

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL – BACKGROUND GUIDE

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*“War itself is the enemy
of the human race.” –
Howard Zinn*

Dear Delegates of DiploMUN Online 2026,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the **Background Guides of DiploMUN Online 2026**, essential resources designed to support your preparation for this year's committees and debates.

These guides have been carefully developed to provide you with a strong understanding of the topics, historical contexts, key actors, central debates, and possible paths for discussion within each committee. More than simple introductory materials, they are meant to serve as a foundation for your research, helping you approach the conference with greater confidence, depth, and strategic awareness.

Throughout these pages, you will find the necessary background to understand the challenges you will face as delegates, as well as important questions and perspectives that should guide your preparation. We strongly encourage you to read your committee's guide attentively, take notes, conduct additional research, and use it as a starting point for building your position, arguments, and diplomatic strategy.

The Study Guides are not meant to replace independent research, but to open the door to it. They are your first step into the world of your committee — a world of negotiation, critical thinking, international cooperation, and complex decision-making.

We are honored to be part of your diplomatic journey and excited to see how each of you will use these materials to contribute meaningfully to the debates of DiploMUN Online 2026.

Sincerely,

The DiploMUN Online 2026 Secretariat

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Directors' Letters

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council for this conference. My name is Lara Rank, and I will be serving as one of your chairs throughout this committee. I have been involved in Model United Nations for the past three years, during which I have had the opportunity to participate in high-level international conferences such as the Oxford Model United Nations and Yale Model United Nations Latin America. Beyond participation, I have also led a large-scale MUN project, gaining experience not only as a delegate but also in organizing, directing, and shaping the academic and strategic direction of simulations. Additionally, I have previously served as a chair, which has deepened my understanding of the balance between procedural rigor and dynamic debate.

From the dais, our goal is to create an environment that is both intellectually rigorous and deeply engaging. This committee is not designed to reward memorization or abstract theorizing, but rather to challenge you to think, react, and negotiate under pressure—much like real diplomats.

It is essential to clarify from the outset that this committee does not begin at the early warning stage of a crisis. You are not entering a chamber attempting to prevent war; you are entering one in which war has already begun. As of late February 2026, as reported by Reuters, the region has transitioned into an active phase of military escalation, characterized by direct strikes, retaliatory exchanges, and expanding theaters of confrontation.

This means you must think and act not as distant observers analyzing events with the benefit of hindsight, but as sitting representatives of the United Nations Security Council, operating under conditions of urgency, uncertainty, and political constraint. The decisions you make are not hypothetical—they are responses to an unfolding war.

This committee demands a high level of both academic preparation and performative engagement. Delegates are expected to approach the simulation with a deep understanding of the institutional logic of the United Nations Security Council, including its procedures, power dynamics, and legal framework.

Equally important is the ability to think strategically within the constraints faced by your assigned country. This includes understanding your state's alliances, adversaries, red lines, and

broader geopolitical objectives. The conflict you are engaging with is shaped by competing narratives and legal interpretations—particularly regarding self-defense, retaliation, and proxy involvement—and you are expected to navigate these complexities with nuance and precision.

Delegates must remain fully in character at all times. This means speaking, negotiating, and making decisions as ambassadors, not as individuals. Your interventions should reflect your country's priorities, rhetoric, and strategic limitations. Compromise, when it occurs, must be politically plausible—not idealistic or detached from reality.

Finally, this committee requires you to produce responses that are credible within the context of an emergency session of the Security Council during wartime. This is not a space for abstract policy proposals or long-term theoretical solutions. Instead, you are expected to engage with immediate challenges: ceasefire negotiations, humanitarian access, escalation control, and the preservation of international stability under pressure.

The quality of this committee will depend on your ability to embrace these expectations fully. We, as your dais, are here to guide, challenge, and support you—but ultimately, the direction and intensity of the debate will be shaped by your engagement.

Looking forward to seeing how you rise to this challenge,

Lara Rank

Dear Delegates,

I don't know your favourite Disney princess—or even if you have one, but mine is definitely Moana (or Vaiana, depending on the country where you are reading this).

Dear delegates, it's a true honor to have you in this committee, where you will debate not only about the future of the Middle East, but also to **Know Who You Are**.

My name is Davi Zidan, and, as someone really passionate about Disney movies, I really like Disney songs. One thing that my 7-year-old self loved watching Moana for the first time was how

she didn't know exactly what she was doing, but knew her **Shiny** purpose during her trip: to restore the heart of Te Fiti.

For what I have experienced in the crisis committees that I have been part of and been awarded, I would say that the most precious thing in a crisis committee is you. So, show who you are: Your great personality that goes **Beyond** what other delegates are doing, or even your influence on the flow of a crisis committee, showing your capacity for creativity and authenticity of a delegate, to end with you "**Finding The Way**" to the best delegate award.

As Moana experienced, I would say to you, stop looking **Where You Are**, and focus on discovering yourself. I believe that the best and the most fun crisis committees—definitely what I'm looking for in this one—are those where you **Get Lost**. So, if you need, make Labubus invade Atlantida, make Barbieland a new country, or whatever you believe is necessary to show your idea of "**How Far I'll Go**" to the other delegates.

Of course, don't exaggerate in creativity and get too crazy, but focus on building your narrative while leading and being cool to say to the delegates, "**You're Welcome**" after the mutual great work, or maybe after a missile hit in their territory. Just remember that, at the end of the day, you must answer yourself who you are, and, as Moana screamed in the middle of the vast uncharted sea, "**I Am Moana**," you must scream who you are during this committee through your resolutions and most crazy ideas that will make you sound like **An Innocent Warrior**.

After reading this, I know that you may agree that Moana is the best princess, since she inspired me to write this through her songs. If you want to, listen to those songs in bold to get the same inspiration from the best Disney princess. As well, don't hesitate to talk to me through my e-mail (contato.zidan@gmail.com) or directly through my WhatsApp number!

See you in the session, and I hope that you can explore the vast uncharted sea, dear delegates.

Davi Zidan

Dear Delegates,

Let me tell you about a feeling.

It lives somewhere between the first time you raise your placard with a trembling hand and the moment, months, conferences, sleepless nights later, when you realize the trembling has stopped. It is not loud. It does not announce itself. It arrives quietly, like dawn, and only when you turn around to look at the distance you have traveled does it take your breath away.

I began this journey in 2023, ordinary and uncertain, with little more than a hope that I belonged in rooms like this one. I did not know then that belonging is not something a room grants you, it is something you build, speech by speech, resolution by resolution, defeat by defeat. The awards came, yes. But they were never the truest measure. The truest measure was the person I was becoming in the pursuit of them, sharper, humbler, more alive to the weight of words and the architecture of ideas.

And the people. There are friendships I carry from this activity that feel less like choices and more like gifts the universe hid inside a conference schedule. People met over draft language, over arguments that turned into laughter, over the particular silence of a room where something real just happened.

That is what I want for you. Not merely a gavel or a certificate, but the slow and luminous discovery of your own growth. **The joy of looking back and barely recognizing the person who once stood where you now stand.** The realization that you are not the same, and that this, quietly and completely, is wonderful.

Come into this committee and mean it. Every word. Every moment.

The view from the other side is worth every step.

With deep pride and belief in each of you,

Demetrio Aranha Saker

Introduction

The year of 2026 must not be understood as a prelude to conflict, but as the consolidation of an already active regional war. By late February, particularly following the escalation reported on 28 February 2026, the pattern of confrontation between Iran and Israel shifted decisively away from indirect engagement and into overt military exchange. What had long been characterized by proxy warfare, deniability, and calibrated deterrence has now evolved into direct strikes, rapid retaliation cycles, and expanding operational theaters.

This transformation carries immediate implications for how the Security Council must interpret the situation. The region is no longer operating under conditions of strategic ambiguity, but under conditions of active hostilities. Military actions have already produced casualties, triggered internal displacement, and forced governments and non-state actors into hardened strategic positions. The involvement of actors such as Hezbollah further complicates escalation dynamics, as decisions taken in one theater now carry near-instantaneous consequences across multiple fronts, particularly in Lebanon and Syria.

As a result, the Council is not convening at a moment of warning, but at a moment of ongoing crisis. Traditional diplomatic timelines—negotiation, mediation, de-escalation—are now compressed by the pace of military developments. Each delay in response risks allowing facts on the ground to solidify, reducing the effectiveness of later intervention and increasing the likelihood of miscalculation. Under such conditions, diplomacy does not precede conflict; it struggles to contain it in real time.

Beyond interstate confrontation, the regional landscape is increasingly shaped by the growing influence of non-state armed actors whose capabilities now rival, and in some contexts surpass, those of state institutions. Groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, alongside a range of militias operating across Syria and Iraq, have embedded themselves deeply within political, military, and social structures. Their presence blurs the line between state and non-state authority, complicating attribution, accountability, and deterrence.

This diffusion of power has produced a strategic environment in which control is fragmented rather than centralized. Armed groups are not merely participants in conflict; they act as force multipliers, escalation triggers, and political actors with autonomous decision-making capacity. In many cases, their actions are aligned with broader regional interests—particularly those of

Iran—but they are not always directly controlled, increasing the risk of independent escalation that can draw states into broader confrontation.

In response to this evolving threat environment, state actors have increasingly relied on military solutions as their primary tool of engagement. Israel, perceiving an existential threat from both state and non-state adversaries, has expanded the scope and frequency of its military operations, including preemptive and retaliatory strikes across multiple theaters. Similarly, the United States has maintained a posture of strategic intervention, conducting targeted operations aimed at deterring armed groups and protecting its regional interests.

However, while these responses are framed within doctrines of self-defense and deterrence, their cumulative effect has often been the intensification of instability. Military actions—particularly those conducted across borders or in densely populated areas—carry significant risks of civilian harm, infrastructure damage, and political backlash. Each strike, regardless of its immediate tactical objective, feeds into a broader cycle of retaliation that further entrenches conflict dynamics.

This cycle creates a paradox at the heart of regional security: efforts to contain threats through force may simultaneously accelerate the conditions that produce further escalation. As state actors increase their reliance on military instruments, the space for diplomatic engagement narrows, and the threshold for wider conflict lowers. The result is a regional system in which escalation is not an anomaly, but an expected outcome of interaction.

The current phase of the crisis must therefore be understood not simply as an escalation in intensity, but as a transformation in the political logic governing conflict in the region. For decades, the confrontation between Iran and Israel operated within a relatively stable—if volatile—framework of indirect engagement. This “shadow architecture” relied on plausible deniability, geographically contained responses, and an implicit understanding of escalation thresholds. Strikes were calibrated not only to inflict damage but to signal limits.

The events following 28 February 2026, including direct exchanges and rapid retaliatory cycles, demonstrate that the mechanisms that once restrained escalation are no longer functioning as intended. The warning issued by the Secretary-General at that moment did not act as a deterrent signal capable of altering state behavior; rather, it marked the beginning of a phase in which

escalation became self-sustaining. Subsequent developments confirm that what was once treated as a risk scenario has materialized into an operational reality.

A key element of this shift lies in the collapse of deniability. In previous phases of confrontation, ambiguity served as a stabilizing force. By allowing actors to avoid direct attribution, it created political space for de-escalation without loss of credibility. In the current phase, however, attribution is no longer avoided—it is often asserted. Public acknowledgment of strikes, combined with rapid retaliation, reduces the time available for diplomatic intervention and increases the pressure on leadership to respond decisively rather than cautiously.

At the same time, the geographic containment of conflict has broken down. What was once limited to isolated theaters has expanded into a multi-front dynamic involving Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and maritime domains critical to global trade. Armed actors such as Hezbollah are no longer peripheral variables, but central nodes in a networked conflict system, where actions in one arena generate cascading effects across others. This interconnected battlespace significantly increases the probability of miscalculation, as localized decisions carry regional consequences.

Within this context, the political meaning of the crisis shifts fundamentally. The central question is no longer one of escalation management within a known framework, but of systemic breakdown. The previous equilibrium—however fragile—depended on shared, if unspoken, rules of engagement. The erosion of those rules creates a vacuum in which new norms have not yet emerged, leaving actors to operate in an environment defined by uncertainty, speed, and heightened threat perception.

This uncertainty directly affects decision-making at the state level. For Israel, the perception that adversaries are increasingly willing to engage directly reinforces a doctrine of preemption and rapid response, prioritizing immediate security gains over long-term stability considerations. For Iran, demonstrating deterrence credibility in the face of repeated strikes becomes a strategic imperative, even if such demonstrations risk broader escalation. Meanwhile, external actors such as the United States face the challenge of balancing deterrence commitments with the need to avoid direct entanglement in an expanding regional war.

The result is a convergence of strategic pressures that make de-escalation structurally difficult. Each actor operates under incentives that favor action over restraint, visibility over ambiguity, and deterrence signaling over diplomatic flexibility. In such an environment, even limited

incidents—whether missile launches, targeted assassinations, or cyber operations—can trigger disproportionate responses, not necessarily because of their scale, but because of their symbolic and strategic implications.

Ultimately, the political significance of the current phase lies in this uncertainty. The crisis is no longer defined solely by the actors involved or the events unfolding, but by the absence of a stable framework through which those events can be managed. The Council is therefore not only responding to a conflict—it is operating within a moment in which the very tools of conflict management are being tested, redefined, or rendered obsolete.

If the previous sections establish that the region is already at war and that the traditional architecture of containment has eroded, this section must confront the central implication of that reality: the Security Council is no longer operating as a preventive body, but as an institution attempting to intervene in an active and expanding conflict system.

First, there is the problem of timing and relevance. In previous crises, the United Nations Security Council could act within a window in which diplomatic intervention had a realistic chance of preventing escalation. In the current context, that window has already narrowed significantly. Military operations conducted by actors such as Israel and Iran are not speculative or preparatory—they are ongoing, publicly acknowledged, and embedded within broader strategic calculations. This raises a fundamental question: can the Council meaningfully shape events after key actors have already committed military resources, reputational stakes, and deterrence credibility to escalation?

Another point to consider is that any resolution or directive must contend with the fact that major powers—particularly the United States, alongside other permanent members—are themselves politically and strategically entangled in the conflict environment. This creates structural constraints on unified action. Veto dynamics, competing alliances, and divergent threat perceptions risk producing outcomes that are either diluted to the point of ineffectiveness or blocked entirely. In such a context, even strong diplomatic language may fail to translate into enforceable outcomes on the ground.

The conflict is no longer confined to a bilateral confrontation, but operates across interconnected theaters. The potential expansion into Lebanon—particularly through the involvement of Hezbollah—represents one of the most immediate risks of full-scale regional war.

Simultaneously, instability in Syria and Iraq provides both operational space and escalation pathways for state and non-state actors. Maritime routes in the Gulf, critical to global energy flows, introduce an additional layer of vulnerability, where disruption could rapidly transform a regional conflict into a global economic crisis.

Otherwise, civilian populations across multiple theaters are already experiencing displacement, infrastructure collapse, and restricted access to essential services. Unlike in post-conflict or frozen-conflict environments, humanitarian operations here must function in parallel with ongoing hostilities, where access is contested, security guarantees are fragile, and aid delivery can itself become politicized. This complicates not only the logistics of response, but also the legal and ethical frameworks guiding international action.

In a regional stability sense, the distinction between self-defense, preemptive action, and unlawful use of force has become increasingly blurred. Cross-border strikes, targeted assassinations, and cyber operations challenge existing interpretations of international law, particularly within the framework of the UN Charter. For the Security Council, this creates a dual burden: responding to immediate violations or risks, while also grappling with the long-term implications of setting precedents in a rapidly evolving conflict environment.

Key actors are no longer merely reacting to isolated incidents; they are actively engaged in demonstrating credibility. For Iran, failure to respond to strikes risks undermining its regional posture. For Israel, restraint may be perceived as vulnerability in the face of multi-front threats. This mutual reinforcement of deterrence signaling creates a feedback loop in which escalation becomes a rational, if dangerous, choice for all sides. The deeper actors invest in this logic, the harder it becomes to reverse course without high political cost.

As well, perhaps most critically, there is the problem of escalation beyond control thresholds. The committee must recognize that the current phase of conflict contains multiple pathways to rapid and uncontrollable expansion. A large-scale engagement involving Hezbollah in southern Lebanon could trigger sustained cross-border warfare with Israel. Escalation in Syria or Iraq could draw in additional state actors. Disruptions to Gulf maritime routes could provoke international military responses to secure energy flows. Cyber operations targeting critical infrastructure could expand the battlefield into domains where attribution and proportional response are even more difficult to manage.

