Forum: General Assembly 6 (Legal)
Issue: Measures to Eliminate Terrorism
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Introduction

Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in pursuit of political aims. Despite this definition, terrorism is described in multiple ways depending on an individual’s, the terrorist’s, the victims’, the law and the public’s perspectives. In the eyes of the victims, the law and the majority of the public, terrorism is viewed as an inhumane and criminal act. To the terrorist or terrorist group, it can be seen as a holy duty. Terrorists do not see their actions as unlawful or evil; most view it as fighting for their beliefs or their freedom. Acts of terrorism are targeted at a population to intimidate citizens, the government and societies. By committing these acts, it allows the terrorists to attain goals based on principles or religious views held by the group. In addition to this, it gives them a platform (in social media and news programmes), allowing them to symbolise their views. Furthermore, terrorism uses violence and/or criminal acts to target a specific population with a political, social, religious or ideological cause.

Terrorism has negative effects on numerous things related to the impact of the attack on its environment. For example, terrorism can cause negative physical, social, mental and financial changes. When acts of terror are committed, they typically affect the physical factor, which includes infrastructure as a result of the use of bombs. This in turn affects the environment due to emissions from the use of the weapons and the destruction of physical structures and public places. For example, on September 11, 2001, the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York City involved the collapsing of the Twin Towers, resulting in the emission of an immense cloud of dust and toxins that polluted the air of the city. In addition to this, there were many casualties and numerous civilians were injured which relates to the social factor, affecting the demographics of the city’s population and its citizens’ health. Since then, terror attacks have multiplied and become more frequent. Furthermore, terrorists have begun to use other methods to instigate fear, such as kidnapping. The deaths of private citizens have increased by 172% between the years 2013-2014, whereas terror attacks on religious or political targets have decreased by 11% within the same time frame.
There are also many economic impacts of terrorism that can be looked at from a national and global perspective or from an individual perspective. For individuals, costs to restore damaged property, medical costs, and a change in income (depending on the casualties, injuries or loss of earnings in a family after a terror attack) are all financial effects after an encounter with an act of terrorism. Nationally, an act of terror results in an adjustment of budget controlled by the government. Government emergency funds are spent on the restoration of public property, increased security in vulnerable areas (as a precaution for possible attacks in the near future), compensation (usually for families who have lost a member) and to increase the public healthcare budget during this time of recovery.

Despite the large number of countries that have encountered numerous terror attacks in the last decade, these attacks are highly concentrated in five countries: Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria. In 2014 alone, these nations (collectively) experienced 78% of deaths and 57% of attacks globally. Since 2000, The United States and Canada (and other western countries) experiences only 3% of deaths. To the governments of and associated with these countries, terrorism has become an issue that not only affects the population, but also creates tense diplomatic relations.

A solution is necessary in order to protect those who are vulnerable to the threat that terrorists pose which include populations and national security. To ensure the safety of the current and future generations, nations must be called upon to work together to eradicate these acts of terrorism. The United Nations has many peacekeeping goals and projects in place and has implemented the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy formed in 2006, which is reviewed every 2 years.

In conclusion, international terrorism is an issue that is highly relevant to most nations as they have been affected by this, whether it be directly or through diplomatic relations. It is essential that nations work together, instead of in supporting terrorist groups, to combat this issue and protect citizens all over the world.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Terrorism**

The use of violence or the threat of violence, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political goals.

**Counter-terrorism strategies**

Counter-terrorism strategies include principles, tactics or activities that are usually adopted by governments or political/diplomatic bodies to combat and prevent terrorist acts.
Terrorist act

A terrorist act entails the use of violence against civilians or populations to achieve goals of the particular organisation the terrorist belongs to including, but not limited to, political or religious goals that are ideological. These acts instil fear and are done through intimidation.

Terrorist group

A terrorist group is a group or organisation that commits violent acts against civilian populations to attain a goal representing their ideologies (commit an act of terrorism).

Background Information

The emergence of terrorism

Ever since its origination, terrorism has taken undertaken many forms. The emergence of terrorism was noticed when the word ‘terrorism’ made a feature into European language after the French Revolution in 1789. Early in the revolution, this word came into existence as a result of the actions of the French government in which they tried to inflict their views, which were rather radical, on the citizens. As stated by the Académie Française it was the ‘system or rule of terror’ indicating that in that context, it was an act relevant to the government of that time which has a dictatorial nature.

20th century terrorism

The 20th century saw a rise of nationalism, which was a means of power for many colonial empires. As nationalism became closer to nations and nations began to support and connect with concepts such as race and ethnicity, developments in politics took place along the same lines. People were placed into various groups based on their ethnicity (ethnic groups) and faced many struggles. The way out that they saw with this was to use terror to display their struggles and bring them to the attention of authoritative bodies, while also establishing a sense of power.

