

Introduction to Sochum:-

The Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Affairs Committee (SOCHUM) is one of the six specialized subcommittees of the United Nations General Assembly and generally referred to as the Third Committee. It was established after the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

Year after year, the General Assembly allocates to its Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee, agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect peoples all over the world.

An important part of the Committee's work focuses on the examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the newly established Human Rights Council. The Committee also discusses the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the promotion of the right to self-determination. The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, ageing, disabled, persons, family, crime prevention, criminal justice and drug control.

**TOPIC:**

**COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM ON ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES**

**What is ethnic and religious terrorism?**

Ethnic violence refers to violence expressly motivated by ethnic hatred and ethnic conflict. It is commonly related to political violence, and often the terms are interchangeable, or one is used as a pretext for the other when politically expedient. Their target selection is highly selective and mostly discriminate - ambassadors, bankers, dignitaries - symbols they blame for economic or political repression. They usually issue communiqués taking credit for, and explaining in great detail, their actions. Only rarely do such groups operate outside their home territory unless it is in their interest to do so or they claim to be representing the oppressed of the Third World or belong to some Diasporas.

Despite the fact that much of recent terror is ethno-nationally based, little attention has been paid to systematically explaining ethnic or religious violence. While there has been important work done to explore ethnic violence, there has been no work exploring ethnic terrorism specifically and none that has exploited systems dynamics as an analytical tool.

The attacks on September 11, 2001 reinvigorated the academic study of terrorism. Much of this research has understandably focused on the global jihadist movement, including al Qaeda, its affiliates, and other groups that take their inspiration from Islamist doctrine. It is timely work, as the public attempts to make sense of high-profile and seemingly ubiquitous attacks, while governments struggle with producing counterterrorism policies and strategies suitable for this breed of violence. Meanwhile, in the process, advances in our understanding of ethnic terrorism – terrorism conducted to promote the objectives of ethnic identity groups – have been limited. And as this phenomenon has transpired from decolonization through the end of the Cold War into the twenty-first century, this subjugation is unwarranted

Ethnic terrorist organizations are active in countries across the globe today –in India, Palestine, Syria, Turkey and beyond. They threaten the lives and livelihoods of all parties within a locality: the state, the ethnic group on whose behalf they purport to act, rival and ally groups, and neighboring states. Between 1985 and 2008, at least one third of all terrorist activity was ethnic in nature, and this is a conservative estimate. Moreover, more than one third of all terrorist organizations have an ethnic agenda, opposed to one derived strictly from another ideology, such as religion or socialism. One study (Masters 2008) even finds that variations of ethnic terrorism are the most violent type. It is a security issue worthy of systematic and comprehensive evaluation.

### **The issue of ethnicity**

Multi-ethnicity has become a socio-political phenomenon in most civil societies. In the present century, inter-ethnic cleavages, competition and conflict seem to have acquired a higher intensity. As a result, ethnic mobilization poses various challenges to many developing as well as developed countries. South Asia is no exception to this phenomenon. It is an intrinsic component of the socio-political realities of multi-ethnic states in South Asia as in other parts of the world. Today, ethnicization of politics and politicization of ethnicity have become very common and have diffused mutual toleration, and have thus, sharpened ethnic consciousness among various communities.

It may be necessary to dwell upon the factors that condition ethnic conflicts. The unequal power structure that exists in a state system could kick-off ethnic conflicts. In the event of the state structure being in the hands of a particular ethnic group, as in Syria, the dominant-subordinate group fights for power-sharing for societal rewards and goods manifest themselves in ethnic terms. However, inequality in power-sharing need not always lead to ethnic conflicts. Few preconditions exist for such conflicts;

(a) A socially mobilized population;

(b) The existence of a pool of symbols connoting its distinctiveness;

(c) The selection, standardization and transmission of such symbol pools to the community by the leadership; and

(d) A reference group in relation to whom a sense of relative deprivation (real or imaginary) is aggregated.

