GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX
2022

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM

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Quantifying Peace and its Benefits

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dragonfly

The GTI uses Dragonfly's TerrorismTracker database, which is contains detailed and structured event records of every terrorist incident reported in open sources since January 2007. Dragonfly is a leading risk intelligence and data company that specialises in global security, geopolitics, crises and instability.

TerrorismTracker is the most comprehensive, current and methodologically robust dedicated open-source teorirsm incidents database available. It is widely used for professional applications in countering terrorirsm, by law enforcement, government, military, in the private sector, in academia, and among insurers.

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Contents

Executive Summary

This is the ninth edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI). The report provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism over the last decade. The calculation of the GTI score takes into account not only deaths, but also incidents, hostages, and injuries from terrorism, weighted over a five-year period. The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) using data from TerrorismTracker and other sources. TerrorismTracker provides event records on terrorist attacks since 1 January 2007. The dataset contains over 60,500 terrorist incidents for the period 2007 to 2021.

In 2021, deaths from terrorism fell by 1.2 per cent to 7,142 deaths and are now a third of what they were at their peak in 2015. The minor fall in deaths was mirrored by a reduction in the impact of terrorism, with 86 countries recording an improvement, compared to 19 that deteriorated. However, the number of attacks globally increased by 17 per cent to 5,226. As such, the lethality of attacks decreased from 1.6 deaths per attack to 1.4 deaths per attack over the 12-month period. Russia and Eurasia had the largest regional improvement.

The number of countries experiencing at least one death from terrorism in the past year was 44, a slight increase compared with the 43 countries in 2020. Another 105 countries had no deaths or attacks from terrorism in 2021. This is the highest number of countries since 2007.

The data shows a shift in the dynamics of terrorism, with it becoming more concentrated in regions and countries suffering from political instability and conflict, such as the Sahel, Afghanistan and Myanmar. Violent conflict remains a primary driver of terrorism, with over 97 per cent of terrorist attacks in 2021 taking place in countries in conflict. All of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism in 2021 were involved in an armed conflict in 2020.[1] Attacks in countries involved in conflict are six times deadlier than attacks in peaceful countries.

There were serious deteriorations in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), especially the Sahel. Forty-eight per cent, or 3,461, of all terrorism deaths globally occurred in SSA with four of the ten countries with the largest increases in deaths from terrorism residing in SSA: Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and Niger. Three of these countries are in the Sahel.

On a more positive note, there was a ten per cent improvement in terrorism deaths in SSA. The improvement can be attributed to the successful counter insurgency operations targeting Boko Haram where deaths caused by the group declined by 72 per cent between 2020 and 2021 from 629 deaths to 178 deaths. Nigeria recorded the second biggest reduction in deaths. This is more than the overall decrease in terrorism deaths in SSA. Attacks by the group also significantly deceased, halving from the prior year to 64 attacks.

The Sahel is of serious concern. The expansion of Islamic State (IS) affiliates led to a surge in terrorism in many countries in the Sahel. Highlighting the magnitude of the problem, terrorism deaths have risen by over one thousand per cent between 2007 and 2021 in the Sahel. Terrorism deaths in Niger more than doubled in 2020, rising to 588. Deaths attributed to Islamic extremist groups such as Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab recorded deaths as far south as Mozambique, with 43 per cent occurring in the Sahel.

The situation in the Sahel is rapidly deteriorating, with eight attempted coups in Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea and Chad in the last eighteen months. The underlying drivers are complex and systemic, including poor water utilisation, lack of food, malnutrition, strong population growth, and weak governments, with most of the terrorist activity occurring along borders where government control is weakest. Adding to the complexity, many criminal organisations increasingly represent themselves as Islamic insurgents.

JNIM is the fastest growing group globally, recording the largest increase in the number of attacks and deaths in 2021. It was responsible for 351 deaths in 2021, an increase of 69 per cent. In contrast ISWA is the most lethal group in the Sahel, with the group responsible for on average 15.2 deaths per attack in Niger.

In the West, the number of attacks has fallen substantially over the last three years, with successive falls each year. Fifty-nine attacks and ten deaths were recorded in 2021, a decrease of 68 and 70 percent respectively since the peak in 2018. In Europe, Islamist extremists carried out three attacks in 2021. Attacks in the US also dropped to the lowest level since 2015, with only seven attacks recorded in 2021. None were attributed to any known terrorist group. Fatalities in the US increased slightly, from two to three between 2020 and 2021.

Politically motivated terrorism has now overtaken religiously motivated terrorism, with the latter declining by 82 per cent in 2021. In the last five years, there have been five times more politically motivated terrorist attacks than religiously motivated attacks. There are now noticeable similarities between far-left and far-right extremist ideologies, with both targeting government and political figures. Since 2007, 17 per cent of terrorist attacks by these groups have targeted this category.

Additionally, while the motivation can be inferred, most attacks attributed to left or right ideologies are perpetrated by individuals or groups with no formal affiliation to a recognised organisation, with many of the underlying motivational factors being similar.

IS remained the deadliest terror group globally, recording the most attacks and deaths of any group in 2021. However, globally 52 per cent of all terrorist incidents are not ascribed to a group. Despite this, the strength and influence of IS and its affiliate groups, Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP), Islamic State - Sinai Province (ISSP) and ISWA, are showing signs of decline. Twenty countries experienced a death from terrorism caused by IS in 2021, a decrease from 26 countries the year prior. Deaths attributed to IS also declined in 2021, falling by 1.6 per cent to 2,066.

Deaths in The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) dropped by 14 per cent to 1,139 fatalities, the lowest since 2007, although attacks remained steady at 1,271. Therefore, terrorist attacks are becoming less deadly in the region, with less than 1 person killed on average per terrorist attack in 2021, the lowest lethality rate in the last decade. In contrast, SSA and South Asia recorded more deaths than MENA.

The report also looks at the relationship between insurgency, conflict and terrorism as well as the application of systems thinking to better understand the dynamics of terrorism and its impact on society. Once groups exist for more than 12 years they are very hard to stop. In contrast to this, over half of all terrorist groups do not survive beyond three years. This emphasises the need to focus counter-terrorism operations while the groups are still nascent.

Myanmar had the largest increase in terrorism deaths, rising twenty-fold from 24 to 521 in 2021. This year marks Myanmar's first appearance amongst the ten most impacted countries by terrorism, with the current political unrest being responsible for this increase and is likely to grow in 2022.

Niger recorded the second largest increase in terrorism deaths, increasing by 129 per cent to 588 while attacks remained consistent. The increased lethality is largely driven by the growing sophistication and organisational capabilities of ISWA.

Mozambique recorded the largest drop in terrorism deaths with 414 fewer deaths in 2021, an 82 per cent decrease from the previous year. The fall was driven by successful counter-terrorism measures against IS performed by the Mozambican forces in conjunction with Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community.[2]

South Asia remains the region with the worst average GTI score in 2021, with the region recording 1,829 deaths from terrorism in 2021, an increase of eight per cent or 137 deaths. Pakistan remains one of the ten most affected countries in 2021. Terrorism deaths in Pakistan rose slightly to 275, a five per cent increase from 263 deaths in 2020. There have been no terrorist attacks or deaths in Sri Lanka for the second year. The worst year for terrorism was 2019 when 197 people were killed in 11 attacks.

As new technologies have become more pervasive, so has their use by terrorist organisations. The advent of the IED in Iraq is a good example, and resulted in more than 70 per cent of US forces deaths in the five years from 2001. Smart phones using GPS systems are capable of guiding cheap drones with deadly precision, with attacks by missiles and
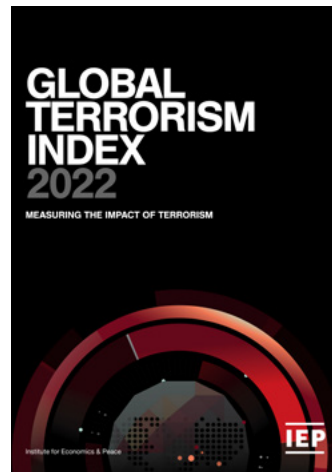
drones becoming more common. Advancements, such as AI, 3D printing or autonomous vehicles may in the future be weaponised. These new risks will drive future advancements in counter-terrorism tactics.

The factors that are most closely statistically associated with terrorism vary depending on the socio-economic development of a country. Political terror and acceptance of basic rights are common globally. For OECD countries there are two statistical clusters. They are measures associated with social equity and acceptance of violence within a society. The latter being associated with political terror, access to weapons and militarisation. For less economically developed countries the statistical clusters are weak institutions and societal fractionalisation. The two strongest correlations for this group were *Political Terror Scale* and *Group Grievances*.

The decline is terrorism in the West coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on freedom of movement, public gatherings, travel and an immediate threat to personal health may help to explain some of this fall. Once the emergency measures are removed and societies begin to live with COVID-19, there is the possibility of an uptake in terrorism activity. This would require addressing the underlying issues of alienation.

"Political terrorism has now overtaken religious terrorism in the West, with religiously motivated attacks declining 82 per cent in 2021."

Key Findings

1

Results

▸ Deaths from terrorism fell to 7,142 deaths in 2021, representing a 1.1 per cent decrease from the prior year.

▸ However, attacks increased by 17 per cent to 5,226 in 2021, largely due to violence in the Sahel region and instability in countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar.

▸ Seven of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism deteriorated in 2021. MENA, Europe, Russia and Eurasia, South America and sub-Saharan Africa regions all recorded falls in deaths from terrorism of at least ten per cent.

▸ Three of the ten most impacted countries by terrorism in 2021 were in the Sahel region. Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso recorded substantial increases in terrorism deaths of 81, 174 and 74 respectively.

▸ Myanmar had the largest increase in terrorism, where deaths increased from 24 to 521. This was followed by Niger where terrorism deaths increased from 257 in 2020 to 588 in 2021.

▸ Afghanistan remains the country with the highest impact from terrorism for the third year followed by Iraq and Somalia. Deaths increased by 14 per cent to 1,426.

▸ The deadliest attack of 2021 occurred when an Islamic State (IS) suicide bomber detonated two suicide bombs at Afghanistan's Kabul International Airport, resulting in 170 deaths and over 200 injuries. It was the deadliest attack in Afghanistan since 2007.

▸ The Taliban were overtaken by IS as the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2021, despite deaths attributed to the group and its affiliates slightly declining from 2,100 to 2,066 deaths.

▸ Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) is the fastest growing terrorist organisation and was responsible for 351 deaths in 2021, a 69 per cent increase.

▸ Of the 5,226 terrorist attacks recorded in 2021 only 52 per cent were attributed to a group

▸ COVID-19 has affected the tactics used by terror groups to spread their ideology and their radicalisation and recruitment processes.[1]

2

Trends in Terrorism

▸ Deaths from terrorism have fallen by over a third since the peak in 2015, with two of the largest decreases occurring in Iraq and Pakistan.

▸ 44 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism. This is down from the peak of 55 countries in 2015.

▸ Of the 163 countries included in the analysis, nearly two thirds or 105 recorded no attacks or deaths from terrorism in 2020 and 2021, the highest number since 2007.

▸ Terrorist activity has been concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with both regions recording more terrorism deaths than MENA for the last three years.

▸ In MENA deaths from terrorism have fallen by 39 per cent in the last three years.

▸ As the conflict in Syria subsided, IS and its affiliates have shifted their focus to sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel region in particular.

▸ Deaths in the Sahel region account for 35 per cent of global terrorism deaths in 2021, compared with just one per cent in 2007.

▸ In most regions, the weapon used in the majority of attacks was firearms, followed by explosives.

▸ After many years of improvement, Iraq recorded more deaths in 2021 than the prior year, with an increase of 15 per cent to 524 terrorism deaths. Attacks increased by a third, driven by an increase in activity by Islamic extremists.

▸ There were three attacks by Islamic extremists in Europe. This is the lowest level since 2012. In total there were 113 attacks in Europe in 2021.

▸ The US recorded a significant improvement in the impact of terrorism in 2021, recording its lowest GTI score since 2015. In 2021, there were seven attacks and three deaths in the US.

▸ Terrorist attacks in the West have fallen every year since 2018 and decreased by 68 per cent. In 2021 there were only 59 attacks.

▸ Political terrorism has now overtaken religious terrorism in the West, with religiously motivated attacks declining 82 per cent in 2021. There were 40 politically motivated attacks, compared with just three religiously motivated attacks.

▸ Eight countries in the West experienced at least one

instance of political terrorism in 2021, with Germany recording 19 attacks, the highest of any Western country, followed by Italy who recorded six attacks.

- While the motivation can be inferred, most attacks driven by a left or right ideology are perpetrated by individuals or groups with no formal affiliation to a recognised organisation.

3

Terrorism in the Sahel

- The Sahel has become increasingly more violent over the past 15 years, with deaths rising by over one thousand per cent between 2007 and 2021. The increase in violence shows no sign of abating.

- The underlying drivers are complex and systemic, including poor water utilisation, lack of food, malnutrition, strong population growth, and weak governments.

- Ten per cent or more of young males suffer from very high levels of thinness in eight of the ten countries in the Sahel.

- In conflict environments terrorists groups prefer to target police, military and domestic government.

- Water and food utilities and/or infrastructure are the preferred targets of terrorist groups in non-conflict environment.

- Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) is the most lethal group in the Sahel. In Niger it was responsible 23 attacks killing on average 15.2 people per attack.

- The increase in terrorist activity in Niger is part of a larger increase across the Sahel region, with similar surges seen in Mali and Burkina Faso over the past few years.

- Most terrorist activity is in border regions where government activities are at a minimum.

- There is a strong statistical relationship between criminal activity and terrorism in the Sahel.

4

Terrorism and Conflict

- In 2020, 97.6 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurred in conflict affected countries.

- 80 per cent of all terrorist incidents have occurred within 50 kilometres of a zone where a conflict is taking place.

- As the intensity of conflict increases, so does the lethality of terrorist actions. Terrorist attacks in conflict countries are more than six times deadlier than attacks in peaceful countries.

- In armed conflicts, the intensity of terrorist activity in a given year is proportional to the number of battle deaths. On average, every 4.7 per cent increase in battle deaths is associated with a ten per cent rise in terrorist attacks.

- Terrorism appears to be contracting into conflict areas with a higher percentage of attacks happening in conflict areas.

- On average, terrorist groups that are classified as insurgent groups remain active for 11.8 years.

- Once a terrorist organisation has operated for 12 years or more they are difficult to eradicate.

- Half of all terrorist groups cease to exist in three years. Of the 84 active terrorist groups studied in 2015, only 32 were active in 2021.

- The factors that correlate with terrorism are distinctly different for OECD countries and less developed countries, highlighting that different approaches are needed depending on the situational context of a particular country.

- For OECD countries there are two statistical factors associated with terrorism - social equity and acceptance of violence within a society. The latter being higher levels of political terror, access to weapons, and militarization.

- The factors that correlated the strongest for the Rest of the World could loosely be classified as weak institutions and societal fractionalisation. The two strongest correlations were *political terror scale* and *group grievances*.

About the Global Terrorism Index

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is a comprehensive study analysing the impact of terrorism for 163 countries and which covers 99.7 per cent of the world's population.

Given the significant resources committed to counter terrorism by governments across the world, it is important to analyse and aggregate the available data to better understand its various properties.

Examples of the information contained in this study are:

- The differing socio-economic conditions under which it occurs.
- The longer term trends and how terrorism changes over time.
- The geopolitical drivers associated with terrorism and ideological aims of terrorists groups.
- The types of strategies deployed by terrorists, their tactical targets and how these have evolved over time.

In this context, one of the key aims of the GTI is to examine these trends. It also aims to help inform a positive practical debate about the future of terrorism and the required policy responses.

The GTI is based on data compiled by TerrorismTracker and uses the 31st of December 2021 as the cut-off date. Incidents are only included in the dataset if they are consistent with TerrorismTracker's definition of terrorism which means recorded incidents may vary from other databases.

Defining terrorism is not a straightforward matter. There is no single internationally accepted definition of what constitutes terrorism and the terrorism literature abounds with competing definitions and typologies. IEP accepts the terminology and definitions agreed to by TerrorismTracker.

