

THE IMPACT OF TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Nabi BERKUT*
Faith Umene BANJE**

ABSTRACT

Terrorism is an organizational behaviour usually employed by non-state actors for centuries, yet a legal definition has not been provided in international law. Transnational terrorism poses a global threat, undermining security and societal stability. It is essential to examine the causes, nature, and impact of terrorism while assessing counterterrorism measures to understand its nature. Terrorism is increasingly transnational and highly political, driven by grievances related to governance, inequality, religion, and ideological extremism. Technological advancements have enhanced recruitment, fundraising, and coordination, hence increasing the resilience of terrorist networks. There is a need for improved international collaboration, intelligence sharing, and legal frameworks to counter the threat of transnational terrorism effectively. This study advocates for a comprehensive strategy that incorporates legal, diplomatic, and economic measures to combat radicalization and reduce terrorist attacks.

Keywords: *Counterterrorism, Global Security, International Community, Political Violence, Transnational terrorism*

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of International Law, Law Faculty, Near East University, TRNC.
(nabi.berkut@neu.edu.tr)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3854-4906>

** PhD Candidate, Department of International Law, Law Faculty, Near East University, TRNC.
(faithumene.banje@neu.edu.tr)  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4817-9981>

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ÖZ

ULUSÖTESİ TERÖRİZMİN KÜRESEL TOPLUM ÜZERİNDEKİ

Terörizm, yüzyıllardır devlet dışı aktörler tarafından kullanılan bir örgütsel davranış olmasına rağmen uluslararası hukuk bağlamında yasal tanımı sağlanmamıştır. Ulusötesi terörizm, güvenliği ve toplumsal istikrarı baltalayan dünya çapında bir tehdit oluşturmaktadır. Terörizmin doğasını anlamak için terörle mücadele girişimlerini değerlendirirken terörizmin nedenlerini, karakterini ve etkisini araştırmak gereklidir. Terörizm, yönetim, eşitsizlik, din ve ideolojik aşırılıkla ilgili şikayetlerin etkisiyle giderek ulusötesi ve oldukça bir politik bir nitelik kazanmaktadır. Teknolojik gelişmeler, terörist ağlarının dayanıklılığını artırarak işe alım, bağış ve koordinasyon süreçlerini iyileştirmiştir. Ulusötesi terörizm tehdidine etkili bir şekilde karşı koymak için uluslararası iş birliğinin, istihbarat paylaşımının ve yasal çerçevelerin iyileştirilmesine ihtiyaç vardır. Bu çalışma, radikalleşme ile mücadele etmek ve terörist saldırıları en aza indirmek için yasal, diplomatik ve ekonomik önlemleri içeren kapsamlı bir stratejiyi savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Terörle Mücadele, Küresel Güvenlik, Uluslararası Toplum, Siyasi Şiddet, Ulusötesi terörizm*

1. Introduction

Terrorism is a system of conduct with a long history among both states and non-state actors. Despite this historical background, there is still no legal definition of terrorism in international law. However, many international instruments refer to terrorism and measures to counter it (United Nations Treaties Against International Terrorism). Terrorism involves criminal actions deliberately or strategically intended to instill fear among the public or a specific group to achieve political objectives. Such acts of terrorism are considered unjustifiable under any circumstances (74th session of the United Nations General Assembly). Understanding the evolution of terrorism and approaches to terrorist activities is essential in a world engaged a "war on terror." Terrorism is becoming increasingly diverse now occurring in almost every region of the world, involving a broader range of ethnic groups, and employing a wider variety of weapons (Montasari, 2024). Data collection and trend monitoring for this phenomenon have become challenging due to the changing definitions of terrorism at regional, economic, and international levels. This leads to conflicts regarding the war, whom it is

being waged against, and which laws govern it. Terrorism consists of actual or threatened, violent, intentional acts; it differs from regular crime in that it is motivated by political, religious, or ideological factors (Esmailzadeh, 2023).