Also, the spatial and numerical components of an ethnic group condition towards ethnic conflict. The larger the numbers of people of a particular group in an area, the greater the potential for demand articulation and aggregation.

Ethnic and religious conflicts also make their emergence because of accumulated fears about the future and after long experience in the past of various types. These conflicts are caused by the "fear of the future", lived through the past.

Besides several aspects, ethnicity could also be traced back to its economic linkages, social deprivation and political disadvantages, experienced by one particular group against the other. Political turbulence, including actions of ethnic social movements, can produce serious repercussions across national borders within a very short period of time. The formation of Bangladesh is a case in point.

On the whole, ethnic or religious groups use peaceful means to pursue their interests. But in cases where ethnicity or religion was linked with acute social unrest, past history of conflicts between groups, and fear about the future, ethnic and religious groups could adopt violent means and ways to achieve their objectives. Fear about the future could result from a group's past experience with certain other groups within the nation. Also, when the group feels that the government or state machinery has not been able to provide protection and safety to various ethno-religious and minority groups; it could create a sense of fear in their minds and result in ethnic conflicts. In at least all the cases, state weakness becomes an essential prerequisite for violent conflicts to happen.

Ethnic conflicts, in most of the cases, have their roots in colonial and post-colonial rule. Colonial powers ruling a country through many administrative and political units divide and segregate the people into many groups and isolate them from one another. Also certain sections of the society may be given special privileges and entitled to higher professions and authority, which gives them a superiority complex, ignoring the fact whether they belong to a majority or minority group. Other groups in the societies then develop resentment and enmity towards these privileged groups. This goes deep down into the psyche of the people and even after the colonial powers leave, the stigma of minority versus majority and privileged against the non-privileged lies in the human minds. Thus, what happens is that when the colonial powers withdraw, independent states emerge with seeds of enmity and hatred already sown dividing the population into privileged groups and others. This could be suggested as a cause for the eruption of ethnic conflicts.

### **Ethnicity, nationalism/separatism**

Probably the most contested cause of terrorism is an aggrieved group resorting to violence for nationalist or separatist reasons; depending on one's point of view, this can be considered as resistance against an (external) oppressor. Factors like "civil and political rights and regional-ethnic parity in the economy" then generate perceptions of unfairness is competition/rivalry when an ethnicity is subordinated or disadvantaged in economic opportunity, social status, political voice and rights, or cultural expressions.

- Poverty and economic disadvantage:
  - A more important factor may be the social stratification and inequalities in the distribution of scarce resources. The lack of exactly defined economic factors influencing the decision to resort to political conflict and the "tolerance for inequality" are factors what act as main contributors.
  - However, the blames fall on the states in the Third World as a new version of class conflict based on structural violence is mostly observed in those regions. Proving injustice being done by structural violence is considerably more difficult than an overt assault on a country or discrimination of a target group, and even if one succeeds in convincing one's own group, they will likely stumble upon resorting to terrorist methods, not possessing sufficient assets to purchase and develop so-called 'weapons of mass destruction'.
  - This is an example of a wider gap between means and ends.
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- (Non) Democracy
  - The factor of democracy as an instigator or facilitator for terrorism deserves further exploration. A democratic government is supposed to represent the people and provide political means to voice grievances, hence essentially providing a sphere where terrorism has no place. For this reason, in theory, there 'cannot' be an aggrieved group that is not adequately represented; otherwise, it is a "violation of the doctrines of democracy and constitutionalism". Firstly, there is the case of the minority whose basic rights and liberties are denied or taken away by arbitrary action of the government or its agencies. Second is when one minority, ethnic or religious, is attacked by another minority and does not receive adequate protection from the state and its forces of law and order. Those who are the subjects of a liberal state, but who are not admitted to its rights of citizenship cannot be morally bound to obedience to the state. They are not bound by political obligation for they have not been accorded any rights by the state. Arguably, based on these claims, one can say it is exactly absence of a 'correct' implementation of democratic ideals and not democracy

