

Terrorism – a Barbaric Tool and its Disproportionate Counteraction in the Conflict between Hamas and Israel

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Abstract. Terrorism and its means have been applied since Ancient times, and over the years the human development and technologies have transformed it into a serious threat to the civilians, societies, countries and even to the international security. The globalisation of terrorism demands new approaches for the effective counteraction, in accordance to the dynamically changing security environment of the 21st century. Meanwhile, with the escalation of the conflict between Hamas and Israel, the issue about the terrorism threat took the headlines, both in the information space and at the highest political level. The discussion focuses on the specific methods of combating terrorism and the permissible level of violence that should be applied in this fight.

This paper seeks to answer important questions regarding security by presenting an analysis of some basics concerning the phenomenon of "terrorism". For this purpose, the applied methods of the research include careful examination of terrorism's evolution throughout history, the factors that have influence over terrorists' attitude, the motivation which fuels one's decision to become a part of a terrorist group and its most striking recent manifestation. Furthermore, the paper puts the emphasis on the necessity of developing new counter-terrorism strategies along with incorporation of the newest technologies in the security sector.

Keywords: *Fight against terrorism, Hamas-Israel, Terrorism, Security*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the current era of rapid technological changes and globalisation, citizen security is subject to a variety of challenges. One of the most serious and complex problems that stands out in this context is terrorism. This type of crime does not just threaten individuals, but also states as a whole.

Terrorism directly targets the values of freedom, justice and human rights that societies affirm. This report focuses on this phenomenon in a broad way, examining its historical roots on the one hand and its contemporary manifestations, including the ongoing conflict between Hamas and Israel, on the other. The work presents various aspects of terrorism, including the motivation behind terrorist acts, methods to prevent and combat terrorism, and the ethical and legal aspects related to this problem. The analysis covers the international community's response to terrorist threats and how strategies are evolving to keep citizens safe on a global scale.

Terrorism, as a form of violence and extremism, poses a serious threat to the security of citizens in the modern world. Capable of unfolding both locally and globally, terrorism requires complex and multidirectional strategies to prevent and combat it. The history of terrorism, the factors that facilitate its development, and the impact on society and citizens are analyzed.

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II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research implements several methods in its pursuit of determining the phenomenon of terrorism and its actual state as a serious threat for security. The applied methods include a deep analyses of the up-to-date scientific knowledge on the subject of terrorism, the fundamental theoretical basis gathered throughout the decades by numerous researchers, experts and scientists, along with a profound discussion on the most recent terrorist event with significant consequences for the international security, such as Hamas' attack on Israel and the following armed conflict.

The authors have gone through the steps of observation and information gathering, fact-checking the information and the reliability of the sources, analysis of the data and creating hypothesis. Based on the conducted research conclusions have been made about the history, nature, actual state and future of terrorism and the fight against this phenomenon.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. History of terrorism

Terrorism as we know it today finds its roots in the history of humanity. From the early forms of political terrorism in the Roman Empire to the religious conflicts of the Middle Ages, terrorist activity has passed through various stages and taken a variety of forms. In the 19th century, with the development of national movements, terrorism took on new dimensions. Anticolonial struggles, the revival of national ideas and political revolutions set the stage for the modern form of terrorism.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, terrorism became a global phenomenon. Terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, ISIS and their Latin American and Asian counterparts are expanding their reach and influence through the use of new technologies and social networks. Unlike in previous periods, they can now coordinate their attacks and mobilise followers around the world. In this sense, the phenomenon of terrorism has also globalised.

The study of the history of terrorism provides a context for understanding the causes and motivations behind contemporary terrorist actions. For example, religious conflicts in the Middle East and political instability in certain regions are often at the root of terrorism. Understanding this context should aid the process of formulating strategies to prevent future incidents and address threats to citizen security.

B. Causes of terrorism

Terrorism, as a complex and multi-layered phenomenon, finds its roots in various areas of human activity. One of the key tasks in analyzing this problem is to consider the multiple factors that can support the development and "flourishing" of terrorist groups.

Among the social factors that fuel terrorism, social injustice, poverty and discrimination stand out. People who feel rejected by society or are victims of socio-economic inequalities are more likely to join terrorist groups in search of meaning and change.

Political factors also play an important role in the development of terrorism. Failed or unstable

governments, ethnic or religious conflicts, crises regarding the national identity and the inability to reach agreement and compromise can create an environment conducive to the terrorist rise.

Religious beliefs are also an important factor in motivating terrorists. Religious extremists often use versions of religious doctrines to support their goals and actions. In this context, it is essential to distinguish between religious belief and committing violence in the name of that belief.

