

## Modernized “Irregulars”

**Irregular armed actors** include assailants, ambushers, bushwhackers, raiders, partisan rangers, jayhawkers, renegades, rogue activists, insurgents, militias, paramilitary actors, outlaws, mercenaries, extremist cells, and vigilantes. These actors operate outside of, alongside, or in partial alignment with formal military and state structures.

They engage in **guerrilla-style and asymmetrical campaigns**, often characterized by:

- Raids on settlements, infrastructure, and supply lines
- Arson, property destruction, and looting
- Theft and resource seizure (historically referred to as “jayhawking”)
- Retaliatory, punitive, or revenge-driven violence and political coercion
- Irregular tactics including ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run operations
- Fluid loyalties, with shifting allegiances driven by ideology, survival, profit, or personal motive
- Exploitation-based practices, including trafficking and modern forms of slavery, used for control, profit, or destabilization
- Smuggling networks facilitating the covert movement of goods, weapons, and people across borders
- The manipulation or exploitation of migration flows, including mass or irregular immigration movements, as mechanisms for profit, influence, or operational cover in unstable environments

Participation is **not limited to a single identity group**; individuals and factions emerge from diverse racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds depending on the region and conflict.

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## Summary

These actors consistently blur the boundaries between **warfare, criminality, and social conflict**, operating most effectively in environments where formal authority is weak, contested, or actively resisted.

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## Cowdrey