hezbollah

23 In the current political system of Lebanon, the country’s president is required to be a Maronite, the prime-minister a Sunni and the Speaker of the Parliament a Shia.
joined the March 8 political alliance since 2005, with the predominantly Christian Free Patriotic Movement, what, in accordance to Gaub (2013), can be seen as a real moment of integration into the Lebanese political scene. Also, in 2005, it has fielded two ministries in the Lebanese cabinet, something that has been repeated in the following three cabinets.

One important reason why Hezbollah earned so much popular support, besides the resistance against Israel, was its ability to provide services and resources for the civilian population. As it is pointed out by Rostami-Povey (2010, 112-113),

Hezbollah was the first to provide the social services to those who fought the Israelis in the South and their families. It constructed effective social welfare institutions to bring the Shia communities out of marginalization. Gradually its vast social network supported other deprived communities. The funding for these services came not from government resources but from donations, religious taxes and fundraising. Iran's financial assistance was also significant […]. Hezbollah begun to fulfill the function of the state as it was able to mobilize resources that the state was not supplying. It provided schools, clean water and electricity for different communities, and its agricultural development in the Beqaa Valley and the South has been impressive.

Analyzing its stance as a resistance movement and a user of political violence and its evolution on this regard, it has already been said that Hezbollah emerged in the Lebanese Civil War as a militia whose goal was to liberate Lebanon from Israel, something that it kept after the Taif Agreements since Tel Aviv continued to occupy South Lebanon. From this moment on, its existence has been questioned since the Israeli withdrawal and its internal and external opponents argue that the time may have come for Hezbollah to put its weapons at the service of the Lebanese Army. The group, however, refused to surrender its arms and affirmed that the resistance rationale was still up to date, since Hezbollah was now a national movement that could protect Lebanon from future Israeli aggressions. The group also bases its arguments on the fact that Lebanon claims that the Sheeba farms, a territory now under control of Israel in the Golan Heights, is actually Lebanese, thus, needing to be free from the Israeli occupation.

Hezbollah has been credited for terrorist attacks against a set of targets in the 1980s and 1990s, thus, staring in the list of terrorist organizations of the United States, Israel, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (Gaub 2013). Its rhetoric during the Second Intifada, initiated in 2000, supported such views, since it described “the United States as the Great Satan and Israel as a cancerous entity, den[y]ing the existence of civilians in
Israel (hence legitimizing its indiscriminate shelling) and generally us[ing] anti-Semitic language” (Gaub 2013, 8).

However, since Israel’s withdrawal, the group has opted mainly for the launching of rockets against Northern Israel, not having conducted suicide operations since 1999. In fact, in 2001, Hezbollah has condemned the attacks of September 11 against the United States and the 2007 attack on a UNIFIL contingent. In addition, “while it does advocate Palestinian suicide attacks amongst Israeli civilians, Hezbollah itself has conducted suicide operations only against Israeli military targets, and only in Lebanon (Gaub 2013, 8)” . This is explained by the fact that even though Hezbollah does not accept Israel’s existence and advocates for the liberation of Palestine, it has never operated within Israeli territory. Moreover, the group states that suicide is only legitimate when used in a larger context of jihad, being the liberation of Palestine one such example, but not the killing of innocent civilians for no clear context: that’s why it considers Al-Qaeda’s operations as terrorism (Gaub 2013).

The 2006 war with Israel was the watershed moment for Hezbollah in the 2000s, since it affected its stance not only as a resistance movement, but also as a political party and as a user of political violence. After the kidnapping by Hezbollah of two Israeli soldiers in July 2006, Israel unleashed a full-scale war on Lebanon for 34 days, destroying infrastructure and civilian targets in South Lebanon, as well as the Beirut International Airport and the Beirut-Damascus Highway. The United States and the European Union rejected ceasefire calls so that Israel could have time to punish Hezbollah and, indirectly, Syria and Iran (Rostami-Povey 2010). Nonetheless, Hezbollah survived and in fact emerged stronger (Skezely 2012). As soon as the war ended it was Hezbollah’s and Iran’s resources that managed to reconstruct South Lebanon and help the refugees. Skezely (2012) affirms that Hezbollah’s ability to survive the July War and to not suffer a backlash at home was the product of the relationships it built domestically – building civilian support amidst all religious sects – and regionally – with Iran, Syria and Palestine.