Within the concept of terrorism, individuals directly participating in such activities as 'terrorists' seek an audience by employing violent actions to spread ideas. Such actions have resulted in significant loss of life and destruction of property, instilling fear and unease among people across the globe (Walsh, 2024). Promoting fear in a society not only allows them to reach their audience but also creates pressure on the government to acknowledge the terrorists' political goals. They often try to make their causes known on a global scale. Relatively, Gupta defines terrorism as the violence used to further a political or religious goal, which is unrestrained with moral and legal rules that prohibit violence (Gupta, 2020).

Terrorism can be a tool for both governments and insurgents. The current conceptualization of terrorism is naturally subject to debate due to the necessity of international harmony on the fundamental principles that determine the circumstances in which the employing of violence is deemed justifiable. It is common among states and non-state actors to use force to accomplish their political ambitions. As terrorism covers a broad spectrum of behaviors and may be impacted by governmental, sociological, economic, and religious elements, it is difficult to define (Helbling & Meierrieks, 2022). Many acts of violence and damage committed by people or organizations for various reasons have been referred to as terrorism. As Eqbal Ahmad suggested, "*The terrorist of yesterday is the hero of today, and the hero of yesterday becomes the terrorist of today. In a constantly changing world of images, we must keep our heads straight to know what terrorism is and what it is not*" (Schaar, 2015) .

This study adopts a constructivist theoretical framework rooted in International Relations theory (Tudoroiu, 2024) to analyze the global phenomenon of transnational terrorism. Constructivism emphasizes the social construction of international threats, focusing on how norms, identities, political discourse, and institutional practices influence the ways in which terrorism is understood, labeled, and addressed by the international community (Tulga, 2022). Within this framework, terrorism is not only seen as a material or military challenge but also as a contested political and legal concept whose definition is shaped by a cultural framework, historical experience, and global power relations.

Constructivism is especially useful in the context of this study, as it allows for a critical examination of the varying definitions of terrorism across states and institutions, and how these definitions are used to justify different forms of legal, political, and military responses. This perspective also helps to explain how non-state actors, state actors, and international organizations construct narratives of legitimacy or illegitimacy, particularly when dealing with political violence, insurgency, or religious extremism. Furthermore, it enables an exploration of how global norms surrounding sovereignty, human rights, and counterterrorism evolve over time, influenced by both material events (such as 9/11) and ideational shifts.

Methodologically, this article employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach. This approach is appropriate given the complexity of transnational terrorism which spans legal, political, social, and security domains. This article is primarily based on desk research, drawing on an extensive review of secondary sources including scholarly books and journal articles, United Nations conventions and resolutions, government policy reports, and relevant international law instruments. These materials are critically analyzed to identify common themes, theoretical gaps, and areas of normative contestation.

Special attention is paid to legal language, political framing, and institutional discourse that define and shape response of the international community. Moreover, normative legal analysis is employed to assess the effectiveness and coherence of international legal instruments in addressing the challenge of terrorism across borders, such as the UN Security Council Resolutions and General Assembly declarations.

This study differs from previous research by focusing on the transnational nature of terrorism rather than its general conceptualization. Thus, it contributes to the existing debate on global terrorism by providing a general overview of the nature of terrorism, the ‘terrorist’, and how its transnational nature affects the international community.

2. Terrorism and character of terrorism

The term ‘terrorism’ may be used in various contexts or for various objectives. In conflict situations, for example, it can serve as a persuasive tactic to discredit the opposing party, whether a person, a business, an insurgent organization, or a political movement, by states acting alone or collectively, or in the context of national emancipation (Plaut & Vaughzan, 2023). However,

