



# Research Report

Security Council

Strengthening global efforts to counter  
terrorism and violent extremism

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# Introduction

Terrorism and violent extremism are serious global threats. They are causing instability, fear, and loss of life. These acts of violence, often driven by political, ideological, or religious beliefs, harm societies and challenge peace. While many efforts have been made to stop terrorism, new threats continue to emerge, requiring stronger international cooperation.

Terrorist groups operate across borders, using technology, social media, and online networks to spread their messages and plan attacks. From large-scale incidents like the 9/11 attacks in the United States to ongoing threats in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, terrorism affects many regions. **Violent extremism**, which fuels terrorism, has also increased in different forms, including political and religious radicalism. The international community has taken steps to fight terrorism, with organizations like the **UN**, the **EU**, and **INTERPOL** making many efforts.

Strategies such as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and financial monitoring by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) have helped disrupt terrorist activities.

However, as terrorist tactics evolve, nations must improve their responses. To effectively counter terrorism, it is important to address its root causes, such as poverty, social injustice, and political instability. Education, community programs, and counter-narratives can prevent radicalization.

Governments and international organizations must also enhance cybersecurity and law enforcement to stop attacks before they happen. Policies should balance safety with human rights, ensuring a long-term approach to a more peaceful world.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Cyberterrorism:** The use of the internet and digital platforms for terrorist activities, including recruitment and attacks.

**EU:** European Union

**Foreign Terrorist fighters:** Individuals who travel to another country to join terrorist groups.

**INTERPOL:** An international organisation that supports police organisations in preventing and combating crime.

**Radicalization:** The process by which individuals adopt extremist beliefs that may lead to violence.

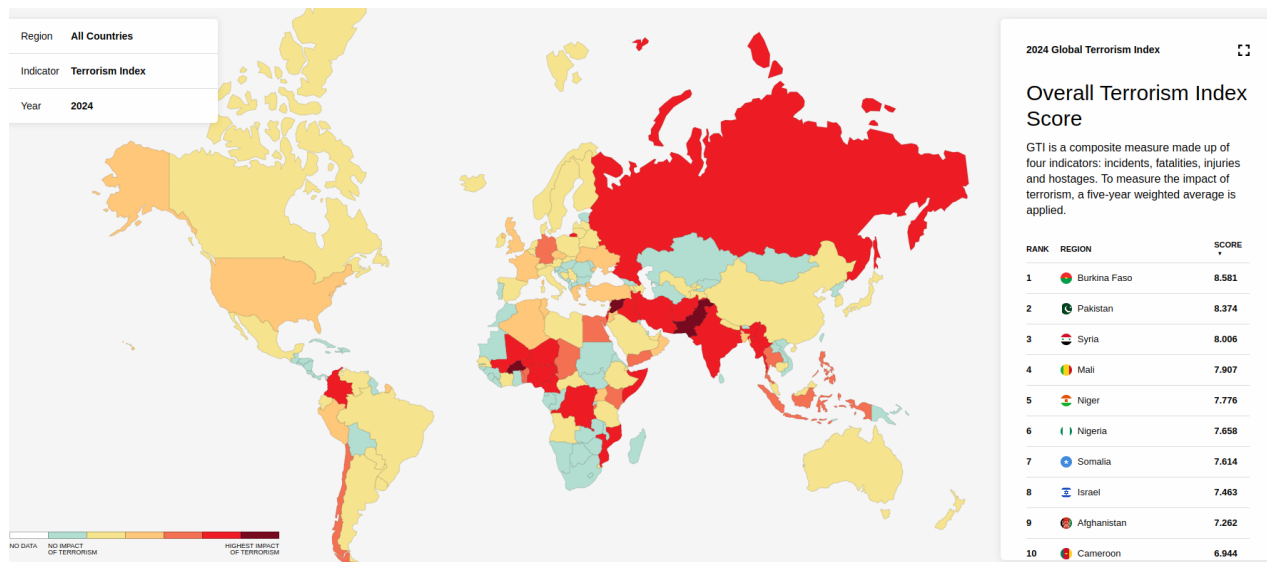
**Terrorism:** The use of violence, often against civilians, to create fear and achieve political, religious, or ideological goals.

**UN:** United Nations

**Violent Extremism:** The belief in and support of extreme ideas that justify violence to achieve goals.

## General Overview

**Terrorism** and violent extremism continue to be major threats to global peace and safety. These problems have changed over time, so it is important to understand their history, causes, and current state. Terrorism has existed for centuries, but modern terrorism became more common in the late 20th century. Key events like the Cold War, struggles for independence, and ideological conflicts led to the rise of different terrorist groups. Major attacks, such as the September 11 attacks in 2001, the 2004 Madrid train bombings, and the 2015 Paris attacks, have shaped how countries respond to terrorism and the general fear for it. On the picture below, you can see the overall terrorism index score. It shows what countries are currently dealing with the most terrorism.