Politically, after the war which Hezbollah claimed to have won, the group demanded more power in the cabinet, asking not only for a change in the electoral system, but also for a veto for itself and its allies in the government (Gaub 2013). Nonetheless, the opposition did not accept such demands and Hezbollah resorted to the use of force, besieging the parliament, clashing with its Lebanese political opponents. According to Gaub (2013, 7),

as a result, Lebanon was paralyzed for over a year; but Hezbollah’s resorting to violence harmed its narrative as the only Lebanese militia never having used its arms against fellow Lebanese. Perhaps not surprisingly, Hezbollah’s bloc lost in
the following elections, and it have up the minority veto it had lobbied for.

More recently, new developments have jeopardized Hezbollah’s position in the Lebanese landscape. First, four prominent Hezbollah supporters have been indicated to the UN’s Special Tribunal for Lebanon for being accused of involvement in the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. This led to Hezbollah’s minister withdrawing from the Lebanese cabinet in 2011. Adding to this blow to the group’s ethics, Hezbollah got officially involved in 2012 in the Syrian conflict at the side of al-Assad’s regime, affirming that its overthrown would endanger Lebanon as a whole. Nonetheless, as Chubin (2012) points, its internal and external critics affirmed that the only thing that was in danger with Assad’s fall was Hezbollah’s links with Syria and Iran related to money and weapons transfer. This way, the group would be putting their weapons at the service of an illegitimate ruler in another country, respecting no more the pact that permitted Hezbollah continue to exist as a force out of state control: to serve only as a national resistance against Israel, acting inside the Lebanese territory.

3.3 HAMAS’ CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS

Current developments involving Hamas must be analyzed in two different points of views. On one hand, the group still utilizes political violence in order to achieve their goals, even though this has dramatically diminished during the last years. On the other hand, the Islamist group followed through the path of participation in the legal process of Palestinian politics.

Hamas considers that the use of violence is a necessity imposed by the reality they are living at on the ground. As stressed by Mirault (2010, 28), “for Hamas, the situation of territorial fragmentation proves the inefficiency of the diplomatic negotiation adopted by the PLO and justifies the continuation of the armed struggle”. This way, military actions for Hamas are a source of legitimation and popular mobilization. The same author continues (2010, 28), “Hamas’ terrorist activities contain two main political messages. The first, to Arafat and the PLO, is do not dare ignore us, the second to the State of Israel is that negotiations with the PLO do not constitute the final word”.

Therefore, to achieve popular legitimation, Hamas used its fight against the peace process as a manner to gather around the group Palestinians who did not agree with the negotiations, “quickly develop[ing] a hard core of determiner Islamist militants (Mirault 2010, 29)”. The suicide bombings, for example, were a new mean of balancing power with Israel, since Hamas wished “to demonstrate
through this device that Israel is neither invincible, nor inaccessible” (Mirault 2010, 31). This same author points that from the beginning of the Second Intifada, in 2000, in two years, Hamas killed 649 Israeli victims, 337 in Israel and 312 in the occupied territories. From them, more than two thirds were civilians. In fact, the group justified the bombings against Israelis civilians because this would be an answer to the assassination of Palestinian civilians by Israeli soldiers. Nonetheless, such new tactics deteriorated the legitimacy of their fight in the face of the international community, even though for Palestinians this served to give popularity in relation to Hamas, which was seen as the one able to inflict damage to their occupier. Such internal support might be seen due to the continued backing of Hamas from the local population (Rostami-Povey 2010).

In regard to the political process, for Hamas, only the end of Israeli occupation in Palestinian lands would open the way for an end to the current violence. Just after Tel Aviv retreat from the occupied territories that a truce could be achieved with the Israelis and then the real negotiations might begin, in accordance to Hamas’ point of view. The participation in politics was one more step that the group saw as necessary to stop the violence perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians. This, however, as pointed out by Mirault (2010), does not mean that Hamas started to recognize the Oslo Agreements\textsuperscript{24} as a legitimate process: first of all, the occupation must end, and only then talks about recognition of Israel and the creation of a Palestinian state should occur.

Throughout the 1990s, Hamas started to participate in local elections in Gaza. It only took the first big step in Palestinian politics in 2006, when it participated as the legend “Change and Reform” for the legislative elections. It won the majority of seats in the Legislative Council, 74 seats out of 132, emerging as the largest party at Palestine (Mirault 2010). The reasons behind Hamas’ victory are many. First of all, Hamas earned a lot of respect after the Second Intifada, in 2000.

Hama’s popularity grew after the collapse of the peace process and the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000, a revolt which allowed the Islamist Movement to build its notoriety and to assert itself in the name of the Palestinian people the legitimacy of the armed struggle and its leading role in fighting the Israeli occupation (Mirault 2010, 52).