Taken together, these challenges redefine the committee's central problem. The question is no longer whether the Security Council should act, but whether it retains the capacity to act effectively under conditions where the conflict is already underway, escalation incentives are structurally embedded, authority is fragmented across states and non-state actors, and the consequences of inaction are cumulative and accelerating.

The urgency lies not only in the scale of the crisis, but in its trajectory. Without rapid and coordinated diplomatic traction, the current conflict risks evolving into a broader regional war with systemic global implications—affecting energy markets, international security frameworks, and the credibility of multilateral institutions themselves.

In this sense, the committee is not merely addressing a crisis within the Middle East. It is confronting a test of whether international diplomacy, as embodied by the Security Council, can still function as an instrument of constraint in a system where escalation is already in motion.

As the preceding sections demonstrate, the Security Council is no longer confronting a conventional crisis defined by warning signs, diplomatic maneuvering, and preventable escalation. Instead, it faces a conflict environment in which war has already taken root, spread across multiple theaters, and begun to reshape the political and strategic landscape of the region. The breakdown of previous containment mechanisms, the rise of interconnected fronts, and the increasing reliance on military responses by actors such as Israel, Iran, and the United States collectively signal that the crisis has entered a phase where escalation is not only possible, but structurally embedded.

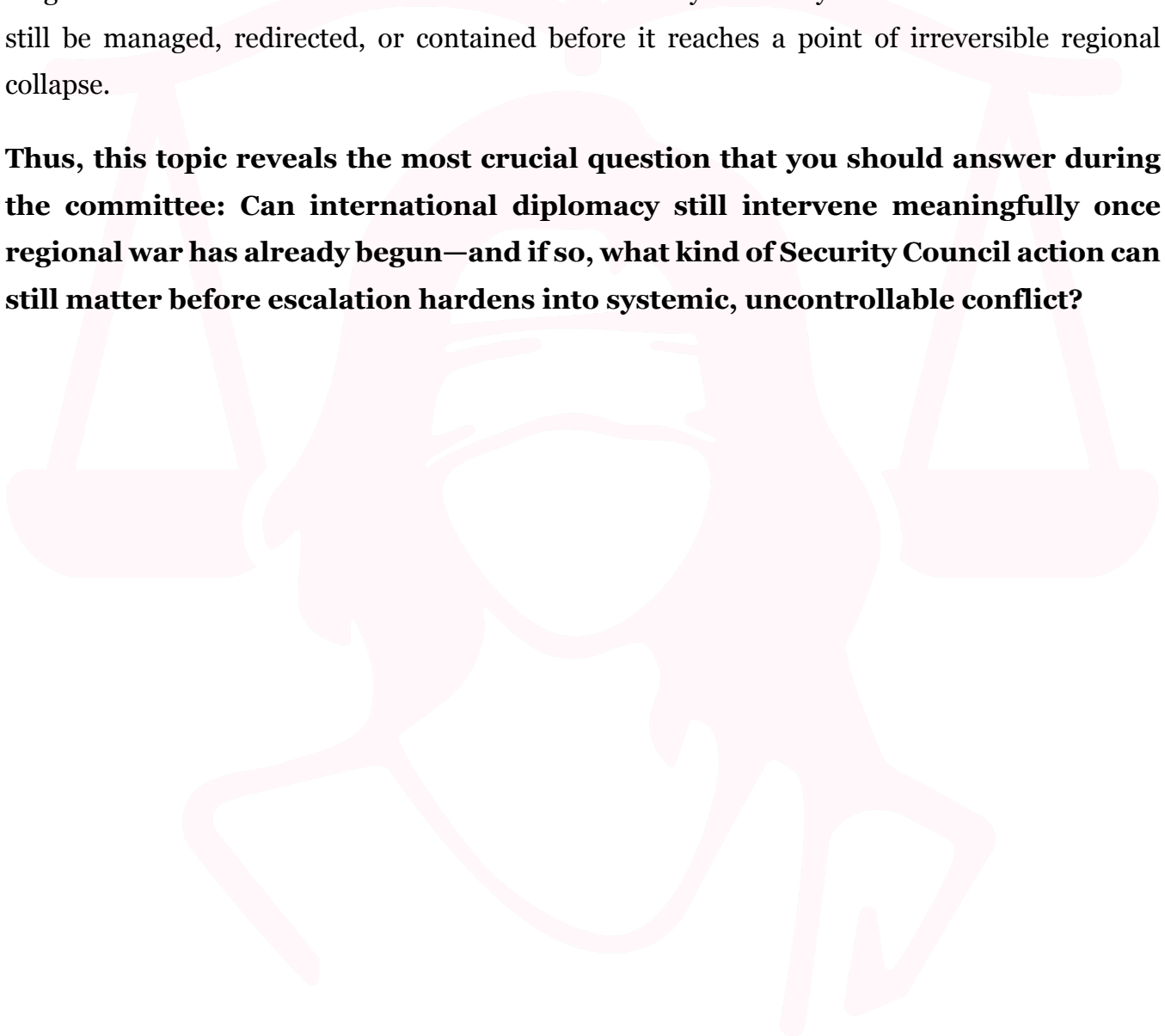
Within this reality, the role of the Security Council becomes both more urgent and more uncertain. The institution is tasked with acting in a moment where its traditional tools—calls for restraint, negotiated ceasefires, and incremental diplomatic pressure—must compete against rapidly evolving military developments and deeply entrenched strategic interests. The presence of actors such as Hezbollah further complicates this equation, reinforcing a fragmented battlespace in which authority is diffuse and escalation pathways are multiple.

What emerges, therefore, is not merely a policy challenge, but a test of institutional relevance. Can the Security Council still function as a mechanism capable of shaping outcomes, or has the pace and scale of escalation outstripped its capacity to respond? Can diplomacy operate

effectively when deterrence credibility has already been publicly asserted and politically internalized by the main actors? And perhaps most critically, can any form of coordinated international action still alter the trajectory of a conflict that is already unfolding in real time across land, sea, and emerging domains?

These questions converge into the central dilemma that defines this committee. The issue is no longer whether escalation should be avoided—it is already underway. The issue is whether it can still be managed, redirected, or contained before it reaches a point of irreversible regional collapse.

Thus, this topic reveals the most crucial question that you should answer during the committee: Can international diplomacy still intervene meaningfully once regional war has already begun—and if so, what kind of Security Council action can still matter before escalation hardens into systemic, uncontrollable conflict?



The United Nations Security Council and the Structure of Power in This War

The Security Council as the primary organ for international peace

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is the most powerful body in the entire UN system. Its main job is to keep the peace between nations and when peace breaks down, it is supposed to step in. But here is the difficult reality: having the authority to act and actually being able to act are two very different things. In the conflict between Iran, Israel, and Hezbollah, this gap has become impossible to ignore. To understand why the Council has struggled to stop the fighting, you need to understand not just what the Council is designed to do, but how it actually works when powerful countries disagree.

The conflict that this guide is about is the result of decades of tension, failed negotiations, and moments where the international community chose not to act. The question the world is now asking is not only how to stop this particular war, it is whether the Security Council is still capable of doing its job at all. This chapter will walk you through how the Council is supposed to function, who the key players are, how power is distributed among its members, and why the current crisis is testing the very foundations of the institution you are about to simulate.

The relationship between the Council, the belligerents, and regional actors

The United Nations Charter gives the Security Council a very specific and powerful role. Under Chapters VI and VII of the Charter, the Council is responsible for responding to threats to peace and acts of aggression between countries. Under Article 25 of the Charter, every single UN member state agrees in advance to follow the Council's decisions. That makes the Council's resolutions legally binding international law, not suggestions, but requirements. That is kind of particular, because no other international body in the world has this kind of authority.

When the Council decides to act, it has a wide range of tools available. It can demand that fighting stops immediately (a ceasefire resolution). It can send in peacekeeping troops. It can impose

sanctions, such as economic penalties that cut off a country from trade, funding, or weapons. It can refer leaders to the International Criminal Court to be tried for war crimes. It can also set up humanitarian corridors to get food and medicine to civilians caught in the middle of a conflict. Each of these actions, when the Council formally votes for them under Chapter VII, carries the full weight of international law behind it.

However, having legal authority does not automatically mean you can make things happen in the real world. The Council can pass a resolution demanding a ceasefire, but if the countries doing the fighting decide to keep fighting anyway, and if no one is willing or able to force them to stop, the resolution ends up meaning very little on the ground.

So, what actually determines whether the Council can get results? The answer involves four things working together: the political interests of the five most powerful members (also called the Permanent 5), the ability of other Council members to build coalitions and pressure those powers, what is actually happening on the battlefield at the moment a resolution is being debated, and how a proposal is worded and framed. A perfectly written resolution can still fail if it is introduced at the wrong moment or uses language that triggers a veto. This means that in the Security Council, strategy and timing matter just as much as being right on the facts.

The structure of power in early 2026

The five permanent members of the Security Council, the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, hold a level of power that no other countries in the world have in this institution. The most important part of that power is the veto. Any one of the P5 can block any resolution, no matter how many other members support it. Even if thirteen of the fifteen Council members vote yes on a resolution, a single P5 veto kills it completely. This means that when you are drafting a resolution or planning a strategy, you always have to ask: which permanent members might veto this, and can we write the text in a way that avoids triggering that veto while still saying something meaningful?

Beyond the veto, P5 power also comes from military relationships and the ability to control what gets discussed. The United States has a close security partnership with Israel and provides it with significant military support. This gives the US enormous influence over how the conflict unfolds — and means the US has historically blocked Council resolutions that Israel opposed. Russia and China have pushed back against what they see as Western overreach in the region, often refusing

to support resolutions they view as one-sided. The UK and France generally align with the US but have sometimes pushed for stronger humanitarian protections. Understanding these relationships is essential for predicting Council behavior.

The ten elected members matter more than people often realize. They cannot veto anything, but they can shape the language of resolutions, add humanitarian provisions, build political pressure, and give or withhold the broad legitimacy that makes a Council resolution truly authoritative. A resolution that passes only because the P5 forced it through looks very different from one that has broad support across the entire Council. For a conflict as politically sensitive as this one, that difference in legitimacy matters.

What is institutionally in crisis

The conflict involving Iran, Israel, and Hezbollah is not just a crisis for the people of the Middle East, it is a crisis for the Security Council itself. The Council was created after World War II specifically to prevent this kind of conflict: multi-sided, cross-border, high-intensity war with massive civilian casualties. The founders of the UN believed that if the world's most powerful countries could agree to sit at a table together and make binding decisions, they could stop wars before they spiraled out of control. The fact that the Council has so far been unable to achieve a lasting ceasefire or meaningfully constrain the military operations of the main actors is not just a political failure, because it raises serious questions about whether the institution still works the way it was designed to.

Why has the Council been unable to act decisively? The short answer is that its members cannot agree on the basic facts of the situation. They disagree on who started the current round of escalation. They disagree on whether Israel's military operations in Lebanon are a legitimate act of self-defense under international law or an excessive and disproportionate use of force. They disagree on whether Iran should be held responsible for what Hezbollah does. They disagree on how to count and respond to civilian casualties. They disagree on whether outside powers have the right to intervene in the conflict at all. These are not small technical disputes, they reflect deep political differences that have been building for years and that different countries have very different interests in resolving.

As you enter this committee, you should understand your task. First, you are working to help stabilize a region on the brink of wider war. Second, you are trying to prove, through your debate,

your coalitions, and your resolutions that the Security Council can still function as a meaningful institution when powerful countries disagree. But it is exactly the challenge that MUN was designed to help students like you practice. The question is not whether the perfect solution exists, but it is whether you can find language, build coalitions, and make the kinds of strategic compromises that move the Council from paralysis to action.



Fundamental Concepts for Debate

To speak of deterrence in the contemporary Middle East is to speak of a system already groaning beneath its own weight. The region is saturated with missile arsenals, long-range strike platforms, non-state partners with independent operational will, and governments for whom the appearance of weakness is not merely a diplomatic liability but a domestic existential threat. Deterrence, in its cleanest theoretical form, functions through the credible promise of unacceptable consequences. But when every actor in a system shares that logic simultaneously, and when each one is watching the others for any sign of hesitation, the architecture stops being stabilizing and starts being a hair trigger. What delegates must truly understand is the difference between a single act of signaling and the far more treacherous phenomenon of retaliatory accumulation, where each strike is experienced by the one who launches it as a necessary and defensive restoration of credibility, and experienced by the one who receives it as an aggression that demands an answer. The cycle feeds itself. And by the time this committee convenes, that cycle is already turning. Deterrence has not been merely tested here. It has partially broken down. The actors in this theater are no longer only showing what they can do. They are doing it.

Every use of force in this conflict has arrived wrapped in the language of justification. States and armed groups alike reach for self-defense, anticipatory necessity, or proportionate retaliation to describe actions that, seen from the other side of the border, look very much like aggression. This is not hypocrisy, or not only hypocrisy. It reflects something genuinely difficult about the legal and moral architecture of war, which was designed for conflicts with cleaner edges than this one possesses. International law offers categories, immediate defensive action, preemption grounded in imminent threat, punitive responses calibrated to restore a prior equilibrium, but those categories were never built to survive the kind of overlap that exists here, where direct interstate war and layered proxy conflict share the same geography and the same calendar. Delegates must resist the temptation to sort actors into tidy boxes and instead sit with the harder questions. At what point does retaliation become open-ended punishment? At what point does preemptive logic shade into something that looks, from the outside, like a war of choice? These are not abstract problems for legal scholars. They are the living justifications being invoked in real time by every party this committee is trying to reach.

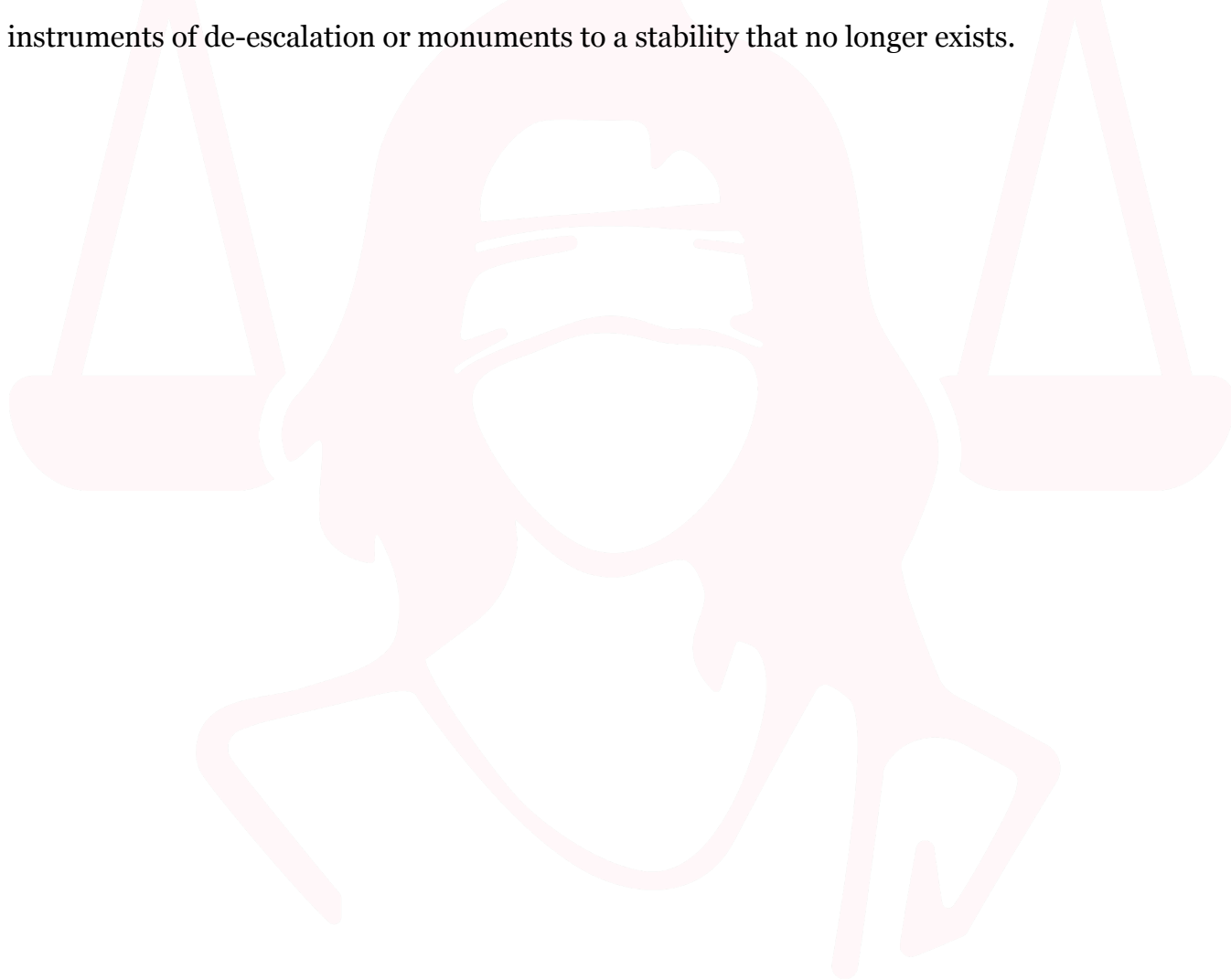
There is a version of proxy warfare that feels manageable, even clinical: a distant patron pursuing its interests through an intermediary, maintaining plausible distance from the consequences,

calibrating pressure without fully committing to conflict. That version does not describe what is happening here. Hezbollah is not a shadow instrument operating in some removed subcontinental competition. It is one of the active escalation variables of an ongoing regional war, capable of opening new fronts with a speed and autonomy that no diplomatic process is structurally equipped to outpace. This is what makes proxy warfare under conditions of direct war so uniquely dangerous. Indirect actors do not pause for Security Council sessions. They move according to their own threat perceptions, their own relationships with patrons who may themselves be under pressure, and their own reading of what the battlefield moment demands of them. Delegates must understand this not as a secondary layer of the conflict, something to be addressed once the primary strategic questions are resolved, but as a structural feature of the war itself. Proxy warfare is not waiting at the edges of this crisis. It is already inside it, shaping its rhythm, accelerating its geography, and complicating every attempt at sequenced de-escalation.