The GTI therefore defines terrorism as 'the systematic threat or use of violence whether for or in opposition to established authority, with the intention of communicating a political, religious or ideological message to a group larger than the victim group, by generating fear and so altering (or attempting to alter) the behaviour of the larger group.'[1]

In line with this definition, TerrorismTracker does not include the following as acts of terrorism:

- Acts of warfare, either irregular or conventional
- Criminal violence orientated exclusively for profit, even if they emulate terrorist tactics such as car bombings and beheadings.
- Violent anti-social behaviour
- Civil unrest
- Isolated acts of violence by unbalanced individuals such as active shooter incidents, unless there is clear evidence the motives of the attack are consistent with our definition of terrorism.[2]
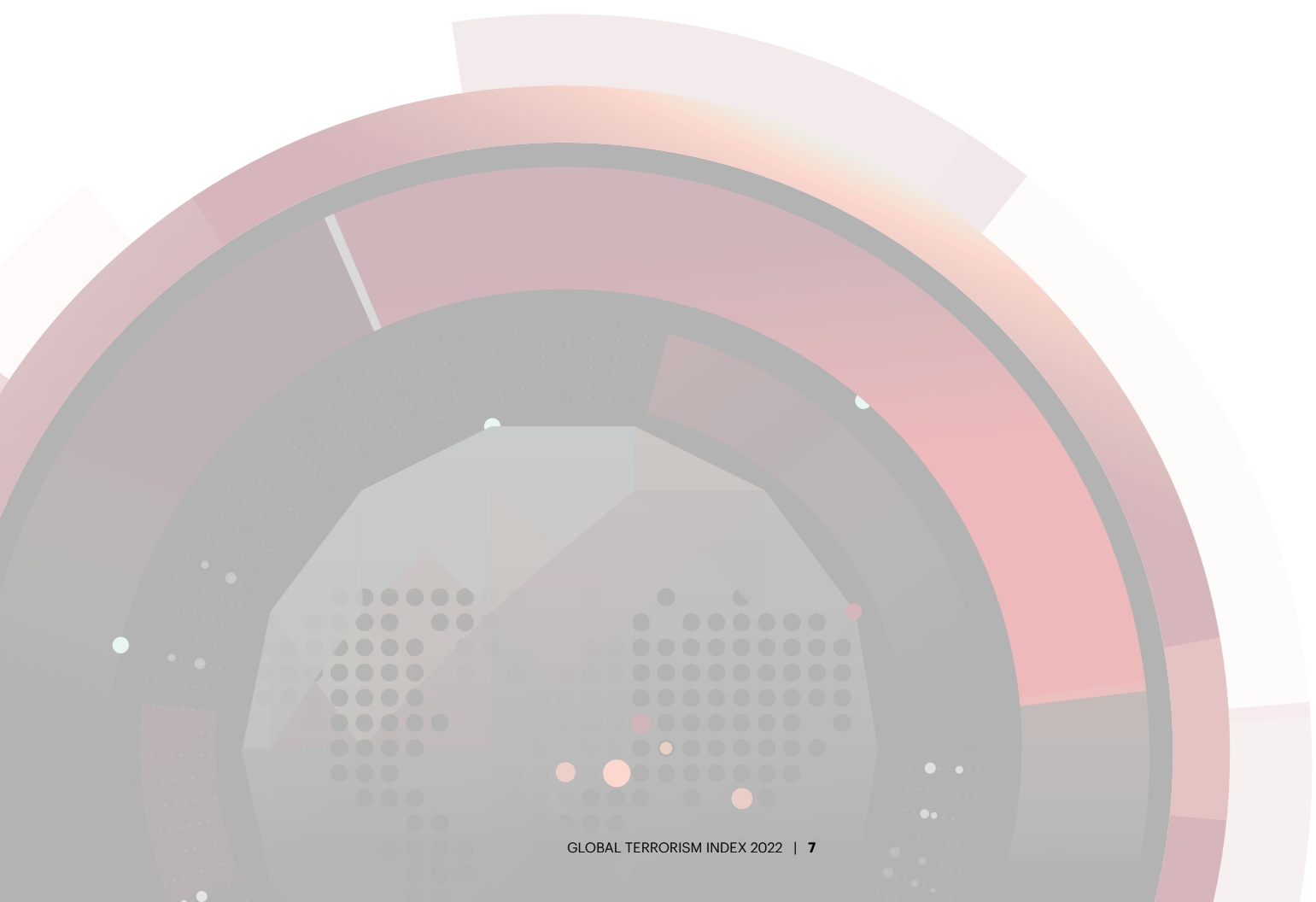
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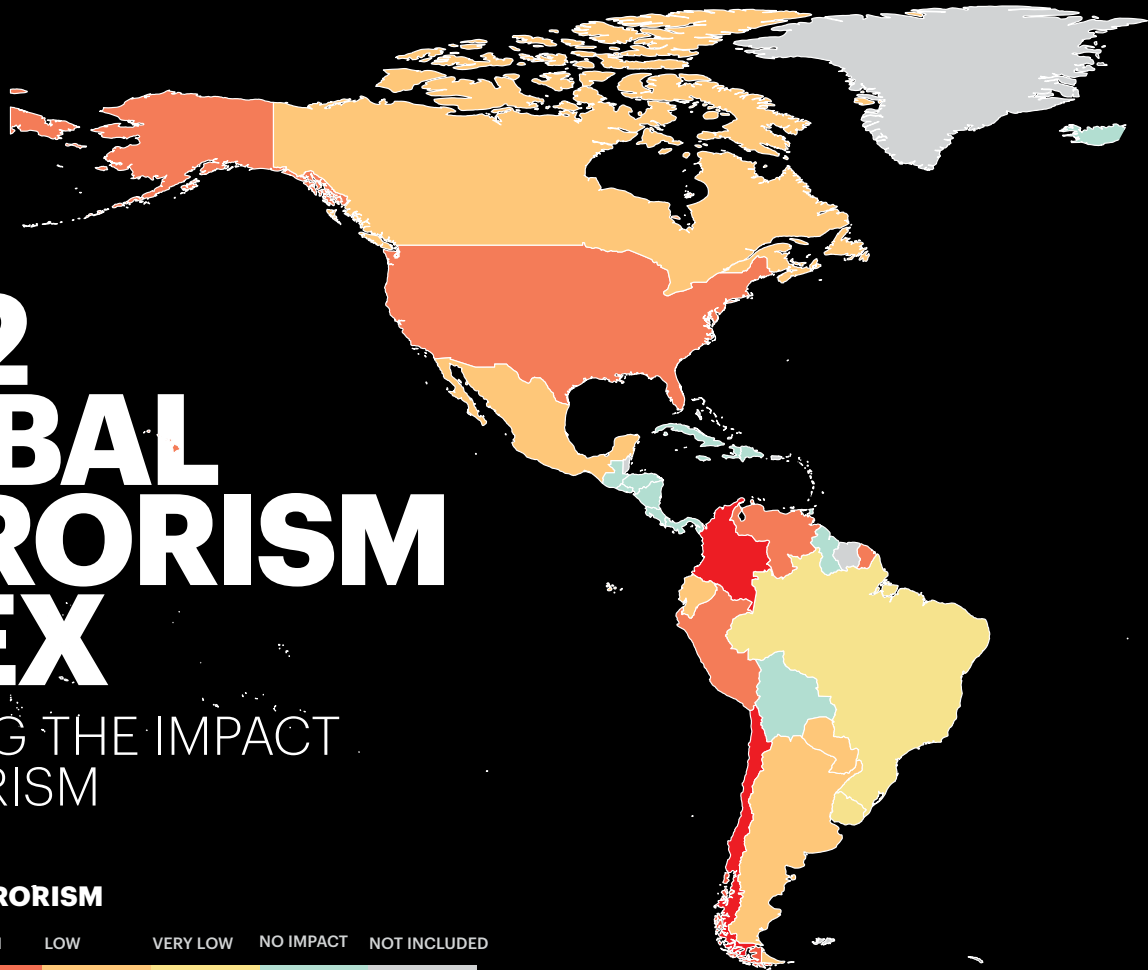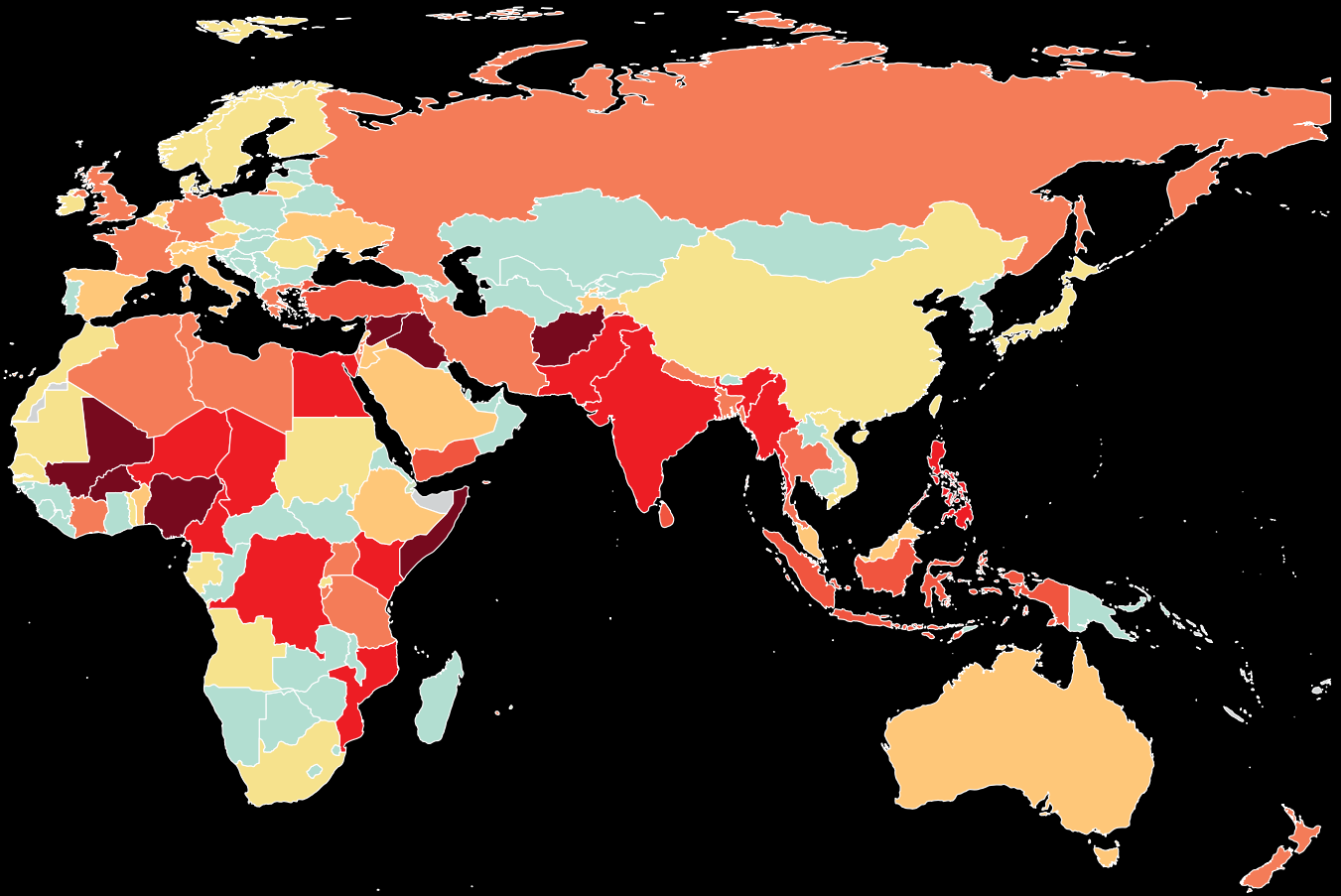## MEASURING THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM

THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM

VERY HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	VERY LOW	NO IMPACT	NOT INCLUDED
10	8	6	4	2	0	

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	Afghanistan	9.109	↔
2	Iraq	8.511	↔
3	Somalia	8.398	↔
4	Burkina Faso	8.270	↓ 2
5	Syria	8.250	↔
6	Nigeria	8.233	↑ 2
7	Mali	8.152	↔
8	Niger	7.856	↓ 4
9	Myanmar	7.830	↓ 15
10	Pakistan	7.825	↑ 2
11	Cameroon	7.432	↔
12	India	7.432	↑ 2
13	Mozambique	7.432	↑ 4
14	Colombia	7.068	↔
15	Egypt	6.932	↑ 2
16	Philippines	6.790	↑ 1
17	Democratic Republic of the Congo	6.733	↓ 5
18	Chile	6.496	↓ 5
19	Chad	6.379	↑ 3
20	Kenya	6.166	↑ 2
21	Yemen	5.870	↑ 1
22	Thailand	5.723	↑ 3
23	Turkey	5.651	↑ 6
24	Indonesia	5.500	↓ 4
25	Sri Lanka	5.445	↑ 4
26	Libya	5.100	↑ 1
27	Iran	5.015	↔

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
28	United States of America	4.961	↑ 2
29	Greece	4.849	↓ 10
30	Israel	4.778	↓ 4
31	United Kingdom	4.770	↔
32	Palestine	4.736	↓ 1
33	Germany	4.729	↑ 1
34	Nepal	4.693	↑ 4
35	France	4.562	↑ 6
36	Tanzania	4.530	↔
37	Peru	4.471	↓ 18
38	Tunisia	4.447	↑ 1
39	Algeria	4.432	↓ 4
40	Bangladesh	4.411	↓ 1
41	New Zealand	4.376	↑ 6
42	Cote d' Ivoire	4.310	↓ 2
43	Burundi	4.271	↓ 13
44	Russia	4.219	↑ 6
45	Uganda	4.106	↓ 59
46	Venezuela	4.005	↔
47	Tajikistan	3.988	↑ 7
48	Canada	3.882	↔
49	Ethiopia	3.759	↑ 7
50	Italy	3.687	↑ 3
51	Lebanon	3.566	↑ 6
52	Austria	3.261	↑ 2
53	Benin	3.164	↓ 19
54	Saudi Arabia	3.110	↑ 5
55	Spain	2.861	↑ 3

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
56	Ecuador	2.766	↑ 2
57	Argentina	2.657	↓ 9
58	Jordan	2.594	↑ 5
59	Switzerland	2.522	↓ 3
60	Australia	2.438	↑ 2
61	Mexico	2.428	↑ 4
62	Ukraine	2.304	↑ 3
63	Malaysia	2.247	↑ 2
64	Paraguay	2.194	↑ 4
65	Bahrain	2.145	↑ 2
66	Netherlands	2.077	↓ 7
67	China	1.863	↑ 3
68	Belgium	1.745	↑ 17
69	Sweden	1.660	↑ 2
70	Senegal	1.580	↑ 2
71	Japan	1.460	↑ 1
72	Uruguay	1.322	↓ 1
=73	Rwanda	1.243	↓ 3
=73	South Africa	1.243	↓ 3
=73	Togo	1.243	↓ 31
76	Morocco	1.156	↓ 2
77	Norway	1.109	↓ 2
=78	Ireland	1.060	↓ 2
=78	Romania	1.060	↓ 3
80	Finland	1.007	↓ 2
81	Brazil	0.951	↓ 2
82	Cyprus	0.922	↓ 2