\textsuperscript{24} The Oslo Agreements were a number of accords signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), controlled by Fatah, in 1993 and 1995. They were agreed in order to pursue a peace plan to end the conflict between Israeli and Palestinians. One of the most important points of them was the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which were recognized by Israel as the representative of the Palestinian people and also as an equal actor in the negotiations. On the other hand, the PA also had to recognize Israel as a state. This brought up a lot of criticism by the part of Hamas, who refused to recognize Israel as a state, also stating that the Israelis were not de facto doing their part during the peace process.
Therefore, Mirault (2010) notices that Palestinian people had already lost faith in relation to the Oslo Agreements and that there was a feeling of injustice and frustration due to the perpetual growth of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Also, Hamas had built a vast network of social services to the Palestinian population in Gaza, which has greatly contributed to their popular support. “Hamas provides the social welfare, health care, education, and cultural and sporting institutions that are crucial for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation (Rostami-Povey 2010, 170).”

Hamas’ provision of resources is transparently conducted through charity organizations, mosques, unions, schools and sports clubs. The Israelis have tried, with the help of the Palestinian Authority, to close down Hamas’ social work institutions and to freeze their bank accounts. But they face street demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, including Fatah supporters, Christians, secular groups and other communities, who receive the social welfare services provided by Hamas (Rostami-Povey 2010, 171-172).

Anyway, Hamas found itself in 2006 occupying 56% of the seats in the Palestinian legislative chamber. President Abbas asked Hamas to form a government of national unity, even though there have been skirmishes and political divergences between Fatah and Hamas during the 1990s regarding their respective positions in relation to Israel and the peace process. Ismail Haniya, a prominent Gaza leader from Hamas, was appointed as the prime minister.

In fact, Israel, and also the United States, did not recognize the election results since they both consider the group a terrorist organization. The then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert declared:

It is clear that in light of Hamas majority in the Palestinian Legislative Chamber and the instructions to form a new government that were given to the head of Hamas, the Palestine Authority is, in practice, becoming a terrorist authority. Israel will not hold contacts with the administration in which Hamas plays any part, small, large or permanent (Mirault 2010, 36).

Abbas’ invitation to Hamas to form a national unity government prompted Israel to impose several sanctions against Gaza. It asked for the international community to impose a financial blockade against the Strip, imposing also a regional one, refusing to send back to Gaza the taxes that Israel got from the Palestinians as an occupier power. It also set up an economic blockade on the Strip’s trade, blocking Gaza’s port and interrupting any exports from Gaza to the outside and limiting its imports.

Amidst this and the problems between Hamas and Fatah, Haniya could
not successfully negotiate with Fatah members to form a coalition government because Hamas refused to recognize the validity of peace agreements previously accorded with Israel. Therefore, Haniya presented a cabinet constituted by only Hamas representatives. This exacerbated tensions with Fatah, whose relationship grew still tenser by the time that Hamas established its own security force in the Gaza Strip, in 2007 – the Executive Force in Gaza, composed by 3,000 members under the Hamas-led Interior Ministry (Mirault 2010). Such act was declared illegal by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, restarting a new cycle of internal confrontation between Hamas and Fatah, which culminated in mid-June with the Hamas’ takeover of Gaza’s security, expelling Fatah’s forces from there. Abbas rapidly declared a state of emergency and set up an emergency cabinet, dismissing the government of national unity.

Israel unleashed as a punitive action against Hamas in Gaza the Operation “Cast Lead”, on 27th December 2008. At this day, one hundred tons of bombs were dropped on Gaza, receiving Haniya’s answer that Hamas would be ready for the struggle. The European Union and the United States endorsed Israel’s actions, even though the first one had went back on its position later. After three weeks of confrontations, Hamas was weakened, with more than 1,250 Palestinians dead, and a unilateral ceasefire was reached on January 18th, 2009. Throughout the conflict, Hamas managed to keep firing rockets on Israeli territory, which boosted its image amidst the population of Gaza, still under control of the group.

Recently, the Arab Spring contributed to affect Hamas’ positions. Due to its links with Syria and Iran, states who usually provided the group with military and financial resources, Hamas used to have an operation base in Damascus. Nonetheless, after the Syrian conflict escalated and the al-Assad regime became threatened, Hamas was asked to provide full support to the government in Syria. Afraid of losing support at home if it stood by al-Assad’s side, Hamas refused it and left Syria in the end of 2011. One of the supposed consequences of it was a reduction on the aid given by Iran to the group (Chubin 2012). More isolated than before, Gulf countries such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia managed to take on the vacuum of power left by Syria and Iran and started to developed commercial and investments links with Hamas. Doha, in fact, crafted an agreement between Fatah and Hamas for a new attempt to form a national unity government in 2012, which failed then, but was revived now in April 2014, with results yet to be seen (Ben-David and Ramadan 2014).
3 PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL ACTIONS

The issue of what actions the UN must employ when dealing with non-state military actors is a very complex question. In fact, until today, there isn’t a general international framework widely accepted of how to deal with this kind of groups. This is due to the fact that there are a huge variety of non-state military actors worldwide, with specificities in each region and at their own foundation and relations with outside powers.