## Causes of Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Several factors contribute to terrorism and violent extremism. Political problems such as weak governments, corruption, and unfair treatment push people toward extremist beliefs. Economic struggles, including unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunities, make people more vulnerable to **radicalization**. Religious and ideological beliefs are sometimes misused by extremist groups to justify violence. Social issues like discrimination, exclusion, and lack of belonging can make young people more likely to join extremist groups. Technology, especially the internet and social media, helps extremist groups spread their messages and even recruit people.

Terrorism today is less organized, with more individuals carrying out attacks on their own and extremists using the internet to spread their ideas. Despite ongoing threat posed by Al-Qaeda and ISIS, new extremist organisations continue to emerge worldwide. Conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia continue to fuel terrorism. Some key trends in terrorism today include; Changes in terrorist activity, some regions have seen a decline in terrorism, but new hotspots have appeared, especially in Africa and Southeast Asia. **Cyberterrorism** is used to recruit members and even **Foreign terrorist fighters**. Cyberterrorism is also used to raise money and plan attacks. The last element, which influences terrorism, is the role of governments and non-government group. Some governments have been accused of supporting terrorist groups, while others work to stop extremism through education and community programs.

### **Key actors in Counterterrorism**

Many groups are involved in fighting terrorism. The United Nations (UN), through agencies like the UN Office of Counterterrorism (UNOCT) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), helps create global strategies. National governments make their own policies, carry out operations, and share intelligence with other countries. Regional organizations, such as the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), help in their areas. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies, such as Interpol, work to prevent terrorist attacks. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) help by running programs to stop radicalization and educate people. Technology and social media companies, like Facebook, Twitter, and Google, are under pressure to stop extremist content from spreading online.

Fighting terrorism and violent extremism is a complex issue that requires teamwork at all levels; local, national, and international. Even though progress has been made, new threats continue to emerge, so efforts must keep evolving. Understanding the history, causes, and current state of terrorism is key to creating effective strategies to counter it.

## Timeline of Key Events

**Late 20th Century** – **Rise of modern terrorism** due to ideological conflicts, decolonization, and political instability.

**1972** – **Munich Olympics Massacre**: Palestinian group Black September attacks Israeli athletes.

**1988** – **Al-Qaeda is founded** by Osama bin Laden.

**1993** – **First World Trade Center bombing** in New York City.

**2001 (September 11)** – **9/11 attacks** lead to the U.S. War on Terror.

**2004** – **Madrid train bombings** kill 193 people.

**2005** – **London bombings (7/7)** target public transport.

**2011** – **Osama bin Laden is killed** in a U.S. operation.

**2014** – **ISIS declares a caliphate** in Iraq and Syria.

**2015** – **Paris attacks** by ISIS-affiliated terrorists kill 130 people.

**2019** – **ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is killed**.



# Stakeholders

- **United Nations (UN)** – Works through agencies like the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to create global strategies.
- **National Governments** – Develop counterterrorism policies, conduct operations, and share intelligence.
- **Regional Organizations** – Groups such as the European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) coordinate regional efforts.
- **INTERPOL** – Organizations like Interpol assist in preventing terrorist activities.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** – Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Google work to stop the spread of extremist content online.
  
- **Governments and Security Forces** – Agencies responsible for maintaining security, often targeted by terrorist groups.
- **Civilians** – Innocent people, including families and children, are often victims of terrorist attacks.
- **Refugees and Displaced Persons** – Terrorism and conflict force people to flee their homes, leading to refugee crises.
- **Religious and Ethnic Minorities** – These groups are sometimes targeted by terrorist organizations based on ideology.
- **Youth and Vulnerable Populations** – Young people, especially those facing poverty and social exclusion, are at risk of being radicalized.

## Possible Solutions

### **Strengthening International Cooperation**

Improving intelligence-sharing between nations is essential to track and prevent terrorist activities. The role of the United Nations and regional organizations should be strengthened to coordinate counterterrorism efforts effectively. Enhancing border security is also necessary to prevent the movement of terrorists and foreign fighters.

### **Addressing Root Causes of Terrorism**

Investing in education and job opportunities can prevent vulnerable populations from being drawn into extremism. Community engagement programs should be promoted to prevent radicalization at a local level. Supporting initiatives that encourage religious and cultural tolerance can also play a key role in reducing extremism.

### **Enhancing Law Enforcement and Security Measures**

Security forces need better training to respond to terrorist threats while respecting human rights. Strengthening anti-money laundering policies can cut off terrorist funding and disrupt financial networks. Expanding deradicalization and rehabilitation programs for former extremists is also necessary to prevent re-engagement in terrorist activities.

By focusing on these areas, future discussions can explore the best strategies to counter terrorism effectively while maintaining human rights and global stability.

## Further Readings

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<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/terrorism/index.html>

<https://www.state.gov/terrorist-designations-and-state-sponsors-of-terrorism>

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