Humanitarian law was not written for comfortable times. Its principles, distinction between combatants and civilians, proportionality in the use of force, precaution in attack, the protection of hospitals and water systems, the rights of those forced to flee, were forged specifically for moments of breakdown, for the spaces where human dignity is most at risk of being consumed by military logic. And yet those principles face their most severe and systematic erosion precisely when the fighting is most intense. Delegates must not allow the humanitarian dimension of this conflict to be treated as a moral epilogue, something to be appended to a resolution after the strategic architecture has been agreed upon by the permanent members. In this committee, the scale of civilian displacement, the targeting of medical infrastructure, the obstruction of aid corridors, and the collapse of basic services are not soft indicators on the margins of the debate. They are among the most telling signs that the regional order is already coming apart at its seams. And the humanitarian question does not simplify once war is underway. It deepens. It becomes more morally urgent and more operationally complex in the same breath, because every hour of fighting adds to the weight of what any eventual resolution will have to address.

It would be a mistake to think of regional stability as a fixed condition, something solid and pre-existing that the current conflict is threatening to disturb. It is better understood as a living arrangement, a fragile ecosystem of political relationships, security understandings, economic interdependencies, and carefully maintained ambiguities that has been accumulating stress for years and is now, in several places at once, beginning to show the fractures. Spillover is not a

metaphor in this context. It is a description of real and concurrent processes: the bleeding of violence across the Lebanese border, the activation of armed groups in Syria and Iraq, the anxiety spreading through Gulf capitals, the insurance premiums rising on tankers in contested shipping lanes, the energy markets absorbing risk that no market was designed to price. The critical question for delegates is not whether spillover is occurring. It is whether the regional system still has enough structural integrity to contain what is already moving through it, or whether the threshold between a bounded active conflict and a genuinely regionalized war has already been crossed without anyone having made a conscious decision to cross it. That distinction is not academic. It determines whether the tools this committee reaches for are instruments of de-escalation or monuments to a stability that no longer exists.



Historical Formation of the Crisis

To understand the current confrontation between Iran and Israel, it is essential to recognize that its roots do not begin in 2026, nor even in recent decades, but are deeply embedded in the historical processes that led to the creation of Israel as a state. The foundation of Israel in 1948 was not an isolated geopolitical event, but the culmination of overlapping political, historical, and humanitarian dynamics that reshaped the Middle East in the aftermath of global upheaval.

One of the central driving forces behind the establishment of Israel was the rise of Zionism in the late 19th century—a political and nationalist movement advocating for the creation of a Jewish homeland. Emerging in the context of widespread antisemitism in Europe, Zionism argued that Jewish communities, facing systemic persecution and exclusion, required a sovereign state to guarantee their security and self-determination. This idea gained traction particularly as pogroms in Eastern Europe intensified and Jewish populations faced increasing marginalization across the continent.

The urgency of this movement was profoundly amplified by the events of the Holocaust during World War II. The systematic extermination of six million Jews under Nazi rule not only devastated Jewish communities worldwide but also reshaped international opinion. In the post-war environment, the argument for a Jewish state was no longer framed solely as a nationalist aspiration, but as a humanitarian necessity. Displaced persons camps across Europe, filled with survivors who had nowhere to return, became a powerful symbol of the failure of existing international systems to protect vulnerable populations.

At the same time, the geopolitical context of the Middle East was undergoing transformation. The region had been under the control of the British Empire through the Mandate for Palestine, established after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. During this period, Britain had made conflicting commitments. The Balfour Declaration expressed support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, while earlier assurances had been made to Arab populations regarding independence and self-governance.

These overlapping promises created deep tensions between Jewish and Arab communities in the region. Jewish immigration to Palestine increased significantly throughout the 1920s and 1930s, leading to demographic shifts and growing fears among the Arab population regarding

displacement and political marginalization. This resulted in periodic violence, uprisings, and increasing polarization between the two groups, setting the stage for open conflict.

By the mid-1940s, Britain found itself unable to manage the escalating tensions and referred the issue to the newly established United Nations. In 1947, the UN proposed the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine, which recommended the division of the territory into separate Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem under international administration. While Jewish leaders accepted the plan, Arab leaders rejected it, viewing it as unjust and a violation of the rights of the existing population.

On 14 May 1948, the State of Israel was officially declared. Within hours, neighboring Arab states launched military interventions, marking the beginning of the 1948 Arab–Israeli War. The war resulted in the consolidation of Israeli statehood, but also in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, an event that remains central to the political and humanitarian dimensions of the conflict.

Thus, the foundation of Israel must be understood as the intersection of nationalist aspirations, humanitarian urgency, colonial legacies, and competing territorial claims. It created not only a new state, but a new geopolitical reality—one that would define regional dynamics for decades to come. The tensions generated during this foundational moment did not remain confined to the immediate aftermath of 1948; instead, they evolved, expanded, and became embedded within broader regional rivalries, eventually contributing to the complex confrontation that continues to shape the Middle East today.

Following the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the immediate outbreak of conflict with neighboring Arab states, regional tensions were initially structured along a largely Arab–Israeli axis. However, over time, a parallel and increasingly central dimension of the conflict emerged: the transformation of Iran from a peripheral actor into one of Israel’s principal strategic adversaries. This shift did not occur instantaneously, nor was it inevitable. In fact, for several decades after Israel’s creation, relations between the two were not only non-hostile but in many respects cooperative.

In parallel, under the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Iran pursued a foreign policy aligned with Western interests and maintained informal yet significant ties with Israel. Both states shared common strategic concerns, particularly the rise of Arab nationalism under leaders

such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, which was perceived as a destabilizing force in the region. This convergence of interests gave rise to what is often referred to as the “periphery doctrine,” in which Israel sought alliances with non-Arab states surrounding the Middle East, including Iran and Türkiye, as a way of counterbalancing hostile Arab neighbors.

During this period, cooperation between Iran and Israel extended across multiple domains. Economic ties were established, particularly in the energy sector, with Iran supplying oil to Israel. Intelligence collaboration also developed, reflecting shared security concerns. While these relations were not always publicly emphasized, they were strategically significant and reflected a pragmatic alignment rooted in mutual benefit rather than ideological affinity.

This dynamic, however, was fundamentally transformed by the Iranian Revolution. The overthrow of the Shah and the rise of the Islamic Republic under Ruhollah Khomeini marked a decisive ideological and geopolitical rupture. The new regime redefined Iran’s identity not as a Western-aligned monarchy, but as a revolutionary Islamic state committed to resisting external influence and reshaping regional power structures.

Within this new framework, Israel was no longer viewed as a potential partner but as a central adversary. The Iranian leadership framed Israel as an extension of Western dominance in the region and as fundamentally illegitimate. This ideological positioning was not merely rhetorical; it became embedded within Iran’s foreign policy and strategic posture. Diplomatic ties were severed, and support for opposition to Israel became a defining feature of Iran’s regional engagement.

One of the most significant manifestations of this shift was Iran’s support for non-state actors opposed to Israel, particularly Hezbollah, which emerged in Lebanon during the 1980s. Through financial, military, and logistical backing, Iran contributed to the development of Hezbollah into a highly capable armed organization, effectively creating a forward-positioned actor capable of exerting pressure on Israel’s northern border. This marked the beginning of a new phase of indirect confrontation, in which Iran and Israel engaged through proxies rather than direct military conflict.

Over the following decades, this indirect rivalry expanded across multiple theaters. Iranian influence grew in countries such as Syria and Iraq, particularly in the aftermath of regional conflicts and political instability. For Israel, this expansion was perceived as a form of strategic

encirclement—a network of allied forces and missile capabilities positioned within close proximity to its borders. In response, Israel increasingly adopted a doctrine of preemptive and preventive action, conducting strikes aimed at limiting Iranian entrenchment and disrupting weapons transfers.

This evolving dynamic transformed the Iran–Israel relationship into a complex and enduring confrontation defined by both ideological opposition and strategic competition. Unlike earlier phases of the Arab–Israeli conflict, which were often characterized by conventional interstate wars, this rivalry developed as a hybrid conflict, combining elements of proxy warfare, covert operations, cyber activities, and limited direct engagement.

Thus, the intensification of tensions between Iran and Israel reflects a broader transformation in the structure of regional conflict. What began as a localized struggle over statehood and territory expanded into a multifaceted geopolitical rivalry shaped by revolution, ideology, and shifting alliances. The legacy of earlier periods of cooperation serves as a reminder that this antagonism was not historically predetermined, but rather the result of profound political change—changes whose consequences continue to define the trajectory of the Middle East today.

A central pillar in the evolution of the Iran–Israel confrontation has been the rise of Hezbollah as both a military actor and a political force embedded within the fragile state structure of Lebanon. Understanding Hezbollah is essential not only to grasp the operational dynamics of the conflict but also to analyze how Iran projects influence across the region through non-state mechanisms.

Hezbollah emerged in the early 1980s, during a period marked by the Lebanese Civil War and the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon. Initially formed as a resistance movement against Israeli military presence, the group quickly evolved beyond a localized militia into a structured organization with ideological, military, and political dimensions. Its founding was deeply influenced by the ideological framework of post-revolutionary Iran, particularly the concept of Islamic resistance and the export of revolutionary principles beyond national borders. This connection was not merely inspirational; it was institutional, strategic, and enduring.

From its inception, Iran provided Hezbollah with critical support in the form of funding, training, weapons transfers, and strategic guidance. This relationship allowed Hezbollah to develop capabilities that far exceeded those of a typical non-state actor. Over time, the group

established a sophisticated military infrastructure, including missile arsenals, defensive networks, and operational units capable of conducting both conventional and asymmetric warfare. This has positioned Hezbollah as one of the most formidable non-state armed actors in the world.

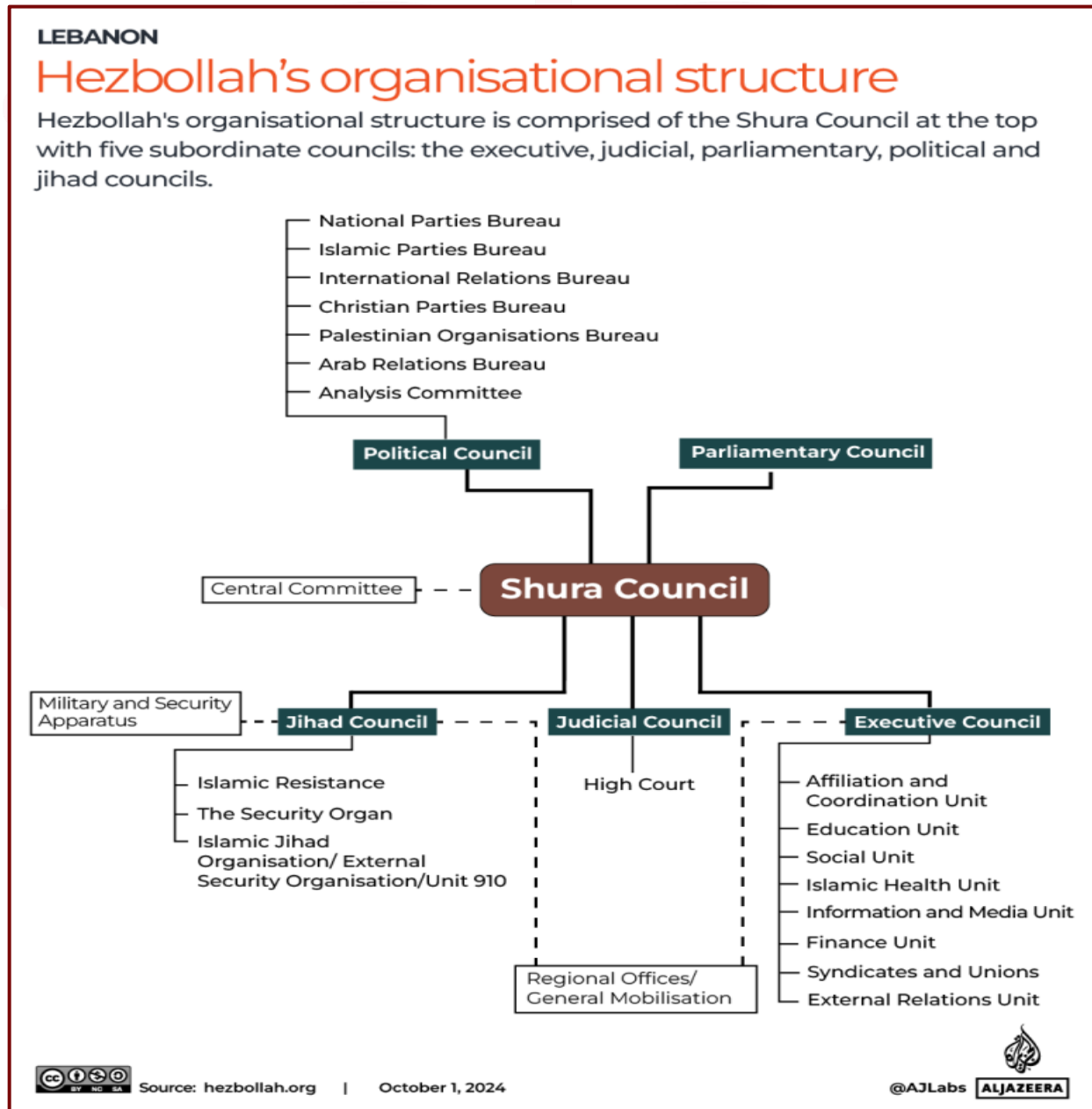
At the same time, Hezbollah embedded itself within Lebanon's political system. It participates in elections, holds parliamentary seats, and maintains influence within government institutions. This dual identity—as both a political party and an armed organization—creates a structural ambiguity that complicates international responses. Any military action against Hezbollah risks directly affecting the Lebanese state, while any political engagement with Lebanon must account for Hezbollah's influence within it.

This hybrid nature is central to understanding the group's strategic value for Iran. Rather than engaging in direct confrontation with Israel, Iran is able to operate through Hezbollah as a forward-positioned actor. This creates what analysts often describe as a form of “strategic depth,” allowing Iran to exert pressure on Israel's northern border without immediate direct escalation. It also enables a layered deterrence system: any attack on Iran risks triggering responses not only from Iranian territory, but from allied actors across the region.

However, this relationship is not purely hierarchical. While Hezbollah is closely aligned with Iran, it is also shaped by domestic Lebanese considerations. Economic instability, political fragmentation, and societal divisions within Lebanon impose constraints on the group's actions. A full-scale war with Israel could have devastating consequences for the Lebanese state, potentially undermining Hezbollah's own political position. As a result, its decision-making reflects a constant balancing act between ideological commitment, strategic alignment with Iran, and domestic survival.

This dynamic becomes particularly significant in moments of escalation. Hezbollah has the capacity to transform a bilateral confrontation into a multi-front war. Its arsenal, geographic positioning, and operational experience mean that any large-scale engagement involving the group would dramatically alter the scale and intensity of the conflict. For Israel, this represents one of the most immediate and severe security threats, shaping its doctrine of preemption and rapid response.

