ILE JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY REVIEW

INSTITUTE OF LEGAL EDUCATION

ILE JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY REVIEW

(Free Publication and Open Access Journal)

ILE Publication House is the
India's Largest
Scholarly Publisher

TERRORISM: A GLOBAL ISSUE

Author - Charu Kohli, Student at Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, Delhi

Abstract

This article deals with terrorism which is a form of asymmetric warfare where powerful anti-national groups pose a threat to the weaker civilian group of people in order to get their whims fulfilled. Terrorists can use violence and self-destruction to cause mass destruction in the country at large. These terrorists are considered to be terrorists because they try to impose their thoughts on others by using violent means of destruction. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria commonly known as ISIS is the most active and barbaric in its attempts to create chaos in the world at large, and it is rooted in the Middle East and South Asia. In this paper, we discuss the current state of the art of terrorism as well as the current status of terrorists in countries around the globe.

KEYWORDS- Terrorism, Global Terrorism, ISIS, Forms and causes of terrorism, UN, Combating Terrorism

Introduction: Terrorism

The 26th of November 2008 is still marked as a black period in the hearts of many because this day brought out a new face of terrorism in limelight and made people aware of the prevalence of terrorist groups which were earlier perceived to be dormant. The Mumbai terror attack[90] threw light on the active presence of groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba who are ready to point guns at civilians and butcher them for the fulfillment of their motive.

7 years before the Taj attack of 26/11 the world had witnessed the emergence of terrorism in a new and vigilant form during the 9/11 at the World Trade Center. The Osama-bin-la-den led Al-Qaeda group of terrorists had posed the threat of terrorists who were ready to use violence and self-destruction to cause mass destruction.

These new variants of terrorists believe in spreading their word through gross killings and massacres. They threaten not only the lives of men in uniforms but civilians at large.

I. What is terrorism?

Terrorism is the spreading of terror using any and every means feasible. Walter Ze'ev Laqueur, an American historian, journalist, and political commentator in his work TERRORISM[91] defined terrorism as an act that constitutes of illegitimate use of force in order to achieve one's political objective and this is when innocent people are targeted to reach the end result.

It is the use of violence or even the threat of the use of violence to achieve a particular objective and its characteristics range in the various forms of actions like assassination, hijacking, bombing, turning people into hostages, etc. Terrorism is a form of asymmetric warfare where powerful anti-national groups pose a threat to the weaker civilian group of people in order to get their whims fulfilled.

The FBI[92] defines all violent and criminal acts which are committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored) as well as acts stemming out of ideological goals to be terrorist

---

[90] Manisha Shekhar, *"CRISIS MANAGEMENT-A CASE STUDY ON MUMBAI TERRORIST ATTACK,"* https://www.unisdr.org/preventionweb/files/7737_Mumbai.pdf.

[91] Walter Laqueur, New Terrorism. (1999).

[92] Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Terrorism*, Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018), https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism.

activities. The ideological goals of terrorists can be political, religious, social, racial, or environmental in the nature of their being.

A. History of Terrorism

The word terrorism has its roots in the French Revolution when the First Republic was being created. The duration of Reign of la-Terreur is the time when the violence was state-sanctioned and thousands of mass killings took place based on mere suspicion. The Reign of la terreur is commonly known as the reign of terror when the term terrorism was coined.

The period of 1793-94 was the spell of mass destruction and execution therefore today's activities against unarmed civilians by armed members of violent groups is referred to as terrorism.

B. Terrorism in a global world

In today's fast-paced and globalized world terrorism can range from the use of physical attacks to cyber-attacks. These attacks are designed in such a way that mass fear and pain are caused among the citizens and therefore the government becomes submissive to the attackers to ensure the safety of its citizens.

Non-state actors take use of the communication links and travel interlinkages of today's world to prepare and spread their message far and wide. Due to the technologically advanced world and the availability of weapons of mass destruction in the black markets along with the globalized world terrorist groups can stay dormant like sleeper cells until the attack day thereby making it slightly difficult to capture them beforehand.

C. Key ingredients of terrorism

Terrorism is a multi-dimensional concept with various ingredients which help in creating havoc and cause distress in the country at large.