It is no different in the Middle East: all these groups in the region have been generally dealt with in a case by case basis by the UN, regional bodies and the states themselves. Generally, when they are considered in a collective manner, the most common framework used is terrorism. Even though there are non-state military actors that clearly use political terror to achieve their aims, other groups do not consider that this characteristic shapes their main identity. Therefore, an approach that deals with these groups considering all as terrorist raises considerable criticism. Furthermore, the very labeling of a group as terrorist implies a political decision, since, as it has already been discussed, for some a non-state actor may be a freedom fighter and for others a separatist/terrorist/rebel.

Another question that must be raised is in relation to the best form to deal with non-state military actors. Usually, the UN uses the sanctioning approach, preferring to cope with the problem coercively. This is because sanctions are also the most common actions perpetrated by states such as the United States, Israel and also European countries. Nonetheless, there is much criticism in relation to such approach, since dealing with these groups purely through coercion is a short-term solution, which may not even address the reasons behind a non-state military actor’s foundation. Therefore, a wider approach that also involves such groups politically is sometimes considered.

According to Miretski (2009), the UNSC has already adopted several resolutions dealing with non-state military actors, even enforcing duties upon them. Such facts point to the UNSC’s responsibility to also address intra-state problems, related to non-state military actors, and not only inter-states issues. As laid down by Article 2(6) of the UN Charter, the UN has the authority to ensure that non-members, such as these groups, act in accordance with the principles of the organization for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The first UNSC resolution addressing non-state entities, in fact, was adopted in May 1958, with Resolution 50, on the Palestine question (Miretski 2009). Nonetheless, the first and clearest moment in which sanctions and direct obligations were installed upon a non-state entity came years later. They
were targeted against União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), during the Angolan Civil War, where the UNSC installed sanctions and imposed obligations directly to this group through Resolution 864 (1993).

Special resolutions and sanctions have also been raised against the main non-state military actors of the Middle East, namely Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas. It is important to note that the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has also risen as a prominent non-state military actor in the region lately, defying the current borders of existing states and the stability in the region. However, since it came to the forefront of international discussions only recently, no action against it has yet taken place.

Sanctions against Al-Qaeda have been closely linked to the Taleban regime initially, in Afghanistan. Travel bans, freezing of assets and further actions have been designed by the UNSC to address the possible spread of such group. The Council used to work against Al-Qaeda close to other resolutions that tackled terrorism in a broader way. On the other hand, for Hezbollah and Hamas to be targeted by sanctions as terrorist groups is a more contentious issue. This hampers the possibility of multilateral international sanctions to be laid down by the UN, usually leading to the adoption of unilateral actions by states that condemn both such groups.

4 BLOC POSITIONS

The United States includes Al-Qaeda, Hamas and the military wing of Hezbollah in its list of terrorist groups around the world. The country considers that non-state military actors’ acts are an affront against the basic rights of every single human being (Karl 2014). Since the September 11 attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the US government has unleashed an international struggle in order to defeat terrorism, seeing fundamentalist Islamic

25 A full list of resolution linked to targeted sanctions used in the fight against terrorism can be find at the Global Policy Forum site in the following link: https://www.globalpolicy.org/security-council/index-of-countries-on-the-security-council-agenda/sanctions/49069.html

26 In relation to Hezbollah, many Western countries classify the group or its military wing as a terrorist organization, while other Arab and Muslim states consider it as a resistance movement (Horowitz 2013; PewResearchCenter 2010). Australia, Bahrain, Canada, France, Israel, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States and also the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council have officially listed Hezbollah, at least in one aspect, as a terrorist organization (PewResearchCenter 2010). The same applies to Hamas. Australia, Canada, Israel, the European Union, Japan, Jordan, the United Kingdom, Egypt and the United States consider the group a terrorist organization. Public opinion in Arab countries, on the other hand, shows a more favorable position toward Hamas (PewResearchCenter 2010).
groups as the great threat against North-American citizens around the world. In order to meet this goal, the United States, during the Bush Administration, started two wars in the Middle East: the first of them, against Afghanistan, to hunt the Al-Qaeda leader responsible for the September 11 attacks and to topple the country’s Taliban regime; the other one, against Iraq, where supposed nuclear weapons had had been developed by Saddam Hussein’s government (Roberto 2013).

