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The “war on terror” was a term employed by the U. S. administration under President George W. Bush to describe the armed conflict ^[1] it launched against Al-Qaeda and associated groups following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks ^[2] against the U. S. It comprised of a military campaign against Afghanistan (which, at the time, was under the government of the Taliban, who were accused of harbouring Al-Qaeda leaders) and of attacks against or arrests of suspected Al-Qaeda members or other terrorists ^[3] elsewhere in the world.

The Bush administration determined that its “war on terror” was neither an international ^[4] nor a non-international armed conflict ^[5] because Al-Qaeda was not a State party to the Geneva Conventions ^[6] and the conflict went beyond the territory of one State. Furthermore, it held that its enemies in the conflict were neither combatants ^[7] nor civilians ^[8] but unlawful combatants ^[9] who could be attacked at any time and detained indefinitely ^[10] without trial.

However, this approach was rejected by the US Supreme Court which ruled in the case *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* that every armed conflict which “does not involve a clash between nations” is “not of an international character”. The U.S., under the Obama administration, has abandoned the term “war on terror”.

See Armed conflict ^[1]; Direct participation in hostilities ^[11]; International armed conflict ^[4]; Non-international armed conflict

[5]; Geneva Conventions [6]; Attacks [2]; Terrorism and terrorists [3]; Internationalized internal armed conflict [12]; Combatants [7]; Civilians [8]; Unlawful combatants [9]; Unprivileged belligerent [13]; Internment [14];

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