defining terrorism is crucial for ensuring state security, distinguishing between armed conflicts, and condemning human rights violations (UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 2020). The history of significant social and political transformations in various countries and regions also demonstrates that a person formerly defined as a terrorist may later be viewed differently or even the opposite. The definition of terrorism is often described as a combination of war and tragedy, representing one of the most prohibited forms of violent action, intentionally committed against unarmed civilians in public to instil fear for political gain (Caron, 2023). This explanation of terrorism includes many essential elements. Following a review of the existing literature, insufficient studies exist on the character of terrorism (Haghani, et al., 2022). It involves the execution of extreme actions to instigate political transformation. At its core, terrorism revolves around the concept of justice, whether it is seen as a product of human agency or divine intervention. The definitions now utilized by international and national groups include these components (Combs, 2023). It has become clear that, within the context of contemporary international law, terrorism is one of the phrases and notions that is the most difficult to define. The political significance of the word "terrorism" pervades its current legal definition, resulting in discrepancies that make it highly challenging to draft a comprehensive legally binding treaty addressing the concept of terrorism (UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, 2020). Government-affiliated groups have primarily authored the prevailing definitions in circulation, and these definitions systematically exclude governments from their scope. The contemporary use of the word "terrorist" carries a pejorative connotation due to its implication to lack legality and morality (Scheinin, 2020). Activities, often labelled as "terrorism," are frequently used tactically by individuals or groups to advance a broader military or geopolitical agendas. This inquiry pertains practicality. Since "terrorism" has become politicized, any definition must be acceptable to all parties (Grand, 2023). The issue of terrorism is pervasive and often exerts a significant influence on human existence. This study defines terrorism as the deliberate and symbolic use or threat of violence by non-state or quasi-state entities to influence public opinion, to undermine institutional legitimacy, and to alter power dynamics frequently beyond conventional conflict. The act transcends mere violence; it constitutes a deliberate disruption of civilian life for ideological or political power.

Terrorism is prolific with threats and violence when the ability and desire to apply violent means are shown (Martin, 2023). The act of violence does not need to be thoroughly carried out, for example, for the bomb to explode first or for all the passengers on an airplane to suffer harm for it to be deemed a terrorist attack. However, the ability and motivation to act violently must be evident. For this violence to satisfy these definitional requirements, human targets do not have to be killed. Violence is damaging, but it does not always result in loss of life; it may also disrupt lives without ending them. For example, contemporary phenomena popularly referred to as cyber assaults could be considered a form of terrorism since it is undoubtedly capable of being disruptive but not invariably fatal to human objects (Saul & Heath, 2021, p. 205-230). While violence is systematically directed at a target rather than an actual person, the disruption and resulting state of terror might be disastrous.

The effects of terrorism have a tremendous impact on society. It may result in wrongful death, property damage, and disruption of everyday life. The public may become fearful and anxious because of terrorism, feeling unsafe and losing trust in the state and other institutions. Moreover, terrorism may harm the economy by affecting businesses and sectors due to reduced customer confidence and tightened security (Atai & Ita, 2021). With the emergence of diverse forms of terrorism in various contexts, its definition and character have changed over time. However, the distinction between inappropriate and acceptable forms of violence is often less clear. There may be difficulty in accurately classifying violence by rebels and by the state labeled as terrorism despite the numerous definitions developed (Fortna, et al., 2022). Our knowledge of this crucial yet perplexing phrase could be improved by more research on the background, ideologies, and personalities involved in terrorist attacks. Terrorism is undeniably a pervasive global issue that significantly affects several nations around the world.

3. Understanding the ‘terrorist’

Undoubtedly, terrorism poses a very significant threat to global security. Substantial resources have been allocated to both national and international bodies, making the prevention of terrorism their responsibility. However, these efforts often lack a conceptual and empirically validated framework for understanding terrorists and their violent acts (Barman & Dakua, 2024). This gap presents a considerable challenge across several domains, including international

frameworks regarding state responses to terrorism and policy decisions on the potential threat posed to the international community by individuals expressing sympathy for extremist ideologies (Khan, et al., 2023).