## **Dehumanization**

Opposite the concept of disaffected intelligentsia is the assertion that it is not intelligentsia, but simpleminded people who are easy to indoctrinate that are perceived to be 'the cause'. Simply saying, they, and other, are essentially trying to dehumanize terrorists, thereby confirming terrorist's core reasons they are fighting for: being heard, recognized and treated as equal human beings. Thus obfuscating the distinction between literal and metaphorical wars,

where the negative mindset of people caused by the Cold War continues to live on, and feed, terrorism and the violent responses on terrorism, made possible by disregarding the idea that an opponent is a human being too. However, a closer examination of this argument reveals that the implied cause of the violence is within us, having internalized dehumanization, sadly but truly.

### **Religion:**

In line with either dehumanization, or with previously outlined ethnicity and democracy or both, is religion as a cause for terrorism put forward. Whether terrorist Islamist groups or fanatic Christians, religious terrorism is found in all the religions of the world. However, all religions emphasize that one should treat others as we wish to be treated, and that one should not kill another human being.

### **Why Ethno-Political Exclusion leads to Domestic Terrorism**

There is a strong theoretical base to support the notion that countries with large ethnic Populations excluded from political power would experience higher levels of domestic terrorist activity. Several studies have shown that deprivation acts as a root precipitant of riots, rebellion and civil war helps to provide some of the theoretical motivation for the assertion that political exclusion due to ethnicity is likely to lead the excluded to support or engage in domestic terrorism. When ethnic and religious – and, in principle, socioeconomic – subgroups within society face collective political and economic deprivations, such as discrimination or lack of opportunities to participate in mainstream political or economic life, several transformations occur, which makes political violence more likely. Initially, core anti-status quo grievances are formed and enhanced among group members by the experience of exclusion. This experience of grievance prompts the group to develop an enhanced sense of collective identity as well as a strong sense of alienation from the ethnic or religious majority in society, which, in turn, only serves to further reinforce the salience of group grievances. Then, enhanced group identity, alienation, and salient group grievances are exploited by elites within the community to radicalize members and mobilize opposition – both nonviolent and violent – to the state and status quo

### **Case of Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka is a multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious country with Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamils, Indian Tamils, and Sri Lankan Moors or Muslims as major ethnic groups. A fifth group, the Veddhas, only a few thousands are descendants of original inhabitants of the island. Their traditional culture has disappeared due to their contact with the Sinhalese and Tamils. The huge migration process not only created a bulk of Sri Lanka's population, but also had provided the majority-minority component of its social structure.

Majority of the Sinhalese are Theravada Buddhist and the remainder are mostly Roman Catholics. Their areas of habitation are western, central, and southern provinces, where they are politically and economically dominant.

The Sri Lankan Tamils are mostly Hindus and a small minority belongs to Protestants and Roman Catholics. They live primarily in the eastern and northern provinces, with cultural and political activity centered on the Jaffna peninsula.

The roots of insurgency lie deep in the social, political and economic situation at a given point of time. The insurrectionary movements took shape due to the existence of sharp divisions within the society owing to regional, ethnic, linguistic, religious and communal differences alone with issues of legitimacy and authority. There are different versions on the question whether the Sinhalese or the Tamils were the ones who came to the island first.

Under the British rule till 1948, the Tamils had enjoyed a comfortable position in the system. They were not discriminated or treated as a minority group of people. But once the British left, the Sinhalese became obsessed with their numerical superiority and started a cruel process of racial discrimination interspersed with periodic violence against the Tamils. Under the colonial rule, the relations between the two communities had been relatively harmonious. It was only in 1958 that the Sinhalese-Tamil resentment turned bloody when some Sinhalese rioted against Sri Lankan Tamils in the south. In the following two decades, the Sri Lankan economy began deteriorating and the unemployment rates also shot up.

