

War Bands, Gangs, Groups

1. War Band

A war band is a coordinated group that uses or threatens force.

Core features:

- Small-to-medium armed or semi-armed group
- Shared identity and coordination
- Participation in conflict, raids, or violent action
- Not necessarily state-authorized

War bands are defined by **organization + collective violence**.

2. Non-State Actor

A non-state actor is any organized group operating outside formal government authority that can influence or use force.

Includes:

- Militias
- Insurgent groups
- Ideological militant cells
- Some protest networks (depending on activity)

3. Organized Criminal Group

An organized criminal group is a structured network that uses coercion or violence primarily for unlawful purposes.

Characteristics:

- Hierarchy or coordination
- Sustained illegal activity
- Use of intimidation or violence
- Control of territory or illicit operations

Examples: gangs, cartels, syndicates.

4. Gang War

A gang war is violent conflict between organized criminal groups.

Features:

- Rival group retaliation cycles
- Territorial or market competition
- Civilian spillover violence
- Lack of legal authorization

This is best understood as:

Inter-group organized criminal conflict

5. Terrorist Organization

A terrorist organization is a legal classification assigned by governments.

It typically involves:

- Organized use of violence
- Political, ideological, or strategic objectives
- Intent to intimidate or coerce populations or governments
- Formal designation under legal frameworks (e.g., SDGT/FTO in the U.S.)

6. Antifa

In many modern academic discussions:

- “Antifa” is generally described as a decentralized movement or network
- It does not function as a single unified organization
- It contains multiple independent groups, cells, and individuals
- Individuals may be designated based on documented violent activity
- Militant groups associated with anti-fascist ideology may be designated based on specific actions

7. How They All Relate

- **War band** → structural form (group using force)
- **Non-state actor** → political/legal status (not government)
- **Organized criminal group** → intent (illegal coercion/profit)
- **Gang war** → interaction between criminal groups
- **Terrorist organization** → legal designation for specific groups meeting statutory criteria

Final Summary

A war band is a general structural term for a coordinated group using force. In modern systems, such groups may be classified as:

- Non-state actors (if outside government control)
- Organized criminal groups (if harm/profit-driven illegally)
- Participants in gang wars (if engaged in inter-gang conflict)
- Terrorist organizations (formally designated by governments based on specific violent conduct and legal criteria)

Sources / References

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