There are various reasons why terrorist acts are committed, and a range of individuals and organizations engage in such activities. Who exactly qualifies as a terrorist? Understanding the factors that motivate someone to become a terrorist would help clarify this. One would be better able to predict and prevent the establishment of terrorist organizations if one could identify the characteristics associated with a tendency to use terrorist techniques. However, identifying these characteristics is challenging. There is considerable heterogeneity among individuals involved in acts of terrorism, such as the distinction between violence and terrorism, and the differentiation between revolutionaries and terrorists (Polo, 2020, p, 235-250). Terrorists often have a revolutionary approach, revolting against specific government structures. These revolutionaries fighting back against government oppression are prepared to employ violence against defenseless populations. According to Friedrich Hacker, there are three types of *"terrorists: criminals, crazies, and crusaders."* Although he acknowledges that terrorist acts are rarely committed by one type of person, he argues that each type may provide insight into why someone might turn to terrorism (Friedrich Hacker, 1978, p, 8-9). It is necessary to understand terrorists to determine how to deal with them effectively if they are actively involved in organizing or carrying out terrorist attacks, as well as for humanitarian reasons. For example, from the perspective of international law, it is crucial to understand the distinction between a belligerent terrorist and a criminal engaging in a hostage incident (Chadwick, 2023). Understanding criminals' minds is often essential to addressing this problem. International law does not identify the global "physical qualities" of a present terrorist. Hence, it becomes crucial to highlight that terrorist profiling has not mostly been physical. Instead, it is psychological (Cantatore, et al., 2024). Searching for members of a certain race to "profile" them as terrorists is neither rational nor permitted under international law. Such profiling is also not very beneficial since it violates human rights and international law tenets (Svensson-McCarthy, 2021). Hence, profiling may only be implemented to a limited extent by looking for behavioral patterns that psychological profilers believe can indicate a propensity for the execution of terrorist activities.

According to Richardson, three key considerations stand out when analyzing the current terrorist selection process: identification, revenge, and simplicity (Richardson, 2007). Osama bin Laden regularly used oversimplified language to characterize the world and the conflict in which he was involved, saying, *"The fact is the entire Muslim world is the victim of international terrorism, organized by the United Nations and America"* (Silber & Bhatt, 2007). Group identification is believed to be a significant motivation as it leads to a willingness to commit terrorist activities. While not every person who joins a group commits a terrorist act, interviews and memoirs of those who have done so, reveal that identification strengthens the individual's ambition. The urge to revenge the "wrongs" committed against members of the identity group is often linked to an affinity with the suffering of others. Most of the violence can be appropriately considered as purposeful. It is usually intentional and goal-oriented to produce a desired result desired by the performer. However, it is neither the result of a basic intuitive drive nor the inevitable outcome of social and psychological factors that have been determined beforehand. While numerous elements undoubtedly affect that choice and the alternatives offered, terrorists are often not direct conduits for uncontrollable action; there are exceptions (Polo, 2020). One might imagine situations, where a person can have a brain disorder that leads to generalized impairment instability that could lead to hostility or violence. However, this would be incompatible with the preparation and organization required to execute a terrorist operation. It is common to portray terrorists as insane or fanatical individuals with whom it would be challenging to have a meaningful conversation or engage in serious talks. To characterize and comprehend the behavior of the terrorists, classical studies often provide psychotic or psycho-sociological reasons for the violence (Yehoshua, 2020).

Most of the time, terrorist action is planned out rather than spontaneous, instrumental, related to, and justified by religious or political ideologies. It generally includes a group or numerous actors/supporters (Mesquita & Brito, 2024). The exact target that these actions are intended for classifies those who carry them out as "terrorists," as well as those whose organizations have decided to use them as a strategy. Certain acts may be classified as terrorist activities, whether carried out by groups with legitimate policy aims or by armed revolutionaries seeking liberation from tyranny. Terrorists involve a range of actors, including those who identify as revolutionaries, nationalists resisting

foreign invaders, minority separatists opposing indigenous governments, as well as anarchist or millenarian organizations (Ishola, 2025) Most terrorists today are fanatics with distorted perceptions of reality. They work on the presumption that they alone are the only ones who can determine what is good and wrong because they know the truth. They consider themselves as moralists exempt from the application of regular law, arguing that since immoral individuals created existing laws for immoral ends. The challenges of gathering and evaluating data are another significant obstacle to understanding terrorist thought systems. Since the international community declared a "war on terror," a flood of documents describing terrorist training grounds and online gatherings have been discovered (Nanda, 2021). Nevertheless, only a small number of "decision makers" from active terrorist organizations are accessible to help reconstruct the events. Government classification practices render much of the data practically unavailable to researchers.