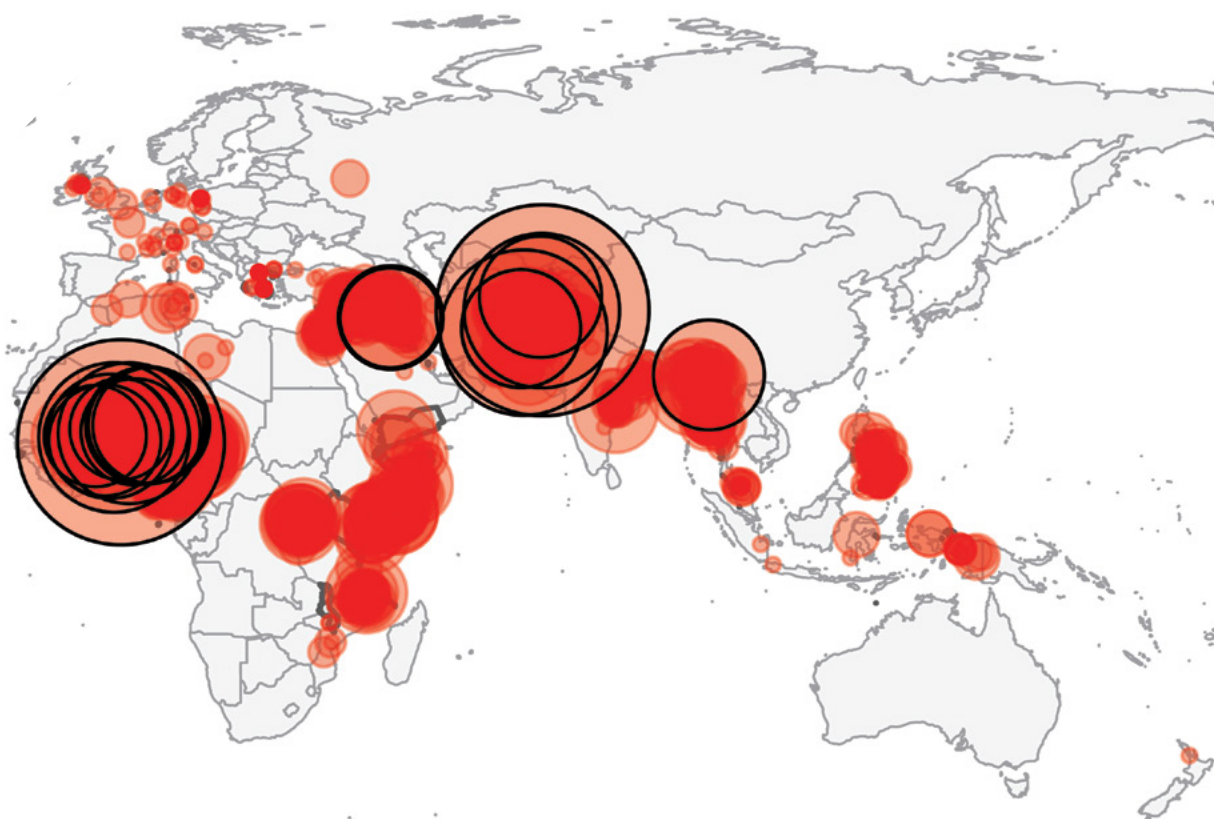| RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE		RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE		RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
83	Lithuania	0.827	↓ 2		=93	Equatorial Guinea	0.000	↔		=93	Namibia	0.000	↔
84	Mauritania	0.509	↓ 3		=93	Eritrea	0.000	↔		=93	Nicaragua	0.000	↔
85	Vietnam	0.407	↓ 3		=93	Estonia	0.000	↔		=93	North Korea	0.000	↔
=86	Angola	0.291	↓ 3		=93	Georgia	0.000	↓ 1		=93	Oman	0.000	↔
=86	Czech Republic	0.291	↓ 3		=93	Ghana	0.000	↔		=93	Panama	0.000	↔
=86	Denmark	0.291	↓ 3		=93	Guatemala	0.000	↔		=93	Papua New Guinea	0.000	↔
=86	Gabon	0.291	↓ 3		=93	Guinea	0.000	↔		=93	Poland	0.000	↓ 5
=86	Kosovo	0.291	↔		=93	Guinea-Bissau	0.000	↔		=93	Portugal	0.000	↔
=86	Sudan	0.291	↓ 3		=93	Guyana	0.000	↔		=93	Qatar	0.000	↔
92	Taiwan	0.227	↓ 4		=93	Haiti	0.000	↔		=93	Republic of the Congo	0.000	↔
=93	Albania	0.000	↔		=93	Honduras	0.000	↔		=93	Serbia	0.000	↔
=93	Armenia	0.000	↓ 6		=93	Hungary	0.000	↓ 4		=93	Sierra Leone	0.000	↔
=93	Azerbaijan	0.000	↓ 6		=93	Iceland	0.000	↔		=93	Singapore	0.000	↔
=93	Belarus	0.000	↔		=93	Jamaica	0.000	↔		=93	Slovakia	0.000	↔
=93	Bhutan	0.000	↔		=93	Kazakhstan	0.000	↓ 18		=93	Slovenia	0.000	↔
=93	Bolivia	0.000	↔		=93	Kuwait	0.000	↓ 6		=93	South Korea	0.000	↔
=93	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.000	↔		=93	Kyrgyz Republic	0.000	↓ 1		=93	South Sudan	0.000	↔
=93	Botswana	0.000	↔		=93	Laos	0.000	↓ 22		=93	Swaziland	0.000	↔
=93	Bulgaria	0.000	↔		=93	Latvia	0.000	↔		=93	The Gambia	0.000	↔
=93	Cambodia	0.000	↔		=93	Lesotho	0.000	↔		=93	Timor-Leste	0.000	↔
=93	Central African Republic	0.000	↓ 28		=93	Liberia	0.000	↔		=93	Trinidad and Tobago	0.000	↔
=93	Costa Rica	0.000	↔		=93	Macedonia (FYR)	0.000	↔		=93	Turkmenistan	0.000	↔
=93	Croatia	0.000	↔		=93	Madagascar	0.000	↓ 24		=93	United Arab Emirates	0.000	↔
=93	Cuba	0.000	↔		=93	Malawi	0.000	↔		=93	Uzbekistan	0.000	↔
=93	Djibouti	0.000	↔		=93	Mauritius	0.000	↓ 6		=93	Zambia	0.000	↔
=93	Dominican Republic	0.000	↔		=93	Moldova	0.000	↓ 6		=93	Zimbabwe	0.000	↔
=93	El Salvador	0.000	↔		=93	Mongolia	0.000	↔					
					=93	Montenegro	0.000	↔					
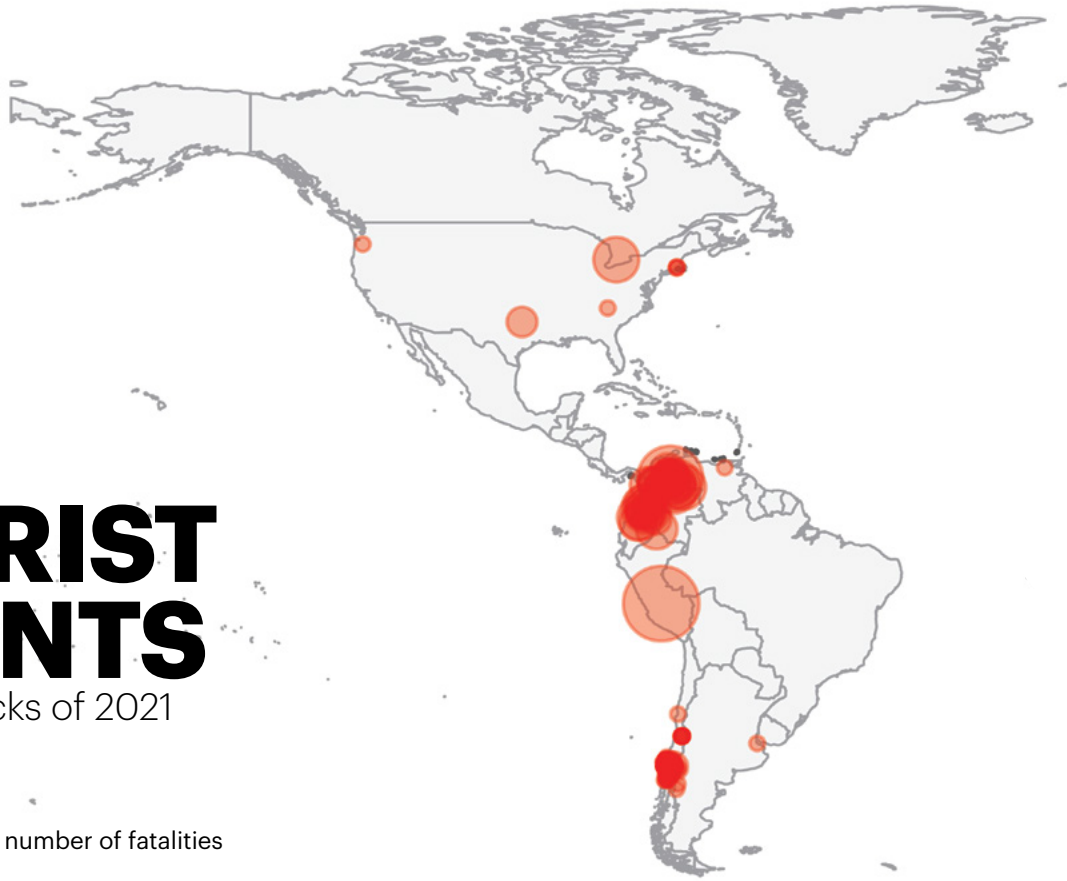
TERRORIST INCIDENTS

Top 20 deadliest attacks of 2021

⬤ All attacks in 2021 scaled by number of fatalities

◯ Worst attacks in 2021

					DESCRIPTION
1	COUNTRY **AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE **KABUL**	DEATHS **170**		A suicide bomber killed at least 170 people and injured at least 200 others when he detonated his explosives at Kabul International Airport. The attack was followed by another suicide bomb nearby, with reports of gunfire. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE **26/8/21**	GROUP **ISLAMIC STATE - KHORASAN PROVINCE**			
2	COUNTRY **BURKINA FASO**	PROVINCE **YAGHA**	DEATHS **160**		Gunmen killed at least 160 people and wounded at least 40 others in Solhan village in the Sahel region. The assailants first attacked members of a volunteer defence force militia before attacking civilians and burning down houses and a market. No group had claimed responsibility for the attack but jihadists operate in the area.
	DATE **5/6/21**	GROUP **UNKNOWN**			
3	COUNTRY **NIGER**	REGION **TAHOUA**	DEATHS **137**		Gunmen killed 137 civilians in three coordinated attacks in the Tahoua region. Islamic State West in Africa (ISWA) claimed responsibility, saying they targeted pro-government militia members.
	DATE **21/3/21**	GROUP **ISLAMIC STATE IN WEST AFRICA (ISWA)**			
4	COUNTRY **AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE **KANDAHAR**	DEATHS **100**		Gunmen killed at least 100 civilians they forced from their homes in Kandahar province. The Ministry of Interior Affairs said that at least another 200 people remained unaccounted for. The Ministry said the Taliban was responsible, although the group denied it had carried out the attack.
	DATE **22/7/21**	GROUP **TALIBAN**			
5	COUNTRY **AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE **KABUL**	DEATHS **86**		A series of three bombs killed at least 86 civilians, most of them students, and wounded 150 others at a high school in Kabul province. A car bomb initially exploded, followed by two others of unspecified type that detonated as students fled outside. No group had claimed responsibility for the attack, but based on location and tactic jihadists were probably responsible. The Taliban issued a statement denying responsibility for the attack.
	DATE **8/5/21**	GROUP **UNKNOWN**			
6	COUNTRY **BURKINA FASO**	REGION **SAHEL**	DEATHS **80**		Gunmen killed 59 civilians, 15 security forces personnel and six pro-government militiamen, and wounded 19 others, in an attack on a military convoy that was escorting civilians on the road between Arbinda and Gorgadji in the Sahel region. Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE **18/8/21**	GROUP **JAMAAT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL MUSLIMEEN (JNIM)**			
7	COUNTRY **NIGER**	REGION **TILLABERI**	DEATHS **70**		Gunmen on motorbikes killed around 70 civilians and wounded around 17 others in the village of Tchombangou. Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) claimed responsibility, saying they targeted pro-government militia members.
	DATE **2/1/21**	GROUP **ISLAMIC STATE IN WEST AFRICA (ISWA)**			
8	COUNTRY **BURKINA FASO**	REGION **SAHEL**	DEATHS **53**		Gunmen killed at least 49 police officers and four civilians at a police post near an abandoned mine in the Sahel region at around 0500hrs on 14 November. No group had claimed responsibility for the attack at the time of writing, but local media outlets reported that Jamaat Nustrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) was probably responsible.
	DATE **14/11/21**	GROUP **JAMAAT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL MUSLIMEEN (JNIM)**			
9	COUNTRY **AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE **KUNDUZ**	DEATHS **50**		A suicide bomber detonated explosives during Friday prayers in a Shia mosque in the Kunduz province. Local officials reported that at least 50 civilians were killed and 140 more wounded. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility.
	DATE **8/10/21**	GROUP **ISLAMIC STATE - KHORASAN PROVINCE**			
10	COUNTRY **AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE **KANDAHAR**	DEATHS **47**		Four suicide bombers killed at least 47 people and injured at least 80 others in an attack on a Shia mosque in Kandahar province. Two suicide bombers detonated explosives at the entrance to the mosque, followed by two further detonations inside the mosque. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE **15/10/21**	GROUP **ISLAMIC STATE - KHORASAN PROVINCE**			

						DESCRIPTION
11	COUNTRY	**AFGHANISTAN**	PROVINCE	**KANDAHAR**	DEATHS **47**	Four suicide bombers killed at least 47 people and injured at least 80 others in an attack on the Imam Bargah Shia mosque in Kandahar, Kandahar province at around 1300hrs on 15 October. Two suicide bombers detonated their vests at the entrance to the mosque, followed by two further detonations inside the mosque. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE	**15/10/21**	GROUP	**ISLAMIC STATE - KHORASAN PROVINCE**		
12	COUNTRY	**BURKINA FASO**	REGION	**NORD**	DEATHS **41**	Gunmen killed at least 41 civilians, including members of the Volontaire pour la Defense de la Patrie (VDP) militia, in an attack on a convoy of market traders under escort in the Nord region. Among the VDP casualties was a senior commander. Supporters of Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) released a video saying the group was responsible.
	DATE	**23/12/21**	GROUP	**JAMAAT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL MUSLIMEEN (JNIM)**		
13	COUNTRY	**MYANMAR (BURMA)**	REGION	**SAGAING**	DEATHS **40**	Gunmen killed 40 soldiers in the Sagaing region. No group had claimed responsibility, but local media said that anti-junta groups were responsible for the attack.
	DATE	**20/9/21**	GROUP	**ANTI-JUNTA ARMED GROUP**		
14	COUNTRY	**NIGER**	REGION	**TILLABERI**	DEATHS **37**	Gunmen killed 37 civilians in an attack on the village of Daraidey in the Tillaberi province. Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) claimed responsibility the following month, saying it had targeted militia members.
	DATE	**16/8/21**	GROUP	**ISLAMIC STATE IN WEST AFRICA (ISWA)**		
15	COUNTRY	**IRAQ**	CITY	**BAGHDAD GOVERNORATE**	DEATHS **35**	A bomb killed at least 35 civilians and wounded at least 60 others at a market in the Baghdad governorate. The attack targeted a Shia majority neighbourhood on the eve of the Eid Al-Adha holiday. Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack and said it was a suicide bombing. However, security forces said the device was a static explosive.
	DATE	**19/7/21**	GROUP	**ISLAMIC STATE (IS)**		
16	COUNTRY	**MALI**	REGION	**MOPTI**	DEATHS **33**	Gunmen killed at least 33 civilians and injured at least seven others in an attack on a public bus in the Mopti region on 3 December. No group had claimed responsibility at the time of writing, but jihadists operate in the area.
	DATE	**3/12/21**	GROUP	**UNKNOWN**		
17	COUNTRY	**MALI**	REGION	**GAO**	DEATHS **33**	Around 100 assailants killed 33 soldiers and wounded 14 others in an ambush against a military patrol in the Gao region. Security forces retaliated, allegedly killing 20 assailants. Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) claimed responsibility.
	DATE	**15/3/21**	GROUP	**ISLAMIC STATE IN WEST AFRICA (ISWA)**		
18	COUNTRY	**IRAQ**	CITY	**BAGHDAD GOVERNORATE**	DEATHS **32**	Two consecutive suicide bombings killed at least 32 civilians and wounded 110 more at a market in the Baghdad governorate. Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE	**21/1/21**	GROUP	**ISLAMIC STATE (IS)**		
19	COUNTRY	**MALI**	REGION	**SEGOU**	DEATHS **30**	Gunmen killed at least 30 militia members guarding rice fields in the village of Sibi in the Segou region. No group had claimed responsibility, but jihadists operate in the area.
	DATE	**6/10/21**	GROUP	**UNKNOWN**		
20	COUNTRY	**MYANMAR (BURMA)**	REGION	**MAGWAY**	DEATHS **30**	A bomb targeting a military convoy of eight vehicles killed thirty soldiers in the Magway region. The Yesagyo Peoples' Defence Force, an anti-junta armed group, claimed responsibility for the attack.
	DATE	**23/8/21**	GROUP	**YESAGYO PEOPLES' DEFENCE FORCE**		

Results

TERRORISM IN 2021

The total number of deaths from terrorism declined in 2021, falling by 1.2 per cent to 7,142 (Figure 1.1). This is the fourth consecutive year where deaths from terrorism remained fairly constant. However, there has been a 33 per cent reduction since the peak in 2015 when 10,699 people were killed in terrorist attacks.

The primary driver of this reduction in 2021 has been a fall in the intensity of conflict in the Middle East, and the subsequent decline of the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria. However, increases in the number of deaths were recorded in three of the nine regions - Asia-Pacific, North America and South Asian regions, which increased by 303, 66 and eight per cent respectively. North America was off a very low base, recording three deaths from terrorism in 2020 and five in 2021.

Despite the year-on-year fall in deaths, the number of attacks rose from 4,458 in 2020 to 5,226 in 2021, a 17 per cent increase and the highest number of attacks recorded since 2007, largely due to violence in the Sahel region and instability in countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar.

Although there was a substantial improvement in Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa, overall the Sahel recorded a noticeable deterioration, with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger all recording substantial increases in terrorism deaths in 2021. Six of the eight countries in the Sahel are amongst the ten most impacted countries for terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa.

Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, a rise in terrorism was anticipated. However, the evidence suggests that the pandemic has had very little impact on terrorism in 2020 and 2021. Despite this, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented new and distinct counter-terrorism challenges. In particular, the increase of government deficits caused by increased public spending during the pandemic continues to impact on counterterrorism budgets. It is still to be seen whether the economic impact of COVID on countries that are already fragile will increase frustrations with governments, aggravating existing political tensions and possibly leading to further civil unrest.

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) found that slightly more

countries improved then deteriorated. In 2021, 25 countries recorded reductions in terrorism deaths, while 21 countries recorded increases and 117 countries recorded no change in the number of deaths. One hundred and five countries did not record any terrorism incidents.

The GTI assesses four measures, the number of attacks, deaths, wounded and hostages, using a 5 year weighting system to determine the level of impact for any given year. The weighting system allows for the impact of the lingering effect of terrorism on a country's psyche.

Although the number of deaths from terrorism has remained fairly constant for the last four years it is still a major global threat. The number of terrorism incidents remains substantially higher than a decade ago, while there has been a slight increase in the number of countries experiencing terrorism, from 43 in 2020 to 44 in 2021.