The US government also defends the right of the Israeli Army to guard Jewish people’s lives against attacks undertaken by Hamas and Hezbollah. At the same time, the White House reinforces the necessity of preserving Human Rights measures in the conflict zone, asking for Israeli authorities to be aware in relation to the civilian population (Calamur; Chappell 2014). Other worrying point about this issue is the acquisition of sophisticated armaments by Hezbollah, giving them a reach beyond the borders of Lebanon, which Washington strongly believes have been supplied by Iran (Hirschfeld; Gordon 2014). These Hezbollah’s initiatives has provoked an response from the United States Congress, which is now working in new measures to impose sanctions to the jihadist group, in order to decrease its financial founds, discouraging new acquisitions (Lebanon News 2014).

However, on the other hand, the United States has also been indirectly involved in Middle Eastern conflicts through the financing of non-state military groups that Washington judges as moderate in their struggle against the local governments which, in turn, are designated by US as not being legitimate anymore27 (Bandeira 2013). Therefore, such groups would cease to be only non-state military actors and would start to transform themselves in the next legitimate representative of its people as soon as the previous regime fell down. This has happened in Libya (2011), when a popular movement took place in order to remove Kaddafi28 from power. The North-American government, jointly to others NATO’s members, provided financial resources, armaments and logistical assistance to non-state military actors, including the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, one of the main rebel groups in the struggle against Kaddafi’s regime (Chossudovsky 2011 apud Bandeira 2013). Washington has

27 This loss of legitimate character of some governments in the Middle East pointed by Washington is related to the use of force against the civilian population authorized by the central administration.

28 Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Kaddafi assumed power in 1969 in a military coup that deposed king Idris. As soon as he came to power, Kaddafi has tried to implement a lot of reforms in political and economical Libyan systems (Bandeira 2013, p. 252). In 2011, when the revolution started, Libya had a 30% rate of unemployment, and a one third of the whole population was living below the poverty line (CIA 2010 apud Bandeira 2013).
also been providing rebels in Syria with military equipment and technology in their struggle to fight against Bashar al-Assad’s regime, seen as illegitimate and as a dictatorship (Bandeira 2013).

The United Kingdom has been a great US ally in counter-terrorism strategies since the beginning of the Global War on Terror, inaugurated right after the September 11 attacks, in 2001. The UK government has contributed with its forces in the North-American pursuit of bin Laden and in the combat against Taliban at Afghanistan. For London, the struggle against non-state military actors, which use terrorism as a tactic, is a very important issue, necessary to be addressed in order to protect and guarantee the United Kingdom interests and the security of its citizens. To achieve this important goal, the UK government has been working, in the last few years, in new measures to improve its strategy into a more effective one, utilizing its intelligence services for detecting threats before they become real (Government of United Kingdom 2011; Home Office 2011). In June 2014, the UK government published a list containing all the non-state military groups considered terrorists and banned under UK law. Such list counts with the names of Hamas and Hezbollah’s military wing, besides listing all the criteria used to identify these groups with this denomination (Home Office 2014).

It is also important to point out the partnership firmed with the French government, named as “Entente Frugale”. The agreement intends to establish a military cooperation between the greatest European armies in order to share responsibilities and costs (Abbas; John 2013). Both countries agree with the United States position that despite the existence of terrorist non-state military actors, some groups might turn into the representative of peoples when they are moderate and are fighting against illegitimate governments. Such instance has been proved when London and Paris acted together in the Libyan campaign, assisting rebel groups against the central government of Muammar Kaddafi. Great Britain and France have provided help with their Special Forces with the aim to help insurgents that occupied one of the most important oil facility in Brega, a complex of small cities located in Sirte Bay, a substantial oil reserve for Europe (Bandeira 2013). In Syria, the UK’s government was also accused, by an Israeli communication agency (DEBKAfile), to promote special training to Syrian insurgents against al-Assad’s regime, besides providing weapons to it (Chossudovsky 2012 apud Badeira 2013).

France has been working directly in the combat of jihadist groups in North Africa, especially in Mali, where it acts against a branch of Al-Qaeda, the AQIM. The French government believes that these jihadist groups threaten not only the African or Middle Eastern security, but the European as well. To combat this threat is actually a priority of the French’s government foreign
policy, and achieving this goal is a way to guarantee the presence of France all over these regions. Nevertheless, it is important to point that military measures are the most important strategy used by the French government in the struggle against terrorism threats and that it considers every jihadist group as a possible menace (Euronews 2013; Hansen 2008).