4. Transnational nature of terrorism

Terrorism has a significant history that dates to the beginning of civilization. Nevertheless, the modern age of terrorism began with the utilization of stifling political dissent during the French Revolution. (Gill, 2023). With the advent of national and ideological forces aiming to overthrow established power structures, terrorism increased frequency throughout the 20th century (Combs, 2022). Terrorism is not confined within one country's borders or a single state's boundaries. Because terrorists may operate across numerous nations and regions, it is difficult to identify and stop their operations. This is because of terrorism's transnational character. Nowadays, terrorism is a widespread problem that affects many nations and areas, with different organizations using varied strategies to further their objectives. Today, this terrorism is distinct from previous eras (Mawlood, 2020). There is no doubt that a broad range of entities and individuals have engaged in terrorism. The reason that propels people to embrace terrorism is one of the differences between terrorism as it has existed in past times and current terrorism. It has been a go-to strategy for national and religious organizations. It has been used as a tool for implementing government policies. Although both democratic and dictatorial governments have been targeted, it is political democracies that have been targeted most often. This has sometimes served as a last resort for national liberation movements whose political efforts to change the

status quo have failed, and has also occasionally been a deliberate choice made by such groups before exploring other political alternatives.

Terrorism is primarily transnational today (Baker & Carson, 2020). Terrorism used to be planned and executed inside a single state, but today's actions are far more likely to contain global preparation, performance components, and victims. This connection is formidable because of globalization and advances in public travel and communication. There are several various kinds of terrorism, for example, domestic terrorism, state terrorism, and global terrorism. A government using force or threats against its people or other nations is referred to as state terrorism. Domestic terrorism refers to acts of harm or threats of harm committed by people or organizations inside a nation. The term "international terrorism" describes violent actions carried out by individuals or organizations against another nation. In the 21st century, most acts of terrorism seem to have a murky political motivation (Pék, 2022). While idealistic, a sense of social responsibility or a dislike of injustice in other countries might motivate someone to carry out terrorist actions. Since more governments have recently utilized such weapons in conflicts, it seems that terrorists of the 21st century are more likely to employ weapons causing large-scale destruction than terrorists of previous decades (Hummel & Burpo 2020). Although outside of their borders, states have supported terrorism and turned it into an attack on their populace.

One can hardly expect people involved in terrorist attacks to continue abstaining from employing such weapons if states that establish the rules that restrict their use openly use them. Paradoxically, terrorism continues to be used as a tool of oppression to stop radical social and political change, as well as a tool to impose such changes. However, this research does not focus on state-sponsored terrorism. Terrorists today may pick from several techniques and have the necessary support and training mechanisms for most of them if they decide to utilize them. Although most terrorist organizations continue to use strategies that have been effective in the past (Stohl, 2020, p, 1-28), such as bombing and hostage-taking, alternative decisions may likely be taken in the coming years considering recent events. Most contemporary conceptions of terrorism are widely available today and include the fundamental criteria—violent actions intended to arouse fear in a target audience, motivated by political or social motivations, and directed towards individuals not participating in battle (Law, 2024). The internet and global media, transportation systems, and modern technology are enhancing

our ability to analyze and predict terrorist acts, yet the risk of widespread devastation remains.

Terrorists are becoming better at causing more harm and destroying more infrastructure. At the same time, those who attempt to safeguard these targets are continuously persuaded to compromise to prevent an attack (Yaacoub et al., 2022, 115-158). Terrorists' cell structures are now significantly more complex to penetrate than the past decades. Compared to the previous chain networks, payoffs, clandestine operations, and the arrest of a single member to gain access to a group are far less successful in counterterrorism measures because terrorist cells have all-channel network topologies. Terrorists in the 21st century are often better prepared and are considerably more skilled at using the web and other contemporary mass communication tools, to efficiently target a broad range of audiences and reach a global audience (Haghani et al., 2022). They no longer depend on having their messages published in local newspapers. These new abilities also show how computer networks are becoming more open to hacker assaults, putting the vital infrastructure of many wealthy countries in danger from cyberterrorism (Rauf, 2021).