Thus, it was only to ascertain their survival and progress that the Tamils in 1976 decided to demand a separate and sovereign state. There was a kind of justification in this demand for a separate state as the July genocide had amply demonstrated the vulnerability of the Tamils to the frenzy and fury of the Sinhalese. If the Tamils were not considered as equals to the Sinhalese, it became quite understandable on the part of Tamils to organize themselves for having a separate and sovereign state.

The current strife in Sri Lanka is thus, a violent, ethnic separatist movement that mainly involves the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Sinhalese.

Hence, it appears that the issue is rooted in a long-felt economic and cultural grievance of a Sinhalese-Buddhist majority against an articulate Tamil minority, who as a minority has fared far too well under the British and has acquired a sound base after independence. What makes the situation even worse is that the Tamil minority makes up an overwhelming majority, 95.6 per cent of one province, situated on the Jaffna peninsula, and also constitutes significant minorities in the district of Trincomalee (33 per cent), and a large majority in Batticaloa (70 per cent). Both of these districts are situated in the eastern province. While the distribution of economic wealth and employment availability make up much of the reason for grievances on both sides, the problem of the role that cultural and religious symbolism play within Sri Lankan society and within the structure of the state also constitutes a sore point in their relations.

The ethnic conflict, thus, in Sri Lanka, assumes significance in the context of what was appeared to be a malady of its kind. Political, social turmoil with a desire to have a decisive mileage in these affairs has remained a guiding spirit in this case. The economic disadvantage

and insecurity cause further distance between the LTTE and the Sinhalese and hamper their rapprochement.

### **Pakistan's Instable case**

The issue of Pakistan is one a kind as well as there are various sects and groups that are conflicting on religion and ethnic basis. Unjust criteria that leads towards mass murder and genocide. The Lahore incident of Christian colony being burnt to ashes to the blasphemy of Mumtaz Qadri and to name a few. This country has been an icon of such an extremity and instability which hasn't been dealt by its government which shows a need of a global law and implementation that needs to be put so that these conflicts can be resolved.

### **Overview of the Basque Country:-**

The wider Basque Country, known as EuskalHerria in the Basque language, is a region that spans north-central Spain and southwestern France. It is not a legal administrative entity but based on a common cultural and linguistic identity. The Basque Country consists of Biscay, Gipuzkoa, and Alava – three Spanish provinces that collectively make up the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country; Navarre – formally, the Chartered Community of Navarre, also a Spanish province and autonomous community; and Lower Navarre, Labourd, and Soule – three French provinces that constitute the majority of the French department of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques.<sup>15</sup> The Spanish Basque region is known as Hegoalde (Southern Basque Country) and the French Basque region is known as Iparralde (Northern Basque Country). In all, the area covers nearly 21,000 km<sup>2</sup> which is slightly smaller than the state of New Jersey. The population is approximately three million, of which roughly 90 percent resides in Spain. The population of the Basque Autonomous Community and Navarre is approximately six percent of Spain's total population. With 350,000 inhabitants, Bilbao is the largest city.

The Basques are different ethnically and historically from the Castilian-speaking Spaniards and Francophone French. These distinctions have led some Basques, especially in Spain, to regard EuskalHerria as a separate nation deserving independence. The Franco regime suppressed Basque nationalism – which provoked the rise of militant organizations – but this suppression ended after the transition to democracy in the late 1970s, at which time Basque regions received autonomy and Basque culture became protected. Although hardline nationalists continue to fight for full independence, demographics complicate the nationalist program. Many Basques live outside of the Basque Country, especially in Latin America, and the population of the region is not made up strictly of ethnic Basques. The Basques also have their own language, called Euskera, which is the most observable component of their ethnic differentiation (Conversi 1997, 66) but roughly three-fifths of the population in the wider Basque region cannot speak it, as it is quite difficult to learn. Despite complications in the nationalist agenda, ETA members and their supporters have continued to demand full independence, which has been the primary source of conflict between the Basque Country and the Spanish government.