In the scope of the “Entente Frugale” with Great Britain, the French government developed some joint operations (in association to UK’s forces) to support rebel groups in the popular revolution against Kaddafi, in Libya, believing that such struggle was legitimate. Paris was responsible to provide self-defense weapons, stating that this action did not constitute a violation of the arms transfer embargo (Holtom n.d.). Also in Syria, the French government was accused by local media to train deserters from the Syrian Army through agents from the Service Action de la Direction Générale and the Commandement des Opérations Spéciales. These Syrian insurgents, armed and trained by France’s forces, constituted the Free Syrian Army, one of the most important groups that fought against al-Assad’s government (Lussato 2011 apud Bandeira 2013).

The Russian Federation has been developing a framework to address non-state military actors under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization’s (SCO) environment, working directly with the Chinese government in order to eliminate the threats all over its influence zone, in Central Asia, where terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda act (Neves Jr.; Piccoli 2012). The SCO advocates against direct military intervention as a counter terrorism strategy, understanding that the combat against this menace is more than just the employment of force: it is also important to stimulate economic growth in countries where terrorist groups have been acting ultimately, in order to strengthen the central administration before the local population.

One example of Russia’s tendency for non-interventionism is the case of the Syrian crisis, which started in 2011. For Moscow, terrorist groups has been trying to overturn the government of President Bashar al-Assad, and the Russian Federation has been one of the greatest advocators against attempts of direct Western military interventions, vetoing a resolution that tried to impose sanctions against the Syrian government (The Guardian 2011; United Nations 2011).

Africa is the most important supplier of oil and metals to France even nowadays, that is what justifies the very strong presence of the European country in the African continent (Melly; Darraçq 2013). The European country has a more effective presence in Africa as a consequence of the past relations among its former colonies.

Russia and China vetoed a resolution elaborated together between the three Western powers (USA, UK and France), in October 2011, in order to guarantee sanctions against al-Assad government, accused in the occasion to use the force against the civilian population in Syria (The Guardian 2011; The United Nations 2011).
This was clear when the local government was accused of using chemical weapons against the civilian population in order to contain the rebel jihadist groups, in 2013, and Russia firmly opposed any US or NATO intervention in the country. In the case of Libya, Russia again has positioned itself against the direct intervention of Western powers in the conflict between government and insurgents. In fact, Russia has accused Western powers of double standards when dealing with Middle Eastern conflicts, since on one hand they consider Islamic fighters in Lebanon, such as Hezbollah, as terrorists, but, on the other hand, they support armed opposition movements in other countries, such as Syria, which, in most time, are similarly consisted of Islamic fighters. Also, in June 2011, Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, accused the French government of violating the United Nations Security Council’s Resolution 1970, which imposed an embargo on arms transfers inside the Libyan territory (Abu-Aun 2011).

For the People’s Republic of China, terrorism and religious fundamentalist are two of the “Three Evils” which threat the country’s stability and security, thus needing to be contained (Chien-peng 2006). In 2001, after the September 11 attacks against the United States and its subsequent Global War on Terror, China has been a supporter of this struggle, participating in multilateral efforts headed by Western powers. Nonetheless, the Chinese administration positions itself totally against direct intervention promoted by foreign forces in internal issues, as happened in Libya and Syria in 2011. In the case of Syria, China’s government pointed out that a military action promoted by Western powers in the country could put in danger not only the local economy, but the whole international oil market, leading to a considerable increasing in prices (Benammar 2013). It has also adopted a similar instance to Russia when pointing at what it considers Western powers’ double standards in relation to terrorism, considering that some radical armed groups that are supported by the West should also be labeled as terrorists (Bandeira 2013). Beijing believes, thus, that all radical and extremist forces should be dealt with through severe means, but keeping in mind what the country which hosts those non-state armed actors considers about them.

On the other hand, the government’s posture for internal issues has been questioned in international instances: the severity of the central administration’s acts in the struggle against non-state military actors has, in the other hand, contributed to the outbreak of terrorist movements into its own territory. The

---

31 Besides the agreement proposed by Russia to United States, about the destruction of Syrian chemical arsenal, Russian government sent maritime task force to Syrian coast in order to guarantee the safety evacuation of Russian citizens from the country if the situation gets into chaos (Iaroslav Viátkin 2013).
internal combat to these groups has been seen, by the international community, as violations of Human Rights (Chien-peng 2006). In the end of 2001, Chinese government published an estimative in which 800 Chinese citizens Uighurs had received training in guerilla tactics from al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The number was considered as inflated. Actually, since the September 11 September attacks against the United States and the beginning of the Global War on Terror, China has been trying to connect its internal separatist movements to terrorist organization as an strategy to combat these groups that can threat the stability of some important Chinese regions, as Xinjiang (Dynon 2013).