Nowadays, terrorists are no longer reliant on a state for sponsorship; they are now able to sponsor states if they wish to (Byman, 2021). As a result, it can no longer be assumed that restrictions on official action and state actors' susceptibility to retaliation or penalty for open support limit the acts of terrorist organizations. As evidenced by the increasing number of piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia, failed or failing regimes may provide terrorist organizations with a refuge that is free from any obligation and accountability to uphold international law (Brock, S. B., 2021). Al-Qaeda is undoubtedly dispersed, but as its area and objectives have grown, so too has its ability to carry out terrorism (Burke, 2021). Hence, cyberterrorism presents a unique challenge to global security that is not often encountered by law enforcement or the military today. The globalization of transport and communication is one of the main drivers of transnational terrorism. Thanks to advancements in modern technology, terrorists can more easily organize their actions across international borders (Dayan, 2024). Social media and the internet are becoming crucial instruments for spreading misinformation and enlisting new members. Terrorists can also move swiftly and efficiently between nations due to the accessibility of air transport and a global network of airports. For states attempting to safeguard themselves against terrorist

attacks, this terrorism network, including the finance, the organization, and the readiness of individuals from entirely different backgrounds to collaborate in carrying out terrorist operations, presents several problems. The presence of failing or weak governments further contributes to the international nature of terrorism. In these countries, inhabitants are exposed to the direct impact of terrorist organizations because they lack security access and essential amenities (Ojewale, 2024). Terrorists often use these circumstances to establish centers of operations and conduct attacks on nearby nations. The tragedies of September 11, 2001, starkly illustrated how widespread, sophisticated, and national terrorist actions are (Alexander & Alexander, 2021). The extent to which we can comprehend and forecast influences our capacity to cope. Recent characteristic changes in terrorism do not illustrate the concept of terrorism.

4.1 The Globalization of Terrorism and Its Impact on the International Community

Terrorism is undoubtedly a global problem that has a global impact. Security increasingly became more contested and contentious than ever in the era of globalization. Political leaders have spoken on terrorism numerous times, and foreign policy specialists have used it to catalyze several conferences and projects (Alexander & Alexander, 2021). The narrative of terrorist-instigated incidents draws massive widespread media coverage and television interest. Terrorist attacks that are limited to a specific geographical area had played an effective role in political achievements for a very long period until the concept of global terrorism was back in the 1880s (Tschantret, 2023).

According to the examination of the characteristics and causes of terrorism by the UN Secretariat, *"The legality of a reason does not in itself condone the use of particular types of violence, specifically towards innocent persons."* This restriction on the legal use of force has long been recognized, even under the customary rules of armed conflict (UN Doc. A/C.6/418, 1973). According to the UN resolution A/RES/49/60, , *"criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons, or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstances unjustifiable, regardless of the concerns of an ideological, conceptual, religious, ideological, ethnic, racial, or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them"* (UN, GA Res/ 51/210, 1997, UN, GA Res/49/60, 1995). The international community has acknowledged that,

regardless of the legitimacy of the cause, there are valid boundaries to the use of violence in several publications and conversations, including the Secretariat's report. (McLoughlin et al., 2023, p. 477-505).

The emphasis on global terrorism is on terrorist groups that are trying to achieve a political or religious objective, which is characterized as a radical revision of the idea of legitimacy that solidifies the status quo (Lea et al., 2024). Most of it takes place inside specific states, and terrorist organizations in one state did not attempt to work with those in another. Some countries have never had terrorist attacks, and those with them have extended stretches without them (Byman, 2021). Since the late 20th century, when technology and the web were first developed, the phrase "global terror" has been a part of the contemporary lexicon (Rapoport, 2017). Another aspect of globalization has also started to cause terrorist attacks. It is not hard to notice how technological advancements have contributed to terrorism's worldwide nature. The new daily mass newspapers immediately convey information to many people, and the media swiftly send information throughout the globe (Rapoport, 2022). The internet also shortened the communication process, allowed for a more vivid description of events and plots, and increased the potential number of foreign citizens involved in a plot. Combined with the development of airplanes, international travel became simple, quick, and affordable.

