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# **CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SECURITY AND SOVEREIGNTY<sup>1</sup>**

AUTHORED BY - DR. POOJA JAIN

## **I. Introduction**

Cross-border terrorism poses a severe threat to global peace, sovereignty, and the foundational principles of international law. Unlike domestic terrorism, cross-border terrorism involves perpetrators operating across national boundaries, often with the covert or overt support of state actors. This phenomenon not only challenges the internal security of nations but also brings into question the effectiveness of international legal mechanisms. Recent attacks, such as the October 2023 Hamas infiltration into Israel and continued instances of terrorism emanating from Pakistan into India, highlight the limitations of current international responses.

This article explores the tension between a state's right to defend itself against cross-border terrorist threats and the international legal norms that prohibit the violation of another state's sovereignty. The piece aims to analyze recent attacks, examine the international legal framework addressing such threats, and propose reforms to ensure a balance between collective security and respect for sovereignty.

## **II. Conceptual Framework**

### **A. Definition of Cross-Border Terrorism**

Cross-border terrorism refers to violent acts planned, sponsored, or executed by individuals or groups across international borders, often targeting another sovereign state. This form of terrorism typically involves state complicity or a failure to prevent non-state actors from operating within a state's jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup>

### **B. Key Legal Principles**

International law rests on several foundational principles:

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Charter, Article 51; see also UN Secretary-General statements, October 2023

- **Sovereignty and Non-Intervention:** Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.<sup>3</sup> This principle upholds the sovereign equality of all states and forms the cornerstone of international relations.
- **Self-Defense:** Article 51 of the UN Charter recognizes the inherent right of states to self-defense if an armed attack occurs.<sup>4</sup> This right is reaffirmed in customary international law and has been invoked to justify responses to both state and non-state aggressions.
- **Prohibition of Terrorism:** Though international law lacks a universally accepted definition of terrorism, numerous instruments and resolutions characterize it as a serious threat to peace and security. Notable among these are United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1566 (2004), which call upon states to take concrete measures against terrorism, including criminalizing its financing and preventing the provision of safe havens.<sup>5</sup>

### III. Recent Instances of Cross-Border Terrorism (2023–2025)

#### A. Pahalgam terror attack: Terrorists asked name and religion of male tourists, shot them.

On April 22, 2025, a devastating terrorist attack occurred in Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the deaths of 26 civilians and injuries to 20 others. The assailants, armed with M4 carbines and AK-47s, targeted tourists, predominantly Hindus, in what has been described as the deadliest attack in the region since the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially claimed responsibility, citing opposition to the Indian government's policies allowing non-locals to settle in Kashmir. However, the group later retracted its claim. Investigations by Indian authorities linked the attackers to Pakistan, with evidence suggesting support from operatives based in Muzaffarabad and Karachi.

The attack led to a significant escalation in India-Pakistan tensions. India accused Pakistan of

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, "Statement on Balakot Air Strike," February 2019

<sup>4</sup> Security Council Report, "UNSC Briefing on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts," 2023.

<sup>5</sup> UNSC Res. 1373 (2001), S/RES/1373; UNSC Res. 1566 (2004), S/RES/1566.

state-sponsored terrorism, while Pakistan denied involvement and suspended all bilateral treaties, including the 1972 Simla Agreement<sup>6</sup>. The United Nations and other international actors urged both nations to exercise restraint and seek peaceful resolutions.

### **B. Israel-Hamas Conflict (October 2023)**

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched a surprise attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip, killing over 1,200 civilians and taking hundreds hostage. Israel responded with a prolonged military campaign in Gaza. The legal justification cited by Israel was self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The international community, however, remained divided on the proportionality and civilian cost of Israel's response.<sup>7</sup>

### **C. Pakistan-Based Terror Attacks in Jammu & Kashmir (2023–2024)**

India has faced continued infiltration and terrorist activities in Jammu & Kashmir attributed to groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba<sup>8</sup> and Jaish-e-Mohammed<sup>9</sup>, allegedly operating from Pakistan. Despite bilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts, Pakistan's failure to prevent these groups from using its territory has led to India invoking its right to self-defense and launching cross-border operations, such as the 2016 "surgical strikes" and 2019 Balakot airstrikes.<sup>10</sup>

### **D. Ukraine Conflict and Border Sabotage (2024)**

During the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, both sides have accused each other of cross-border sabotage, including drone strikes and sabotage units infiltrating across borders. These incidents blur the line between warfare and terrorism and complicate legal responses, especially when attribution remains contested.