- The power of fear- Terrorists make use of the fear of terror and pain on unarmed civilians in order to make the higher-ups

follow their will. The psychological impact of fear and insecurity are the stepping stones for terrorist organizations.

- Use of violence- Unlike the presence of extremist groups whose belief setup is outside the mainstream ideology and who preach their ideologies, the terrorists are extremists laced with violent gears of destruction in order to spread their ideology.

- Camouflage- Terrorist organizations are the sleeper cells of the society and they act as a chameleon in the territory. They disguise themselves are residents and normal citizens until the day of action arises, and as and when they receive orders they set out in motion.

- Soft-targets- Rather than targeting the government or military of the nation the terrorists target unarmed civilians. This deliberate targeting of non-combatants is to ensure that the government will use all resources to safeguard the lives of the people since the right to life is an inalienable right.

- Against the peace of the nation- The works of these people are usually against the law of the land and harm the peace and stability of the society thereby making them unlawful and illegitimate in nature.

- Shock and awe factor- The goal of organizations and groups of such nature is to shock the government to accomplish their ideological and political goals.

D. The cause of terrorism

The causes of terrorism are complex and diverse since terrorism in itself is not a static form of activity. Some of the most common causes are political, religious, or ideological beliefs that are engrained in the mind of the people.

Political causes of terrorism often involve disputes between two or more political factions, and terrorist groups will use

violence or the threat of violence to further their political goals. It is a cause where the terrorists make use of violence to get something of political nature done by the government like releasing prisoners of war. In the 1999 exchange of the hostages of the Indian Airlines Flight IC-814 hijacked from Kathmandu, Zargar alias "Mushtaq Latram" was to be released[93].

Religious causes of terrorism can involve a religious group attempting to impose its beliefs on others, or an individual believing that they are carrying out the will of a higher power. Islamic Terrorism[94] which is rooted in the Middle East and South Asia has taken center stage in the religious and ideological form of terrorism since they try to impose their thoughts on other by using violent means of destruction.

Another major cause of terrorism is the Psychological and personal reasons of various organizations. These reasons can be social, economic, or politically personal in nature like in the 1893's France where Auguste organized terrorism for personal gains. This is particularly used for the redressal of grievances by gaining victory over the other party.

Ideological causes of terrorism are often related to a group's belief in a certain political system or ideology, such as communism or fascism. The ideological cause stems out of the belief and value system of the organization's members. An example of ideological terrorism can be seen in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) organization's ideological claims in Sri Lanka. There is continuous discrimination as well as violent prosecution of various Sri Lankan Tamils by the majority and ruling Sinhalese of Sri Lanka.

In some cases, terrorism is also financially motivated. Terrorist groups may use violence to extort money from governments or individuals or to raise funds for their operations. They use any and every means to gain financial control in order to work out their excessive plans of mass destruction.

E. Forms of terrorism

Terrorism is a crime against humanity and results in the mass genocide of life and property. Broadly terrorism is divided into two forms, international and domestic terrorism. International terrorism is when the use of violence or the threat of the use of violence by groups across different countries around the globe in order to attract attention from a global audience. Whereas, the domestic form of terrorism is when it is in the country against civilians, political leaders, or the government.

There is no formal division of terrorism into types but generally one can divide it into 6 types:

- Cyber terrorism- In the 21st century, terrorism has also taken form in the cyber sector of society. With the advancements in technology not only are the terrorist organizations able to spread their ideology and motive but are also able to live telecast their acts and engage more people in the organizations. It is the use of technology to disrupt computer systems and networks. It can include data theft, the spread of malicious software, and other forms of cybercrime[95].
- Environmental terrorism- Nuclear, as well as bioterrorism, are the forms of terrorism that are keeping the whole world on its toes since the

---

[93]The Hindu Bureau, *Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, released during hijacking of IC-814 in 1999, designated as terrorist*, THE HINDU, April 14, 2022, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/mushtaq-ahmed-zargar-released-during-hijacking-of-ic-814-in-1999-designated-as-terrorist/article65320199.ece#:~:text=Zargar%20alias%20%E2%80%9CMushtaq%20Latram%E2%80%9D%2C (last visited Mar 4, 2023).