At a broader level, Hezbollah exemplifies a key transformation in modern conflict: the increasing centrality of non-state actors in shaping regional power dynamics. Traditional models of interstate warfare are no longer sufficient to explain the realities of the Middle East. Instead, networks of influence, proxy relationships, and hybrid actors play a decisive role in determining both the trajectory and the limits of escalation.



Annex 1: Organizational Structure and Leadership Bodies of Hezbollah

A critical dimension of Iran's regional strategy—and of the broader instability shaping the Middle East—is the formation and expansion of what is commonly referred to as the “Axis of

Resistance.” This network is not a formal alliance in the traditional sense, but rather a constellation of state and non-state actors aligned, to varying degrees, with the strategic and ideological orientation of Iran. Its core objective is to resist external influence—particularly that of United States and Israel—while reshaping the regional balance of power in favor of actors opposed to Western-backed security structures.

At the center of this network stands Hezbollah, widely regarded as the most capable and institutionalized component of the Axis. Unlike other affiliated groups, Hezbollah combines military sophistication, political integration, and long-term strategic coordination with Iran. Its evolution from a resistance movement into a hybrid actor with state-like capabilities makes it a cornerstone of Iran’s ability to project influence beyond its borders. Through Hezbollah, Iran achieves a form of forward deterrence—maintaining pressure on Israel’s northern frontier without engaging in constant direct confrontation.

However, the Axis of Resistance extends beyond Hezbollah. It includes the government of Syria, various militia networks in Iraq, and other armed groups operating across the region. These actors are linked through varying degrees of coordination, resource-sharing, and ideological alignment, forming a decentralized but interconnected system. This structure allows for flexibility: actions can be carried out in multiple theaters simultaneously, often with limited direct attribution to Iran itself.

This decentralized nature is precisely what enhances the Axis’s destabilizing potential. Unlike conventional alliances, where command structures and accountability are relatively clear, the Axis operates through overlapping channels of influence. Decisions taken by one actor—whether a missile launch, a cross-border incursion, or a targeted attack—can trigger cascading responses across the network. This creates a highly volatile environment in which escalation is not always centrally controlled, increasing the risk of unintended regional spillover.

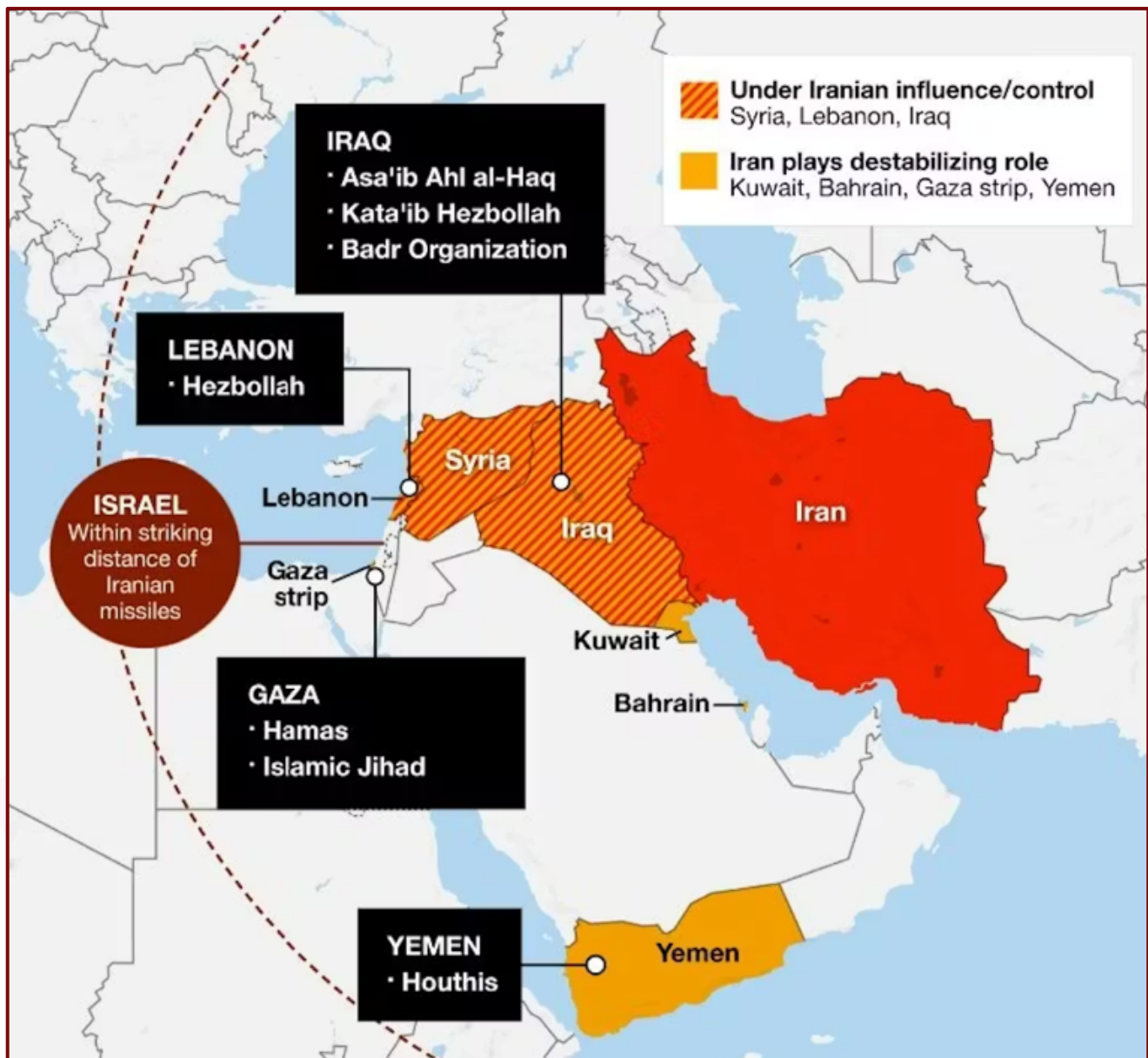
From a strategic standpoint, the Axis of Resistance serves multiple functions for Iran. It provides deterrence by establishing multiple points of pressure against adversaries, complicates the operational environment for opposing forces, and extends Iran’s reach into key geopolitical arenas without requiring direct territorial expansion. At the same time, it allows Iran to maintain a degree of plausible deniability, particularly in situations where actions are carried out by affiliated but formally independent actors.

Yet this model also introduces significant instability into the region. The presence of heavily armed non-state groups operating alongside or within state structures challenges traditional notions of sovereignty and governance. In countries such as Lebanon and Iraq, the influence of Axis-aligned actors can both reinforce and undermine state authority, creating internal tensions that are easily exacerbated by external conflict. Meanwhile, in Syria, the Axis has become deeply embedded within the conflict landscape, further entrenching divisions and prolonging instability.

For Israel, the Axis represents not a single threat, but a networked one—capable of opening multiple fronts and sustaining prolonged pressure. This perception has driven Israel's increasing reliance on preemptive and preventive military strategies aimed at disrupting the Axis's infrastructure, particularly in Syria and Lebanon. However, such actions often reinforce the very dynamics they seek to contain, feeding into cycles of retaliation that strengthen the Axis's narrative of resistance.

Ultimately, the Axis of Resistance embodies a broader transformation in regional conflict dynamics. Power is no longer concentrated solely in state institutions, but distributed across networks that blur the lines between formal and informal authority, military and political roles, and domestic and external arenas. This transformation significantly complicates the role of international actors, including the United Nations Security Council, whose mechanisms are primarily designed to engage with sovereign states rather than fluid, transnational networks.

In this context, Hezbollah's role becomes even more critical. It is not only a participant in the Axis, but one of its most effective instruments—demonstrating how non-state actors, when sufficiently organized and supported, can shape the trajectory of regional conflict. The challenge for the international community is therefore not only to address the actions of individual actors, but to understand and respond to the systemic dynamics that allow such networks to operate, expand, and destabilize the region as a whole.



Annex 2: Iran's influence in the Middle East (Axis of Resistance)

Before the escalation of February 2026, the Middle East was not a stable system disrupted by a sudden shock—it was already a structurally fragile environment, marked by overlapping crises, weakened state capacity, and unresolved geopolitical tensions. The region entered 2026 with limited resilience, meaning that when confrontation between Iran and Israel intensified, there were few remaining buffers capable of absorbing or containing escalation. What followed was not simply the outbreak of conflict, but the ignition of a system that had long been under strain.

At the center of this fragility lies Lebanon, a state whose internal collapse has made it one of the most vulnerable arenas in the region. Years of economic crisis, political paralysis, and institutional breakdown have severely weakened the Lebanese state's ability to govern effectively. Hyperinflation, currency collapse, and the erosion of public services have generated widespread social instability, while political fragmentation has prevented coherent national decision-making. Within this context, the presence of Hezbollah introduces an additional layer of complexity. While the group provides a form of localized security and political representation, its military capabilities and alignment with Iran mean that Lebanon is constantly exposed to external escalation risks. In practical terms, this transforms the country into both a frontline and a fault line—where internal fragility and external confrontation intersect.

A similar dynamic of instability can be observed in Syria, where over a decade of conflict has left the state fragmented, economically devastated, and heavily penetrated by external actors. Although the intensity of large-scale fighting has decreased compared to earlier phases of the Syrian civil war, the country remains divided across multiple zones of control, with competing military presences and ongoing low-intensity conflict. Iranian influence, Russian involvement, and the continued presence of various armed groups have turned Syria into a critical arena for regional competition. This fragmentation reduces the state's ability to function as a stabilizing actor and instead positions it as a conduit through which conflict can spread. Military operations conducted within Syrian territory—often targeting infrastructure linked to Iranian networks—further illustrate how the country serves as a battleground for broader geopolitical struggles.

In Iraq, the situation is characterized less by territorial fragmentation and more by the diffusion of authority. While the Iraqi state formally maintains sovereignty, in practice it operates alongside a complex network of militia groups, many of which are integrated into or aligned with broader regional structures, including those connected to Iran. These militias possess significant military capabilities and political influence, often operating with a degree of autonomy that complicates centralized governance. This creates a dual system of power in which state authority is constantly negotiated rather than fully exercised. As a result, Iraq becomes both a platform for regional influence and a potential trigger point for escalation, particularly when tensions between external actors manifest within its borders.

Beyond land-based dynamics, the region's instability is further amplified by vulnerabilities in the maritime domain. The security of key shipping routes—especially those connected to the

Gulf—has become increasingly uncertain, with incidents involving attacks on vessels, disruptions to trade flows, and heightened military presence. These waterways are not only regionally significant, but also globally critical, as they facilitate the movement of energy resources and commercial goods. Any disruption within this domain carries immediate international consequences, linking regional instability to global economic security. The strategic importance of these routes ensures that even localized incidents can escalate rapidly, drawing in external actors and expanding the scope of conflict.

The Gulf states themselves, including actors such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, reflect another layer of regional sensitivity. While economically robust and militarily capable, these states operate under constant threat perception, particularly in relation to missile and drone capabilities associated with Iranian-aligned networks. Their strategic position—both as energy exporters and as partners to Western security frameworks—places them at the intersection of regional rivalry and global interest. This creates a delicate balancing act: maintaining economic stability and international partnerships while avoiding direct entanglement in escalating conflict.

Taken together, these dynamics reveal a region already operating under significant stress prior to February 2026. Weak governance structures, economic crises, fragmented authority, and persistent security threats had eroded the capacity of states to absorb shocks. The concept of “absorptive capacity” is critical here: it refers to the ability of a system to withstand and adapt to external pressure without collapsing. In the case of the Middle East entering 2026, that capacity was already severely diminished.

This is precisely why the escalation between Iran and Israel carries such profound implications. It did not occur in a vacuum, but within an environment primed for amplification. Each localized crisis—whether in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, or the Gulf—functions not as an isolated issue, but as part of an interconnected system. Instability in one arena increases pressure on others, creating a cumulative effect that accelerates regional breakdown.

In this sense, the events of 2026 should not be understood as the beginning of instability, but as the moment in which existing fractures began to align. The region was already weakened, already fragmented, and already under strain. What changed was not the presence of crisis, but its scale, speed, and interconnectedness. The war did not create fragility—it exposed and intensified it, pushing a system with limited resilience closer to the threshold of systemic collapse.

Military Capabilities of the Middle East Countries

Manpower
(thousand)

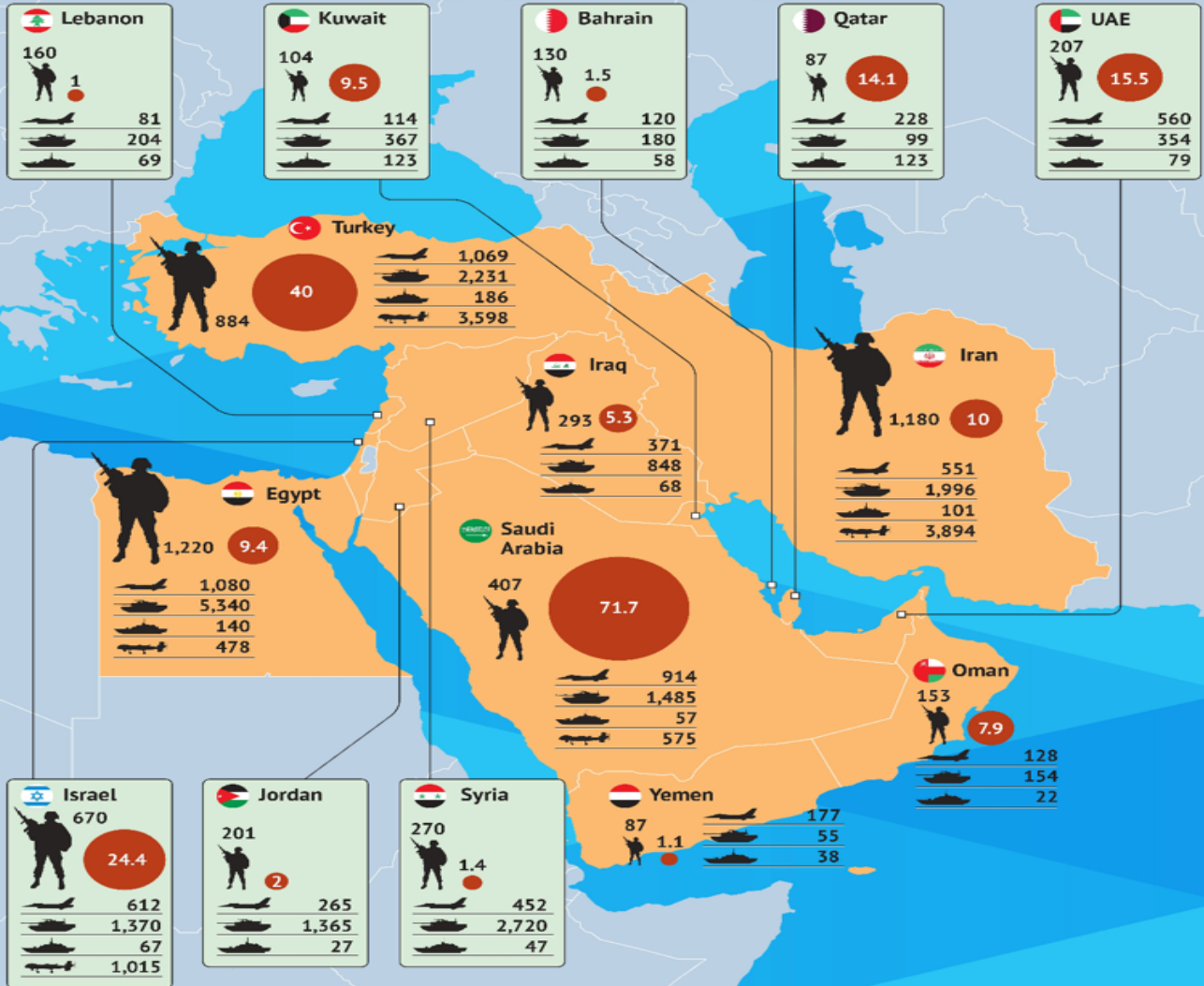
Defense Budget
(bln \$)

Airpower

Tanks

Naval Forces

Drone Force
(Total Units)



Source: Global Firepower Index (GFI), 2024



Annex 3: Military Capabilities of the Middle East

In this scenario, the events of 28 February 2026 must be understood not as an isolated escalation, but as the decisive turning point at which latent instability across the Middle East crystallized into an active and self-sustaining phase of regional war. What had previously existed as a volatile but managed system—characterized by indirect confrontation, proxy engagement, and calibrated retaliation—shifted into a new operational reality defined by speed, visibility, and structural escalation. From that moment forward, the region no longer operated under the logic of containment, but under the logic of active conflict.

