

Fourth-Generation Warfare 4GW

Union of Saints

Fourth-generation warfare (4GW) is a concept used in military and strategic studies to describe conflict where state and non-state actors compete through decentralized, irregular, political, economic, informational, cyber, and psychological means, rather than relying primarily on conventional battlefield combat. Below is a broad list of tactics, methods, and activities that are commonly discussed in relation to irregular warfare, hybrid warfare, political warfare, insurgency, organized crime, terrorism, and fourth-generation warfare. Some of these are lawful political activities when conducted peacefully (such as peaceful protest or advocacy), while others are criminal or violent acts.

- Terrorism
- Domestic terrorism
- International terrorism
- Insurgency
- Guerrilla warfare
- Urban warfare
- Asymmetric warfare
- Hybrid warfare
- Gray zone operations
- Political warfare
- Information warfare
- Psychological warfare
- Cognitive warfare
- Influence operations
- Propaganda
- Disinformation
- Misinformation
- Malinformation
- Strategic deception
- Perception management
- Rumor campaigns

- Fear campaigns
- Intimidation campaigns
- Radicalization
- Extremist recruitment
- Online recruitment
- Foreign influence operations
- Election interference
- Political subversion
- Destabilization campaigns
- Civil unrest
- Violent riots
- Looting
- Arson
- Sabotage
- Critical infrastructure attacks
- Utility disruption
- Transportation disruption
- Supply chain disruption
- Economic coercion
- Economic sabotage
- Financial fraud
- Money laundering
- Terrorist financing
- Organized crime
- Criminal enterprises
- Racketeering
- Extortion
- Protection rackets
- Drug trafficking
- Human trafficking

- Labor trafficking
- Sex trafficking
- Arms trafficking
- Weapons smuggling
- Human smuggling
- Contraband smuggling
- Counterfeiting
- Identity theft
- Corruption
- Bribery
- Blackmail
- Coercion
- Kidnapping
- Hostage taking
- Assassination
- Attempted assassination
- Targeted violence
- Mass casualty attacks
- Bombings
- Vehicle attacks
- Active shooter attacks
- Gang violence
- Criminal gangs
- Prison gangs
- Cartel violence
- Cross border criminal activity
- Border infiltration
- Safe house networks
- Underground logistics
- Sleeper cells

- Criminal facilitators
- Espionage
- Industrial espionage
- Intelligence collection
- Insider threats
- Theft of intellectual property
- Cyber espionage
- Cyber attacks
- Ransomware
- Malware campaigns
- Phishing
- Credential theft
- Data theft
- Data manipulation
- Website defacement
- Denial of service attacks
- Critical network intrusion
- Surveillance
- Counter surveillance
- Criminal surveillance
- Stalking
- Cyberstalking
- Doxxing
- Revenge Pornography
- Voyeurism
- Harassment
- Threats
- Witness intimidation
- Judicial intimidation
- Swatting

- Coordinated harassment campaigns
- Online abuse
- Reputation attacks
- Social engineering
- Deepfake campaigns
- AI enabled deception
- Forged documents
- Fraud
- Charity fraud
- Procurement fraud
- Election fraud
- Document fraud
- Immigration fraud
- Visa fraud
- Identity fraud
- Shell companies
- Front organizations
- Front businesses
- Proxy organizations
- Covert funding
- Influence through nongovernmental organizations
- Lawfare (strategic use of legal processes to pursue political or military objectives)
- Strategic litigation
- Bureaucratic obstruction
- Administrative overload
- Regulatory capture
- Community intimidation
- Parallel governance
- Territorial control by criminal organizations
- Recruitment of youth

- Prison radicalization
- Exploitation of social grievances
- Exploitation of economic instability
- Exploitation of humanitarian crises
- Exploitation of migration routes
- Exploitation of natural disasters
- Cultural influence campaigns
- Religious extremism
- Ideological extremism
- Sectarian violence
- Ethnic violence
- Political violence
- Vigilantism
- Proxy warfare
- Foreign proxy support
- Covert operations
- Special operations support
- Maritime smuggling
- Port infiltration
- Airport infiltration
- Tunnel operations
- Cross border logistics
- Supply network disruption
- Strategic communication campaigns
- Media manipulation
- Narrative warfare
- Social media manipulation
- Bot networks
- Troll farms
- Coordinated online influence campaigns

- Artificial amplification
- Censorship campaigns
- Self censorship through intimidation
- Community polarization
- Social fragmentation
- Institutional erosion
- Public trust erosion
- Recruitment through grievance narratives
- Recruitment through identity politics
- Criminal infiltration of institutions
- Corruption of public officials
- Infrastructure reconnaissance
- Target surveillance
- Operational security practices
- Encrypted communications
- Decentralized command structures
- Leaderless resistance
- Cell based organization
- Network based organization
- Distributed operations
- Low intensity conflict
- Protracted conflict
- War of attrition through irregular means

This list brings together concepts from military doctrine, national security studies, law enforcement, and criminology. Many of these overlap with broader concepts such as irregular warfare, hybrid conflict, organized crime, and terrorism, rather than being unique to fourth-generation warfare itself.