[94] John Moore, *The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism - an Overview*, PBS (2014), https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/target/etc/modern.html.

[95] GABRIEL WEIMANN, *Cyberterrorism: How Real Is the Threat?*, (2004), https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr119.pdf.

repercussions of such war will lead to a detrimental effect on the whole of the globe. This form of terrorism is usually symbolic in nature as it affects the property of the victim[96].

- Political terrorism- Political terrorism is meant to get political benefits from the government by turning them submissive under the fear of a citizen's life. This form has taken place by various means like hijacking, kidnapping, arson, assassination, etc.[97]

Throughout the history of time, two prominent forms of political terrorism namely right-wing and left-wing have been seen in the global forum. The right-wing forum deals with ideologies like communalism, Nazi, chauvinism, sexism, whereas the left-wing ideology is broadly based on revolutionary and Marxist, and Leninist approaches.

- State terrorism- It means terrorist activities against another state by one state or against its citizens by a particular group of people.
- Religious terrorism- As the name suggests religious terrorism is to promulgate the religious ideologies of a country or a particular group who dream of global supremacy of their religion. Jihad in the name of religious superiority is what makes the Islamic nations a major shareholder in religious terrorism.
- Economical terrorism- Economical terrorism is a form as well as a cause of terrorism. Sometimes the terrorist aims to create havoc in order to attain finances from the government of a nation so that they can continue

to fuel the fire of terrorism in other parts of the world.

F.   Reasons for terrorist activities

The violent act of groups needs to have a reason behind their working and establishment. The most important reason as discussed by thinkers is the issue of resources since resources are the basis for the establishment of any society, these terrorist organizations perform violent acts to attain resources for creating their society.

Further, grasping territory in order to claim it and then be able to settle over it is another plausible reason. Cultural and religious ideology and its supremacy are one of the main reasons to perform such activities. This helps in creating a society where their ideas as seen as a missionary and they have complete control over everything.

II.   Terrorism around the globe

The world forums have time and again warned global leaders regarding the uprising of terrorism and various surveys are conducted every year to understand the situation as well as the position of these terrorists in the geopolitics of the world at large.

Since terrorist ideology and aim is to disrupt the peace and stability of the world, they need funds and territory to operate. The various surveys and research along with military operations in the past decades were able to classify the most notorious countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen as having the deadliest attacks in the recent past.

The organizations like ISIS[98], Al-Qaeda, and Taliban have been categorized as devastating terrorist groups and have been blacklisted from all the nations. Out of these the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria commonly known as ISIS is considered to be the most active and barbaric in its attempts to create disorder in the world. Their violent ideology can be seen in the Paris

[96] S P Eagan, *From Spikes to Bombs: The Rise of Eco-Terrorism | Office of Justice Programs*, WWW.OJP.GOV (1996), https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/spikes-bombs-rise-eco-terrorism#:~:text=For%20the%20purposes%20of%20this.

[97] Nehemia Friedland, *Political Terrorism: A Social Psychological Perspective*, THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT 103–114 (1988).

[98] Rand Corporation, *The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization)*, RAND.ORG (2018), https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html.

ILE JOURNAL OF GOVERNANCE AND POLICY REVIEW

Volume I and Issue I of 2023

ISBN - 978-81-961791-0-6

Published by

Institute of Legal Education

https://iledu.in

attacks of 2015, the Brussels attack of 2016, and the 2017 Manchester bombing.

A. Global Terrorism Statistics

The Global Terrorism Database recorded that in the year 2020[99], there were more than 12,000 terrorist attacks and more than 30,000 deaths. The Islamic extremist groups were the ones responsible for more than 5,000 attacks in the same year. This data has helped global leaders in creating plans and policies in order to eradicate terrorist groups.

III. Combating Terrorism

Tackling terrorism is a complex and difficult task since the information about their presence is not always clear and it is difficult since they camouflage as a civilian in most cases. However, over the years various strategies have been formulated in order to combat the veil of terrorism at a global and domestic level.