One of the most significant transformations following this turning point has been the redefinition of how war is conducted across the region. The older model of “shadow war,” which relied on ambiguity and deniability, has been largely replaced by overt and rapid cycles of action and response. Direct exchanges between Iran and Israel—whether through missile strikes, targeted operations, or cyber activities—are now more publicly acknowledged and strategically integrated. This shift reduces the space for de-escalation, as visibility increases domestic and international pressure on actors to respond decisively rather than cautiously.

At the same time, the battlespace itself has expanded and become increasingly multidimensional. Conflict is no longer confined to territorial borders or conventional military engagements. Instead, it operates simultaneously across land, air, maritime, and cyber domains, creating a networked environment in which actions in one sphere rapidly influence others. The involvement of actors such as Hezbollah exemplifies this transformation. Positioned in Lebanon, yet deeply connected to regional dynamics, Hezbollah functions as both a localized force and a strategic extension of broader confrontation, capable of activating additional fronts with minimal warning.

Beyond the primary theaters of confrontation, the post-February phase has also been marked by the persistence—and relative invisibility—of secondary conflicts that continue to shape the region’s stability. In Syria, fragmented control and ongoing military activity provide both a staging ground and a corridor for strategic operations. In Iraq, militia networks operate within a complex political landscape, where state authority coexists with autonomous armed actors. These environments do not always dominate international headlines, yet they form critical components of the broader conflict architecture, enabling movement, coordination, and escalation in ways that are not immediately visible but strategically consequential.

Economic and commercial dynamics have also undergone significant disruption. The heightened insecurity of maritime routes—particularly those linked to the Gulf—has introduced volatility into global energy markets and trade flows. Shipping lanes, once governed by relative predictability, are now subject to increased risk, with incidents ranging from targeted attacks to strategic signaling operations. This instability has ripple effects beyond the region, affecting global supply chains, insurance costs, and energy pricing. For states heavily dependent on these routes, the economic dimension of the conflict becomes inseparable from its security implications.

Within the region, these developments have contributed to a deepening atmosphere of strategic distrust. States that once maintained cautious but functional relationships are increasingly viewing one another through the lens of potential escalation. Communication channels, while not entirely absent, are strained and often insufficient to manage the speed of unfolding events. This erosion of trust reinforces a security dilemma in which defensive measures by one actor are interpreted as offensive threats by another, further accelerating the cycle of militarization.

Simultaneously, the role and proliferation of paramilitary and non-state armed groups have intensified. The model exemplified by Hezbollah has expanded in influence, as similar structures gain prominence in other parts of the region. These groups operate with varying degrees of coordination with state actors, but share a common characteristic: they blur the line between formal and informal power. Their presence complicates attribution, challenges traditional deterrence models, and creates multiple, decentralized points of escalation. In practical terms, this means that conflict can be initiated or expanded not only through state decision-making, but through the actions of actors operating within loosely connected networks.

This decentralized escalation dynamic is particularly dangerous in a post-28 February context. Because authority is fragmented, control over the pace and direction of conflict is inherently limited. A localized incident—whether a missile launch, a border clash, or a cyberattack—can trigger broader responses that extend far beyond its initial scope. The absence of clear escalation thresholds or universally recognized “red lines” further increases the likelihood of miscalculation, as actors operate under conditions of uncertainty and heightened threat perception.

Another critical consequence of this turning point is the compression of diplomatic space. Prior to February 2026, diplomatic efforts, while often strained, operated within a framework that

allowed for gradual negotiation and crisis management. After the onset of active war, diplomacy has been forced into a reactive posture, attempting to respond to developments that are unfolding faster than institutional mechanisms can adapt. This temporal imbalance—where events outpace procedure—reduces the effectiveness of traditional diplomatic tools and raises fundamental questions about the capacity of international institutions to manage modern conflict dynamics.

Taken together, these shifts illustrate that 28 February 2026 did not simply mark the beginning of a new round of hostilities, but the transition into a fundamentally different phase of regional conflict. The Middle East is no longer characterized by isolated crises, but by an interconnected system of instability in which military, political, economic, and social dimensions are tightly interwoven. Each development reinforces others, creating a cumulative effect that accelerates escalation and diminishes the prospects for containment.

In this environment, the distinction between crisis and war becomes increasingly blurred. What might once have been treated as a temporary escalation now functions as part of a sustained conflict structure, with no clear endpoint and multiple pathways for expansion. The region has moved beyond the threshold where instability can be easily reversed; it now operates within a framework where instability is continuous, adaptive, and deeply embedded.

Understanding this turning point is essential for interpreting the current moment. It reveals not only how the conflict has intensified, but why it has become so difficult to control. The events of 28 February 2026 did not create the underlying tensions—they activated them, aligning existing fractures into a coherent and accelerating system of war. The challenge that follows is not merely to respond to individual incidents, but to confront a regional dynamic in which escalation has become the default trajectory rather than the exception.

By March 2026, the trajectory set in motion at the end of February had already evolved into a broader and more complex phase of regional war. What began as a direct and highly visible escalation between Iran and Israel rapidly expanded beyond a bilateral framework, drawing in additional actors and opening new fronts. The most significant of these developments emerged along the Lebanon front, where the role of Hezbollah proved central to the widening of the conflict.

Israeli military operations increasingly extended beyond reactive strikes into more sustained and structured activity, particularly in southern Lebanon. Reports of efforts to expand a security buffer zone in this area reflect a shift in strategic posture—from short-term deterrence to longer-term territorial and security considerations. Such moves indicate that the conflict is no longer being managed solely through calibrated responses, but is beginning to reshape realities on the ground in ways that carry enduring implications. For Israel, this expansion is framed as a necessary measure to prevent cross-border threats and limit the operational capacity of Hezbollah. However, for Hezbollah and its aligned networks, these actions reinforce the perception of ongoing aggression, thereby justifying continued engagement and resistance.

This dynamic transforms Lebanon into more than just an adjacent theater—it becomes a central arena in which the broader regional confrontation is actively unfolding. The fragile internal condition of the Lebanese state further amplifies the risks associated with this shift. As military activity intensifies, the potential for large-scale humanitarian consequences and institutional breakdown grows, increasing the likelihood that Lebanon itself becomes a focal point of sustained conflict rather than a peripheral front.

At the same time, the expansion along the Lebanon front signals a deeper structural change in the nature of the war. The conflict has moved beyond a narrow exchange between two principal adversaries and has taken on the characteristics of a multi-front, networked confrontation. Actions in one theater are no longer contained; they generate immediate and often unpredictable repercussions across others. The involvement of Hezbollah, with its strong ties to Iran and its embedded position within Lebanon, exemplifies how state and non-state actors are interconnected within this evolving conflict system.

This widening is not limited to geography alone. It reflects an expansion in strategic scope, operational objectives, and political stakes. Military decisions are increasingly linked to broader regional calculations, while local developments carry implications for international stability. As a result, the conflict is no longer defined by discrete events, but by an ongoing process of escalation that continuously reshapes the regional landscape.

In this sense, March 2026 represents the consolidation of the transition from crisis to war. The patterns established in late February have not only persisted but intensified, embedding themselves within the operational logic of the region. The war is no longer emerging—it is expanding. And with each additional front, each strategic adjustment, and each cycle of action

and response, the possibility of containment becomes more distant, while the risk of systemic regional conflict becomes increasingly immediate.



The Structure of the Crisis Before the Council

A War Already in Progress, Not a Crisis at the Threshold

The defining structural feature of this committee is that it begins in the midst of an active war, not at the threshold of one. By late February 2026, missiles have already been launched, strikes have already been conducted, and retaliatory actions have already generated layered cycles of escalation. Reporting from Reuters characterizes this moment as the transition into a sustained phase of hostilities rather than an isolated outbreak.

This distinction is not merely descriptive—it fundamentally alters the logic of Security Council engagement. In a pre-crisis scenario, diplomacy is oriented toward prevention: signaling restraint, building confidence, and deterring escalation before it occurs. In the present context, however, the United Nations Security Council is operating within the politics of wartime containment and damage limitation.

The implications are immediate and significant. Delegates are not tasked with asking whether the region may ignite; that question has already been answered. Instead, they must confront whether an ongoing war can still be prevented from expanding further—geographically, militarily, and politically. This requires a shift from abstract deliberation to urgent, consequence-driven decision-making, where each delay or miscalculation may contribute to irreversible escalation.

In this sense, the structure of the crisis forces the Council into a reactive posture. The challenge is not to shape the initial trajectory of events, but to intervene in a conflict whose momentum is already established.

The Expansion from Direct Confrontation into Regional War Logic

What began as escalation between Iran and Israel has evolved into a broader regional war logic that connects multiple theaters and actors. The conflict is no longer confined to a bilateral axis; it now incorporates the strategic role of Hezbollah, the instability of Lebanon, vulnerabilities in

Gulf maritime and energy routes, and the wider perceptions of deterrence held by regional and global actors.

This expansion reflects a key structural transformation: each front of the conflict is simultaneously local and regional. A strike in one theater is interpreted not only within its immediate context but as part of a broader strategic contest. For example, actions involving Hezbollah cannot be understood solely within the Lebanese context; they are also linked to Iranian strategy, Israeli security doctrine, and regional alliance dynamics.

The interconnected nature of these fronts creates a system in which escalation is not linear but networked. Developments in one area can rapidly trigger responses in others, producing cascading effects that are difficult to predict or control. Analysis from institutions such as International Crisis Group highlights how such interconnected conflicts increase the risk of rapid regionalization, particularly when multiple actors perceive their credibility and deterrence as being simultaneously tested.

For delegates, this means that no issue can be treated in isolation. Every proposal, statement, or action must be evaluated not only for its immediate impact but for its potential to influence the broader regional system. The difficulty of the committee lies precisely in this complexity: the war has already escaped the boundaries of a single theater, and any attempt to address it must grapple with its multi-front nature.

The UNSC Under Wartime Compression

A further structural constraint is the condition of “wartime compression” under which the Security Council is operating. Military developments are unfolding at a pace that often outstrips diplomatic deliberation. Strikes, counterstrikes, and strategic repositioning occur in rapid succession, while the Council must navigate procedural requirements, political divisions, and the need for consensus.

This temporal imbalance creates a significant challenge. Delayed responses from the United Nations Security Council risk allowing the conflict to consolidate into a new and more dangerous status quo. As patterns of escalation become normalized, the threshold for further violence may lower, making subsequent interventions less effective.

Moreover, the perception of delay can influence the behavior of actors on the ground. If parties to the conflict believe that the Council is unable or unwilling to act decisively, they may feel less constrained by international pressure, increasing the likelihood of unilateral escalation. This dynamic reinforces the gap between diplomatic intention and strategic reality.

In this context, the Council must function as an emergency diplomatic body attempting to regain influence after the onset of war. This requires not only substantive proposals but also procedural agility and political coordination. The challenge is to produce outcomes that are both timely and credible, despite the inherent constraints of multilateral decision-making.

Delegates must therefore balance urgency with deliberation, recognizing that both premature and delayed action carry significant risks.

The Leadership Dilemma

At the core of the Council's response lies a fundamental leadership dilemma, shaped by the ambiguity of action in wartime conditions. Every potential course of action carries both strategic benefits and political risks, often simultaneously.

Strong action—such as robust resolutions, sanctions, or the authorization of coercive measures—may be interpreted as necessary to restore deterrence and signal resolve. However, it may also be perceived as endorsing or intensifying the logic of confrontation, particularly if it aligns with the strategic objectives of certain actors.

Conversely, cautious or limited action may reflect a deliberate effort to avoid further escalation and preserve space for diplomacy. Yet such restraint can also be interpreted as weakness or institutional paralysis, undermining the credibility of the United Nations Security Council and reducing its ability to influence events.

Delay introduces a third layer of complexity. Postponing action may create opportunities for consensus among divided members, particularly within the permanent five. However, in a rapidly evolving conflict, delay risks allowing battlefield momentum to dominate, closing the window for meaningful diplomatic intervention.

This dilemma is not theoretical—it is embedded in the structure of the crisis itself. Delegates must navigate competing imperatives: acting decisively without exacerbating the conflict, exercising restraint without appearing ineffective, and managing time without losing relevance.

Ultimately, the leadership challenge for the Council is to identify forms of action that can alter the trajectory of the conflict without reinforcing its most dangerous dynamics. This requires careful calibration, strategic awareness, and a willingness to engage with uncertainty—hallmarks of diplomacy under conditions of active war.



Major Causes and Drivers of Escalation

The Collapse of the Shadow-War Equilibrium

The outbreak of large-scale hostilities in late February 2026 reflects the definitive collapse of what had long been described as a “shadow-war” equilibrium in the Middle East. For decades, regional tensions—particularly between Israel and Iran—were managed through indirect confrontation, covert operations, and carefully calibrated retaliation. This system relied on ambiguity, deniability, and restraint, allowing actors to pursue strategic competition without triggering full-scale war.

By early 2026, this equilibrium had eroded beyond repair. The escalation beginning on 28 February, as reported by Reuters, demonstrates that the mechanisms which previously contained conflict—limited strikes, delayed retaliation, and informal red lines—are no longer functioning effectively. Military actions have become increasingly overt, attributable, and politically acknowledged, eliminating the ambiguity that once provided space for de-escalation.

This shift is not accidental but cumulative. Years of incremental escalation, including proxy conflicts in Syria and Iraq, cyber operations, and targeted strikes, gradually weakened the norms that sustained bounded confrontation. What emerges in 2026 is not a sudden crisis, but the visible failure of a long-standing system of informal containment.

As a result, the current war must be understood as the product of structural breakdown rather than isolated provocation. Delegates should approach the conflict not as a deviation from stability, but as the consequence of a system that could no longer absorb escalating pressures.

Accumulated Military and Political Signaling

A central driver of the current escalation lies in the accumulation of military and political signaling over time. By March and early April 2026, multiple actors have already committed themselves to positions that are difficult to reverse without incurring significant strategic and domestic political costs.

Military signaling has taken the form of repeated strikes, force mobilizations, and the deployment of advanced capabilities. These actions are not merely tactical; they are

communicative, intended to demonstrate resolve, deterrence capacity, and willingness to escalate. According to analysis from International Crisis Group, such signaling creates a dynamic in which each action generates expectations for response, reinforcing cycles of escalation.

Political signaling has reinforced this pattern. Public statements, alliance commitments, and rhetorical positioning have raised the stakes of the conflict. Leaders who frame actions in terms of credibility, security, and national survival limit their own room for maneuver, as any perceived concession risks being interpreted as weakness by both domestic and international audiences.

This creates a classic escalation dilemma. Each actor faces a strategic environment in which de-escalation without tangible gains may appear as defeat, while escalation, though risky, preserves credibility. As a result, the conflict intensifies not necessarily because actors seek war, but because the costs of backing down have become politically and strategically prohibitive.

The cumulative effect of this signaling environment is a self-reinforcing cycle. Actions taken to deter escalation paradoxically contribute to it, as they provoke countermeasures and reduce the perceived viability of restraint.

Hezbollah's Role as an Escalation Accelerator

Within this broader dynamic, Hezbollah occupies a uniquely critical position as an escalation accelerator. Unlike other actors, Hezbollah operates at the intersection of state and non-state dynamics, combining significant military capability with deep political integration within Lebanon.

Hezbollah's strategic significance lies in its ability to transform a contained conflict into a multi-front regional war. Its geographic position along Israel's northern border, combined with its arsenal of missiles and asymmetric warfare capabilities, creates a constant risk of rapid escalation. Even limited engagement on this front can trigger large-scale military responses, drawing additional actors into the conflict.

Lebanon's internal fragility amplifies this risk. The country's political and economic crises have weakened state institutions, limiting their capacity to regulate or contain armed actors. Reports and analyses from Council on Foreign Relations emphasize that in such environments, non-state actors can operate with greater autonomy, increasing unpredictability and reducing the effectiveness of traditional diplomatic channels.

Importantly, Hezbollah should not be treated as a hypothetical trigger for escalation, but as an actor already embedded within the ongoing conflict dynamic. Its actions are both influenced by and contributory to the broader regional confrontation, particularly in its alignment with Iranian strategic objectives.

This makes the Hezbollah front one of the most volatile elements of the conflict. Escalation in this arena has the potential to rapidly expand the geographic scope of the war, overwhelm existing containment efforts, and significantly increase humanitarian and strategic costs.