However, it is important to distinguish Chinese politics for counterterrorism inside its territory from the ones preached for the external arena: China has been working hard in order to establish a peace zone in the Palestinian territory, avoiding hostilities from both parties, Jewish and Arab. Thus, the Asian power recognized, in 2006, the Hamas government, elected by the Palestinian people, even though it disagrees with its political practices. Having recognized the new Palestinian authority, China has been trying to help broker a ceasefire between Hamas forces and the Israeli army, believing that terrorist actions against the Jewish population will not contribute positively to the negotiations (New Agencies 2006).

Argentina positions itself entirely against terrorism in all its forms. The country does not accept religious causes as justifications for these acts. Nevertheless, the Argentinean government does not believe in violent actions as the correct way to solve the problem. Thereby, Cristina Kirchner, Argentina’s president, has been encouraging the dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian’s authorities in order to stop attacks headed by non-state military actors who act from the Palestinian territory, such as Hamas (Infosur hoy 2009). It is also worth remembering that Hezbollah was held accountable for the authorship of the attacks from 1992 and 1994 in Buenos Aires, against the Israeli Embassy and the Argentine-Israeli Mutual Association, respectively (Sullivan 2010).

Under these circumstances, Argentina sees international cooperation as the best way to reach solutions, eradicating terrorist groups first where they seem more effective and then in other regions where they must probably act. It is also important to stress out the Argentinean large defense on the protection of Human Rights both in relation to terrorist acts and in measures to combat them (Buenos Aires Herald 2013a). Last year, Argentina officially positioned itself against military intervention in the Syrian conflict, stating that the Western attitude would contribute to aggravate the situation in the Middle East. Instead of military actions, Argentinean government has stand up for humanitarian interventions promoted by United Nations (Buenos Aires Herald 2013b).

Chile is engaged in the global counterterrorism struggle, being part of
multilateral organs that work in order to combat these practices, such as the Executive Secretariat of the Organization of American States’ Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (US Departament of State 2012). The South-American country condemns the application of direct foreign military actions to solve countries’ internal issues, such as have been happening in Syria and has happened in Libya. It is important to point out that this position is clearly defended by a majority of Latin-American countries in every multilateral forum they came to make part (Sanchez 2013). Accordingly, Chile’s central administration supported the agreement between US and Russia in order to eliminate the chemical weapons arsenal in Syria’s government power as the best solution capable to prevent Western interventions (Xinhua 2013).

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been facing a menace to its stability through the presence of radical Islamic groups in its territory and therefore supports strong actions against terrorism. Due to its position, bordering Israel, the West Bank, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Jordan is a natural target for non-state military organizations such as Al-Qaeda. Thereby, the Arab monarchy relies on military support from Western powers, such as the United States, the United Kingdom and France for its security (Global Research 2010). The country also suffers directly with the strong presence of the Muslim Brotherhood movement from inside its territory, currently under a conflict between two factions: one more moderate, and other more extremist, which follows strongly Qutb’s thoughts, defending the jihad against Israeli people (World Almanac of Islamism 2013).

The Islamic Action Force (IAF), the political representation of Muslim Brotherhood in the country, has close relations with Hamas, supporting its struggle for the Palestinian cause, as well as Hezbollah’s. Nevertheless, the central administration, in order to safeguard its relations with Western powers, has been undertaking efforts to stop the growth of this faction in Jordanian politics: the king has declared that he would not use peaceful means to stop the enemy advance on his domains (World Almanac of Islamism 2013). Despite of having no great amounts of oil, Jordan is considered a key country in the region by Western powers: not only it has been an ally for a long time, but also because of its geostrategic position in the region, acting as a local support to external forces against these jihadist groups (Visentini 2010).

Nigeria has been suffering directly from the actions of non-state military actors, such as Boko Haram, a fundamentalist Islamic group that utilizes terrorist attacks as a form of achieving its goals in the region (Sergie 2014). Therefore, the country believes that harsh actions must be imposed on terrorists. The importance of energetic resources from Nigeria, specifically the oil from the Gulf of Guinea, makes the country an important target of Western policies
to combat Islamic terrorist groups (Magginis 2012). With the objective of preserving the oil reserves of Nigeria, Western countries offered themselves to collaborate with Nigerian forces in the combat against Boko Haram’s expansion and other terrorist groups that may act in Nigeria’s territory (Reuters 2014). Nevertheless, as one of the most important member of the African Union, Nigeria has been a great advocate of African solutions to African problems, condemning military intervention promoted by Western powers in its territory and seeing military actions in the Middle East region with particular uneasy (Cerqueira 2008).