The World Wars lead to a significant rise in violence and signified the difference in ideologies that people had. The development of brutal weapons meant for the destruction of the enemy created an aura of terrorism and fear. In particular regards to the Cold War, in the post-war period, terrorism was used as a tactic or means for campaigns to conduct movements against colonial rule and for independence.
Modern terrorism

The largest act of international terrorism occurred on September 11, 2001 in a set of coordinated attacks on the United States of America, where terrorists hijacked civilian airliners and used them to attack the World Trade Centre (WTC) towers in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. The effects of 9/11 had a significant impact on the American psyche and led to global reverberations. Other major terrorist attacks have also occurred in places such as: New Delhi (where the Indian Parliament was attacked); Bali (where a car bomb attack took place); London (subway bombings); Madrid (train station bombings); Mumbai (where there were attacks in hotels, a train station and a Jewish outreach centre), Nigeria; Pakistan; and Paris. Since 2000, there have been over 72,000 terrorist acts resulting in almost 170,000 deaths. The centre, however, of most terrorist organisations and most terrorist activities are parts of the Middle East, including Syria and Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Social effects

The effects of terrorism are evidently seen on the social structure of a state. It increases the rate of unemployment as it decreases employment opportunities and thus affects the lives and households of people, creating a social issue. In states where an act of terror takes place, education can also be impacted. In certain cases, attacks are targeted on schools directly. In 2011, girls’ schools in Pakistan experienced 62 attacks and boys’ schools experienced 51 attacks. Another highly important impact of terrorism is displacement. As a result of terrorist activity and feeling vulnerable, people are prompted to leave their homes and flee for safety. An example of this is the Syrian Refugee crisis which arose as a result of conflict and terrorist activity in Syria.

Psychological effects

The aftermath of a terrorist attack can make people feel more vulnerable. As cities go on alert because of the threat of future attacks, fear can colour our daily routines and world views. People living in areas regularly impacted by acts of terror are forced to develop mental mechanisms to adapt to and cope with the trauma presented by these situations. People also often display feelings that may have never been raised before such as fear, shock, helplessness/loss of control, anger, regret/guilt, and grief (over the loss of loved ones). The build-up of these unresolved emotions can often affect the work ethic of the victims and often limit their chances of obtaining employment in their later years. This can negatively impact the economy of the country as more and more parts of its labour force will be unable to work, or even be unproductive should they get the chance. These acts can also lead to the feeling of vulnerability amongst populations and to people experiencing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In 1995 and 1996, France experienced a
wave of bombings that killed 12 and injured more than 200. A 2004 retrospective study examined post-traumatic stress disorder rates in the victims and found that 31 percent experienced post-traumatic stress disorder.

Relation to illegal activity

The issue of terrorism is of concern to the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC). The financing of acts of terrorism and terrorist groups is of great importance, as the financing comes from illegal activity. Drug trafficking plays an important role in this and example of this is Afghanistan. According to the World Drug Report produced in 2007 by the UNODC, Afghanistan’s estimated revenue from the harvest of opium was estimated at $3.1 billion. Even a percentage of this amount would be enough to fund terrorist activity. Drugs have even been used as a commission for acts of terror, as exemplified by the Madrid Bombings.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Pakistan

In recent years, terrorism in Pakistan has become highly catastrophic. The birth of terrorism in Pakistan was as a result of Pakistan’s support and involvement in the Soviet-Afghan war in addition to the decade-long civil war that followed. For the cause of jihad, fighters from South Asia were recruited to get involved in the conflict and the Mujahideen fighters were trained to fight in Afghanistan by the CIA, western intelligence and by Pakistan’s military. Although a decrease in terrorist attacks has been observed, the attacks are now deadlier with an increase in the number of deaths per attack. According to statistics provided by the US State Department, Pakistan experienced 1823 attacks and 1761 deaths in 2014 as opposed to the 1009 attacks and 1081 deaths in 2015. This shows a decrease in the number of attacks (by 45%) and the number of deaths (by 39 people). However, the ratio of death per attack increased suggesting the attacks have become more catastrophic since in 2014 there were 0.99 deaths per attack and in 2015 there were 1.1 deaths per attack. One notable effort made by Pakistan to reach a solution regarding the issue of terrorism was in 2012, when leadership authorities in Pakistan met to seek solutions. On Monday 9 September 2013 passed a resolution stating that the first step in the process of counter-terrorism was to negotiate with the militants.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan wasn’t always a place of terror and fear as seen today. The country’s prominent and popular
trade background made it a good trade location and attracted invaders, due to which it has been fought over and ruled by many people. Since the 1980s, Afghanistan has been a place of constant war. Terrorism started when the Taliban came into power. The Taliban are a political terrorist group which conquered Afghanistan and its people. In 1996, when the Taliban first rose into power, they took a series of rights away from Afghans and they started attacking and victimizing them. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2014, terrorism is increasing in Afghanistan, with 10% more terrorist attacks and 13% more fatalities in 2013 than 2012. Although there were seven different terrorist groups active in Afghanistan, one group, the Taliban, carried out the majority of attacks and was responsible for casualties. In both 2012 and 2013, the Taliban was responsible for 75% of all terrorist fatalities in Afghanistan. In 2013, there were terrorist acts in over 440 different cities in Afghanistan, clearly highlighting the breadth of terrorism across the country. However, 304 cities suffered only one terrorist attack. There were 36 attacks in the capital Kabul and 25 attacks in the old capital of Kandahar. The police are being attacked 46% of the time and suffer 53% of the deaths. Private citizens are the second largest target group, with 21% of attacks and 19% of deaths. According to statistics, 4,561 people were killed by terrorists in Afghanistan in 2016. Afghanistan suffered from 1,340 terrorist attacks that year.