Weak Regional Buffers

Another critical driver of escalation is the weakening of regional “buffer” mechanisms—political, institutional, and structural factors that historically helped contain conflict. In previous crises, relatively stable state institutions and regional diplomatic frameworks acted as shock absorbers, limiting the spread of violence and providing channels for de-escalation.

By 2026, many of these buffers have eroded. In Lebanon, prolonged political paralysis and economic collapse have significantly reduced state capacity. In neighboring theaters such as Syria and Iraq, years of conflict have fragmented authority and entrenched the presence of armed non-state actors. According to assessments by United Nations Development Programme, such conditions weaken governance structures and increase vulnerability to external shocks.

The consequence is a regional environment in which conflicts spread more easily and are harder to contain. Weak states lack the capacity to control territory, enforce ceasefires, or mediate between competing actors. At the same time, strong armed networks—often operating across borders—can exploit these vulnerabilities to expand their activities.

This imbalance between weak institutions and strong non-state actors accelerates the diffusion of conflict. Violence in one area can quickly spill over into others, as there are few effective mechanisms to absorb or isolate shocks. The result is a highly interconnected and unstable regional system, where escalation in one theater can trigger cascading effects across multiple fronts.

The guide should therefore emphasize that the current war is more dangerous not only because of the actors involved, but because the structural conditions that once limited escalation have largely disappeared.

Great-Power Division Inside the Council

A final and critical driver of escalation lies within the very body tasked with maintaining international peace and security: the United Nations Security Council. Divisions among its permanent members (P5) significantly constrain the Council's ability to respond effectively to the crisis.

The P5—comprising the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—hold divergent perspectives on key issues such as deterrence, legality, alliance obligations, and the appropriate balance between escalation and de-escalation. These differences are rooted in broader geopolitical rivalries and strategic interests, which shape how each member interprets the conflict and its potential solutions.

This division has practical consequences. Disagreement among permanent members can delay or block resolutions, weaken the language of adopted measures, and reduce the credibility of the Council's actions. As highlighted in analyses by International Crisis Group, fragmented responses undermine the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy and limit the Council's ability to influence behavior on the ground.

Moreover, the perception of division can itself contribute to escalation. When regional actors believe that the Council is unlikely to act decisively or coherently, they may feel less constrained by international pressure, increasing their willingness to pursue unilateral or escalatory strategies.

In this sense, the war deepens not only because of regional dynamics but also because of systemic limitations within the global governance framework. The body designed to respond to threats to peace is itself politically fragmented, reducing its capacity to act as an effective mediator or enforcer.

Post-Conflict De-escalation and Conflict Containment

De-escalation means taking steps to reduce the intensity of a conflict and slowing down the fighting, pulling back forces, opening channels for negotiation. Before a war starts, de-escalation is relatively straightforward, because you try to calm tensions before anyone makes a move. But once fighting is already underway, de-escalation becomes much more complicated. Calling for a ceasefire might save thousands of lives in the short term, but it might also be seen by one side as a sign that military pressure is working, which could actually encourage further aggression after it.

On the other hand, taking a hard stance and refusing to push for de-escalation might preserve a country's credibility and signal that aggression will not be rewarded, but it also risks letting the war deepen and spread further. The real objective for this committee is whether it is possible to design a de-escalation strategy that works during a war, not just before one. Can the Council create off-ramps, some ways for the parties to step back without feeling like they lost, even after the shooting has already started? This requires creative diplomacy of the delegates.

Hezbollah as a live front of the war

Hezbollah is not a side issue in this conflict, because it is one of the central actors driving the fighting. As an armed group based in Lebanon with deep ties to Iran, Hezbollah has been launching attacks and drawing retaliatory strikes that threaten to turn Lebanon into the most dangerous flashpoint of the entire war. The committee must debate what, if anything, the international community can actually do about Hezbollah. Can its military activity be contained through diplomatic pressure on Lebanon or Iran? Can it be isolated from its supply chains and funding? Or is the only way to address Hezbollah through a much broader regional deal that involves Iran directly?

Lebanon itself cannot be treated as just a passive backdrop to this story. The Lebanese government has very limited control over what Hezbollah does and that is not a new problem, it has been a defining feature of Lebanese politics for decades. If the Security Council passes a resolution demanding that Lebanon disarm Hezbollah without addressing why that has been impossible for years, the resolution will mean literally nothing.

Civilian protection in Lebanon, Israel, Iran, and beyond

In Lebanon, entire neighborhoods have been evacuated, hospitals are overwhelmed, and basic infrastructure like electricity and water is under strain. In Israel, communities near the border have been displaced by rocket fire, and the psychological toll on the population is severe. In Iran, the ripple effects of military strikes and economic pressure are affecting ordinary people who have no say in their government's decisions. The raw human cost of this war must not be treated as a future concern, but a current one.

Civilian protection should not be treated as a purely moral issue in a war like this one, because how civilians are treated also has direct strategic consequences. Mass civilian casualties can fuel recruitment for armed groups, destabilize governments, trigger refugee crises that spill into neighboring countries, and harden public opinion against any peace deal. This means that humanitarian policy is not separate from the political and military strategy, it means it is part of it. Delegates must debate what protecting civilians actually looks like when both sides believe retaliation is justified.

Maritime security, energy pressure, and global consequences

From the moment the conflict escalated, global shipping routes through the region became threatened, energy prices began to rise, and financial markets reacted with anxiety. The Middle East sits at the crossroads of some of the most important trade routes in the world, and disruption to those routes, whether through direct attacks on ships or through the general instability of the region, sends economic shockwaves far beyond the countries doing the fighting. Organizations like the International Energy Agency, the IMF, and the World Bank have already flagged the conflict as a source of serious international economic concern.

This raises a question the committee has to decide on: should the Security Council's response focus narrowly on stopping the fighting between the parties directly involved, or should it also explicitly address the broader global consequences of the war? Some countries will argue that the Council's job is to stop the war first and let economists worry about energy prices. Others will argue that if the world's largest economies are being damaged by this conflict, then the international community has an even greater stake in resolving it, and that economic pressure tools like sanctions or trade mechanisms could be part of a comprehensive Council response. There is no easy answer, but it is a debate countries cannot avoid.

The role of outside powers

Some external countries, such as the United States, are not simply watching this conflict from a distance and offering opinions. It is a direct strategic actor providing military support to Israel, maintaining a significant military presence in the region, and making decisions every day that affect the course of the war. That means the United States is simultaneously a member of the Security Council supposed to be managing the crisis and one of the parties shaping how the crisis evolves. Gulf states like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar are also deeply affected because they are geographically close, economically exposed, and politically caught between their relationships with the US and their own complex ties to Iran.

European powers like France, Germany, and the UK carry diplomatic weight even if their military leverage in the region is more limited because they can offer mediation frameworks, push for humanitarian access, and use their relationships with multiple parties to facilitate back-channel negotiations. The question for countries is this: does the involvement of outside powers make this war easier to end, or harder? On one hand, powerful outside actors can apply pressure and offer guarantees that make a ceasefire happen. On the other hand, when external powers are deeply invested in the outcome, they can fuel the conflict by continuing to supply weapons, intelligence, or diplomatic cover to their preferred side. Countries must honestly confront whether outside involvement is part of the solution or part of the problem.

International law during layered wartime escalation

International law is supposed to set clear rules for when and how countries can use military force. For example, a country has the right to defend itself if it is attacked, that is called the right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. But this conflict involves a complicated tangle of actions, such as preemptive strikes before an attack happens, retaliatory strikes after one does, targeted killings of military commanders, support for proxy groups fighting across borders, and cross-border operations that may or may not qualify as acts of war. These situations test the limits of existing legal categories in ways that even experienced international lawyers disagree about.

The deeper problem is whether legal arguments still have any practical power once a war is already underway and both sides believe they are acting in self-defense. When every party claims the law is on their side, the law starts to lose its ability to actually constrain behavior, so the

Security Council has to decide whether it is going to firmly apply international humanitarian law and hold parties accountable for violations, or whether it is going to set legal standards aside in the name of political compromise. If the Council chooses the latter too often, it risks sending a message to the world that international law only applies when it is convenient, which has consequences that will outlast this particular conflict.

The future credibility of the Security Council

So, every time the Security Council fails to act meaningfully during a major crisis, it loses a little bit of its authority, so countries start to ask: if the Council cannot stop a war this serious, why should we listen to it at all? This is not just an abstract institutional concern, because not only countries are making it, but also society. If states stop believing the Council can enforce its decisions, they start making their own security arrangements outside the UN system, taking unilateral military action, and ignoring resolutions they find inconvenient. The war between Iran, Israel, and Hezbollah is already testing whether the Council can function under real pressure, with great powers on opposite sides.

The problem goes even deeper than whether the Council passes a resolution in situations in which a resolution that nobody follows is arguably worse than no resolution at all, because it highlights the gap between what the Council says and what actually happens. Countries should think of this committee not just as a simulation of diplomacy, but as a test of whether multilateral institutions, such as organizations where many countries work together under shared rules, can still matter in a world where powerful states often prefer to act alone.

Positions of Blocs, and Internal Council Tendencies

Bloc 1 – Western Security & Deterrence Coalition

This bloc is defined by a shared strategic outlook that prioritizes the preservation of the international rules-based order, the containment of destabilizing actors, and the use of credible deterrence—both military and political—as a primary instrument for managing the current phase of the conflict.

It includes key Western and allied states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Australia, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Poland, the Republic of Korea, and Ukraine.

At its core, this bloc interprets the current regional war as the result of sustained destabilizing behavior by state and non-state actors aligned with Iran. From this perspective, the erosion of deterrence over time—particularly in relation to proxy networks and missile capabilities—has enabled the transition from shadow conflict to overt confrontation.

As a result, members of this group generally and usually support the recognition of Israel's right to self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter, the use of targeted and proportionate military action as a legitimate means of restoring deterrence, the containment of Iranian regional influence, particularly through pressure on affiliated armed actors such as Hezbollah, and the protection of critical infrastructure and maritime routes essential to global economic stability.

However, this bloc is not internally monolithic. While the United States and some of its closest allies may adopt a more assertive posture emphasizing rapid response and strategic dominance, several European states—such as France and Spain—are increasingly attentive to the humanitarian consequences of escalation and the long-term risks of regional war.

This creates an internal tension between deterrence and de-escalation. On one hand, failure to respond decisively may embolden adversaries and weaken credibility. On the other hand, excessive reliance on military instruments risks accelerating the very instability this bloc seeks to contain.

In diplomatic terms, this bloc is likely to push for strong Security Council language condemning destabilizing actions by Iran and affiliated groups, resist resolutions perceived as limiting Israel's operational freedom in the short term, support humanitarian corridors and aid mechanisms, provided they do not interfere with security objectives, and advocate for multilateral coordination in securing maritime routes and critical infrastructure.

Ultimately, the Western Security & Deterrence Coalition approaches the crisis from a position of strategic urgency. It views the current phase not only as a regional conflict but as a test of whether deterrence, alliance systems, and the rules-based international order can still function under conditions of rapid escalation and fragmented warfare.

Main Agendas: Usually defense of Israel's right to self-defense; containment of Iran's regional influence; weakening of non-state armed actors such as Hezbollah; protection of maritime routes and global energy flows; preservation of the rules-based international order; authorization or legitimization of targeted military deterrence measures; controlled humanitarian assistance without compromising security operations.

Bloc 2 – Axis of Resistance & Strategic Defiance

This bloc is defined by a shared opposition to Western-led security frameworks and a strategic emphasis on resistance, sovereignty, and the rebalancing of regional power structures. Rather than viewing the current crisis as a breakdown of order, this group interprets it as the consequence of long-standing asymmetries, external intervention, and unresolved political grievances across the Middle East.

It includes core actors such as Iran and Syria, alongside the strategic backing—both diplomatic and military—of the Russian Federation. While not formally unified under a single command structure, these actors converge around a common objective: resisting what they perceive as external dominance and preventing the consolidation of a regional order shaped by Western and allied interests.

From this perspective, the escalation observed since late February 2026 is not an unprovoked shift toward war, but a predictable outcome of sustained military pressure, territorial violations, and asymmetric confrontation—particularly by Israel. Actions framed by other blocs as

“deterrence” are instead interpreted here as escalation triggers that necessitate a response in order to maintain credibility and strategic balance.

A central feature of this bloc is its acceptance—and, in some cases, endorsement—of non-state armed actors as legitimate components of regional security architecture. Groups such as Hezbollah are not viewed merely as proxies, but as integral actors within a broader axis of resistance. Their role is framed as defensive, particularly in relation to territorial integrity and political autonomy, even as their operations contribute to the complexity and volatility of the conflict environment.

Members of this bloc generally support the rejection of narratives that assign primary responsibility for escalation to Iran and its partners, the framing of military actions as legitimate responses to external aggression and violations of sovereignty, the protection and political recognition of aligned non-state actors within the broader conflict structure, and the limitation of Western military presence and influence in the region.

At the same time, this bloc operates under its own internal constraints. While committed to maintaining deterrence credibility, actors such as Iran must carefully calibrate their actions to avoid triggering a level of confrontation that could threaten regime stability or provoke direct large-scale intervention. Similarly, the Russian Federation balances its support with broader geopolitical considerations, including its own strategic priorities beyond the Middle East.

In diplomatic terms, this bloc is likely to oppose Security Council resolutions that explicitly condemn Iran or its affiliated actors, emphasize violations of sovereignty, particularly in relation to cross-border strikes, advocate for language that constrains or criticizes the military actions of Israel, and support calls for a ceasefire, but only under conditions that do not undermine their strategic position.

Ultimately, the Axis of Resistance & Strategic Defiance approaches the crisis not as a breakdown to be urgently reversed, but as a confrontation that must be navigated without conceding strategic ground. For this bloc, the central concern is not simply de-escalation, but the terms under which any de-escalation occurs—and whether those terms reinforce or challenge existing power dynamics in the region.

Main Agendas: Rejection of Western-led intervention frameworks; condemnation of military actions by Israel; legitimization of resistance against external aggression; protection of

sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran and allies; political and strategic recognition of aligned non-state actors; limitation of foreign military presence in the region; restructuring of regional power balance away from Western dominance.

Bloc 3 – Regional Stabilizers & Gulf Pragmatists

This bloc is defined not by ideological alignment, but by geographic proximity and strategic necessity. Its members are directly exposed to the consequences of escalation and therefore prioritize stability, de-escalation, and conflict containment above all else. Unlike other blocs, their primary objective is not to “win” the confrontation, but to prevent its expansion into a full-scale regional war that would threaten regime security, economic continuity, and internal cohesion.

It includes key regional actors such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, as well as frontline diplomatic and political actors such as Egypt and Jordan.

These states operate within a complex strategic environment. On one hand, many maintain security partnerships with the United States and share concerns regarding the regional influence of Iran. On the other hand, they are acutely aware that confrontation—particularly one involving actors such as Hezbollah or expanding into Lebanon and Syria—would produce immediate and severe consequences for regional stability.

As a result, this bloc tends to adopt a pragmatic and risk-averse approach, emphasizing immediate de-escalation and the establishment of ceasefire mechanisms, the prevention of spillover into neighboring states and critical infrastructure zones, the protection of maritime routes and energy flows, particularly in the Gulf, the use of diplomatic channels, including backchannel negotiations and mediation.

Unlike more polarized blocs, the Regional Stabilizers do not frame the conflict in absolute terms of alignment. Instead, they seek to maintain working relationships across opposing sides, positioning themselves as potential intermediaries. Countries such as Qatar and Oman, in particular, are likely to play active roles in facilitating dialogue, even between actors who are otherwise unwilling to engage directly.

However, this balancing strategy comes with inherent vulnerabilities. These states face the constant risk of being drawn into escalation despite their preference for neutrality or mediation.

Missile threats, proxy activity, and economic disruptions—especially those affecting oil and shipping—place them in a position where inaction is as risky as alignment.

In diplomatic terms, this bloc is likely to strongly support calls for an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation, promote humanitarian access and civilian protection measures, resist highly politicized or accusatory language that could hinder negotiation, and advocate for inclusive diplomatic frameworks involving all major stakeholders, including Iran.

Ultimately, the Regional Stabilizers & Gulf Pragmatists approach the crisis through a lens of urgency and realism. For them, the central concern is not assigning blame, but preventing collapse. Their role within the Security Council is therefore critical: they represent the actors most invested in stopping escalation quickly, and potentially the only ones capable of facilitating dialogue across deeply divided blocs.

Main Agendas: Immediate ceasefire and de-escalation; prevention of regional spillover into Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq; protection of Gulf maritime routes and energy infrastructure; preservation of regional stability and regime security; promotion of mediation and diplomatic dialogue (including with Iran); expansion of humanitarian access; avoidance of large-scale military confrontation.