## **IV. International Legal Response to Cross-Border Terrorism**

### **A. United Nations Framework**

The United Nations has developed a robust, albeit fragmented, legal framework to combat cross-border terrorism, primarily through Security Council resolutions and subsidiary bodies.

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<sup>6</sup>A [peace treaty](#) signed between [India](#) and [Pakistan](#) on 2 July 1972 in [Shimla](#), the capital of [Himachal Pradesh](#). It followed the [Indo-Pakistani War of 1971](#). The treaty's official purpose was stated to serve as a way for both countries to "put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations".

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Charter, Article 51; see also UN Secretary-General statements, October 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations Security Council under Resolution 1267; see UNSC Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267/1989/2253

<sup>9</sup> Listed as a terrorist entity by the United Nations Security Council and several national governments; see UNSC Sanctions List, Resolution 1267

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, "Statement on Balakot Air Strike," February 2019.



These instruments do not offer a universally accepted definition of terrorism but impose binding obligations on member states to prevent and suppress terrorist activities.

- **UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001):** Adopted in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, this landmark resolution obliges all UN member states to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freeze terrorist assets, and deny safe haven to terrorists and those supporting them. It also calls on states to enhance border controls, improve information sharing, and ensure the prosecution and punishment of terrorist acts. The resolution established the **Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** to monitor implementation<sup>11</sup>. While not passed under Chapter VII, it is considered binding and reflects the international community's collective response to the transnational threat of terrorism.
- **UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014):** This resolution specifically addresses the growing concern of **foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)**—individuals who travel to other states to engage in terrorist activities. Adopted under Chapter VII, it obliges states to prevent the recruitment, organization, and transit of FTFs and strengthen domestic legislation to prosecute such acts. The resolution was aimed primarily at curbing the influx of fighters into conflict zones like Syria and Iraq, but its implications are global, as it stresses the necessity of **intelligence sharing and international cooperation** to combat cross-border radicalization.<sup>12</sup>
- **UNSC Resolution 2396 (2017):** Building on previous instruments, this resolution recognizes the evolving nature of terrorist threats posed by **returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters**. It mandates that states collect biometric data, share airline passenger information (API/PNR), and implement **effective border security measures** to prevent terrorists from crossing borders undetected. It also emphasizes rehabilitation and reintegration efforts for individuals returning from conflict zones, aiming to create a **comprehensive counter-terrorism architecture** that addresses not just attacks but the ecosystems that enable them.<sup>13</sup>

Together, these resolutions have formed the backbone of the international legal response to terrorism, particularly cross-border activities. However, enforcement remains a challenge due to political differences, resource constraints in developing nations, and the absence of a uniform legal definition of terrorism. The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted in 2006 and reviewed biennially, complements these resolutions by encouraging soft power tools, such as

<sup>11</sup> UNSC Resolution 1373, S/RES/1373 (28 September 2001), available at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1373\(2001\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1373(2001))

<sup>12</sup> UNSC Resolution 2178, S/RES/2178 (24 September 2014), available at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2178\(2014\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2178(2014))

<sup>13</sup> UNSC Resolution 2396, S/RES/2396 (21 December 2017), available at: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2396\(2017\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2396(2017))

addressing root causes and promoting interfaith dialogue.

Despite these resolutions, the absence of a universally accepted definition of terrorism has impeded enforcement and cooperation.

## **B. International Conventions**

Several conventions indirectly address cross-border terrorism:

- **International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999)<sup>14</sup>**
- **International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997)<sup>15</sup>**
- **International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages (1979)<sup>16</sup>**

None of these treaties, however, specifically address state-sponsored or cross-border terrorism in a holistic manner.

## **C. Customary International Law and State Practice**

The evolving doctrine of "unwilling or unable," used to justify operations in foreign territories harboring terrorists, lacks formal recognition but has been invoked by the United States, Israel, and India. The U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan and Yemen and Israel's strikes in Syria are prominent examples.

# **V. Challenges in Enforcement**

## **A. Attribution Issues**

Establishing a clear link between non-state actors and a host state's complicity remains difficult, especially when groups operate autonomously or covertly.

## **B. Legal Grey Zones**

International law does not yet fully accommodate pre-emptive self-defense or non-traditional warfare methods like cyber-terrorism and drone strikes.

