

Key International Issues: Instructions

My name is David Koplow.

I'm a professor here at the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC.

And for the next 30 minutes or so, we'll be describing a variety of ways in which the rules and practices and institutions of international law are relevant to the story of terrorism and to the struggle against that scourge.

We'll be dealing with three main points.

First is a point of background.

You need to describe why this problem is so difficult for international law.

Why the system as it's traditionally been configured is just not well set up to deal with the phenomenon of non-state actors.

Then we'll move on to the three main sources, or types, of international law that have made a contribution to the struggle against terrorism.

And we'll deal, sequentially, first with treaties, formal written documents whereby pairs or groups of countries negotiate and bring into force rules of international law that are applicable between them.

Then with customary international law.

Somewhat more ephemeral, but nonetheless fully binding source of international law.

And finally with resolutions of the United Nations Security Council, which have come to play an increasingly important role in this story as well.

Finally, we'll deal with the enforcement problem.

That is, what can international law do when the rules relevant for terrorism or anything else are violated.

What are the institutions and mechanisms of international law that can deal effectively with enforcement.