Bloc 4 – Non-Aligned & Strategic Balancers

This bloc is defined by its commitment to multilateralism, strategic autonomy, and the preservation of international legal frameworks under conditions of escalating conflict. Its members do not align fully with either Western deterrence-driven approaches or resistance-based narratives; instead, they seek to preserve diplomatic space, reduce polarization, and re-center the role of international institutions—particularly the Security Council itself.

It includes influential and regionally diverse actors such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Mexico, as well as traditionally neutral or diplomatically oriented states like Austria.

Rather than interpreting the crisis through a binary lens of alignment, this bloc approaches the conflict as a systemic failure of escalation management and international coordination. From this perspective, both the expansion of military operations by Israel and the strategic responses of Iran contribute to a cycle that undermines stability, weakens legal norms, and increases the risk of broader regional collapse.

As such, this bloc prioritizes the immediate restoration of diplomatic channels, including direct and indirect negotiations, the reaffirmation of international law, particularly principles related to sovereignty, proportionality, and civilian protection, the de-escalation of rhetoric and the avoidance of absolutist or polarizing narratives within the Council, and the strengthening of multilateral mechanisms capable of operating under conditions of active conflict.

A defining characteristic of this group is its emphasis on balance without neutrality. While not aligned with major power blocs, these states do not adopt passive positions; instead, they actively seek to shape outcomes by proposing compromise frameworks, bridging language in draft resolutions, and introducing mechanisms that can be accepted—if not fully supported—by opposing sides.

At the same time, internal diversity within the bloc produces varying emphases. India may approach the crisis with a stronger focus on strategic autonomy and security considerations, while Brazil and South Africa often foreground humanitarian concerns and institutional legitimacy. Neutral states such as Switzerland may prioritize mediation frameworks and confidence-building measures.

In diplomatic terms, this bloc is likely to advocate for ceasefire resolutions that avoid assigning unilateral blame, promote the inclusion of humanitarian corridors, monitoring mechanisms, and international oversight, resist efforts to legitimize broad military escalation under the banner of deterrence, and act as intermediaries in negotiations between polarized blocs, particularly between Western states and actors aligned with Iran.

Ultimately, the Non-Aligned & Strategic Balancers play a structurally critical role within the committee. In a Security Council marked by division and competing strategic priorities, their ability to craft acceptable compromises, reduce diplomatic deadlock, and reintroduce functional dialogue may determine whether the Council can move from paralysis to meaningful action.

Main Agendas: Immediate diplomatic de-escalation frameworks; reaffirmation of international law and UN Charter principles; balanced accountability for actions by both Israel and Iran; protection of civilians and humanitarian corridors; strengthening of multilateral mechanisms under the Security Council; resistance to polarization and bloc politics; construction of compromise-based resolutions acceptable to all sides.

Note on Bloc Flexibility and Delegate Autonomy:

While the blocs outlined above provide a structured framework for understanding general alignments and strategic tendencies within the committee, they are not binding categories and should not be interpreted as fixed or restrictive groupings.

These blocs are intended to reflect broad patterns of positioning, not rigid alliances. In practice, the United Nations Security Council operates through fluid negotiation, shifting coalitions, and issue-specific cooperation. Delegates are therefore not required to follow their assigned bloc, nor are they expected to maintain consistent alignment across all aspects of the debate.

Furthermore, in a crisis committee, positions may evolve in response to crisis updates and rapidly changing developments on the ground, national interests that diverge from broader bloc tendencies, diplomatic negotiations and emerging compromise proposals, and strategic decisions made within the flow of committee dynamics.

For example, a state typically aligned with Western positions may prioritize humanitarian concerns over military ones in specific contexts, while a non-aligned actor may temporarily support stronger language depending on the situation. Similarly, regional actors may shift from mediation roles to more assertive stances if directly affected by escalation.

Delegates are encouraged to view these blocs as analytical tools rather than political constraints. The effectiveness of the committee will depend not on adherence to predefined groupings but on the ability of delegates to navigate complexity, build coalitions, and respond dynamically to unfolding events.

Case Studies and Factual Axes for the Guide

The 28 February 2026 UNSC warning and war outbreak

The Secretary-General's remarks should anchor the committee's chronology.

This matters because the war phase is now understood as having begun in late February 2026, making the committee explicitly wartime rather than pre-war.

The guide should use this as the central chronological pivot.

The widening of the war into Lebanon

Israeli operations in southern Lebanon and Hezbollah's continuing role should be treated as evidence that the conflict is already regionalized.

This case is useful because it turns Lebanon from theoretical spillover into a live and central front.

Global economic response to the war

The IEA, IMF, and World Bank coordination response should be used to show that the war is already producing system-level concerns.

This case helps delegates understand that the Council is debating a conflict with real global economic consequences already underway.

The humanitarian and political pressure on Lebanon

Lebanon should be treated as one of the most vulnerable theaters in the war.

This case helps integrate state fragility, civilian protection, displacement, and proxy warfare into one theater-specific axis.

Political, Humanitarian, and Economic Impacts of Possible Responses

The decisions the Security Council makes in response to this conflict will not exist in a vacuum. Every resolution passed, every veto cast, every paragraph negotiated will produce real consequences, for the people living through the war, for the countries involved, for the global economy, and for the institution itself. This section walks through five key areas where the Council's response, or lack of one, will leave a lasting mark.

Delegates should approach each of these not as abstract policy categories, but as interconnected realities: what the Council says about de-escalation affects humanitarian outcomes, how it handles legal language shapes future conflicts, how it performs under pressure determines whether it retains any authority at all. Understanding these connections is what separates a resolution that looks good on paper from one that actually changes something in the world.

The impact of rapid de-escalation language

When the Security Council moves quickly to call for de-escalation, using calm, measured language that urges all sides to stop fighting and return to dialogue, it can have an immediate positive effect on the diplomatic temperature of the crisis. Leaders and diplomats around the world watch what the Council says, and a clear unified message calling for restraint can give moderate voices on all sides the political cover they need to pump the brakes. It can also open space for humanitarian organizations to negotiate access, for hostages or prisoners to be exchanged, and for back-channel conversations to begin between parties who are not yet ready to talk publicly.

However, rapid de-escalation language carries real risks that countries cannot ignore. If one side in the conflict believes it has military momentum, meaning it thinks it is winning and that continued fighting will improve its position, a Council call for de-escalation might actually be read as an attempt to freeze the conflict in a way that protects the losing side. That perception can cause the party with the upper hand to dismiss the resolution entirely, which in turn makes the Council look powerless. Even worse, it might encourage the stronger party to accelerate military operations before any ceasefire takes hold, actually worsening the situation in the short term.

There is also a significant effect on coalition-building inside the Council chamber itself. Delegates who push for quick de-escalation language will likely attract support from humanitarian-focused members and smaller elected states that feel the human cost of the war most acutely. But they may lose the support of members aligned with parties who believe they are acting in legitimate self-defense and do not want their operations constrained by a Council resolution. Finding language that is fast enough to matter but balanced enough to hold a coalition together is one of the central diplomatic challenges of this committee. Speed and precision are both necessary, and they are often in tension with each other.

The impact of hard-line deterrent language

Hard-line deterrent language means the Security Council uses strong, firm wording that signals the international community will not tolerate continued aggression, that there will be consequences for violations, and that actors who escalate further do so at their own serious risk. The logic behind this approach is that weakness invites more aggression. If the Council speaks softly and avoids confrontational language, it may signal to the belligerents that they can keep fighting without facing real international pressure. Strong language, on the other hand, attempts to restore the credibility of international norms by making clear that rules still exist and still matter.

The problem is that hard-line language inside the Security Council chamber does not stay inside the chamber. It is broadcast to every government, every military commander, and every armed group paying attention to the conflict. When the Council uses language that seems to endorse or implicitly justify one side's military posture, it can function as a green light for further escalation rather than a brake on it. A resolution that validates one party's right to self-defense without placing firm limits on what that defense can look like may actually narrow the space for ceasefire diplomacy, because the party being validated has less incentive to stop.

Hard-line language also tends to deepen divisions within the Council itself. Permanent members whose allies are being criticized will push back hard, raising the likelihood of a veto or a watered-down text that satisfies no one. Elected members from regions directly affected by the conflict may feel pressured to choose sides in ways that compromise their ability to play a bridging or mediation role later in the process. Countries choosing this approach must think carefully about

whether the short-term benefit of appearing firm and principled outweighs the longer-term cost of fracturing the Council's ability to act collectively.

The impact on the region's humanitarian future

The humanitarian crisis in this conflict is not a warning about what might happen if the war continues, it is already happening. People have already been forced out of their homes. Hospitals are already struggling to treat the wounded. Electricity grids, water systems, and roads have already been damaged or destroyed. Children have already missed months of school. Families have already been separated. The Security Council is not debating how to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, because it is debating how to respond to one that is actively unfolding. Every day the Council delays meaningful action, the situation on the ground deteriorates further in ways that will take years or decades to reverse.

Displacement is one of the most serious long-term consequences. When people are forced to flee their homes, whether within a country or across borders, they carry the trauma of that experience for generations. Communities that once functioned are fractured. Host countries that receive refugees face enormous economic and social pressure. In a region already dealing with prior waves of displacement from earlier conflicts, the addition of new refugee flows strains governments that are already at or beyond their limits.

Infrastructure destruction compounds every other problem. When hospitals are damaged, the sick and wounded cannot be treated, when water systems are hit, disease spreads, when schools are destroyed, an entire generation loses access to education during formative years, when power grids fail, businesses close, food spoils, and medical equipment stops functioning. These are not abstract statistics, they are the daily realities faced by millions of civilians who had no role in starting this war. The Security Council has tools that can address some of these issues, it can demand humanitarian corridors, call for the protection of civilian infrastructure under international law, and authorize UN agencies to operate more freely in conflict zones.

Perhaps most importantly, countries must understand that humanitarian deterioration creates its own cycle of political instability, such as a population that has lost everything, homes, livelihoods, family members, trust in institutions, becomes a population that is more vulnerable to radicalization, more likely to support extreme political movements, and less willing to accept compromise peace agreements. In this sense, failing to address the humanitarian crisis is not

just a moral failure, it is a strategic failure that will make the political resolution of this conflict harder to achieve and harder to sustain once achieved.

The impact on international law and precedent

One of the most consequential things the Security Council does, even when it does not fully realize it, is set precedent on international situations. The language the Council uses to describe this conflict, the legal frameworks it invokes or ignores, and the standards it applies or fails to apply will be referenced for decades in future debates about when military force is justified, how proportionality should be measured, and who bears responsibility for the actions of non-state armed groups.

Proportionality is one of the most contested legal questions in this conflict. International humanitarian law requires that the harm caused to civilians must not be excessive compared to the military advantage gained. But what counts as excessive is deeply disputed, especially when one side argues it is responding to existential threats. If the Security Council passes language that implicitly accepts very broad interpretations of proportionality, it sets a precedent that future actors will use to justify actions that might otherwise be clearly illegal. Conversely, if it demands strict adherence to proportionality without acknowledging the genuine security threats involved, it may produce language that the parties simply refuse to accept.

Proxy responsibility is another area where the Council's words will shape future norms. For years, states have used proxy groups as a way to project military power while maintaining a degree of legal distance. If this Council holds Iran accountable for Hezbollah's actions in clear legal terms, it strengthens the international norm that states cannot escape responsibility simply by using intermediaries. If it avoids that question or uses vague language that sidesteps the issue, it signals that proxy warfare remains a legally safe strategy.

With that, countries should understand the danger of what lawyers call normalization through exception. When the Council repeatedly treats emergency situations as special cases that justify bending or suspending legal rules, those exceptions gradually become the new normal. The rules designed to protect civilians, limit the use of force, and hold states accountable stop functioning as firm boundaries and start functioning as suggestions. This erosion of international legal norms does not happen dramatically or all at once, it happens incrementally, resolution by resolution, crisis by crisis.

The impact on the Security Council itself

The Security Council's authority has never come primarily from its physical power, has no army of its own and cannot force compliance on its own. Its authority comes from legitimacy: the widely shared belief that the Council represents the international community's collective judgment and that its decisions therefore carry moral and political weight that no single country acting alone can match. That legitimacy is not automatic or permanent. It is built over time through consistent, principled action, and it can be eroded through paralysis, double standards, and the perception that the Council serves the interests of its most powerful members rather than the international community as a whole.

The fact that the Council has struggled to produce meaningful, enforceable action in the face of an active war with massive civilian casualties is not going unnoticed. Countries in the Global South, regional organizations, humanitarian agencies, and ordinary people watching the news are all drawing conclusions about whether the Security Council is capable of doing its job when the stakes are highest. If the Council emerges from this crisis having passed nothing of substance, or having passed resolutions that were immediately ignored, the damage to its authority will be real and lasting.

There are three possible outcomes for the Council's institutional standing in this conflict. The first is visible irrelevance, the Council debates at length, vetoes fly, nothing passes, and the war continues without any meaningful international framework. This outcome does not just fail the people caught in the war; it actively weakens the case for multilateralism as a viable approach to global security. The second outcome is partial reassertion of authority, the Council passes something imperfect but real, creates some mechanism for monitoring or accountability, and demonstrates that even under intense political pressure it can produce collective action. The third is a deeper entrenchment of veto paralysis, where the same divisions that have blocked action before simply reassert themselves, confirming a pattern that has already damaged the Council's credibility in Syria, Ukraine, and Gaza.

Delegates should carry this awareness into every session and every negotiation. When you fight for a particular paragraph, when you push back against language you believe is inadequate, when you work to build a coalition that crosses regional and political lines, you are not just performing diplomacy. You are making an argument, through action, that this institution still matters. The

Council is not only deciding the fate of a region on fire. It is deciding something about itself, whether it is still capable of being the body the world created it to be, or whether it has become a forum where great-power competition plays out while the people who need protection most are left to wait.



Relevant Legal, Normative, and Doctrinal Frameworks

The UN Charter and International Peace and Security

The legal foundation of the United Nations Security Council's authority lies in the United Nations Charter, which establishes both the prohibition on the use of force and the mechanisms for maintaining international peace and security. Article 2(4) of the Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, forming one of the central pillars of modern international law. At the same time, Chapter VII empowers the United Nations Security Council to determine the existence of threats to peace, breaches of peace, or acts of aggression, and to take binding measures in response.

In the context of the 2026 Middle East war, this dual structure becomes particularly significant. On one hand, the Charter establishes a clear normative baseline: the use of force is generally prohibited. On the other, it recognizes that the Security Council may authorize coercive measures—including sanctions or military action—when international peace and security are at stake.

For delegates, it is essential to understand that all debate within the committee is formally situated within this Charter framework. Even when states justify their actions through claims of necessity or self-defense, such arguments are made in relation to the Charter's provisions rather than outside them. This creates a legal and rhetorical structure in which actors seek not to reject international law, but to interpret it in ways that legitimize their conduct.

The challenge for the Council is therefore not simply to restate legal principles, but to determine how those principles apply in a context where multiple actors claim legal justification for actions that collectively contribute to escalation.

Self-Defense, Necessity, and Escalation

One of the most contested legal doctrines in the current conflict is the right to self-defense, as articulated in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. This provision recognizes the inherent right of states to defend themselves in the event of an armed attack, pending action by the

Security Council. In practice, however, the interpretation of self-defense has expanded and evolved, particularly in contexts involving non-state actors, proxy warfare, and anticipatory threats.

In the 2026 conflict, multiple actors invoke self-defense to justify both initial strikes and subsequent retaliatory actions. These claims are often intertwined with the doctrine of necessity, which requires that defensive measures be necessary to repel or prevent an attack, and proportionality, which limits the scale and scope of such measures.

The difficulty arises when these principles are applied in a complex, multi-actor environment. Direct state-to-state conflict overlaps with proxy actions carried out by groups such as Hezbollah, blurring the lines of attribution and responsibility. In such cases, states may argue that actions against non-state actors are justified as self-defense against the state that supports them, further complicating legal interpretation.

Additionally, the logic of retaliation can create a chain of actions in which each step is framed as defensive, even as the overall trajectory is escalatory. This produces a situation in which legality becomes contested not only in substance but in narrative: each actor constructs a legal argument to justify its behavior, often drawing on selective interpretations of international law.

For delegates, this means that legality cannot be treated as a fixed or neutral category. Instead, it must be analyzed as a field of argumentation, where competing claims are advanced, contested, and evaluated. The task is not merely to identify whether actions are “legal” or “illegal,” but to understand how legal justifications are constructed and how they influence political and strategic outcomes.