## **C. Political Selectivity**

Powerful states often manipulate legal interpretations to suit strategic interests, undermining

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations, *International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism*, adopted 9 December 1999, entered into force 10 April 2002, UN Treaty Series, vol. 2178, p. 197.

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, *International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings*, adopted 15 December 1997, entered into force 23 May 2001, UN Treaty Series, vol. 2149, p. 256.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, *International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages*, adopted 17 December 1979, entered into force 3 June 1983, UN Treaty Series, vol. 1316, p. 205.

the consistency and credibility of international law.

## VI. Case Studies: Legal and Policy Analysis

### A. India's Position

India consistently raises the issue of cross-border terrorism in international forums such as the UN and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)<sup>17</sup>. India argues that repeated attacks from Pakistan-based groups justify proportionate responses under Article 51<sup>18</sup> of UN Charter. The 2019 Balakot airstrike targeted a Jaish-e-Mohammed camp in Pakistan. India cited it as a "non-military preemptive action," sparking international debate on the scope of self-defense.<sup>19</sup>

### B. Israel's Use of Force

Israel relies heavily on Article 51 to justify its military responses. Its legal argument emphasizes its right to defend against non-state actors operating from territories over which it has no control. However, criticism regarding proportionality and civilian casualties remains a point of contention in international humanitarian law.

### C. Role of the ICJ and ICC

The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** and the **International Criminal Court (ICC)** play important, though constrained, roles in addressing cross-border terrorism. Their contributions are hampered by jurisdictional barriers, lack of enforcement capacity, and geopolitical constraints, particularly in situations involving powerful states or non-state actors operating from ungoverned territories.

#### 1. International Court of Justice (ICJ)

The ICJ, as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, adjudicates disputes between states and provides advisory opinions on legal questions referred by UN organs and specialized agencies. However, its utility in addressing cross-border terrorism is limited for several reasons:

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<sup>17</sup> Financial Action Task Force, *Mandate and Framework*, established in 1989 by the G7 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Charter, 26 June 1945, Article 51 affirms the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a UN member state; 1 UNTS XVI.

<sup>19</sup> Security Council Report, "UNSC Briefing on Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts," 2023.

- **Jurisdictional Constraints:** The ICJ can only hear cases between states that have consented to its jurisdiction, either through treaties, optional clause declarations under Article 36(2) of the ICJ Statute, or special agreements. In the context of terrorism, this means that both the victim state and the alleged sponsoring state must agree to be bound by the Court's decision—which is often not the case in politically charged disputes involving terrorism.<sup>20</sup>
- **Case Example – Iran v. United States:** While not directly about terrorism, the ICJ has heard cases involving state responsibility and extraterritorial acts (e.g., the *Oil Platforms Case*, where Iran accused the U.S. of unlawfully destroying Iranian oil platforms allegedly connected to terrorism). The Court took a cautious approach, focusing narrowly on treaty obligations and sidestepping broader terrorism-related claims.<sup>21</sup>
- **Advisory Opinions:** Although not binding, the ICJ's advisory opinions can help clarify international legal principles relevant to terrorism, such as the scope of state sovereignty and the legality of self-defense.

## 2. International Criminal Court (ICC)<sup>22</sup>

The ICC is tasked with prosecuting individuals, not states, for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community—namely **genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression**—as defined in the **Rome Statute**. Despite growing calls to include terrorism explicitly within the Court's jurisdiction, it is not currently listed as a separate crime under the Statute.

- **Jurisdictional Gaps:** The ICC's jurisdiction is limited to crimes committed on the territory of states parties to the Rome Statute, or by their nationals, unless the UN Security Council refers a situation under Chapter VII. Many countries where cross-border terrorism originates or is alleged to be supported—such as Pakistan or the United States—are not parties to the Rome Statute, limiting the ICC's reach.<sup>23</sup>
- **Palestine and the Israel-Hamas Conflict:** One of the most prominent examples involving cross-border violence is the situation in **Palestine**, which acceded to the Rome Statute in 2015. The ICC opened an investigation into possible war crimes

<sup>20</sup> ICJ Statute, Article 36. See also: *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)*, ICJ Reports 1986.