FIGURE 1.1
Total terrorism deaths by country, 2020-2021

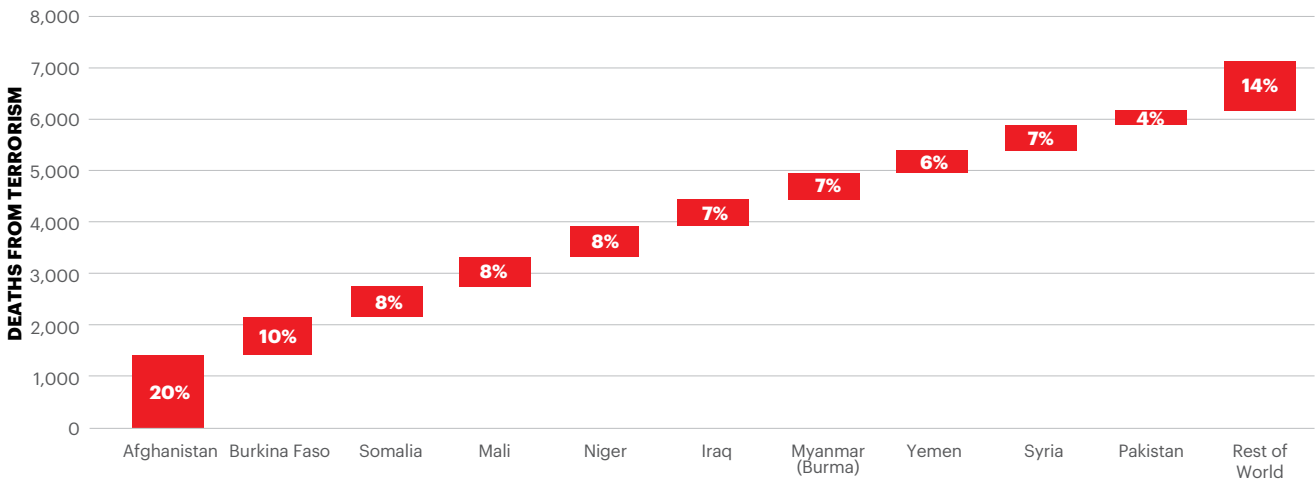Total deaths from terrorism fell 1.2 per cent from 2020 to 2021.
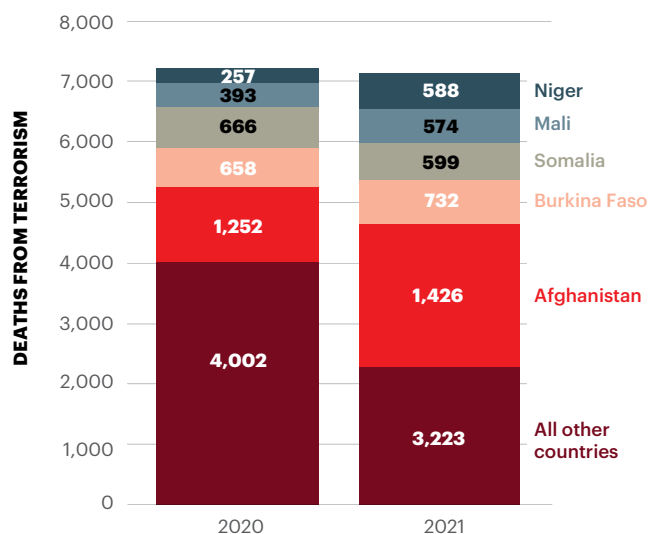
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

FIGURE 1.2
Deaths from terrorism by country, 2021

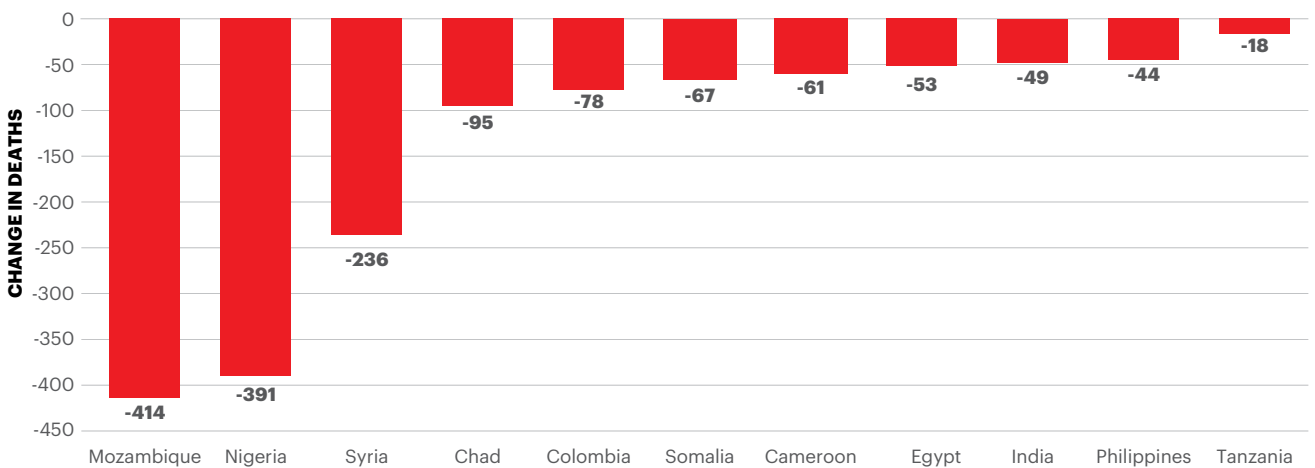Ten countries accounted for 85 per cent of deaths from terrorism.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

FIGURE 1.3
Largest decreases in deaths from terrorism, 2020–2021

Mozambique had the largest decrease in the number of deaths from terrorism, reversing seven years of consecutive increases.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Mozambique recorded the largest decrease of terror related deaths, from 507 deaths in 2020 to 93 in 2021 while Nepal recorded no deaths for the first time since 2016.

Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of deaths in the five countries with the most deaths from terrorism in 2021, when compared to 2020. Of the five countries that experienced the highest levels of terrorism, four countries, Afghanistan, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, recorded an increase in the number of deaths, while the total number of deaths fell only in Somalia.

2021 was also the first year where Myanmar and Niger were among the ten countries with the highest number of terrorism deaths.

Just ten countries accounted for 85 per cent of all deaths from terrorism in 2021, as shown in Figure 1.2. The most deaths in a single country were recorded in Afghanistan, accounting for 20

per cent of all deaths. This represents a slight increase from 2020 when Afghanistan accounted for 17 per cent of global terrorism deaths. Most of the deaths were recorded prior to the Taliban taking control of the country. In December, seven deaths were recorded, compared to the average monthly death rate of 133 for the prior 11 months.

Of the 5,226 terrorist attacks recorded in 2021, only 52 per cent were attributed to a group.

INCREASE AND DECREASE IN TERRORISM

Figure 1.3 shows the countries that experienced the largest decreases in terrorism deaths in 2021. Mozambique and Nigeria experienced the two largest falls in 2021. In 2020, deaths rose by 48 per cent in Mozambique, before falling 82 per cent in 2021. The fall in deaths in Mozambique was driven by a marked decrease in deaths attributed to IS as a result of successful

FIGURE 1.4
Largest increases in deaths from terrorism, 2020–2021

Deaths from terrorism in Myanmar rose by almost 500 deaths between 2020 and 2021.
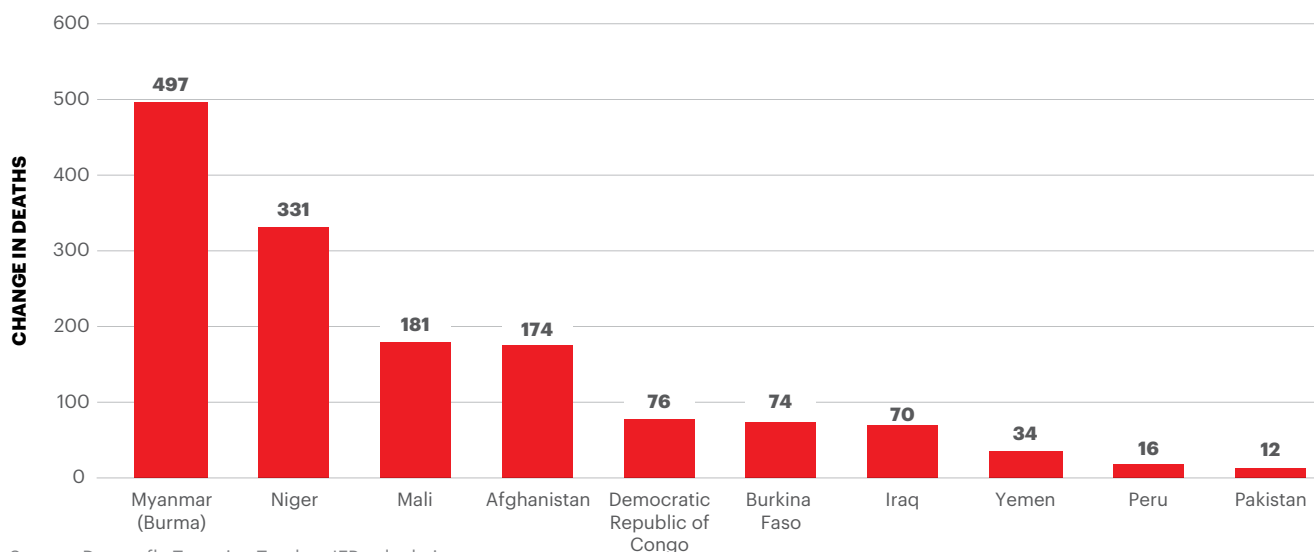
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

counter-terrorism measures by the Mozambican forces in conjunction with Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community.[2] Deaths in Nigeria fell by 51 per cent in 2021, following three years of successive increases. This decline was due to a fall in deaths attributed to Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWA), particularly in the Borno region where deaths fell by 71 per cent. ISWA overtook Boko Haram as the deadliest terror group in Nigeria in 2021 and, with an increased presence in neighbouring countries such as Mali, Cameroon and Niger, presents a substantial threat to the Sahel region. The fall of Boko Haram coincides with the death of its leader Abubakar Shekau in May 2021, and the subsequent defection of his followers in favour of groups such as ISWA.

Syria had the third largest total fall in deaths, with deaths from terrorism falling by a third in 2021 to 488 deaths. The fall in terror-related deaths in Syria can be attributed to the defeats IS suffered in 2019, after the group was ousted from all of its territories in the region. Despite this, IS is still a potent force.

Figure 1.4 highlights the countries with the largest increases in deaths from terrorism in 2021. While the increases were offset by much more significant decreases elsewhere, there were still a number of countries with significant increases.

The country with the largest total increases in deaths from terrorism was Myanmar, where the number of people killed rose from 24 in 2020 to 521 in 2021. This significant increase was predominantly driven by ongoing political instability and widespread protests that began with the military coup in February 2021. Anti-junta armed groups were responsible for over half of terrorism deaths in Myanmar in 2021. The majority of deaths occurred during attacks targeting government and military personnel.

Niger recorded the second largest increase in 2021. While the number of attacks in Niger remained consistent between 2020 and 2021, the number of terrorism deaths increased by 129 per cent to 588, indicating increased attack lethality. In 2021, attacks caused on average 7.9 deaths per attack, compared to 3.8 in 2020. This is of particular concern and highlights the growing sophistication and organisational capabilities of ISWA.

COVID-19 AND TERRORISM

Despite initial predictions that the COVID-19 pandemic would worsen the impact of terrorism in certain regions, it seems that the pandemic has had very little impact on terrorism in 2020 and 2021.

The decline is terrorism in the West coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on freedom of movement, public gatherings, travel and an immediate threat on personal health may help explain the fall. Public anger from the fringes of the left and the right have been directed towards lockdown restrictions and mandatory vaccinations. However, extremists have sought to capitalize on many of the secondary effects that the pandemic had created such as isolation, increased online activity, and resentment over vaccines and lockdown.[3] They have looked to those with real or perceived grievances, with messages that merge health care issues with ideological propaganda with the purpose of amplifying anger and disenchantment.

Once the emergency measures are removed and societies start to live with COVID there is the possibility of an uptake in terrorism activity. To prevent this, society should pursue a systemic, multi-sectoral, and synchronize response addressing such issues

FIGURE 1.5
Four deadliest terrorist groups in 2021

Islamic State were the deadliest terrorist group of 2021.
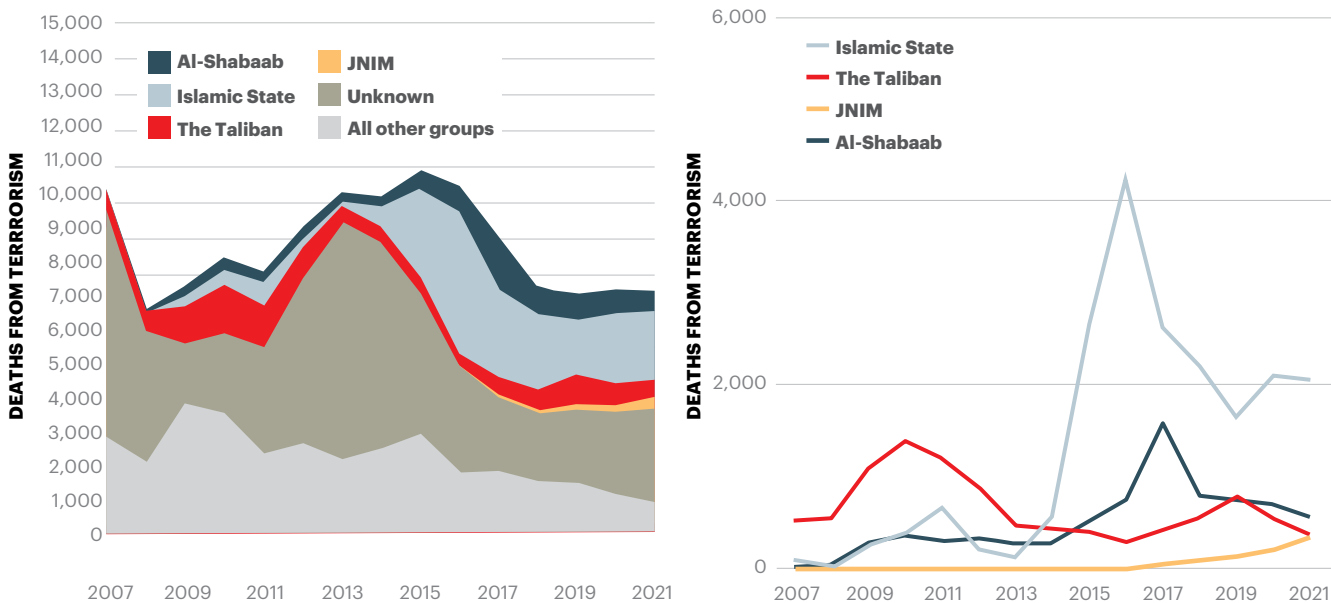
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

as mental health, loss of faith in the political system, and lack of economic opportunities. Adopting innovative programmes aimed at empowering the youth would help respond to the growing resentment and disillusionment.

Globally, terror groups such as JNIM in the Sahel region have successfully exploited local grievances with governance, economic and social conditions, particularly in northern and central Mali to bolster recruitment. The recent coups in the Sahel, including Mali, do not bode well for future stability.

National governments in the region are currently supported by approximately 14,000 UN peacekeeping troops, as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), currently at 2,400 French troops and an additional 500 special forces from 13 European countries under a newly established task force. The French counterterrorism operation in the region, Operation Barkhane's goal is to counter the jihadist in order to allow states in the Sahel to develop their own defence mechanisms. However, with African economies being significantly affected by the pandemic, it has impacted the ability of African countries, particularly in the Sahel, to design and fund counter-terrorism strategies. This, combined with the French government's announcement that Operation Barkhane will end in early 2022 will almost certainly provide terrorist groups room to continue to gain local support

by exploiting existing ethnic tensions and positioning themselves as alternate service providers. It may also be the case that in the long term, the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences might increase the likelihood of terrorist threats.

One of the impacts of the pandemic on terrorism lies within the Internet. The role of the online dimension has increased since the beginning of the pandemic, terrorist and extremist groups, like others, have partly shifted from a physical to a virtual environment.[4,5]

With pandemic-related sociocultural restrictions in place across the world, people are spending increasingly more time online, terrorist groups have used the pandemic as an opportunity to spread conspiracy theories and disinformation to undermine confidence in governments and gather more support for their ideology.

Notably, political groups continue to view the pandemic as an opportunity to fuel existing narratives with a rise in racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic or anti-immigrant hate speech.[6] These groups often use internet forums and chatrooms to spread their ideology and have been observed exploiting protest movements against government restrictions and public health measures to spread xenophobic and anti-Semitic narratives.[7]

TERRORISM GROUPS

The four terrorist groups responsible for the most deaths in 2021 were Islamic State (IS), Al-Shabaab, the Taliban and Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) as shown in Figure 1.5. These four groups were responsible for 3,364 deaths from

terrorism, representing 47 per cent of total deaths in 2021. Another 2,775 of terrorism deaths were not attributed to any organisation. Three of these four groups were also the deadliest groups last year, with JNIM replacing Boko Haram this year.

In 2012, just prior to the large global increase in terrorist activity, these four groups were responsible for just under 16 per cent of all deaths from terrorism.

Determining which terrorist groups are the most active and responsible for the most deaths can be difficult, as many groups have regional affiliates and other groups working in partnership or partially under the same command. For the purpose of this report, IEP includes chapters and provinces of terrorist groups that are specifically affiliated under the same organisational name. For example, IS refers to Islamic State, also known as Daesh, as well as their affiliated chapters such as the Khorasan Chapter and Islamic State in West Africa which are included. When specifically referring to the affiliate group, the chapter name will mainly be used.

The past decade has seen the largest surge in terrorist activity in the past fifty years. However, of the four deadliest groups in 2021 only JNIM recorded an increase in the level of terrorism incidents over the prior year.

Islamic State

Islamic State (IS) alongside its affiliate groups, were the deadliest terror group of 2021. IS is a Sunni extremist group which formed as an Al-Qaeda affiliate group in Iraq and Syria in 1999.[8] Following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, IS participated in the Iraqi insurgency. In 2014 the group declared itself a worldwide caliphate.[9] IS primarily adheres to a global jihadist ideology, following an anti-Western interpretation of Islam and promotes violence against those who do not align with their ideology. IS original aim was to establish a Salafist-orientated Islamist state spanning countries such as Iraq, Syria and other areas of the Levant.[10] IS used affiliate groups to promote their ideology in other parts of the world including Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP) in Afghanistan and Pakistan and later the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA), which operates in the Sahel region. IS and its affiliates exploit tensions between Sunni and Shia Muslims, using Sunni disenfranchisement to capture and consolidate its control over areas of Iraq and Syria.

By the end of 2015, IS had captured significant territory in Iraq and Syria, including Iraq's second largest city Mosul. However, constant pressure from international military efforts meant that IS lost the last of its territory in March 2019.[11] Though IS remains unable to hold territory in Iraq and Syria, it continues to operate, focusing its efforts on insurgency outside of the Levant, particularly the Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa.[12]

Changes since 2020
Islamic State (IS) and its affiliate groups Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP), Islamic State - Sinai Province (ISSP), and Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) recorded the most attacks and deaths of any terrorist group in 2021. IS deaths represented 29 per cent of all deaths from terrorism globally in 2021. Despite this, IS attacks fell from 837 in 2020 to 794 in 2021, a decrease of five per cent. Deaths as a result of IS attacks mirrored this trend, declining almost two per cent between 2020 and 2021. IS recorded attacks in 21 countries in 2021 compared with 30 in 2020. In 2021, IS attacks occurred in every region in the world apart from North America and Russia and Eurasia. The country

most affected by IS terrorist attacks was Iraq, in which 327 attacks occurred in 2021, a decrease from 353 attacks in 2020. Despite this, Afghanistan recorded the most IS-related deaths, with the country recording a quarter of IS casualties for 2021.

The deadliest attack attributed to IS occurred at Kabul International Airport during the evacuation of US troops from Afghanistan in August 2021. A suicide bomber detonated explosives near the Abbey Gate area of the airport where civilians were waiting to be placed on evacuation flights, followed by another suicide bomb nearby. It is unclear how many people were killed and injured in each attack, however it was estimated that 170 people were killed and at least 200 were injured in total, including civilians, US soldiers and UK nationals. ISKP claimed responsibility for the attack. It is also the deadliest attack attributed to any terror group in 2021.