4.2 Religious Dimensions and Strategic Complexity in Transnational Terrorism

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush said, "Our war on terror... will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been.... defeated" (Bush, 2021). Despite certain underlying similarities to times past, terrorists now have different reasons for committing acts of violence. Many individuals persist in justifying their severe acts of violence by claiming the so-called "wrongs" they have suffered at the hands of an unjust society (Caron, 2021). Both political and religious terrorism have a long history and are often motivated by political objectives. Religiously motivated terrorism is not a recent occurrence. Religious fanatics have a long history of willingly taking innocent lives to further their extreme religious agendas (Antes, 2024, p. 41-56).

Contrary to what is said, the extremists who commit acts of terror "in the name" of their religion do not speak for the great majority of people who adhere

to the same core values (Schmid, 2022). The al-Qaeda network provided the whole world with a vivid illustration of the deadly potential of those dedicated to conducting holy wars based on religious ideas or followers of religious fanaticism. The assaults on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in 2001 resulted from the holy war bin Laden advocated and backed by Islamic extremists (McNeese, 2021). Unlike al-Qaeda, Hamas operates primarily within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though rooted in Islamist ideology, Hamas also functions as a political party and social welfare provider (Gunning, 2023). Its armed wing, engages in tactics widely classified as terrorism such as suicide bombings and rocket attacks, targeting Israeli civilians especially. The international response to Hamas has been highly polarized. Western nations, particularly the U.S. and EU, have labeled it a terrorist organization and imposed sanctions, while others view it as a legitimate resistance movement (Merhi, 2024). This then underscores the challenge of defining terrorism when actors perform multiple roles in governing, resisting, and engaging in armed struggle and how geopolitical alliances heavily influence response of the global community. This battle continues to stoke tensions in the Middle East and the rest of the globe. Religiously motivated terrorism is not a recent occurrence, but today, it is more overtly aggressive and aims for widespread casualties rather than targeted ones (Lama & Paul, 2024). This kind of contemporary terrorism poses a significant threat to civic society today because it is committed in the conviction that their religion justifies the killings and that life beyond death would reward their deeds (Popovic & Kozar, 2023). Some of the most terrifying examples of the connection between religion and terrorism may be seen vividly in the Middle Eastern region, where modern "crusaders" often manifest as suicide bombers (Tibi, 2023). Religious fanatics perform for two audiences: the government, which they want to transform, and their divine figure. The desired political transformation is genuine but often entangled inextricably with religious objectives. Finding the root cause of terrorism is often made challenging, if not unattainable, by the intertwining of political and religious objectives (Cassam, 2024).

4.3 Comparative Case Studies: Global Responses to Transnational Terrorism

Although terrorist organizations may hold several common objectives, they may disagree on which objectives should take precedence, making it difficult

for the international community to end terrorism by knowing what integral action would satisfy the calls for a shift. For instance, while the armed wing of HAMAS (Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah) has questionable actions to establish an Islamic state in the region, the Palestine Liberation Organization seeks political solutions to its conflict with Israel (Hamed, 2023). These two contrasting approaches demonstrate the internal divergence of aims within one geopolitical context, complicating international diplomatic and counterterrorism responses. Similarly, the global reaction to al-Qaeda following 9/11, particularly the U.S.-led “War on Terror,” shows how one major transnational incident galvanized broad international cooperation through military intervention, intelligence-sharing, and prioritizing international legal instruments (Aydinli, 2022). These attacks were not only symbolic but also demonstrated the reach of non-state actors across borders and the use of modern infrastructure such as; airplanes, global finance, and digital communication to carry out complex operations. The U.S. response with the launch of the “Global War on Terror” included military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, expansion of surveillance laws, and a global counterterrorism coalition that pressured states to revise their domestic security policies (Johnson, 2024). NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan, UN resolutions, and the rise of expansive surveillance measures illustrate the lengths to which international actors may go in response to a single network’s global reach (Chang, 2024).