<sup>21</sup> *Oil Platforms (Islamic Republic of Iran v. United States of America)*, ICJ Reports 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Established under the Rome Statute of 1998, the ICC is a permanent international court with jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression; UN Treaty Series, vol. 2187, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Articles 12 and 13.

committed by both Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups, including those crossing into Israel, such as during the October 2023 attacks by Hamas. However, the investigation has faced intense political resistance and limited cooperation, reflecting the Court's difficulty in dealing with asymmetric warfare involving non-state actors and contested territories.<sup>24</sup>

- **Selectivity and Political Pressure:** The ICC has often been criticized for selective prosecution, focusing primarily on African states while showing reluctance to investigate actors from powerful countries. This pattern undermines the perception of impartiality and limits the ICC's effectiveness in serving as a credible deterrent against state complicity in terrorism.

In sum, while the ICJ and ICC can contribute to the legal accountability architecture concerning cross-border violence and terrorism, their impact remains largely **symbolic** or **limited to specific contexts**. Structural reforms—such as expanding jurisdiction, clarifying definitions, and ensuring greater state cooperation—are necessary if these institutions are to play a meaningful role in global counter-terrorism efforts.

## VII. Bridging the Gap: Reconciling Security and Sovereignty

As the international community grapples with the growing threat of cross-border terrorism, the need to harmonize the principles of state sovereignty and collective security becomes paramount. Existing legal instruments provide a fragmented approach, lacking a coherent framework to address the complexities of modern transnational terrorism. Bridging this gap requires a multidimensional response encompassing international legislation, regional collaboration, state accountability, and civil engagement.

### A. Need for a Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism

The **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**<sup>25</sup>, proposed by India at the United Nations in 1996, seeks to criminalize all forms of terrorism and establish a universal legal framework for prosecution and extradition of offenders. However, it remains deadlocked primarily due to **lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism**, particularly

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<sup>24</sup> Office of the Prosecutor, ICC, "Situation in the State of Palestine," Statement, 3 March 2021. Available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int>

<sup>25</sup> Proposed by India at the United Nations in 1996, the CCIT aims to develop a comprehensive legal framework to criminalize all forms of international terrorism but remains under negotiation due to definitional disagreements among member states.



regarding acts committed by national liberation movements and resistance groups.<sup>26</sup>

The draft CCIT emphasizes:

- A **clear and universal definition** of terrorism,
- Prohibition of **state support for terrorist groups**,
- Obligations for states to **extradite or prosecute** perpetrators,
- Mechanisms for **inter-state cooperation and information exchange**.

Adoption of the CCIT would significantly bolster existing treaties, such as the **International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999)**, by offering a broader and unified framework for enforcement and accountability.<sup>27</sup> As UN Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004) noted, a universally agreed definition of terrorism would enhance international cooperation and reduce political ambiguity in counter-terrorism measures.<sup>28</sup>

## B. Regional Cooperation

Given the transnational nature of terrorism, **regional bodies** are uniquely positioned to respond quickly and contextually. Organizations like the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** and **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** have adopted counter-terrorism mechanisms aimed at fostering cooperation among member states.

- **SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (1987)** and its **Additional Protocol (2004)** provide for extradition and mutual legal assistance among South Asian countries. However, **implementation remains weak** due to political distrust, particularly between India and Pakistan.<sup>29</sup>
- **ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (ACCT) (2007)** obliges member states to take effective measures to prevent terrorist acts, enhance border controls, and criminalize terrorism-related offenses.<sup>30</sup>

Such regional instruments can serve as **building blocks** for international efforts, particularly by facilitating **intelligence sharing**, **capacity-building**, and **joint operations**. They also allow for **contextualized responses** that reflect regional legal traditions and security concerns.

## C. Accountability and Legal Reform

The role of **state accountability** is crucial in addressing cross-border terrorism. States that

<sup>26</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Sixth Committee, "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism: Working Group Report," A/C.6/51/L.4 (1996).

<sup>27</sup> International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, UNGA Res. 54/109 (1999).

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004), S/RES/1566, para. 3

<sup>29</sup> SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (1987); Additional Protocol (2004).

<sup>30</sup> ASEAN Convention on Counter Terrorism (2007), Articles IV–XII.

harbor, finance, or fail to prevent terrorist activities on their soil violate principles of international law, including the **duty of non-intervention** and the **obligation not to allow one's territory to be used to harm another state**.<sup>31</sup>

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** plays a vital role by **monitoring financial flows** and applying **targeted sanctions** against countries that fail to curb terrorist financing. Pakistan, for example, was placed on the FATF "grey list" in 2018 due to inadequate action against groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, prompting legislative and enforcement reforms.<sup>32</sup>
- The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** can, under its **contentious jurisdiction**, address claims of state responsibility for aiding and abetting terrorism. For instance, Ukraine filed a case against Russia before the ICJ alleging violations of the **International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism**, demonstrating how litigation can be used to press for state accountability.<sup>33</sup>

Enhancing these mechanisms would require:

- More robust **verification and compliance procedures** under FATF,
- Expansion of **ICJ jurisdiction** through optional clause declarations or treaty obligations,
- Strengthening the role of the **UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)** in monitoring state performance.