Syria

The burning issue of the Syrian crisis is by far, is one of the most pressing and convoluted issues of our time. More than an estimated 400,000 lives have been lost due to these continued hostilities in just under 5 years. What started off as peaceful protest for democracy soon escalated into full blown civil war as Assad pre-emptively tried to end rebellion by opening fire on the demonstrators and killing several of them, a misguided attempt that sparked the country into civil war. This caused massive indignation within the country and the protests to become violent. Syrian soon became the battleground of a proxy war. There are a large number of parties and many different aims involved in this war. These individual interests, and the conflict of them, makes solving the issue more complex. It is said that 2.5 million refugees have been recorded with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees; nevertheless, there are Syrian citizens who have yet to escape, making the actual figure of refugees larger than expected. 75% of these refugees are women and children, with 25% of these refugees as boys below the age of eighteen. The majority of Syrian refugees are presently displaced within countries of close proximity, including Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq and 20,000 refugees are in North Africa.
France

There is a long history behind terrorism in France. It first appeared as a result of the revolution in 1789 and described the campaign of the government. Since then, it has developed through the centuries to reach the stage it is at now. France has recently become a prominent target of terrorist attacks to the extent that the nation declared a state of emergency. Notable acts of terror in France include: the Charlie Hebdo attack on January 7, 2015; the series attacks carried out in Paris (on various locations including a concert hall, stadium, restaurants and bars) on November 13, 2015; and the attack on the 14th of July 2016, celebrated as Bastille Day, in which a lorry slammed through a crowd killing 84 people. To combat terrorism, France has increased their security by deploying more personnel in cities and by increasing the security on public transport, as transport is considered a target for terrorists. They also allowed police officers to carry guns as police officers are actively partaking in the fight against terrorism, and thus it is valid for them to be armed. They also enhanced diplomatic relations by cooperating with other nations to combat this issue. An example of this is the cooperation between France and Belgium, especially following the November 2015 Paris attacks. France has also improved their legal capacity and one important advancement in terms of this is the freezing of assets of people and/or entities involved in acts of terrorism as a result of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006.

United States

The involvement of the US in actions relating to terrorism is prominent. As a nation, it has been victim to catastrophic terrorist attacks and it also one of the key nations fighting to counter and eliminate terrorism. With the exception of the September 11, 2001 attack on the WTC, the US has seen a reduction in the frequency of terrorist attacks since 1970 with 2608 attacks, of which 226 were lethal, within the time frame of 1970-2011. Law enforcement authorities have also statistically become better at deterring terrorist activity/attacks. Currently, to eliminate terrorism, the US is implementing certain strategies. One of these strategies includes the sharing of intelligence information which is vital when considering that data must be shared with the police in foreign countries to be able to foil attacks that are planned. Also included in these strategies is an increase in international financial cooperation to fund counter-terrorism efforts in various states, as well as the increased usage of drones. Another notable strategy is raiding terrorist bases and camps in foreign countries, particularly those where terrorist activity is concentrated.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

UNESCO is a branch of the UN based in Paris with the aim of making contributions to peace and security by promoting collaboration on an international scale through reforms with regards to education,
science and culture. As an organisation, UNESCO focuses both on countering and preventing violent extremism. UNESCO has adopted to the UN Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism which consists of areas with a direct link to the work of UNESCO. These areas include: empowering the youth and women and gender equality; communication with regards to the Internet and social media; and education, the development of skills and employment. One of the most important points is that the organisation has the aim of using education as a method of preventing extremism and terrorism as it can potentially make the people who have been educated strong and resilient.