The combination of these factors affects the individual and causes him to seek alternative forms of expression, often through violence. Appropriate counter-terrorism strategies should address the roots of these problems, offering comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

C. Terrorist groups. Motivation and methods.

Terrorist groups operating today represent a diverse landscape of ideologies, goals and methods. Studying these organizations is key to understanding the terrorist landscape and building effective strategies to deal with such entities.

Of the terrorist groups that focus on religious motivations, Al-Qaeda is one of the most notorious. Established in 1988, this group has been linked to numerous terrorist attacks, including the September 11th, 2001 attacks in the United States. Another influential group with religious ambitions is ISIS, which in recent years has been the main terrorist organisation in the Middle East and Africa.

Political terrorism also remains a factor in the modern world. Such groups often pursue goals such as changing power, changing political systems or national independence. Various separatist and communist groups operate in different parts of the world, using terrorist methods to achieve their goals.

Modern terrorism also involves the use of new technologies and methods. The Internet and social networks have become a platform for new membership, propaganda and coordination of terrorist activities. Cyber-attacks have also become a commonly used means of exerting influence and creating chaos.

Understanding the motivations, methods and objectives of terrorist groups is a key element of combating this type of threat. Effective counter-terrorism strategies must adapt to the changing nature of terrorist activity and include close monitoring, intelligence and cooperation at the international level.

D. Impact on citizens and society

Terrorist attacks have a lasting effect on citizens and society as a whole. Individuals directly affected by these events often experience deep emotional trauma, such as fear, helplessness and concern for the future of society.

On a psychological level, terrorist attacks create an atmosphere of uncertainty and tension. People face the challenge of rebuilding their sense of protection and stability, which can lead to changes in behaviour, perspective and attitude towards others. The growth of fear can undermine trust in institutions, increasing

tensions and divisions. As a result, societal values face challenges.

The impact of terrorism is not limited to the timing of the attack. Long-term effects include changes in security legislation, increased surveillance and stricter protection measures. However, all of this can lead to further challenges to individual liberty and civil rights, raising new debates about the balance between security and personal independence.

Therefore, understanding the impact of terrorism on citizens and societies is a key factor in formulating strategies to prevent and deal with this serious threat, because as Mr. Slavcho Velkov says "terror is fear and dread". In their brutal activity, terrorists are guided by the ancient Chinese proverb "Kill one, scare a hundred", as well as by the Arab military doctrine - "Victory in a war is not measured by the number of killed and wounded, but by the number of the scared".

E. Fight against terrorism

Combating terrorism requires a coordinated and multidirectional effort by the international community and national governments. One of the main strategies is to develop effective methods to prevent terrorist acts. This includes maintaining a high degree of vigilance and alertness, as well as developing intelligent systems to counter terrorist threats.

In the area of terrorism prevention, education and awareness play a crucial role. The development of educational programmes aimed at understanding the roots and consequences of terrorism can help prevent the recruitment of new members and promote peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Cooperation between different countries and organisations is also essential in the fight against terrorism. The exchange of information and the coordination of efforts to combat the financing of terrorist groups are vital. Terrorism knows no borders, and effective strategies must be coordinated and supported by the international community.

The response to terrorism also includes control of the internet and social networks, which are often used to recruit and plan terrorist activities. In this sense, a key element of the prevention of terrorist acts from materializing should be the research of the behavior of the nowadays information users. For example, such strategy implements the task to determine to what degree people use mobile devices to read, learn and access information resources. The free and almost uncontrollable access to different kinds of information facilitates the radicalization, especially amongst the marginalized groups and the minorities if they feel neglected or threatened [1]. The development of tracking and surveillance technologies can help detect and intercept these threats before they become a reality.

Finally, the approach to tackling terrorism must be balanced, providing security without neglecting respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Strategies must be adapted to the changing conditions and incorporate the wide range of factors that influence the dynamics of terrorism globally.

F. The conflict between Hamas and Israel – a barbaric attack and a disproportionate counteraction?

The insidious and devoid of any humanity terrorist attack carried out by the Hamas group against Israel on October 7th 2023 has once again brought the terrorist security threat to the world's attention. In addition, the aggression in question has escalated tensions both throughout the Middle East and at a global level. An unprecedented response by the Israeli State has followed, involving the mobilisation of enormous human and technological resources in order to conduct a ground military operation in the Gaza Strip and eliminate Hamas and its leaders.

Undoubtedly, the attack carried out by Hamas militants has achieved its objective of both striking turmoil and fear into the hearts of the citizens and, on the other hand, provoking such a military response from Israel as to draw the attention of the international community to the fate of the Palestinian people and their status.