### **Overview of Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)**



Since the 1960s, the Basque Country has been rife with political violence as a result of the struggle primarily between ETA and the Spanish state. ETA has been the most militant actor in the Basque National Liberation Movement and is the prototype of an organization that has routinely carried out ethnic terrorist attacks. Throughout its campaign it has used premeditated violence against civilians to produce an atmosphere of fear in order to influence political interests on behalf of the Basque community, whose support for its goals and operations has varied across members and over time. In addition to terrorist tactics, it has used other violent methods, as well as negotiations and political concessions. Founded in 1959 during the Franco era, ETA has carried out at least 1,600 attacks resulting in over 800 deaths and thousands of injuries in an effort to establish an independent Basque state that would consist of all seven provinces in the wider Basque Country (Council on Foreign Relations 2008). ETA's targets have been Spaniards and those Basques that, according to ETA leaders, have betrayed the independence movement, including various businessmen and politicians. ETA has launched attacks principally in Spain but also in neighboring France and other countries. The organization has targeted Spanish security personnel, such as members of the Civil Guard, National Police Corps, Spanish Army, Ertzaintza (the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country's police force), municipal police, and Mossos d'Esquadra (the Autonomous Community of Catalonia's police force), as well as the French National Gendarmerie. It has also killed over 300 civilians (The Economist 2009), some of whom were specifically assassinated, such as wealthy Basque industrialists, while others, ETA leaders have claimed, were inadvertently killed, such as the victims of the infamous Hipercor bombing attack in 1987.

ETA emerged in 1959 in response to Franco's repressive policies. It grew in strength throughout the 1960s and started to carry out high-profile attacks in the early 1970s, such as the assassination of Prime Minister Luis Carrero Blanco. Its violence became most intense during Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy beginning in 1975. Due to the fog of the country's political future and acting on an immediate history of repression, ETA leaders believed that increased violence would force the new democratic regime into liberating the Basque people. To curb the organization's continued violence, between 1983 and 1987, the Spanish government secretly funded Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación (GAL or Antiterrorist Liberation Groups) which were active mainly on the French side of the Basque Country, as the core of ETA's leadership has traditionally operated from there. Throughout the 1990s, ETA's violence decreased due to a renewed Spanish-French counterterrorist strategy, a key component of which was that the French government would not passively continue to allow ETA members to take sanctuary in the French Basque Country. The organization's violence continued to decline after 2003 when the Spanish government banned Batasuna, ETA's political arm. Due to this loss of support, in 2006, ETA announced a permanent ceasefire. However, ETA broke this ceasefire with another terrorist event (the Madrid-Barajas airport bombing), and as a consequence, the organization further lost support.

### **What ISIS really wants?**

The Islamic State is no mere collection of psychopaths. It is a religious group with carefully considered beliefs, among them that it is a key agent of the coming apocalypse.



Where did it come from, and what are its intentions? The simplicity of these Questions can be deceiving, and few Western leaders seem to know the answers. In December, The New York Times published confidential comments by Major General Michael K. Nagata, the Special Operations commander for the United States in the Middle East, admitting that he had hardly begun figuring out the Islamic State's appeal. "We have not defeated the idea," he said. "We do not even understand the idea." In the past year, President Obama has referred to the Islamic State, variously, as "not Islamic" and as al-Qaeda's "jayvee team," statements that reflected confusion about the group, and may have contributed to significant strategic errors.

Nor, in the case of the Islamic State, its religious or intellectual appeal. That the Islamic State holds the imminent fulfillment of prophecy as a matter of dogma at least tells us the mettle of our opponent. It is ready to cheer its own near-obliteration, and to remain confident, even when surrounded, that it will receive divine succor if it stays true to the Prophetic model. Ideological tools may convince some potential converts that the group's message is false, and military tools can limit its horrors. But for an organization as impervious to persuasion as the Islamic State, few measures short of these will matter, and the war may be a long one, even if it doesn't last until the end of time.