**Timeline of Events**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Description of Event:</th>
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<tr>
<td>18 December 1972</td>
<td>First resolution addressing international terrorism, made by the General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 July, 1995</td>
<td>Paris gas and nail bombing (Saint-Michel subway station)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 September 2001</td>
<td>Two of four hijacked passenger jets were flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre, Manhattan, and a third into the Pentagon in Virginia</td>
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<td>11 March, 2004</td>
<td>Madrid Bombings</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 July 2005</td>
<td>Four suicide bombings (London, England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 July 2006</td>
<td>Mumbai Train Bombings</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 November 2006</td>
<td>Sadr City Bombings</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 April 2007</td>
<td>Baghdad Bombings</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 January 2015</td>
<td>Paris, France Shooting</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 November 2015</td>
<td>Stade de France stadium suicide bombing</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 November 2015</td>
<td>Paris gun attacks and suicide bombings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 March 2017</td>
<td>Brussels airport and metro bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 April 2017</td>
<td>Paris shooting</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
21 April 2017     Champs Elysees shooting
22 May 2017      Manchester Arena suicide bombing
19 June 2017     Finsbury Park terror attack on Muslim worshippers

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks, 12 February 2015 (S/RES/2199)
- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks, 20 November 2015 (S/RES/2249)
- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist attacks, 17 December 2015 (S/RES/2253)
- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review, 1 July 2016 (A/RES/70/291)
- Resolutions 2309 Adopted by the Security Council at its 7775th meeting (Aviation Security), 22 September 2016 (S/RES/2309)
- Resolutions 2322 Adopted by the Security Council at its 7831st meeting (international law enforcement and judicial cooperation), 12 December 2016 (S/RES/2322)
- Resolutions strengthening the capability of the United Nations system to assist Member States in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 15 June 2017 (A/RES/71/291)
- Resolutions 2386 Adopted by the Security Council at its 8007th meeting, reaffirming its resolve to combat terrorism, 20 July 2017 (S/RES/2386)

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

There have been multiple attempts to solve the issue of terrorism in regard to nations individually. Nations have developed policies regarding counter-terrorism and have implemented them. These can be seen through the likes of various security measures implemented. The UN has made efforts to counter terrorism, one of which include the passing of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in 1994. Another effort made by the UN to make progress regarding this issue was the adoption by the General Assembly of Resolution 52164 in 1997 titled “The International Convention for the suppression of Terrorist Bombings”. These efforts advocated for strong action by member states while still giving importance to the sovereignty of the member states. The Security Council also passed Resolution
1269, which condemned terrorism in all forms and declared it as an unjustifiable criminal act regardless of the motivation behind it.

The financing of terror groups is of large concern and is derived from illegal activity including, but not limited to, drug trafficking. Currently there are multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, including those that impose sanctions on members of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and those associated with them. These sanctions include the freezing of their assets and ban on their travel. These resolutions are targeted at 124 entities and 226 individuals.

**Possible Solutions**

Raising awareness about terrorism is essential in order to have an effect on the involvement of people in terrorist activities. Educating people about the negative effects of terrorist activity through magazines, social networking websites and applications, awareness videos, awareness campaigns, conferences and seminars can play a big role in preventing people from getting involved with terrorist groups and terrorist activity. Through awareness campaigns, those vulnerable to a situation involving acts of terrorism can be educated on what to do, both during and after the terrorist attack, minimising the effects of it in terms of injury and mental health problems (e.g. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). Doing this gives international organisations and states the power to indirectly monitor the terrorist organisations’ use of the internet (especially through social media). This is imperative because terrorists have taken to social media to expand their follower base and heavily rely on this method. By raising awareness on the impact of terrorism and the results of joining terrorist groups, the youth (who are usually the ones recruited through social media) are less likely to be persuaded or blackmailed, resulting in a strain on the group’s manpower. Eventually the vastness of the attacks will decrease.

The exposure of nations who support terrorist organisations is another essential factor that contributes to solving the issue of international terrorism. After exposing the nations that support terrorist groups, boycotting them will affect their economy and in turn decrease the funding of these terrorists. The outcome of this solution could cause a decrease in terrorist activity due to the lack of funding. However, this could also put the mentioned nation at risk of terrorist attacks from the same group that is being indirectly boycotted.

Developing more efficient border control can help prevent acts of terrorism before they can even occur. The movement of terrorists within nations can be avoided with a more advanced system of border security. Furthermore, the use of torture as a means of interrogation should also be eradicated as it has proven to be
a counterproductive method of the eradication of terrorism. Other methods have been highly suggested by psychologists that have been more effective in the past and have not resulted in angered terrorists acting out because of them.

Bibliography