At the same time, international responses to terrorism in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa or Southeast Asia (e.g., Boko Haram, Abu Sayyaf) often receive less strategic emphasis, demonstrating regional inequality in counterterrorism prioritization (Gottlieb, 2025). Despite global frameworks such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, implementation varies according to capacity, interests, and regional stability.

This illustrates how transnational terrorism can prompt large-scale, militarized responses that reshape international relations, security cooperation, and legal frameworks. It also reveals the unintended consequences of such strategies, including prolonged conflicts and debates over human rights and international law. However, developing global counterterrorism strategies is time-consuming and does not always produce the desired outcomes & Müller, 2023, p. 1–19). As these case studies show, the manifestation and management of terrorism differ significantly across contexts. Political, religious, and structural factors all

contribute to the divergent routes terrorism takes and the fragmented international responses it receives.

5. Conclusion

Global terrorism presents an increasingly complex threat to international peace and security, transcending national borders and ideological divides. This study provides a critical overview of the evolving nature of terrorism and the transnational dynamics shaping its impact on the international community. Once limited to localized insurgencies, terrorism has evolved into a global network influenced by socioeconomic, political, and religious factors. Its consequences include widespread violence, economic disruption, and regional instability. Drawing on secondary sources, UN legal instruments, and reports from states and institutions, this research examines the multidimensional effects of global terrorism and identifies key policy gaps that requires further attention. By adopting a comparative perspective, and referencing specific cases such as 9/11, al-Qaeda, Hamas, and international responses to religious extremism, this study demonstrates how transnational terrorism manifests and is addressed across different geopolitical contexts. The scope is global, but the analytical focus remains on understanding how terrorism, as a transnational threat, undermines international cooperation, state sovereignty, and the principles of international law. This research applies constructivist insights to examine the evolving character of terrorism and the limitations of existing global counterterrorism frameworks. Through the combination of theoretical analysis and qualitative review, it contributes to the broader literature by emphasizing terrorism as not only a security threat but also a product of socially constructed political and ideological narratives. It adds to the academic discourse by mapping how the globalized nature of terrorism challenges conventional legal norms and policy mechanisms and by identifying areas where international cooperation can be enhanced.

The findings suggest that contemporary terrorism is primarily political in nature and increasingly transnational, enabled by modern communication technologies that facilitate the rapid spread of extremist propaganda and cross-border recruitment. The resulting landscape is more globalized, agile, and harder to control through state-centric mechanisms. As terrorist groups operate beyond state boundaries, identifying and dismantling their networks require more than

national-level interventions. It demands sustained multilateral coordination. Therefore, this study recommends a diversified and integrated strategy to combat the scourge of transnational terrorism. International legal frameworks must be enhanced to ease cross-border extradition and prosecution. Policymakers should prioritize stronger institutional coordination among governments, intelligence agencies, and law enforcement bodies. Addressing radicalization calls for proactive investment in education, healthcare, and economic opportunity especially in fragile and conflict-affected states. Social inclusion and interfaith tolerance should be mainstreamed in national and international programming. Expanding digital literacy will further empower individuals to resist propaganda. Additionally, reinforcing border security with advanced screening tools and intelligence-sharing protocols remains crucial to disrupting terrorist mobility and logistics. To counter online radicalization, governments must partner with technology companies to disrupt extremist content while promoting credible, alternative narratives. Expanding digital literacy will further empower individuals to resist propaganda. Additionally, reinforcing border security with advanced screening tools and intelligence-sharing protocols remains crucial to disrupting terrorist mobility and logistics. For international institutions, the findings underscore the importance of reforming and harmonizing legal definitions of terrorism to reduce ambiguity and enhance the enforceability of international law. Institutions such as the United Nations, Interpol, and regional security bodies must expand technical support, resource-sharing, and joint operational capabilities among member states.

Conclusively, global terrorism is a fluid and adaptive threat that necessitates an equally adaptive, multidimensional response. The study contributes to the literature by clarifying the structural and normative limits of existing approaches and by offering a blueprint for more collaborative, inclusive, and preventive counterterrorism strategies. As terrorism continues to evolve, the international community must adopt not only responsive but also anticipatory measures to safeguard global peace and human security.

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