International Humanitarian Law in Active Regional War

While the legality of the use of force (*jus ad bellum*) remains contested, the conduct of hostilities (*jus in bello*) is governed by a more clearly defined body of rules known as international humanitarian law (IHL). Rooted in instruments such as the Geneva Conventions, IHL establishes principles designed to limit the humanitarian impact of armed conflict.

Among the most important of these principles are distinction, proportionality, and precaution. The principle of distinction requires parties to differentiate between combatants and civilians, as well as between military objectives and civilian objects. Proportionality prohibits attacks in

which the expected civilian harm would be excessive in relation to the anticipated military advantage. Precaution obliges parties to take all feasible measures to minimize harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

In the context of the current Middle East war, the application of these principles is both essential and deeply challenging. Many areas of conflict—particularly in densely populated regions—are characterized by the close proximity of military and civilian assets. Non-state actors may operate within civilian environments, while critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and energy facilities may be located near or within contested zones.

Reports and assessments from International Committee of the Red Cross emphasize that such conditions increase the risk of civilian harm and complicate compliance with IHL. At the same time, they underscore that the complexity of the environment does not diminish the legal obligations of parties to the conflict.

For the Security Council, IHL is not a peripheral concern but a central component of its mandate to maintain international peace and security. Violations of IHL can exacerbate humanitarian crises, fuel cycles of retaliation, and undermine the legitimacy of political processes. Delegates should therefore treat IHL not as an abstract legal framework, but as a set of operational constraints and ethical imperatives that directly shape the conduct and consequences of the war.

UNSC Practice, Veto Politics, and Legitimacy

Although the Security Council operates within a legal framework, its actions are also shaped by political realities, particularly the role of the veto held by its five permanent members. The United Nations Security Council is both a legal institution and a political arena, where decisions reflect not only normative principles but also the strategic interests of major powers.

The veto power allows any of the permanent members—United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—to block substantive resolutions. This mechanism was designed to ensure that the Council's actions would not directly conflict with the core interests of the most powerful states, thereby preserving their participation in the international system.

In practice, however, veto politics can significantly constrain the Council's ability to act. Divergent interpretations of the conflict, competing alliances, and broader geopolitical rivalries may lead to deadlock or diluted resolutions. Analysis from organizations such as International

Crisis Group highlights how such divisions can undermine both the effectiveness and the credibility of the Council.

At the same time, procedural power is not merely a technical detail but a substantive aspect of the crisis. The ability—or inability—of the Council to adopt binding measures shapes the incentives and behavior of actors on the ground. When the Council is perceived as divided or ineffective, parties to the conflict may feel less constrained by international norms, increasing the likelihood of unilateral and escalatory actions.

This raises broader questions of legitimacy. The authority of the Security Council depends not only on its legal mandate but also on its capacity to act in a timely and coherent manner. When procedural dynamics prevent effective action, the gap between legal authority and practical influence becomes more pronounced.

For delegates, this means that understanding the Council's procedures—including veto dynamics—is essential to understanding the substance of the crisis itself. The challenge is not only to formulate legally sound and normatively grounded proposals, but also to navigate the political constraints that determine whether such proposals can be adopted and implemented.

Paths Forward and Possible Resolution Axes

The United Nations Security Council faces a narrow but consequential set of options as it attempts to navigate an active conflict where battlefield dynamics, humanitarian catastrophe, and great-power competition are simultaneously in motion. The most structurally coherent approaches involve either wartime de-escalation frameworks or limited deterrence paired with diplomatic off-ramps. The former focuses on immediate ceasefire language, deconfliction mechanisms, and humanitarian access, not to prevent war, but to create the conditions for off-ramping it. The latter attempts to preserve some measure of strategic credibility while drawing hard limits against further regional escalation, combining restraint language, attribution formulas, and sequenced follow-on diplomacy. Both carry serious fragility risks: de-escalation frameworks may be dismissed by parties who believe battlefield momentum still favors them, while deterrence-plus-diplomacy hybrids risk satisfying no bloc fully and collapsing under the weight of the next crisis update.

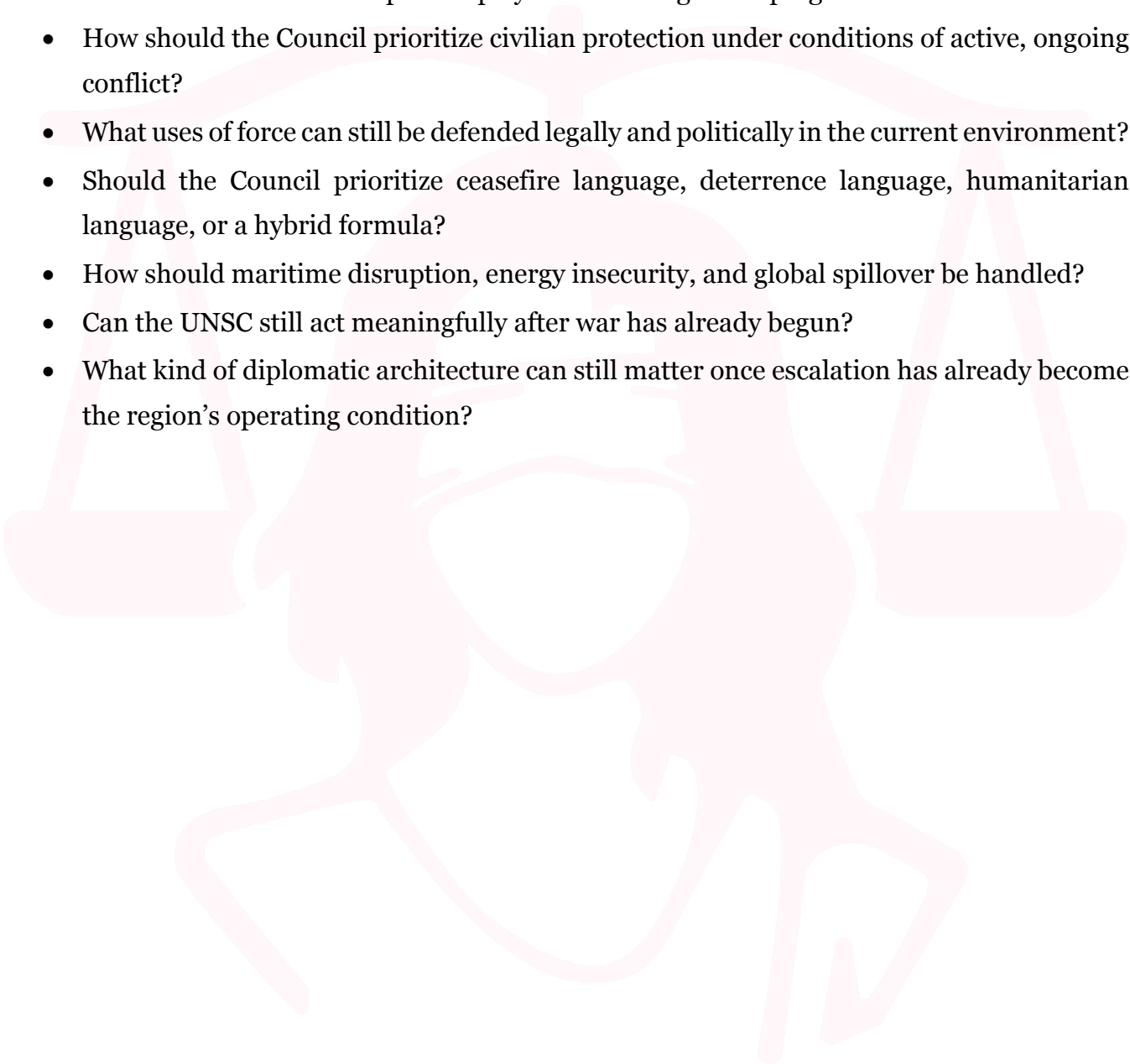
A second cluster of options addresses specific theaters and humanitarian dimensions rather than the conflict's strategic architecture as a whole. A Hezbollah containment strategy would concentrate diplomatic pressure on the Lebanon front, treating it as the most dangerous accelerator of regional widening and attempting to separate it from other active fronts where possible. This is a useful approach if the Council judges that Lebanon represents the war's most volatile pressure point, but it risks underestimating how deeply interconnected the fronts already are. Separately, a humanitarian-first response would place civilian protection, displacement, medical access, and infrastructure safeguards at the center of any resolution, offering a path forward when deeper strategic consensus is out of reach. This approach has genuine moral urgency but is vulnerable to the criticism that it addresses the consequences of the conflict without altering its underlying logic.

The most assertive option available to the Council is hard-power signaling through sharper UNSC language, clearer condemnation, stronger attribution, and more explicit red-line framing intended to reinforce deterrence and strategic clarity for states watching the conflict's trajectory. This approach may appeal to members who believe the current diplomatic temperature is already too deferential to active belligerents. However, it carries the highest institutional risk: it is likely to deepen P5 divisions, raise the diplomatic temperature inside an already active war, and potentially accelerate the dynamic it seeks to constrain. Taken together, these five axes do

not represent mutually exclusive choices so much as a menu of emphasis, and the Council's actual output is likely to reflect a contested, partial synthesis of several of them rather than a clean adoption of any single framework.



Questions a Resolution Must Answer

- How should the Council characterize the current war?
 - What immediate steps can still limit regional widening?
 - What role should outside powers play in containing or shaping the war?
 - How should the Council prioritize civilian protection under conditions of active, ongoing conflict?
 - What uses of force can still be defended legally and politically in the current environment?
 - Should the Council prioritize ceasefire language, deterrence language, humanitarian language, or a hybrid formula?
 - How should maritime disruption, energy insecurity, and global spillover be handled?
 - Can the UNSC still act meaningfully after war has already begun?
 - What kind of diplomatic architecture can still matter once escalation has already become the region's operating condition?
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Suggested Further Research

UN materials

Secretary-General remarks and Security Council materials on the February 2026 emergency.

Humanitarian briefings relevant to Lebanon and the region.

Council practice on emergency wartime deliberation.

CFR materials

Analyses on Hezbollah, Lebanon, and regional escalation.

Backgrounders useful for understanding the strategic role of Hezbollah and the Iran-Israel confrontation.

Reuters wartime reporting

Reporting on the outbreak of the war phase from 28 February 2026 onward.

Reporting on Israeli expansion into southern Lebanon and on broader energy/economic coordination responses.

Conclusion

The committee does not convene at the edge of crisis, but in the midst of one that is already unfolding with speed, complexity, and far-reaching consequences. Since late February 2026, the Middle East has entered a phase of active and expanding conflict, where military exchanges, retaliatory cycles, and strategic positioning have moved beyond the realm of possibility into concrete reality. The confrontation between Iran and Israel, compounded by the involvement of actors such as Hezbollah, has reshaped the regional landscape into one defined by interconnected fronts, compressed decision-making timelines, and a constant risk of further escalation. What is at stake is no longer simply instability, but the potential normalization of a wartime environment in which cycles of violence become structurally embedded and increasingly difficult to reverse.

Within this context, the United Nations Security Council faces a profound and unprecedented dilemma. It is no longer acting as a body attempting to prevent escalation, but as one seeking to reassert relevance after escalation has already dictated the pace of events. Traditional diplomatic mechanisms—resolutions, negotiations, and calls for restraint—must now operate under the pressure of ongoing hostilities, where delays are not neutral, but consequential. As key actors invest political capital and deterrence credibility into continued confrontation, the space for compromise narrows, and the cost of de-escalation rises. The Council is therefore confronted with a critical question of function: can multilateral diplomacy still shape outcomes in a conflict that is already in motion, or has the speed of escalation outpaced the structures designed to contain it?

For delegates, this transforms the nature of participation within the committee. This is not a forum for abstract deliberation or distant analysis, but a space in which decisions must be made under conditions of uncertainty, urgency, and incomplete information. Each position taken, each delay in response, and each failure to act carries tangible implications for the trajectory of the conflict. Delegates must think not only as representatives of national policy, but as crisis managers navigating a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, where the consequences of action—and inaction—are immediate and cumulative.

Finally, the committee is defined by a single, unavoidable tension. Diplomacy is being asked to operate in a moment when war is no longer a future risk, but a present reality. The challenge is not simply to respond, but to determine whether the response itself can still alter the course of events. In this sense, the question before the Security Council—and before every delegate in the room—is both urgent and uncertain: can international diplomacy still act meaningfully once regional war is already underway, or has the Council already arrived too late to prevent escalation from solidifying into irreversible regional collapse?



Rules of Procedure

First, a crisis committee is a fast-paced, dynamic simulation format in which delegates operate under constantly evolving scenarios rather than a fixed agenda. Unlike traditional committees, where discussion follows a structured and predictable flow, crisis committees introduce real-time updates—such as military developments, political shifts, or unexpected events—that force delegates to adapt quickly. In this sense, you are expected not only to debate, but to actively respond to unfolding situations through directives, negotiations, and strategic decision-making, often under significant time pressure.

A crisis arc, on the other hand, refers to the overarching narrative trajectory of the committee. It is the evolving storyline that connects individual crisis updates into a coherent progression, shaping how the situation develops over time. The crisis arc determines the escalation patterns, key turning points, and possible outcomes of the simulation, guiding how the scenario intensifies, stabilizes, or transforms based on both pre-planned developments and delegates' actions.

In this committee, it will be different from customs crisis committees, since this crisis committee will be mixed with a General Assembly approach.

The first point are the documents: The document that will be accepted in this committee will be directives, but only the public ones, since we will evaluate both the leadership ability in blocs and the creativity to influence the flow of your bloc goal, some examples can be found below:

[Directive 777](#)

[DIRECTIVE APPLE](#)

The second type of document is the **Position Paper**. You may use the examples below as a reference when writing your own. All Position Papers must be submitted **by the day before the conference**.

[Position Paper - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland \(ICAO\)](#)

[Position Paper - Malaysia \(HMUN Online\)](#)

[Position Paper - State of Libya \(HMUN Online\)](#)

[Position Paper - Republic of Singapore \(PMUNC\)](#)

After doing directives in the blocs and concluding the crisis, you should do a Draft Resolution, merging the blocs ideas and proposals, some examples can be found below:

[Draft Resolution - PEESA](#)

[Draft Resolution #1 - UNION with TYLER Bloc](#)

[Draft Resolution - PuzzleHome Bloc](#)

Explaining specifically about points that you must acknowledge regarding the committee, there are some procedures that aren't present in this committee. First, crisis notes won't be accepted, and as well private directives. During the committee, you must create a directive with your bloc to solve the crisis; however, the directive must be written during unmoderated caucuses only. In this sense, it's crucial that you guys analyze the needs of the committee before proposing unmoderated or moderated motions.

As well, blocs can be changed anytime. During the blocs, you will be evaluated by leadership, and how you can control the arc of your bloc—the main goal. So, if you are observing that your bloc isn't going the way your crisis arc should flow, you must or influence your bloc, or even create another bloc with other delegates that agree with your proposal: You can create a bloc with 3 or 4 delegates if you want to, or even more, there is no specific limit. Additionally, we will be accepting a specific amount of directives to be presented, which will be announced before the unmoderated be approved.

After a directive have been sent and presented in the committee, the chairs will announce a document called "Crisis Update", which will reveal what happened in the world after your

directives passed. This crisis update will be related to the effects of the clauses and solutions that the delegates proposed in the directives that got presented.

If your bloc wants to send the directive to the chairs, it must have the minimum number of the signatories and the maximum of sponsors defined by the chairs, which will be announced by the chairs before unmoderated caucuses, and as well by the viability of how the blocs are going.

A great difference of something as chairs we will notice is your performance in the backroom and in frontroom. Frontroom is basically what you do showing everyone: speeches, leadership, hooks, and etc. Otherwise, the backroom is everything you do in the dark: documents, invisible clauses, draft resolutions, and etc. We will look upon how your performance is structured in both ways, so show your performance in all ways, since in this way you will demonstrate a “Show and Tell” approach.

Regarding the United Nations Security Council veto power of permanent members, during the committee the P5 members (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States) each of them will have only one veto that can be used in any document (directives or draft resolutions). However, after the member uses its veto power, during the whole committee it won't have this power anymore. For example, if China decides to use its veto power in the “BUTTERFLY DIRECTIVE” it will be vetoed and China won't have its power during the whole committee, but the other permanent members veto power won't be affected.

Again, if you have any doubts or questions regarding procedures the chairs will be 100% available to answer it, so don't hesitate in reaching out through email, training sessions, Q&A sessions, so you can prepare yourself and have your best performance.

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