Tactics favoured by Islamic State
Armed attacks continue to be IS's favoured tactic for the third consecutive year, followed by explosive attacks. In 2021, there were 479 armed attacks compared with 414 attacks the year prior. Deaths as a result of these attacks declined by 12 per cent. Conversely, despite explosive attacks decreasing between 2020 and 2021 from 271 to 240 attacks, casualties as a result of these attacks increased by almost 50 per cent. The same trend was mirrored in the number of suicide bombing attacks. While the number of suicide bomb attacks decreased from 18 in 2020 to 16 in 2021, the number of casualties more than doubled in 2021. The most common target for IS attacks continues to be the military, representing 41 per cent of all IS attacks for 2021. However, civilians recorded the most casualties with 971 civilian deaths in 2021, an increase of 36 per cent when compared to 2020.

The Taliban

The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in 1994 as a reactionary group that combined the Mujahideen that had previously fought against the 1979 Soviet invasion, and groups of Pashtun tribesmen. The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996.[13] The group declared the country an Islamic emirate and promoted its leader to the role of head of state. The Taliban ruled Afghanistan until 2001 when an invasion by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) toppled the regime, which was thought to be harbouring Al-Qaeda. After the regime was overthrown, the Taliban regrouped across the border in Pakistan and has since led an insurgency against the government of Afghanistan and the US-led International Security Assistance Force. Since the mid-2000s, the Taliban has steadily regained territory across Afghanistan. In 2021, the Taliban returned to power after regrouping in Pakistan and launching insurgency attacks against the US-backed government in Afghanistan. By August 2021, the Taliban had seized most major cities in Afghanistan including the capital Kabul. The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan as outlined in the 2020 peace agreement between the US and Afghanistan made for the ideal conditions for the Taliban to reassume control of the country after 20 years of US-backed coalition rule.[14] Now that the Taliban is the government, terrorism deaths attributed to the Taliban will dramatically decrease. However, it is unclear what the future levels of terrorism will be in Afghanistan as this will be dependent on how well IS can mobilise against the government.

Changes since 2020

The Taliban were responsible for 376 deaths in 2021, marking a 32 per cent decrease from 2020 and the lowest number of deaths since 2016. There was a minor decrease in the total number of terrorist attacks by the Taliban, decreasing from 242 in 2020 to 232 in 2021. Attacks became less deadly in 2021, with an average of 1.6 deaths per attack, compared to 2.4 in 2020. Of the 232 attacks attributed to the Taliban in 2021, 56 per cent did not result in any fatalities while only three attacks resulted in more than 10 deaths.

The Taliban is active solely in Afghanistan. Deaths and terrorist attacks attributed to the Taliban in 2021 accounted for 26 and 27 per cent of the country's total, respectively, however 37 per cent was not attributed to any group. In July 2021, gunmen stormed the Spin Boldak district in Afghanistan's Kandahar province and killed at least 100 civilians from among at least 300 they forced from their homes. The Ministry of Interior Affairs, which announced the incident, did not give further details on the location, but said that at least another 200 people remained unaccounted for. The Taliban were thought to have committed the attack, however they have denied having any involvement.

Tactics favoured by the Taliban

In 2021, the Taliban's main targets were civilians, which accounted for 47 per cent of attacks and 64 per cent of deaths. While civilian deaths were the highest of any group targeted by the Taliban in 2021, attacks on civilians decreased by 31 per cent when compared to the year prior. Explosives continue to be the Taliban's weapon of choice, with explosives being used in 72 per cent of all Taliban attacks in 2021. However, the Taliban's armed attacks are more lethal than explosive attacks, with on average 3.5 deaths per armed attack, compared to one death per explosive attack in 2021. Suicide bombings also decreased significantly, with only one attack with no casualties recorded in 2021. In 2020, the Taliban were responsible for 10 suicide bombings which resulted in 55 deaths.

Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab, a Salafist militant group active in East Africa, first emerged in a battle over Somalia's capital in the summer of 2006. As an Al-Qaeda affiliate based in Somalia and Kenya, Al-Shabaab pursues Islamist statehood aspirations in Somalia. Al-Shabaab was estimated to have between 7,000 and 9,000 fighters in 2019. Al-Shabaab has gained global recognition following a number of deadly attacks concentrated around the capital city of Mogadishu, as well as attacks in the neighbouring states of Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. African Union peacekeeping forces known as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) have been fighting Al-Shabaab since 2007 with the help of US and United Nations (UN) support. In 2017, the first wave of US troops and airstrikes were deployed in Somalia to fight against Al-Shabaab.

Changes since 2020

In 2021, terrorism deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab continued to decline, falling 17 per cent from the prior year. Of the 571 deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab in 2021, 93 per cent occurred in Somalia, compared to six per cent in Kenya. The total number of terror incidents fell by 56 attacks to 303 attacks from 2020 to

2021. Over 51 per cent of the attacks in 2021 resulted in at least one fatality. This marks a significant decline from 2020, where 81 per cent of attacks resulted in at least one death.

Deaths in Somalia decreased by 18 per cent in 2021. This was mainly driven by a decline in terrorist activity in the capital, Mogadishu, with 37 per cent less terrorism deaths. Mogadishu has long been the epicentre of terrorist activity by Al-Shabaab and in 2021, 16 per cent of Al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia occurred in Mogadishu, an increase of three per cent in deaths and causing 115 fatalities. This includes one of the group's deadliest attacks of 2021 when a bomb targeting a military training camp killed at least 20 soldiers in the Wadajir district, Mogadishu.

In Kenya terrorism deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab decreased by 14 per cent in 2021. This is the lowest recorded number of Al-Shabaab casualties in Kenya since 2012. The majority of terrorism deaths in 2021 occurred in Kenya's Mandera region which recorded 17 attacks in 2021, the same as the year prior. This was followed by Wajir and Lamu counties, which collectively recorded 18 deaths. The deadliest attack in Kenya in 2021 occurred in Lamu county where a roadside bomb killed 15 soldiers when it struck their convoy.

Tactics favoured by Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab have consistently utilised bombings and armed assaults as its main modes of attack. Almost 68 per cent of terrorism deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab in 2021 were the result of bombings, while armed assaults accounted for 31 per cent of deaths. The highest proportion of Al-Shabaab attacks in both Somalia and Kenya were directed at the military, followed by civilians. Overall, civilian deaths declined by 40 per cent between 2020 and 2021.

Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)

Al-Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) was formed in 2017 in the Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa as a coalition of Salafi-jihadist insurgent groups, including Ansar Dine, the Macina Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and the Saharan branch of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.[15] Since its emergence, JNIM has expanded across West Africa while committing acts of violence against civilians, local security forces and counter-terrorism operations comprising of international militaries and UN peacekeepers.[16] JNIM claims its aims are to incite Muslims to oppose oppression, expel occupying powers from the Sahel region and implement Islamic governance. JNIM's leaders have declared its enemies to be France and other countries assisting France as well as Jews and Christians more widely.[17]

JNIM has successfully exploited local grievances with governance, economic and social conditions, particularly in northern and central Mali to bolster recruitment.[18] Counterterrorism efforts against JNIM include France's Operation Barkhane, formed in 2014 with the aim of expelling insurgent groups from the five co-operation countries, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In 2021, France announced its intention to end the operation and withdraw its troops from the region by early 2022 due to it's inability to work

with the national governments who continued to negotiate with terrorist groups. While France intends to retain some military forces in the region as part of a larger international mission, the waning counter-terrorism effort in the region is likely to allow JNIM to continue its violent campaign across the Sahel.[19]

Changes since 2020

In 2021, attacks and deaths as a result of JNIM activity reached their highest level since the group's emergence in 2007. JNIM were responsible for 351 deaths in 2021, a 69 per cent increase compared with 2020. Terrorism-related incidents also increase by 71 per cent in 2021.

Of the 351 deaths attributed to JNIM in 2021, around 59 per cent occurred in Mali, while 40 per cent occurred in Burkina Faso. A further two attacks in Benin resulted in two deaths. In Mali, JNIM attacks increased by 80 per cent between 2020 and 2021. The majority of terrorist attacks in Mali in 2021 were directed at the military, however civilians comprised the majority of casualties. Malian civilian deaths as a result of JNIM attacks more than tripled between 2020 and 2021.

Despite only 13 of JNIM's 138 attacks in 2021 occurring in Burkina Faso, 207 deaths were recorded in the country as a result of these attacks. The level of activity is higher than in 2020, when Burkina Faso recorded 10 JNIM attacks with 43 casualties. This represents a significant increase with just over four deaths per attack in 2020 to almost 16 deaths per attack in 2021. Like Mali, the group with the largest amount of casualties caused by JNIM in Burkina Faso in 2021 were civilians,

representing 47 per cent of total deaths. In 2020, no civilians were killed in Burkina Faso. JNIM's deadliest attack of 2021 occurred in Burkina Faso's Seno province where gunmen attacked a military convoy escorting civilians between rural towns near the Niger border. JNIM took responsibility for the attack which killed 59 civilians, 15 security forces and six pro-government militiamen and wounded 19 others.

Tactics favoured by JNIM

Over half of attacks perpetrated by JNIM were armed attacks, resulting in 341 fatalities in 2021. Casualties as a result of armed attacks represented over 97 per cent of JNIM fatalities for 2021.

Despite there being 26 JNIM-organised bombings in 2021, these attacks only resulted in seven casualties, a decrease of 46 per cent in JNIM bombing related deaths when compared to the previous year.

JNIM's usual targets are military and political figures, however the tactics did change in 2021 with a marked increase in attacks and deaths of civilians. Military attacks represented only a slightly higher percentage than civilian-targeted attacks, with 29 military attacks and 24 civilian attacks recorded. There were eight times as many attacks on civilians in 2021 than there were in 2020. JNIM attacks on civilians became more deadly in 2021, with an almost sevenfold increase in deaths to 173 from 23 deaths in the year prior. In 2021, JNIM recorded a decrease of 62 per cent in military deaths when compared to the year prior.

10

COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

Table 1.1 highlights the ten countries most impacted by terrorism according to the 2022 GTI, and how they have ranked on the index since 2011.

Despite a one per cent decrease in the number of deaths from terrorism overall, the ten countries most impacted by terrorism remained largely unchanged. Afghanistan and Iraq maintained their positions as the two countries most impacted by terrorism, for the third consecutive year.

There was some movement within the rankings with Burkina Faso overtaking Syria and Nigeria to be the fourth most impacted country, Pakistan moved from eighth most impacted to tenth and Nigeria dropped two places to sixth most impacted country. This is Somalia's sixth consecutive appearance amongst the five most impacted countries.

The newest entries to the ten most impacted countries were Niger and Myanmar, which were in eighth and ninth place, respectively. This is Myanmar's first appearance in the ten most impacted countries, with the current political unrest being responsible for this increase in terror activity. The countries with the largest deterioration in rank since 2011 were all located in the Sahel region, including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Highlighting the extent of their fall, all were ranked outside of the 20 countries most affected by terrorism in 2011.

Nigeria, Syria and Somalia were the only countries amongst the ten most impacted by terrorism to record an improvement in score from 2020 to 2021. The other seven countries deteriorated, with the largest deterioration occurring in Myanmar, followed by Niger.

TABLE 1.1

Ten countries most impacted by terrorism, ranked by GTI score

Afghanistan had the highest impact of terrorism for the third consecutive year.

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Afghanistan	3	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1
Iraq	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Somalia	5	7	7	7	8	5	3	3	3	3	3
Burkina Faso	113	113	111	108	52	30	21	15	7	6	4
Syria	20	4	4	5	6	7	7	8	6	5	5
Nigeria	8	5	5	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	6
Mali	41	23	19	21	16	13	10	9	8	7	7
Niger	49	57	44	34	20	19	18	19	14	12	8
Myanmar (Burma)	17	21	24	29	39	42	40	42	23	24	9
Pakistan	2	2	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	8	10

Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Afghanistan

GTI RANK	GTI SCORE	
1	**9.109**	**1,426** 🔴 DEAD
		2,199 🟠 INJURED
		837 ★ INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

🧍 **17,461**

1,800
1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0

2007 — 2021

Deaths by group

- 🟥 Islamic State - Khorasan Province
- ⬜ Islamic State (IS)
- 🟧 Taliban
- 🟦 Unknown

Attacks by target

- 🟧 Private Citizens & Property
- 🟥 Police & Military
- 🟧 Government
- ⬜ Religious Figures and Institutions
- 🟦 Unknown
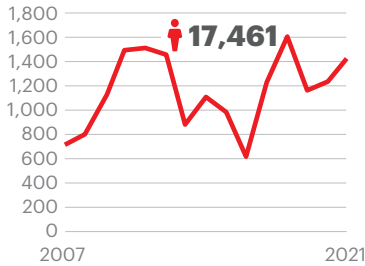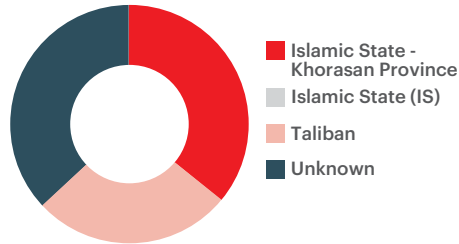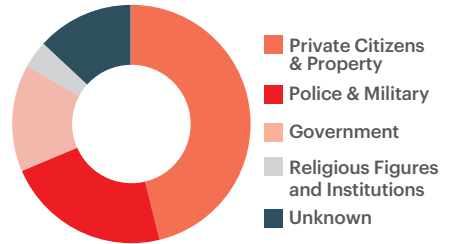
In 2021, Afghanistan recorded 1,426 deaths, the highest number of terror-related deaths in the world, making it the country most impacted by terrorism for the third consecutive year.

In 2021, terrorist incidents in Afghanistan increased by 33 per cent, with deaths increasing by 14 per cent. Overall, Afghanistan accounted for 20 per cent of deaths from terrorism globally in 2021. Civilians accounted for over half of these deaths.

In 2021, terrorism was widespread in Afghanistan with terrorist incidents recorded in 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. The largest number of deaths from terrorism were recorded in Kabul province with the majority of these as a result of attacks by the Khorasan Chapter of Islamic State. Deaths in the Kandahar region have almost tripled in the past year, with 282 deaths recorded in 2021.

While the Taliban was the most active terrorist group in Afghanistan, deaths attributed to the group fell by 32 per cent in 2021 as they made the transition into government after the fall of the capital Kabul in August 2021.

The number of suicide bombings fell. There was only one suicide bombing by the Taliban in 2021, resulting in no deaths, compared to 2020 when ten attacks were recorded resulting in 55 casualties.

Armed attacks were the deadliest form of Taliban attack in 2021, with 206 people killed in such attacks, compared with 164 fatalities as a result of Taliban bombings.

While the Taliban were responsible for the most attacks, the Khorasan Chapter of Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP) were responsible for the most deaths in Afghanistan in 2021. ISKP were responsible for 518 casualties in 2021, including the country's deadliest attack of the year, when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at Kabul International Airport, followed by another suicide bomb nearby. The attack occurred during the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and the corresponding evacuation of civilians, resulting in 170 deaths and over 200 injuries. It was the deadliest attack in Afghanistan since 2007.

Worst attacks
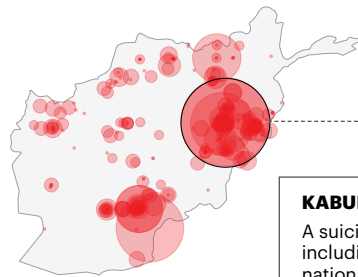
KABUL

A suicide bomber killed at least 170 people, including 13 US soldiers and three UK nationals, and injured at least 200 others, including 15 US soldiers, when he detonated his explosives near the Abbey gate area of Hamid Karzai international airport, Kabul, Kabul province at around 1800hrs on 26 August. The attack was followed by another suicide bomb nearby. It is unclear how many people were killed and injured in each separate attack. There were also reports of gunfire. The attack came after multiple countries warned of an imminent terrorist threat in the vicinity of the airport. Islamic State - Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the attack.

Since its emergence in 2015, ISKP has viewed the Taliban as both its strategic and ideological rival. ISKP has repeatedly denounced the Taliban's efforts to form an emirate based on national boundaries, which directly opposes ISKP's vision of a global caliphate.[20] It is expected that the new Taliban government will continue to clash with the Khorasan Chapter, resulting in more attacks and higher casualty rates.[21] Since the Taliban government came into force in August 2021, there have been 32 attacks by the Khorasan Chapter against the Taliban, resulting in 54 deaths.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains uncertain, with an escalation in conflict between ISKP and the Taliban remaining a strong possibility. With the Taliban appearing eager to engage the international community in a bid to secure international recognition and future economic assistance, it is likely that ISKP will exploit this as a perceived dampening of its ideology, using it to lure a variety of extremist militants to its ranks including foreign fighters from neighbouring Syria and Iraq, leading to larger, more widespread terror attacks.[22,23]

Iraq

GTI RANK
2

GTI SCORE
8.511

524 DEAD
836 INJURED
833 INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

34,043

7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0

2007   2021

Deaths by group

■ Islamic State
■ Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
■ Unknown

Attacks by target

■ Private Citizens & Property
■ Police & Military
■ Critical Infrastructure
■ Government
■ Unknown
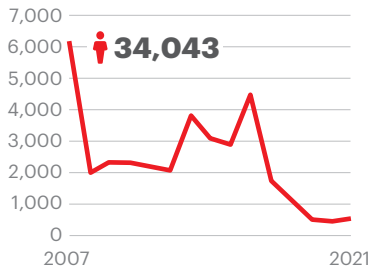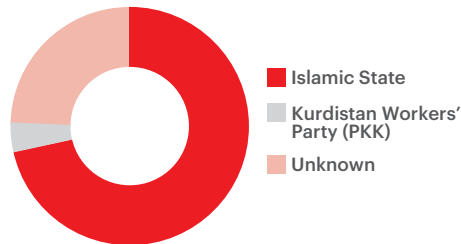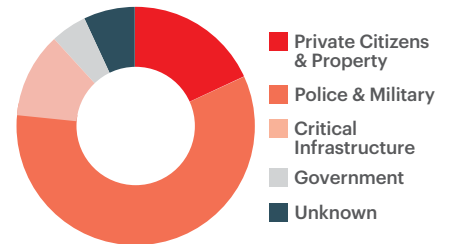
Iraq recorded 833 terrorist attacks in 2021, the highest of any country. This is an increase of 33 per cent when compared to the previous year. This is largely as a result of rising political unrest and instability, which terror groups, particularly IS, are using to their advantage.[24] The number of deaths from terrorism mirrored this trend on a smaller scale, with Iraq recording 524 deaths in 2021, an increase of 15 per cent when compared to the prior year.