The negative security implications for citizens confirm the principles and modus operandi of terrorist groups outlined earlier in the report. Many Israelis lost their lives during the initial attacks, while hundreds were kidnapped by the terrorists. To this day, a significant number remain hostages, used by Hamas as bargaining chips for a pause in the fighting, for example.

The reaction of the international community to the conflict has been and continues to be interesting. Initially, quite in the spirit of humanity, compassion and empathy, most world leaders expressed their deep outrage at the terror of Hamas and showed strong support for the Israeli people. However, when the intense shock wore off and Israel launched its ground operation (accompanied by massive bombardment and artillery fire), and especially when the results of these actions began to be made public in the public space and on social media, it seemed that public opinion in large parts of the world gradually began to tilt in the other direction.

Hamas is now unquestionably reaping the fruits of its "labor." Public space, the mass media, the Internet and social networks are filled with images of destroyed buildings, destitute Palestinians, and an unspecified but certainly large number of civilian casualties. According to some figures from medical officials in Gaza, the death toll from the relentless bombardment exceeds 25 000 [2].

The anguish and suffering of the Palestinians is not only front and centre in the news, but is also the subject of discussions, conferences and meetings at the international level. Personally, the Pope, who recently met both with Israeli relatives of hostages held by Hamas and with Palestinians with families in Gaza, has expressed his concern about what is happening, of which his words are ample testimony: "This is what wars do. But here we have gone beyond wars. This is not a war. This is terrorism" [3].

Naturally, a reaction followed from Israeli officials who repeatedly stated their firm position that there can be no equivalence between Hamas, which is a terrorist organisation and uses civilians as human shields, and Israel, which protects civilians. According to Israel, the starting point in this conflict is terrorism and it must be

eradicated [4]. However, too few answers remain to the real questions, such as what factors gave rise to the creation and development of Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Too often, national governments and the international community grapple with the consequences rather than focusing on identifying and preventing threats of this nature.

It is from this national perspective that Israel is within its rights to use force to protect the security of its citizens as well as its own existence. On the other hand, however, perhaps the overreaction has had more negative effects than anyone imagined. The UN General Assembly has demanded, by a resolution adopted by an overwhelming majority, a humanitarian ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The manner of the vote is significant - 153 votes in favour, 10 votes against and 23 abstentions. On the one hand, this is a strong demonstration of global support for an end to the war between Israel and Hamas. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as a growing isolation of the US and Israel from the international community regarding the conflict [5].

The analysed case raises more questions than answers. What should be the counter-terrorism response in the 21st century? How should citizens be protected from terrorist acts? How far does the law of force go? All these questions are deeply causally linked to the future evolution of the terrorist threat and the security challenges that societies and states will face in the years and decades to come.

G. Future Challenges and Developments

As the fight against terrorism evolves, new challenges and possible developments arise that must be taken into account when formulating strategies for the future. One important future challenge is the adaptation of terrorist groups to changes in technology. The use of encryption, anonymous platforms and other technological innovations may make detecting and countering terrorist activities more difficult.

The global nature of terrorism calls for improved international cooperation. Countries and organisations need to strengthen information exchange, coordination of actions and sharing of good practices. The establishment of effective international counter-terrorism standards and laws is essential.

At the same time, attention must also be focused on preventing radicalisation and the inclusion of new members. Education and social inclusion programmes must be developed to provide alternatives for those at risk of joining terrorist groups.

In the future, the role of tracking and monitoring technologies will continue to grow. Intelligent systems for analysing and processing big data can help identify potential threats before they materialise. However, creating a balance between the need for security and respect for privacy must be put at the forefront.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Terrorism, as a threat to the security of citizens, continues to challenge the global community and national governments. Its complexity and dynamics require the constant development of strategies and means to address

this serious threat. Through the lens of history, we have analyzed the evolution of terrorism from various ideological, political, and religious perspectives.

Awareness of the social, political and economic factors that fuel terrorist activities is critical to building sustainable prevention strategies. Also, the impact on citizens and societies, as well as future challenges, require an integrated and balanced approach that combines security with respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

In the fight against terrorism, international cooperation and information sharing play a key role. Current events in recent months, and specifically the armed conflict between Hamas and Israel, raise questions about the means by which counter-terrorism must be carried out in order to be effective.

It has been proven that neutralizing the terrorist threat is impossible only through retaliatory violence. The creation of intelligent systems and the use of technology to prevent terrorist acts must be developed in parallel with educational and social programmes to combat radicalisation.

Looking forward, strategies to fight terrorism will need to be adaptive, sustainable and global. Cooperation and innovation will be key factors in building a safer and more sustainable world where citizens can live without fear of terrorist threats.

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