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UN UN Arms Embargo on ISIL, Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities

In January 2002 the UN Security Council imposed an open-ended arms embargo on the Taliban or Al-Qaeda and associated entities. In June 2011 this embargo was split into separate embargoes against each entity. In 2014 the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Al Nusrah Front (ANF) in Syria were explicitly mentioned as targets of the embargo.

In January 2002 UN Security Council Resolution 1390 imposed an open-ended arms embargo to apply to any sale or supplies to either the Taliban or to the Al-Qaeda organization regardless of location (see Afghanistan arms embargo). It also terminated the air embargo of resolution 1267 (1999), expanded the financial embargo of resolution 1267 (1999) to apply also to associates of Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda members and re-appointed the monitoring group established by resolution 1363 (2000).

The implementation of an arms embargo against a non-state entity regardless of location raises different implementation challenges compared with an arms embargo that is tied to a particular state or territory. The Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1267 (1999) produced an Explanation of Terms: Arms Embargo to clarify some of the issues raised by resolution 1390 (2002).

In June 2011 UN Security Council split the embargo into separate arms embargoes, one on the Taliban (UN Security Council Resolution 1988) and one on Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities (UN Security Council Resolution 1989). Both were agreed unanimously and part of sets of wider sanctions.

In 2014 UN Security Council Resolution 2170 the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Al Nusrah Front (ANF) in Syria were for the first time mentioned as entities associated with Al-Qaeda and therefore as targets of the embargo. To underline the importance of ISIL as a target it was decided in UN Security Council Resolution 2253 of December 2015 that the 'Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee' would henceforth be known as the 'ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee'.

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