### **Possible Solutions to Conflicts**

Finding a solution to ethnic and religious problems presents itself as a serious question. However, the attempts that can possibly lead toward solutions must be examined. It could be said that most of today's violent conflicts are basically internal in nature, but their possible solutions come from international peace keeping bodies or other dominating powerful states, an action by a special task force of a group of states, or the neighboring states, thus giving it an international dimension. As mentioned earlier, most of the violent conflicts today are caused by the divisions that exist in a pluralist society. Hence, if the conflicts are caused from such differences, the solutions must come from power sharing among the various ethnic or other sectarian groups. That is how in the recent years one finds an increasing significance of minorities and their rights and demands.

Managing ethnic or sectarian violent conflicts and finding solutions to them is not an easy task, given the multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies all over the world today. Instead of a disappearance of individual and group differences, these are only becoming sharper and deeper with the pace of development and competition. If some mutual arrangement can be made for power sharing or regional autonomy at the local level, conflicts will not get prolonged nor result in the wastage of human and other resources of the nation. For this, a few other conditions must exist. There must be mutual respect for other parties and their demands, as part of a confidence building measure. Unless each side views its opponent as honorable and having legitimate demands, relations cannot improve between various groups, which are characterized by widening fears and gaps.

Another significant step towards managing conflicts would be through power sharing. A certain share needs to be kept for the minority groups in cabinet, civil service, military, high party

positions and such other important areas which will give some kind of satisfaction to individuals and groups. The power sharing arrangements are not permanent solutions, but very temporary and fragile. The use of power sharing arrangements between ethnic or sectarian groups has a limited appeal. In the case of India, the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had negotiated peace accords with the All Assam Student Union, the Sikh leader Sant Longowal, the Mizo leader Laldenga and the Gorkha leader Subhash Ghisingh. In Belgium, the cabinet represents two ethnic groups on an equal basis. In Cambodia too, the government comprises two of the three main factions that had been engaged in a protracted civil war. Therefore, this arrangement would bring some improvement in the relations between various competing groups, as they would provide a certain amount of psychological security to these groups.

Also the competing/conflicting parties do not like to get into power sharing arrangement while they have adequate support for their survival. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka are in no way going to accept autonomy as a solution to their demands so long as they have control over vast resources. In Cambodia too, some Khmer Rouge groups refuse to accept a place in the coalition government so long as they have control over pieces of land and trade. Even if the parties agree to this kind of an arrangement, it will not last too long. It would only give a temporary respite from the problem and not result in a long-term settlement.

### **Conclusion:**

It is examined whether the exclusion of ethnic groups from political power is an important contributing factor to domestic terrorism. It is found that countries in which certain ethnic or religious populations are excluded from political power are significantly more likely to experience domestic terrorist attacks and to suffer from terrorist casualties; furthermore, ethnic/religious group political exclusion is a more consistent and substantive predictor of domestic terrorist activity than general political repression or economic discrimination.

We are left with three broad goals.

- First is the understanding the causes of ethnic and religious terror;
- Second is examining the way the relation between the ethnic and religious policies of the governments and the behavior of ethnic and religious groups – particularly their choice to use or not use terrorism relate systematically;
- Third is to apply the tools of systems.

Dynamics to political violence has yet to be explored using this methodology. Theoretically, this project draws on the literatures of ethnic conflict to shed light on the causes of ethnic and religious terror. Based on the literature on religio-ethnic conflict, we seek to examine how group capacity, repression, group's perception of rebellion activity, salience of ethnic identity, comparative disadvantages, opportunity structure, authenticity of leadership, international support, territorial concentration, government's decision structure and political-economic-cultural differences impact the likelihood of rebellion and how rebellion in turn impacts government's discrimination policies.

**Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)**

Q.1 How ethno-political exclusion leading to domestic terrorism must be stopped and what responsibilities do the countries have in order to eliminate this?

Q.2 what are the main causes of ethnic and religious extremism in different countries?

Q.3 what are the effects of these violent activities in these countries?

Q.4 what measures must be taken to confront the challenges and threats that are posed by extremist groups in conflicted countries?

Q.5 As to what extent, should humanitarian aid be provided to war-torn areas?