By strengthening international cooperation and intelligence sharing between global leaders since by working together, countries can identify potential threats and share information that can help prevent attacks. Adding on and increasing security by increasing surveillance, implementing stricter border controls, and increasing the presence of law enforcement can help prevent any threat of war.

Addressing the root causes of terrorism is essential for reducing the number of attacks[100]. This includes tackling poverty and inequality, improving education, and addressing grievances that can lead to terrorism. Further de-radicalization programs which focus on providing educational and vocational opportunities, as well as addressing the underlying causes of radicalization can help in lowering the number of people who join terrorist groups.

A. The United Nations View

The UN formed various conventions in order to condemn terrorism like in Kenya and Tanzania bomb attacks. Further, the Security Council has created counter-terrorism commissions[101] in order to deal with the problem of global terrorism.

International criminal law has enshrined the maxim of 'delicta juris gentium' which means crimes that shock the conscience of nations and address the criminal are mentioned and dealt with accordingly.

Moreover, Chapter IV of the UN in 2001 created a Security Council resolution under which a resolution for improved international cooperation against terrorism has been mentioned. The UN peacekeeping force has been deployed in various events to counter terrorist activities as well.

Conclusion

The crime of terrorism is global in nature and is present in various forms all around the world therefore global leaders need to come together in order to deal with the issue by uniting forces. The Global Peace Index of 2022[102] has clearly pointed out that the low level of peace and stability in the world is due to the rise of terrorist activities and it is high time that all nations together work to tackle the societal evil called terrorism.

References:

1. MANISHA SHEKHAR, "CRISIS MANAGEMENT-A CASE STUDY ON MUMBAI TERRORIST ATTACK," https://www.unisdr.org/preventionweb/files/7737_Mumbai.pdf.
2. WALTER LAQUEUR, NEW TERRORISM. (1999).
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Terrorism, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (2018), https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/terrorism.

---

[99] Global Terrorism Database, *Global Terrorism Database*, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (2020), https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.
[100] Combating terrorism, COUNTER-TERRORISM, https://www.coe.int/en/web/counter-terrorism.

[101] Security Council | Counter-Terrorism Committee, WWW.UN.ORG, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/.
[102] Global Peace Index, VISION OF HUMANITY (2022), https://www.visionofhumanity.org/resources/global-peace-index-2022/.

4. The Hindu Bureau, Mushtaq Ahmed Zargar, released during the hijacking of IC-814 in 1999, designated as terrorist, THE HINDU, April 14, 2022, https://www.thehindu.com/news/nation al/mushtaq-ahmed-zargar-released-during-hijacking-of-ic-814-in-1999-designated-as-terrorist/article65320199.ece#:~:text=Zar gar%20alias%20%E2%80%9CMushtaq%20 Latram%E2%80%9D%2C (last visited Mar 4, 2023).

5. John Moore, The Evolution of Islamic Terrorism - an Overview, PBS (2014), https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontli ne/shows/target/etc/modern.html.

6. GABRIEL WEIMANN, Cyberterrorism: How Real Is the Threat?, (2004), https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/ sr119.pdf.

7. S P Eagan, From Spikes to Bombs: The Rise of Eco-Terrorism | Office of Justice Programs, WWW.OJP.GOV (1996), https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/spikes-bombs-rise-eco-terrorism#:~:text=For%20the%20purpose s%20of%20this.

8. Nehemia Friedland, Political Terrorism: A Social Psychological Perspective, THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF INTERGROUP CONFLICT 103–114 (1988).

9. Rand Corporation, The Islamic State (Terrorist Organization), RAND.ORG (2018), https://www.rand.org/topics/the-islamic-state-terrorist-organization.html.

10. Global Terrorism Database, Global Terrorism Database, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (2020), https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.

11. Combating terrorism, COUNTER-TERRORISM, https://www.coe.int/en/web/counter-terrorism.

12. Security Council | Counter-Terrorism Committee, WWW.UN.ORG, https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/ctc/.

13. Global Peace Index, VISION OF HUMANITY (2022), https://www.visionofhumanity.org/resou rces/global-peace-index-2022/.