Overall, deaths from terrorism in Iraq have decreased 91 per cent from their peak since 2007.

For the second consecutive year, the military were the target of the most terrorist attacks and recorded the most casualties of any group, accounting for 43 per cent of all deaths in Iraq in 2021. Despite the number of attacks against the military increasing by 60 per cent, the number of deaths amongst this group decreased by six per cent. Civilian fatalities increased by 28 per cent from 127 in 2020 to 163 in 2021.

Attacks were recorded in 18 of Iraq's 19 governances in 2021, with the north-eastern governances the most affected. The governances of Diyala, Sala ad-Din and At-Ta'min made up 48 per cent of all terrorist attacks in the country.

Terrorist activity in Iraq continues to be dominated by IS, with the group accounting for 71 per cent of all deaths in 2021. While IS attacks in Iraq have fallen seven per cent in the last year, the number of casualties has risen to the highest level since 2018, at 327 deaths in 2021.

IS claimed responsibility for the deadliest attack in Iraq in 2021, when a bomb detonated at a market in a Shia-majority neighbourhood in Baghdad. Thirty-five civilians were killed and at least 60 others were injured.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were the only other named group active in Iraq in 2021. PKK were responsible for 22 attacks in 2021, which resulted in 21 deaths. This is an increase in activity, with only eight attacks and four deaths recorded in 2020.

Worst attacks

SADR
A bomb killed at least 35 civilians and wounded at least 60 others at Al-Wuhailat market in the Sadr City area of Baghdad, Baghdad governorate on the evening of 19 July. The attack targeted a Shia majority neighbourhood on the eve of the Eid Al-Adha holiday. Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack and said it was a suicide bombing. However, security forces said the device was a static explosive.

Another 484 attacks and 127 deaths were not attributed to any organisation.

While IS activities have significantly declined since the Iraqi government declared the military defeat of IS in Iraq in 2017, it is clear that the group's threat to the security of the region has not disappeared. Though the group remains unable to hold territory in the region, IS continues to wage a low-level insurgency that regularly causes injury and death in remote mountain and desert areas of Iraq.[25] Like in neighbouring Syria, the waning United States military presence is likely to allow IS to reconstitute and reorganise, putting pressure on the Iraqi government to continue counter-terrorism efforts while already under considerable coronavirus and economic downturn-induced stress.[26]

Somalia

GTI RANK
3

GTI SCORE
8.398

599 | DEAD
478 | INJURED
308 ★ INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

6,166

Deaths by group

- ■ Al-Shabaab
- ■ Unknown
- ■ Islamic State (IS)

Attacks by target

- ■ Private Citizens & Property
- ■ Government
- ■ Police & Military
- ■ Unknown
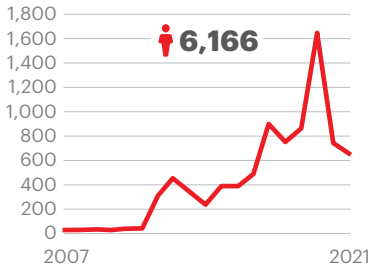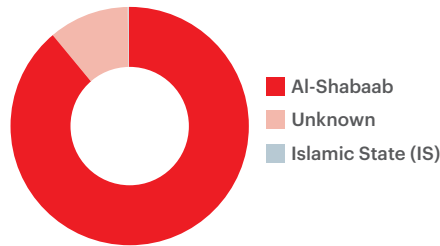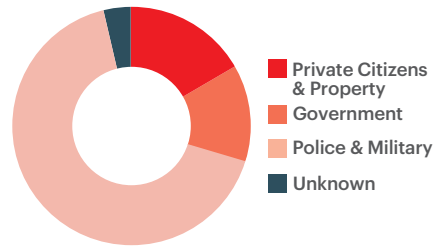
In 2021, terrorist attacks and deaths in Somalia fell from the prior year with both attacks and deaths falling by ten per cent. This continues an improving trend in terror-related deaths that began in 2017 and is now only 17 per cent of the overall peak in 2014.

Al-Shabaab remains the deadliest terrorist group in Somalia, responsible for 534 deaths, which represents 89 per cent of all terror-related deaths in the country in 2021. This is a decrease of 18 per cent when compared to the previous year. In 2021, Al-Shabaab turned their attention to targeting military personnel in addition to civilians and government officials. Military deaths accounted for over half of terrorism deaths attributed to the group, followed by civilians at 13 per cent and government officials, also at 13 per cent.
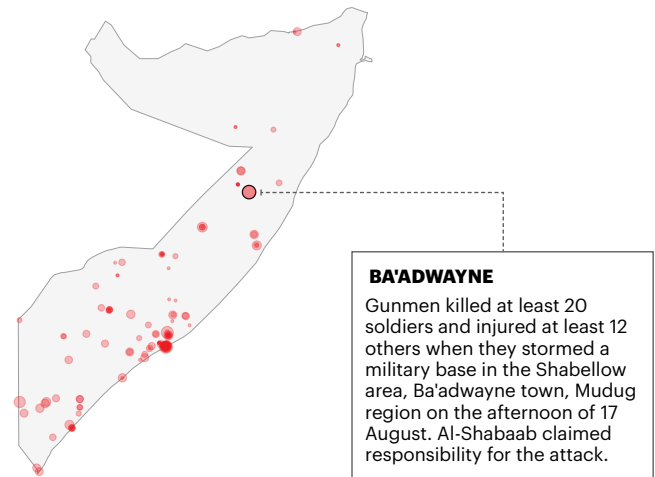
Al-Shabaab's attacks mostly occurred in Somalia's southern provinces. Most attacks occurred in the provinces of Shabeellaha Hoose and Banaadir, the latter of which contains the country's capital Mogadishu. Overall, 40 per cent of attacks committed by Al-Shabaab in 2021 occurred in these provinces.

However, its attacks are becoming more lethal. Although the number of attacks committed by Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu declined by 37 per cent, deaths in the capital city increased by 14 per cent. Six attacks in the Mogadishu area resulted in the death of 10 or more individuals, with Al-Shabaab taking responsibility for five of these incidents.

Somalia's most devastating terrorist attack of 2021 occurred in the capital city Mogadishu when a car bomb exploded outside a restaurant reportedly popular with government officials and members of security forces. The attack killed at least 20 people and wounded more than 40 others, including prison officers from a nearby prison. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.

In 2021, Somali parliament extended the government's term of office without stating when the next election would occur, which triggered violence across the country.

Worst attacks

BA'ADWAYNE
Gunmen killed at least 20 soldiers and injured at least 12 others when they stormed a military base in the Shabellow area, Ba'adwayne town, Mudug region on the afternoon of 17 August. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.

2021 also saw the withdrawal of US security and African Union peacekeeping forces from Somalia after they successfully reclaimed control of Mogadishu and other territories held by Al-Shabaab.[27] However, it is possible that this withdrawal could embolden militants in Africa, sparking a resurgence of terror activity in the region.[28]

It is likely terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab will feel empowered by the political turbulence and reduction in counterterrorism efforts, providing terrorists with additional opportunity to conduct attacks and otherwise undermine Somali stability.[29]

Burkina Faso

GTI RANK	GTI SCORE
4	**8.270**

732 DEAD
231 INJURED
216 ★ INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

947

Deaths by group

- Jama'at Nasr Al-Islam wal Muslimin
- Islamic State West Africa (ISWA)
- Unknown

Attacks by target

- Private citizens & property
- Police & Military
- Government
- Other
- Unknown
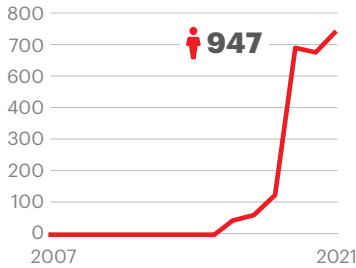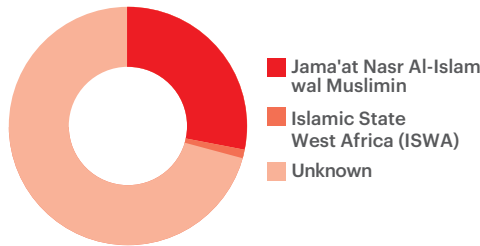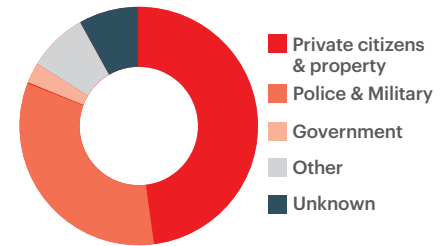
Terrorism incidents in Burkina Faso increased between 2020 and 2021, from 191 to 216 incidents. This is the highest number of attacks since the peak in 2019 after the declaration of a state of emergency as a result of increasing Islamic terrorist activity and the subsequent resignation of Prime Minister Paul Theiba. Terror-related deaths mirrored this trend, increasing by 11 per cent when compared to the previous year, with more than half of the 732 deaths in 2021 being civilians. Burkina Faso recorded the second highest number of deaths of any country in 2021.

The regions near Burkina Faso's borders with Niger and Mali experienced the most terror attacks, accounting for 72 per cent of all attacks in 2021. Of the country's 732 deaths in 2021, 491 occurred in the Sahel administrative region, including Burkina Faso's deadliest attack of 2021. In June, at least 160 people were killed, including 20 children, and 40 people were wounded when gunmen stormed a village along the northern border with Niger. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, however, jihadists are known to operate in the area. This was the second most-deadly attack in the world in 2021.

Civilians were the most targeted group for the third consecutive year. Over 65 per cent of terror-related deaths in Burkina Faso were of civilians, which is an increase of 32 per cent compared with the year prior which outstrips the increase in incidents.

Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM) continue to be the most prominent terrorist group in Burkina Faso. Despite only taking responsibility for 13 terror attacks in 2021, JNIM's death toll rose to 207 deaths in 2021, almost five times the amount recorded for 2020. JNIM's lethality rate is now almost 16 deaths per attack compared with 4 deaths per attack in 2020. JNIM's preferred tactic remains armed assaults with 54 per cent of their attacks targeting military personnel and law enforcement.

Burkina Faso has one of the highest unclaimed terrorist deaths at 71 per cent. It is feasible to assume that the majority of these attacks would have been carried out by JNIM.

While JNIM took responsibility for more terror attacks than any

Worst attacks
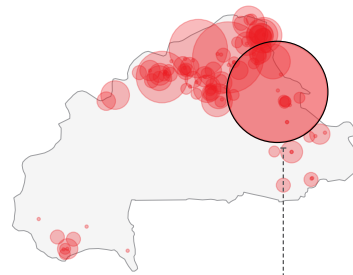
SOLHAN
Gunmen killed at least 160 people, including at least 20 children, and wounded at least 40 others in Solhan village, Solhan department, Yagha province, Sahel region at around 0200hrs on 5 June. The assailants first attacked members of a volunteer defence force militia before attacking civilians and burning down houses and a market. No group had claimed responsibility for the attack at the time of writing but jihadists operate in the area.

other group in Burkina Faso in 2021, 94 per cent of attacks and 71 per cent of deaths were linked to unknown jihadists.

While Burkina Faso continues to cooperate with other Sahel countries in counter-terrorism efforts, they have failed to curb the threat of jihadist groups such as JNIM. Despite the downward trend in terrorism attacks and deaths, Burkina Faso recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness on the 2021 Global Peace Index, falling 13 places. Burkina Faso's political instability and high tensions due to civilian anger at the government's inability to stem terrorist attacks and violence have led to an increase in riots and violent protests. This increase in internal conflict has diverted the attention of security forces towards combating Islamist insurgency, weakening efforts to maintain law and order.[30]
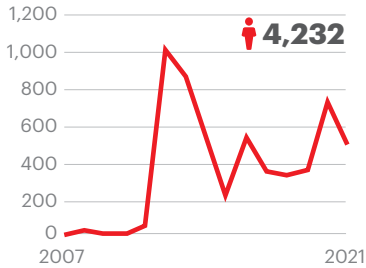
Syria

GTI RANK
5

GTI SCORE
8.250

488 DEAD
502 INJURED
338 INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

4,232

1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0

2007 — 2021

Deaths by group

- Islamic State (IS)
- Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)
- Unknown
- Other

Attacks by target

- Private Citizens & Property
- Other
- Police & Military
- Government
- Unknown
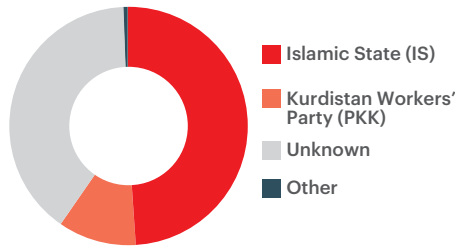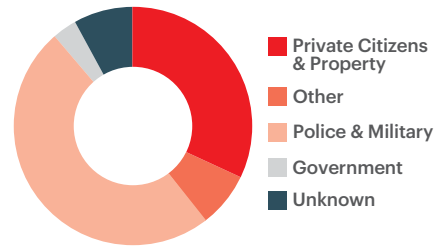
In 2021, the conflict in Syria passed its ten-year anniversary. Following increased armed conflict after a period of de-escalation, deaths from terrorism rose significantly in 2020.

In 2021, this trend reversed, with 488 terror-related deaths recorded in Syria, a decrease of 33 per cent from the previous year. The number of terrorism incidents mirrored this trend, decreasing by 23 per cent between 2020 and 2021.

The military remains the most common target for attacks and the group with the most casualties, followed by civilians. Syria's deadliest terror attack of 2021 occurred when gunmen killed 13 soldiers in an attack on a military vehicle in the Homs Governorate, north-east of Damascus. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, however local media outlets reported that IS was responsible.

The northern provinces were the most affected by terrorism in 2021, with 45 per cent of attacks occurring in Deir ez-Zor and Aleppo governorates. This is a decrease of 32 per cent from the previous year's figures for the same provinces. These governorates retained their positions as the governorates with the highest number of terror attacks in 2021 with 77 and 75 attacks respectively. Aleppo recorded the same number of attacks in the year prior, while attacks in Deir ez-Zor declined by 48 per cent when compared with the previous year.

IS remained the deadliest terrorist group in Syria for the eighth consecutive year, accounting for 49 per cent of total deaths and 32 per cent of claimed incidents. Despite this, terror attacks and deaths by IS fell by 34 per cent and 26 per cent respectively, when compared with the year prior. However, 54 per cent of attacks were not attributed to an organisation.

The lethality of IS attacks against civilians declined substantially from an average of 30 deaths per attack in 2016 to just over 2 deaths per attack in 2021, a decline of 93 per cent. IS continues to shift their focus from targeting civilians to targeting military personnel, which comprised 79 per cent of IS casualties in 2021.

IS' reliance on explosives continues to decline in favour of armed assaults. In 2021, 72 per cent of IS attacks were in the

Worst attacks
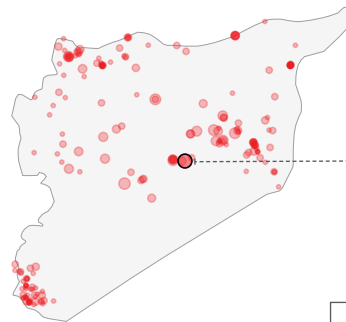
AL-SUKHNA - DEIR EZZOR
Gunmen killed 13 soldiers and wounded an unconfirmed number of others in an attack on a military vehicle on the Al-Sukhna - Deir Ezzor highway, Homs governorate, on 7 September. No group had claimed the attack at the time of writing, but local media outlets reported that Islamic State (IS) was responsible.

form of armed assaults. Explosive attacks have significantly declined, from over a third of IS attacks in 2020 to only 16 per cent of IS attacks in 2021. There were no suicide bombings by IS in Syria in 2021.

Despite US and Syrian military forces reclaiming the final territorial stronghold of IS in Syria in 2019, IS has maintained a low-level insurgency. In Syria, IS appears to be consolidating in desert regions and are awaiting the next stage of its insurgency. With the US continuing to withdraw its forces from combat roles in the area, it is possible IS will resume its activity in an attempt to regain control of the area.[31]
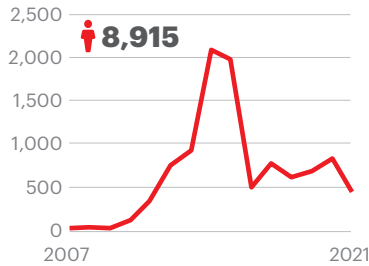
Nigeria

GTI RANK	GTI SCORE
6	**8.233**

448 DEAD
161 INJURED
204 INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

8,915

2,500 / 2,000 / 1,500 / 1,000 / 500 / 0

2007 — 2021

Deaths by group

- Islamic State West Africa (ISWA)
- Boko Haram
- Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)
- Unknown
- Other

Attacks by target

- Private Citizens & Property
- Business
- Police & Military
- Government
- Other
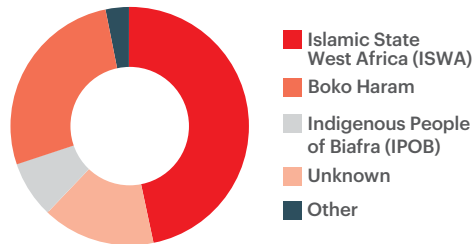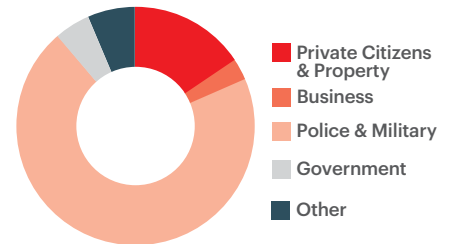
Total deaths from terrorism in Nigeria fell to 448 in 2021, the lowest level since 2011. Terror-related casualties dropped by almost half compared with the previous year. However, the number of terrorist attacks increased by 49 per cent between 2020 and 2021.

