



Security Council

Preventing Terrorism in Europe

History and Introduction:

Terrorism is defined as “the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.” The first uses of terrorism happened as far back as the Middle Ages, with the use of pirates, but terrorism has developed since. In the mid-twentieth century, terrorism was mostly a result of separatist movements, such as the Irish Republican Army, but as we continue into the twenty-first century, religion, political control, and socio-economic factors seem to dominate the motives behind attacks.

In the last couple of decades, terrorist attacks have become more advanced and coordinated. Some of the major attacks in Europe include, but are not limited to, the Lockerbie bombing, the Charlie Hebdo shootings, the Paris attacks, the Brussels bombing, the Nice attack, the Berlin attack, the Westminster attack, Manchester Arena Bombing, London Bridge attack, the Finsbury Park attack, Barcelona and Cambrils attacks, the Parsons Green explosion, Marseille attack, Carcassonne and Trèbes attack, the Paris stabbing, and the Liège shooting. A majority of these attacks involved extensive planning, organization, and funding.



The list of designated terrorist groups is extensive, and continues to grow since its creation in 1977. Most recently, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were designated as a terrorist organization this past April. The groups most active in Europe include ISIS/ISIL and al-Qaeda, each of which holds branches in multiple countries. They use radicalization to recruit vulnerable populations and gain support.

Causes:

The main causes of terrorism in Europe stem from religious differences and political motives. In 2017, there were 62 deaths in terrorist attacks that were affiliated with religion. The year before, there were 135 deaths. The most dangerous year however, was 2015, in which there were 150 deaths as a result of religiously inspired terrorism. This was following a year that experienced only 4 deaths. It is no secret that religiously inspired terrorism is on the rise, however, that is not the only motive.

Other acts of terrorism are done for political motives, whether it be to right what terrorist groups perceive to be a historical wrong, or to simply gain power over who they perceive to be their oppressors. Almost all motives behind terrorism can be linked to political objectives. Even religious and cultural attacks can be said to be done for the purpose of more influence in politics or to decrease one's influence in politics. Examples of political acts of terrorism include the IRA, who wanted to separate themselves from



the United Kingdom, to ISIS in the Middle East. Groups such as ISIS claim that the reason for acts of terror are inspired by religion, but are linked to a desire for political power and control over a region or sovereign state.

Local and Global Effects:

Terrorism is meant to instill fear and feelings of insecurity among citizens and government officials, in the hopes that it will give more power to the terrorists themselves. With that being said, the local effects of terrorism can stretch from political anxiety to economic blows. Terrorist attacks can affect everyone from the individual level all the way up to the societal level. People are affected as groups who may share similar cultural or religious affiliations, or even just share the unlucky coincidence of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Regardless, there is trauma for anyone who is a victim of a terrorist attack.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) wrote a report to assess the effects that terrorism, but more specifically trauma caused by acts of terrorism, has on victims and society. There are categories on the individual level that can be narrowed down to those who: 1) Suffer harm directly as a result of the attack (primary victims), 2) Are related to primary victims, or 3) witness the incident through broadcasting and/or help and attend to victims. These three types of victims are labeled as primary,



secondary, and tertiary victims respectively. The main source of trauma for primary victims includes but is not limited to physical trauma, such as damaged tissue, bones or even death. Psychological trauma can be experienced by all groups of victims, and can destroy a person's ability to perceive anything the same as before. Mental health disorders such as PTSD have been known to arise out of the psychological trauma.

Societal and global effects of terrorism usually depend on the type of attack, and motives behind it. If there is an attack in which a group, culture, or religion is targeted, the victim group often finds themselves experiencing mutual feelings of solidarity and fear. Attacks could potentially bring groups together from around the world that share religious or cultural beliefs, who console and aid their affiliates. It could also bring them together in a psychological sense however, being that they may all share a similar feeling of fear, trauma, and worry that they could be next. With this being said, it is understood that societal, global, and individual effects of terrorism are all interconnected

Current Framework:

The current framework for European terrorism is focused on working internationally through the four pillars- prevent, protect, pursue, and respond. Preventing acts of terrorism is a priority for this committee, and is the basis for protecting the European nations. Both the European Union (EU) and Council of Europe have created



plans in conjunction with one another. The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) has helped record the location and details of terrorist attacks around the world, containing over 180,000 cases.

The four pillars are the foundation from which counter-terrorism strategies are formed. Preventing terrorist actions and protecting the people of Europe are done through combatting radicalization and the recruiting. The UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, as reviewed by UNESCO in 2016, promotes the utilization of education, youth empowerment, communications, and gender equality as the most direct ways to combat radicalization. Many plans and initiatives have focused on educating children to prevent the development of hatred and give them a wider world view. An important part of the protection plan is the PNR, or passenger name record, which is an essential part of tracking the movements of potentially threatening persons.

The Council of Europe is the most inclusive European organization, with 47 countries represented. It's purpose is the preservation of human rights and encouragement of democracy. The council follows the framework outlined by the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, which follows two main goals: cooperation internally and internationally, and criminalizing terrorist actions that lead to offenses. In 2015, the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism criminalized terrorist training, travelling for terrorism, and funding terrorism.



The funding of terrorist organizations is a major issue, as the support provides them the means to travel, gather arms, and take action. In 2018, the Council of Europe amended its anti-money laundering directive in order to further limit the methods of financiers.

Questions for Discussion:

What improvements can be made to the framework for preventing terrorism?

How can terrorist actions be prevented without interfering with the autonomy of the people?

How can technology be used to prevent terrorism?

How will new measures/initiatives be funded?

What can be done to improve the effectiveness of responses to terrorist threats/actions?

How can radicalization and recruiting be prevented?

Where should educational efforts be focused?

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