Located in a region marked by the action of non-state military organizations in North Africa, Chad has been intensively engaged in a counterterrorist struggle, especially since 2011, in order to combat all the possible threats of terrorism in the Sahel region. To be effective in its goal, Chad’s government has created a Special Operations Liaison Element in Chad to support Chadian counterterrorism forces, which contributes to the formulation of a national strategy against terrorism (US Department of State 2012). Even though Chad is an active member of the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECOWAS), the country developed this strategy based on bilateral agreements with other countries of the region, mainly Nigeria, Cameroon and Sudan. From this point of view, Chadian forces have been playing an important role in the combat to non-state military groups in North Africa, such as AQIM in Mali, where the Chad government acted together with French troops. On the other hand, Chad is accused to assist the rebel forces which overthrew the government in the Central African Republic, using similar strategies as the ones that Western powers have been employing in the Middle East’s conflicts (Judah 2013).

Rwanda is a member of the East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative, an institution created by the US government in order to develop capacities to counter terrorism in the Eastern Africa region. The terrorist threat in Somalia, in the last decade, headed by al-Shabaab, a non-state military organization guided by fundamentalist Islamic principles, was the main impulse for the African countries’ decision to engage in this institution, which counts not only with legal instruments, but also with the usage of direct military intervention when the situation makes it necessary (US Department of State 2013), such as the position of Rwanda in this issue.

Australia condemns terrorist acts against the civilian population, considering jihadist groups, like Hezbollah, as dangerous to international security as ISIS, which has been promoting attacks in Iraq. For Australia’s government, the best way to solve the issues which involve terrorism is through governmental agencies of a group of countries (Australian Government 2014). Australia does not believe in violent measures as a solution for this problem, but trusts in
the success of collective actions in order to promote pluralism, democracy and human rights in regions where terrorist groups are acting. Nevertheless, last year, after the accusations against al-Assad’s government of using chemical weapons against its civilian population, Australia’s central administration positioned itself defending direct military actions promoted by the United States, not confirming, however, if it would cooperate, sending Australian forces (News 2013). In this case, Australia justifies its position through the argument of the violation of Human Rights by the Syrian government, affirming that every time it happens, the international community has to intervene to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe, using the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The Republic of Korea demonstrates concern by the advances of jihadist groups in the Middle East and by the terrorist actions undertaken by them. Most of this position is due to its close relations with Israel: nowadays, both countries represent important commercial partners for each other, including in the armaments market (Ningthoujam 2012). Besides that, it is also important to point out the troubled relations with North Korea as one of the reasons South Korea has been supporting Western actions in Middle Eastern issues. In other words, it is important for the Republic’s government to observe how the international community can respond to what Western powers point as violations of Human Rights, as it happened in Syria, in order to find an opportunity gap to call into question the absurdities promoted by North Korean’s administration (Jang 2014).

Lithuania has been an important ally of Western interests in regards to military interventions in order to solve internal conflicts, usually against non-state military actors that uses force to reach their goals. In regard to the Middle East, as an example, during the discussions about the Syrian issue, the Lithuanian Foreign Minister was one of the greatest advocates of United States government actions in its attempt to overthrow al-Assad’s regime (Kane 2013).

Luxembourg’s strategy to counter terrorism is totally aligned to the European Union’s position, with no major disagreements on this point: the organization, as a whole, believes in the use of coercive measures as the best way to combat possible threats (Committee of Ministers Chairmanship 2002). Luxembourg has been concerned about the expansion of non-state military actors all over the world, but especially in the Middle East, giving special attention to actions undertaken by extremist jihadist groups, such as Al-Qaeda. Regarding this issue, Luxembourg’s government has been given particular observation to the proliferation of the use of chemical weapons by these groups (Miller, 2013).
5 QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Is it possible to tackle all Middle East’s non-state military actors in the same manner, or is the current approach of case by case basis the best one?

2. Is it able or desirable to negotiate with non-state military actors, or would this mean that their existence as a non-state entity is recognized? Is their adherence to the current state model a fair approach? Should they be incorporated in the formal ranks of state government, or would it eventually lead to internal sabotage or coup d’états?

3. Are the current methods of military use of force against non-state military actors being effective? Should they continue to be used this way or should it be rethink or even thought of together with some other strategy?

4. Is it possible to contain or solve the current problems involving Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas? Is there any resolution in relation to military non-state actors that might help solve the current problems involving Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah and Hamas?

5. How is it possible to tackle these rooted non-state military actors here discussed together with the new problems arising from the Syrian and Iraqi Wars, especially now with the Islamic State rising in these territories?

REFERENCES


20, 2014).


Lussato, Céline. “France training rebels to fight Syria”. November 26, 2011. PressTV.


Rostami-Povey, Elaheh. Iran’s Influence. London: Zed Books. 2010