36 per cent of attacks were claimed by ISWA, Boko Haram being responsible for eight per cent and 44 per cent not attributed to any group.

Law enforcement, including police and prison officers overtook both military and civilians as the most targeted group of 2021. Attacks against police and prisons increased substantially from one recorded attack in 2020 to 75 in 2021, accounting for over a third of all attacks in Nigeria in 2021. This was largely driven by an increase in clashes between law enforcement and separatist groups, such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Civilian deaths dropped 62 per cent from 2020. Military deaths mirrored this trend, with 2021 recording almost half the number of terrorism deaths from the prior year.

In 2020, ISWA became the deadliest terrorist group in Nigeria. The decline of Boko Haram continued into 2021, with Boko Haram responsible for only 69 deaths, a decrease of 77 per cent from the previous year. This is the lowest number of deaths by the group for a decade.

Boko Haram's decline has resulted in a substantial improvement in terrorism in Borno State, which experienced a decrease of 71 per cent in terrorism deaths when compared with the prior year. Attacks in the state also decreased from 121 to 86 respectively, a decrease of 30 per cent. The state, however, remains the hardest hit region in Nigeria for terrorism, accounting for half of all terror-related deaths in 2021.

Boko Haram's decline coincides with a number of factors, most significantly the death of the group's leader, Abubakar Shekau. Shekau, who committed suicide by detonating an explosives vest during a confrontation with ISWA in May 2021.[32] Given the demise of their leader, Shekau's followers were faced with the decision to either continue Shekau's ideology or join ISWA. It has been reported that as many as 18 former Boko Haram

Worst attacks
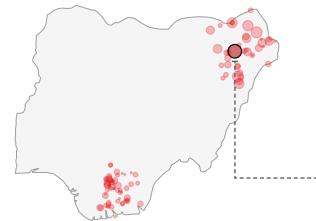
MAINOK
Gunmen killed over 30 soldiers at an army base in Mainok, Kaga area, Borno state, in an attack that lasted from an unspecified time in the afternoon until about 00:00hrs on 25 April. No group had claimed the attack at the time of writing, but local media outlets said Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) were responsible.

commanders have joined ISWA after Shekau's death.[33] Attacks by ISWA as well as counter-terrorism efforts by the Nigerian government and foreign military forces have significantly weakened Boko Haram's impact in Nigeria. These external pressures resulted in an increase in Boko Haram attacks in neighbouring countries, particularly Cameroon which recorded 37 attacks and 58 deaths in 2021. Cameroon recorded more Boko Haram attacks than Nigeria in 2021 for the second consecutive year.

In 2021, ISWA recorded their highest number of incidents and third highest death toll since 2017. Overall, ISWA were responsible of 39 per cent of all attacks in Nigeria in 2021. Despite this, the lethality of ISWA attacks has continued to decline from 10 deaths per attack in 2018 to almost three deaths per attack in 2021.

ISWA was responsible for Nigeria's deadliest attack of 2021, with gunmen killing over 30 soldiers at an army base in the Borno region. ISWA's main target continues to be military personnel, with the military being the target of over half of all attacks, resulting in 45 per cent of casualties attributed to the group in 2021. Despite the civilian death toll decreasing, ISWA continues to increase its attacks on civilians, from 11 in 2020 to 19 in 2021.

With the decline of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Shekau's death, it is expected that ISWA will continue to integrate surviving members of Shekau's group, bolstering its fight against the Nigerian government's counter-terrorism efforts.[34]

Mali

GTI RANK | GTI SCORE
7 | **8.152**

574 DEAD
551 INJURED
333 ★ INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

↑**1,478**

450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0

2007   2021

Deaths by group

- Jammat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)
- Islamic State West Africa (ISWA)
- Unknown

Attacks by target

- Private Citizens & Property
- Peacekeepers
- Police and Military
- Other
- Unknown
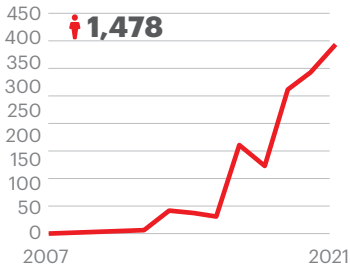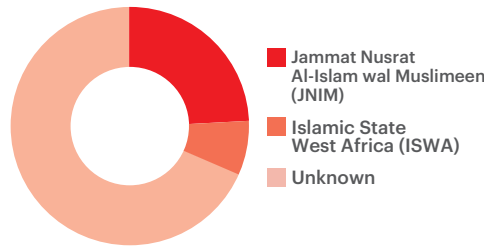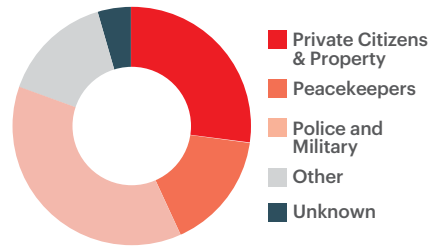
In 2021, Mali recorded the highest number of terrorist attacks and deaths in the last decade. Rising political instability added to the difficulties of fighting terrorism. Attacks and deaths from terrorism in Mali increased by 56 per cent and 46 per cent respectively, when compared with the previous year. This is the largest year-on-year increase since 2017, continuing an upward trend that began with the 2015 declaration of a state of emergency in the wake of the Radisson Blu Hotel attack in Bamako.

Most attacks were directed at the military and counter-terrorism efforts, however civilians accounted for the most deaths in 2021. The deadliest attack was an ambush against a military patrol in the Gao region when around 100 assailants killed 33 soldiers and wounded 14 others. Security forces retaliated, killing 20 assailants. ISWA claimed responsibility for the attack.

The tri-border area, which encompassed Mali's border with Niger and Burkina Faso, continues to be the most plagued area for terrorist attacks, representing over 70 per cent of Mali's attacks for 2021. The Mopti region, which shares a border with Burkina Faso, recorded 148 attacks in 2021, an increase of 70 per cent when compared with 2020.

JNIM continue to be the most prominent group in Mali, being responsible for 72 terror attacks in 2021, an increase of 80 per cent from the previous year. JNIM's attacks largely target the Malian military and peacekeeping operations, however, the majority of deaths attributed to the group were civilians.

Armed assaults involving firearms continue to be the favoured tactic of JNIM, with these accounting for over half JNIM's attacks for 2021. Explosives was the next most popular tactic, with JNIM using bombs to inflict damage and disrupt French Barkhane counter-terrorism operations and MINUSMA peacekeeping efforts. However, the lethality of JNIM's attacks have continued to decrease, from 1.9 deaths per attack in 2021 compared to 3.9 deaths per attack in 2020.

Mali's political instability in the wake of the coup of May 2021 will likely provide Islamic extremist groups with additional

Worst attacks
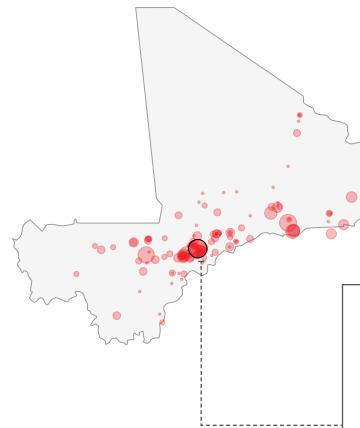
SONGHO AND BANDIAGAR
Gunmen killed at least 33 civilians and injured at least seven others in an attack on a public bus between Songho and Bandiagara, Bandiagara cercle, Mopti region on 3 December. No group had claimed responsibility at the time of writing, but jihadists operate in the area.

opportunity to exploit dissatisfaction with the Malian government.[35] Despite the establishment of trans-regional counter-terrorism forces such as G5 Sahel, there have been few military victories over jihadist insurgency groups. The large area covered by the tri-border region compared with the relatively small numbers of Malian military personnel and counter-terrorism forces means that resources are too stretched to be effective in the area. The decision by France to withdraw its troops and end Operation Barkhane by the first quarter of 2022 is likely to present further challenges for counter-terrorism efforts in the region.[36]

Niger

GTI RANK **8**

GTI SCORE **7.856**

588 DEAD
119 INJURED
74 INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

781

Deaths by group

- Islamic State West Africa (ISWA)
- Boko Haram
- Unknown

Attacks by target

- Government
- Private Citizens & Property
- Police & Military
- Business
- Other
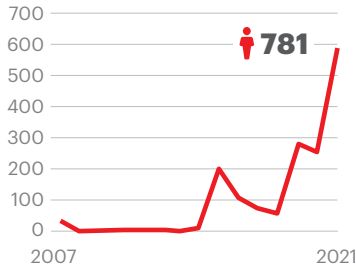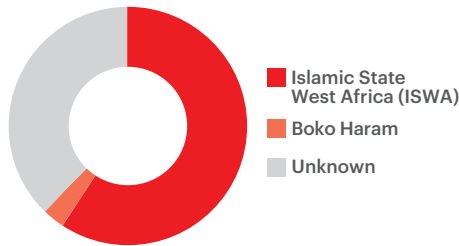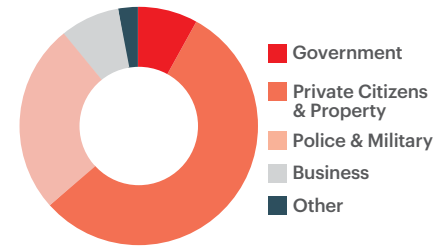
Terrorist attacks in Niger were relatively comparable between 2020 and 2021, however, terror-related deaths almost doubled during the same period. Niger is now amongst the ten countries most impacted by terrorism in 2021 and for the first time.

In 2021, Niger recorded 588 deaths as a result of terrorism. This is the highest terror-related death toll in the last decade. Civilians accounted for 78 per cent of these casualties, resulting in Niger becoming the country with the third-highest civilian death toll in 2021.

Niger's deadliest attack of 2021 occurred in a village in the Tillaberi region when gunmen on motorbikes killed 70 civilians and wounded another 17. ISWA claimed responsibility, indicating they targeted pro-government militia members.

The Tillaberi province recorded the highest number of attacks and deaths in Niger in 2021, with deaths more than doubling between 2020 and 2021 in the region. Being the closest region to the unstable tri-border area with Mali and Burkina Faso, the Tillaberi region has been the hardest hit by the Islamic insurgency in the Sahel. Terrorist attacks occurred in five of Niger's eight regions, with Tillaberi recording half the country's terrorist attacks and 61 per cent of its casualties.

ISWA overtook Boko Haram as the most active terrorist group in Niger in 2021. ISWA were responsible for 23 attacks, spread largely across the Diffa and Tillaberi regions. Deaths as a result of ISWA attacks accounted for 60 per cent of the total casualties in Niger. ISWA largely targeted Nigerien civilians with this group, accounting for 84 per cent of the casualties in 2021.

The lethality of ISWA's attacks in Niger are now at their highest. In 2021 the group executed 23 attacks with on average 15.2 deaths per attack. This compares with 13 attacks in 2020 with an average of 9.4 deaths per attack in 2020. ISWA in Niger is the most lethal group in the world in 2021.

Like other countries in the Sahel region, Niger faces a significant threat to national security by growing Islamic extremist groups. Internal political conflict, including a thwarted coup in 2021 has

Worst attacks
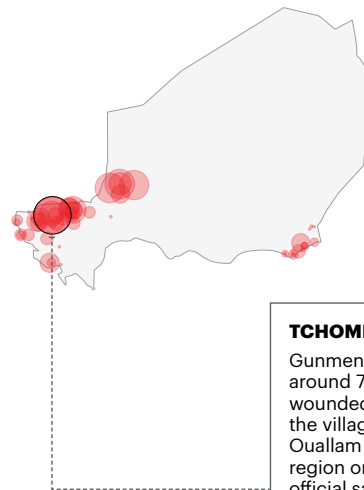
TCHOMBANGOU
Gunmen on motorbikes killed around 70 civilians and wounded around 17 others in the village of Tchombangou, Ouallam department, Tillaberi region on 2 January. One official said the attack took place at around 12:00hrs, although another local source said 21:00hrs. Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) claimed responsibility, saying they targeted pro-government militia members.

led to severely over-stretched and under-resourced security forces attempting to balance counter-terrorism with internal peacekeeping. It is likely that insurgency groups will capitalise on this instability and terrorism in the Sahel region will continue to rise.[37]
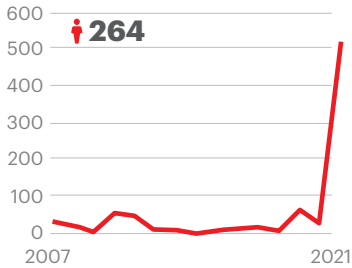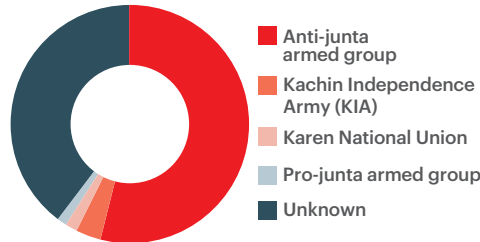
Myanmar (Burma)

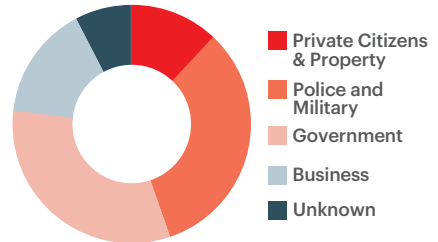GTI RANK
9

GTI SCORE
7.830

521 DEAD
351 INJURED
750 INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

264

Deaths by group

- Anti-junta armed group
- Kachin Independence Army (KIA)
- Karen National Union
- Pro-junta armed group
- Unknown

Attacks by target

- Private Citizens & Property
- Police and Military
- Government
- Business
- Unknown

In 2021, terrorist attacks in Myanmar increased significantly, from 25 attacks in 2020 to 750 attacks in 2021. This is the highest level seen in Myanmar in the last two decades. This is Myanmar's first appearance amongst the ten countries most impacted by terrorism.

Deaths as a result of terrorism have increased dramatically in the past year, rising from 24 in 2020 to 521 in 2021, a 2,071 per cent increase. Political instability as a result of the February 2021 election and the declaration of a state of emergency have led to violent clashes between the new military government, supporters of the former regime and many ethic militias. Myanmar recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness in the Asia-Pacific region, according to the 2021 Global Peace Index. It is now the least peaceful country in the region.

The most devastating attack of 2021 occurred when anti-junta gunmen killed 40 soldiers in the Sagaing region. Armed anti-junta groups were responsible for almost half of terrorist attacks and deaths in Myanmar in 2021. As a result, 76 per cent of all terror-related deaths in Myanmar were of government, law enforcement and military personnel, making this Myanmar's deadliest year in the last two decades. Anti-junta groups are largely composed of grassroots organisations who oppose the military's takeover in February 2021. They appear to operate independently at a local level and vary in their resources and training, with some groups joining forces with ethnic armed organisations such as the Karen National Union.[38,39]

Critical infrastructure is being increasingly targeted by anti-junta groups, accounting for nine per cent of attacks in 2021. Telecommunications towers are of particular interest to anti-junta groups, with numerous towers bombed and torched by these groups in 2021. There were 28 incidents throughout Myanmar. The majority of telecommunications towers destroyed are reported to belong to Mytel, a company part-owned by the junta.[40]

Prior to the 2021 coup, the deadliest terrorist group in Myanmar was the Arakan Army (AA). In 2020, the AA were responsible for over 80 per cent of terror related deaths in Myanmar. Following the government's withdrawal of its designation as a terrorist

Worst attacks
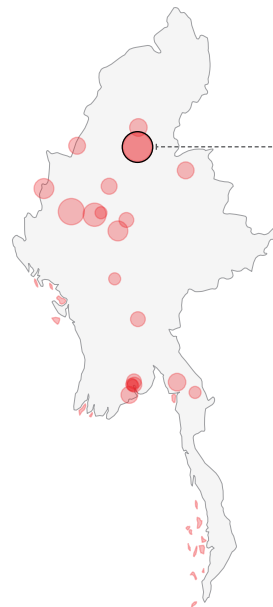
KATHA
Gunmen killed 40 soldiers in Katha township, Sagaing region on 20 September. There were no reported casualties among the perpetrators. No group had claimed responsibility at the time of writing, but local media said that anti-junta groups were responsible for the attack.

group in 2021, no deaths or attacks by AA were recorded. However, it's ally the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) recorded 18 deaths in 2021, becoming Myanmar's second deadliest group.

Yangon bore the brunt of terrorism in 2021, with over half Myanmar's terrorist attacks and over a third of deaths occurring within the region. However, the Magway region recorded the most lethal attacks of all regions in Myanmar with a rate of 2.4 deaths per attack, compared with the national rate of 0.7 deaths per attack.