#### D. Role of Civil Society and Media

**Civil society organizations (CSOs)** and **independent media** play indispensable roles in countering terrorism beyond the battlefield. Their contributions include:

- **Advocacy for victims' rights**, including legal aid, psychosocial support, and reparations,
- **Monitoring human rights abuses** by state and non-state actors in counter-terrorism operations,
- **Challenging extremist ideologies** through education and public dialogue,
- **Exposing state complicity** or negligence in harboring terrorists.

International instruments such as the **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)**

<sup>31</sup> UN General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV), Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States (1970)

<sup>32</sup> FATF, "Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring – June 2022", <https://www.fatf-gafi.org>.

<sup>33</sup> ICJ, *Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Ukraine v. Russian Federation)*, 2017

recognize the role of civil society in developing inclusive and rights-based approaches to counter-terrorism.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, **UNESCO's Media Development Indicators** emphasize the need for a free, independent, and pluralistic media to counter hate speech and extremist propaganda.

However, civil society actors often face restrictions and reprisals, especially in authoritarian regimes. Hence, **international support** for human rights defenders and investigative journalists is essential for promoting transparency and accountability in counter-terrorism policies.

Cross-border terrorism stands as one of the most urgent and multifaceted threats to international peace and security. It operates at the intersection of **state sovereignty, non-state violence, and international accountability**, exploiting legal and jurisdictional loopholes. While international law offers foundational principles—such as the **prohibition on the use of force** (Article 2(4) of the UN Charter), the **right to self-defense** (Article 51), and the **duty of non-intervention**—these remain insufficient when faced with the evolving tactics of terrorist networks and the **ambiguous roles of state complicity**.

To address the growing impunity with which cross-border terrorism is perpetrated, the international community must adopt a **coordinated, legally sound, and enforceable framework**. The following measures are critical:

1. **Adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT):** A universally accepted definition of terrorism is essential to eliminating political and legal ambiguity. The CCIT should explicitly cover state-sponsored terrorism and include clauses on **extradition, prosecution, and intelligence sharing**.
2. **Strengthening Enforcement Mechanisms under Existing Treaties:** Instruments such as the **International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999)** and **UNSC Resolutions 1373, 2178, and 2396** must be backed by **binding compliance audits, penalties for non-compliance, and enhanced technical assistance** to developing states.
3. **Mandating State Responsibility through ICJ and Customary Law:** The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** must be empowered to adjudicate cases of state

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<sup>34</sup> United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, A/RES/60/288 (2006).

support for terrorism under **Article 36(2)** of its Statute. The principle of **due diligence**, embedded in the **Corfu Channel case (UK v. Albania, 1949)**, should be reaffirmed to hold states liable for failing to prevent terrorist use of their territory.

4. **Regional Frameworks with Binding Obligations:** Bodies such as **SAARC, ASEAN, the African Union, and the European Union** must develop binding legal instruments for **mutual legal assistance, joint task forces, and real-time information exchange**, with effective **compliance monitoring**.
5. **Financial Sanctions and Asset Freezing:** Enforcement of **targeted financial sanctions** through bodies like the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** and the **UN 1267 Sanctions Committee** must be made swift, evidence-based, and linked to **automatic suspension of aid or trade preferences** for non-cooperative states.
6. **Institutional Reform and Oversight:** The **UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)** should be granted **independent investigatory powers** to assess member states' compliance with counter-terror obligations and recommend binding Security Council actions against violators.
7. **Integration of Human Rights in Counter-Terrorism:** Any measures taken must remain consistent with international humanitarian and human rights law, such as the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**. Arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, or disproportionate military responses risk undermining the legitimacy of counter-terrorism operations.

Ultimately, bridging the gap between security and sovereignty necessitates **unwavering political will, unified international legal standards, and transparent enforcement mechanisms**. If left unaddressed, cross-border terrorism not only destabilizes states but also erodes the core values of international law—**peace, justice, and collective security**. Only through genuine multilateralism and legal reform can the world hope to respond effectively to this enduring threat.