With a ceasefire unlikely whilst the political instability continues, it is expected that terrorism will remain a fixture in Myanmar for the near future. The sentencing of former leaders Aung San Suu Kyi and Win Myint to terms of imprisonment is likely to further aggravate tensions between the military government and anti-junta groups.[41]
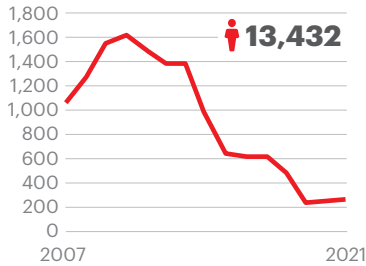
Pakistan

GTI RANK **10** | GTI SCORE **7.825**

275 DEAD
469 INJURED
186 ★ INCIDENTS

Total deaths since 2007

13,432

1,800
1,600
1,400
1,200
1,000
800
600
400
200
0

2007 2021

Deaths by group

- Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
- Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)
- Islamic State - Khorasan Province
- Islamic State (IS)

Attacks by target

- Government
- Private Citizens & Property
- Police & Military
- Business
- Other
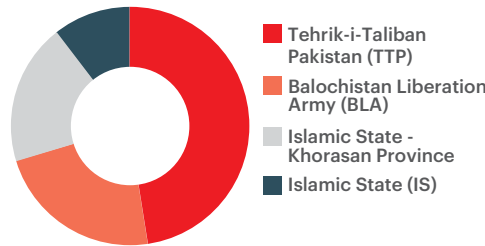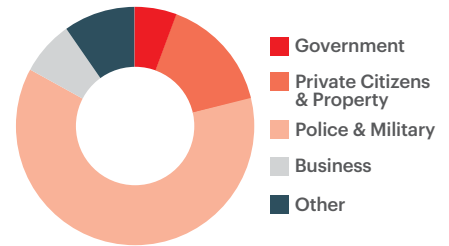
The impact of terrorism increased slightly in Pakistan, with the country recording a five per cent increase in the number of deaths in 2021 compared with the previous year. This is the second consecutive year where an increase in terrorism deaths was recorded. The number of terror related incidents remained steady in 2021, with 171 incidents in 2020 and 186 in 2021.

The number of deaths and incidents are 71 per cent and 82 per cent lower than their respective peaks in the 2011.

Pakistan's military continued efforts to disarm and eliminate terrorist sleeper cells in the form of Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad, which meant that the military were the most common target of attacks in 2021, with 44 per cent of all terror-related deaths being military personnel.

The Islamic resistance group, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) overtook the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) as the deadliest terrorist group, with TTP accounting for 19 per cent of terror-related deaths in Pakistan in 2021. Terrorism deaths by TTP more than doubled between 2020 and 2021, with 62 per cent of the deaths occurring in the states along the border with Afghanistan. Overall, attacks in this area amounted to 36 per cent of Pakistan's total attacks in 2021.

Two attacks, involving explosives, were Pakistan's deadliest terror-related incidents of 2021. In one incident a truck carrying civilian passengers was destroyed by a grenade that killed 13 people and wounded 7 others near Karachi along the southern coast. In another, 13 people were killed and another 28 injured, when a bomb exploded on a bus carrying Chinese workers, engineers and mechanics near the northern Afghanistan border. No group claimed responsibility for either attack.

Terror groups that were historically amongst Pakistan's deadliest terrorist groups particularly, IS and ISKP as well as the BLA, continued to decline. Attacks by the BLA fell by 20 per cent, compared with the prior year. Pakistani military resistance has led to a seven per cent decline in IS attacks and a corresponding 86 per cent decrease in IS deaths since numbers peaked in 2018.

Worst attacks
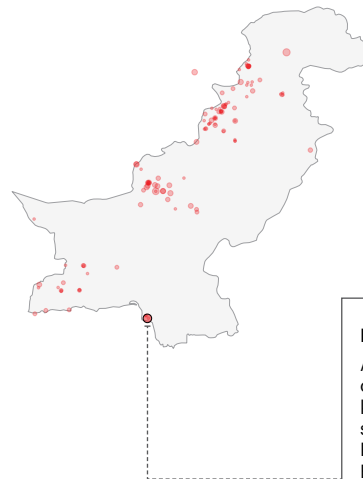
MOACH GOTH
A grenade targeting a truck carrying civilian passengers killed thirteen and wounded seven more on Hub River Road near Moach Goth, Baladia, Karachi, Sindh province at around 2145hrs on 14 August. No group had claimed the attack at the time of writing, but police said they suspected an unspecified banned separatist group.

Pakistani military operations are expected to continue to reduce the impact of terrorism in Pakistan. However, the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan may cause an increase in regional instability, providing terrorist groups with the opportunity to cause more harm.[42]

Trends in Terrorism

TRENDS SINCE 2007

There have been several distinct phases in terrorist activity over the past decade, as shown in Figure 2.1. In 2007-2008, most terrorist activity globally was concentrated in Iraq and Afghanistan in response to the US and its allies' activities. After the events of the Arab Spring and the emergence of IS, there was a surge in terrorism across the Middle East, most notably in Syria and Iraq, and concurrently in Nigeria. At its peak in 2015, over 10,000 people were killed in terrorist attacks in a single year. The Sahel region has also experienced a significant increase in the number of terror attacks and fatalities over the past five years.

Although deaths from terrorism have declined in four of the past five years, the declines have been minimal with the number of deaths remaining fairly constant since 2018.

Overall, deaths from terrorism have fallen by over a third in

total since the peak in 2015. Two of the countries with the largest decreases were Iraq and Pakistan. After recording the lowest number of deaths in 14 years in 2019, terrorism deaths in Pakistan increased to 275 in 2021. Despite this, the annual death rate in Pakistan has remained consistently low as the Pakistani military continues to focus on disarming and eliminating terrorist sleeper cells. The winding down of the Syrian civil war, the collapse of IS, and increased counterterrorism coordination at both the state and international level have all played a role in reducing the impact of terrorism around the world.

As the conflict in Syria subsided, IS and its affiliates have shifted their focus to sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel region in particular. The Sahel has become increasingly more violent during this period, with deaths increasing ten times between 2007 and 2021. Three of the countries in the Sahel were among the five countries with the largest increases in terrorism deaths

FIGURE 2.1

Deaths from terrorism, 2007–2021

Total deaths have decreased 33.5 per cent from their peak in 2015.
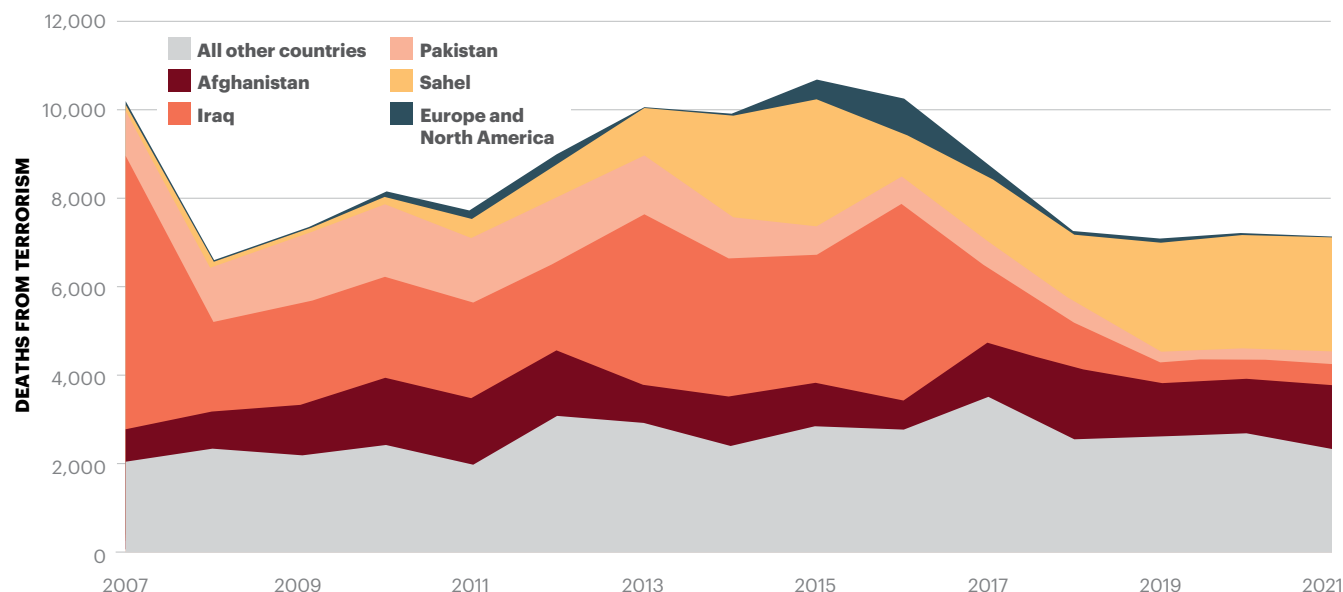
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

during this period, with Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger recording 732, 572 and 554 more deaths in 2021 than in 2007, respectively. Groups such as IS continue to wage a violent campaign in the region, with terrorism deaths in the Sahel accounting for 35 per cent of the total of terrorism deaths globally in 2021, compared to one per cent in 2007.

In the West, total terrorist attacks peaked in 2018 at 182 incidents while deaths from terrorism recorded their highest level in 2016, when 191 people died in terrorist attacks. Although the impact of religious motivated and radical jihadist terrorism has subsided in the West over the past four years, there has been a rise in the level of politically motivated terrorism. In 2018, the number of both deaths and incidents caused by political terrorism was higher than any other form of terrorism for the first time since 2007. In 2021, there were 40 politically motivated attacks, compared with just three religiously motivated attacks.

There has also been a reduction in the number of countries experiencing deaths from terrorism. In 2021, 44 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism. This is down from the peak of 55 countries in 2015. Of the 163 countries included in the analysis, nearly two thirds or 105 recorded no attacks or deaths from terrorism in 2020 and 2021, the highest number since 2007.

Conflict has been the primary driver of terrorism since 2007. In 2021, all of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism were involved in an armed conflict in 2020[1]. There were 120,359 deaths from terrorism between 2007 and 2020. Of these deaths, 92 per cent, or 111,191, occurred in countries involved in conflict.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the trend in deaths from terrorism by conflict type. During the peak of terrorist activity in 2015, most deaths from terrorism occurred in war zones, meaning countries that had registered over one thousand deaths from conflict in a single year.

FIGURE 2.2

Distribution of deaths from terrorism, 2007–2021

In 2021, 44 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism, two per cent higher than 2020.
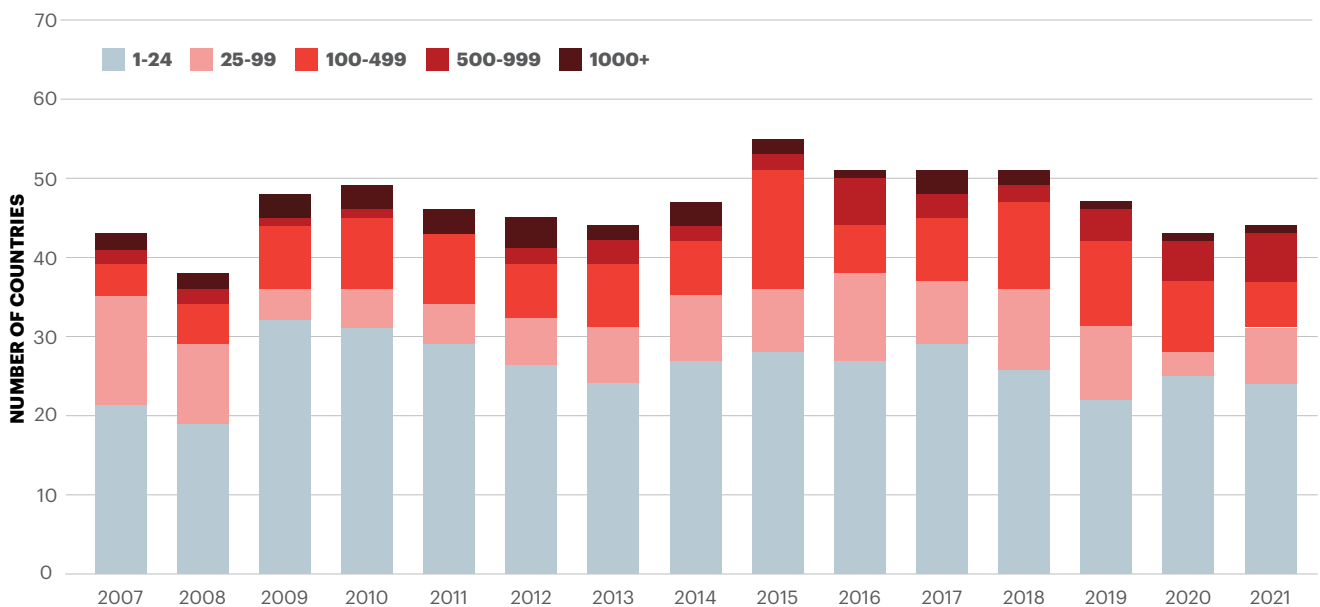
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

"Of the 163 countries included in the analysis, nearly two thirds or 105 recorded no attacks or deaths from terrorism in 2020 and 2021, the highest number since 2007."

However, over the past few years, the number of deaths from terrorism in war-afflicted countries has dropped, with the majority of terrorist activity now taking place in countries involved in a minor armed-conflict, which is where there were between 25 and 1,000 battle-related deaths in a single year. The decrease in terrorism deaths in war-afflicted countries and increase in deaths in minor armed-conflicts is shown in Figure 2.3.

Even in conflict situations, terrorism is a distinct form of violence, with unique forms of attack type and differing targets from conventional military or insurgent conflict. Figure 2.4 shows deaths from terrorism by target type in countries in conflict, from 2007 to 2020.

In conflict-afflicted countries, more people are killed in terrorist attacks that target civilians, than attacks targeting police, the military, and infrastructure. Since 2007, 39,943 people have been killed in terrorist attacks on police, the military, and infrastructure targets in countries in conflict. By contrast, 42,964 people were killed in attacks targeting civilians in conflict-afflicted countries.

FIGURE 2.3

Deaths from terrorism by conflict type, 2007–2020

Over 96 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurred in countries currently experiencing a conflict.
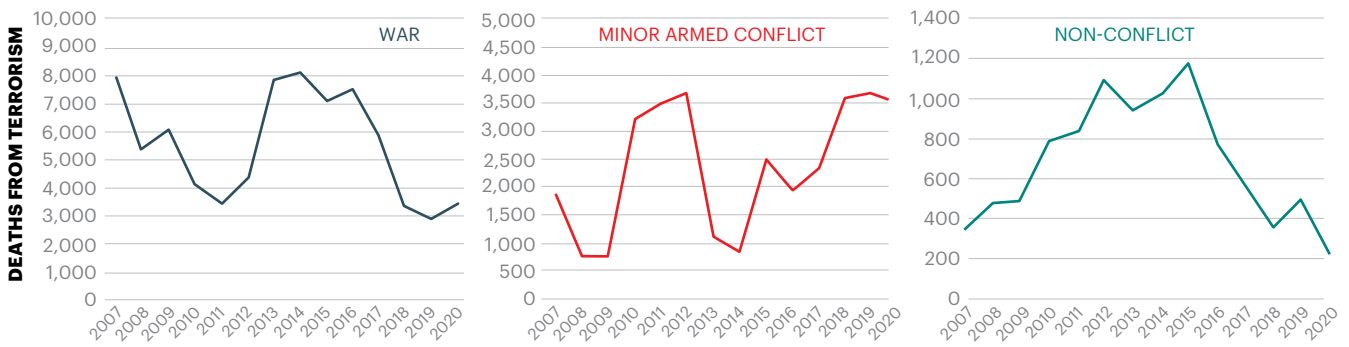
Source: UCDP, ACLED, Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

FIGURE 2.4

Deaths from terrorism by target type in countries in conflict, 2007–2021

Even in conflict situations, civilians are more likely to be terrorist targets.
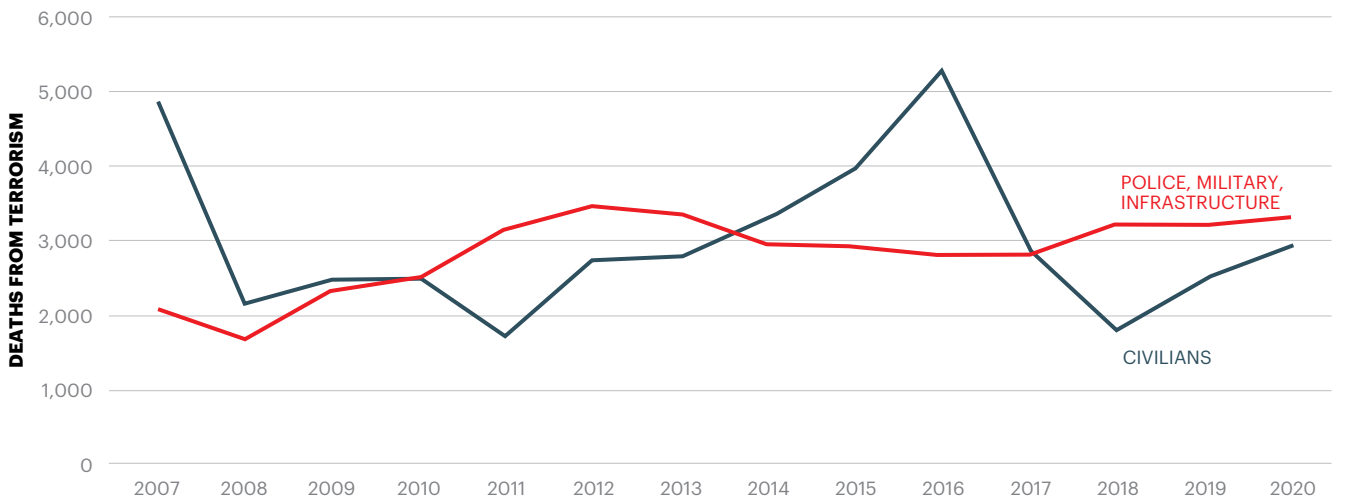
Source: UCDP, Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS
IN THE WEST

IEP groups terrorist organisations and ideologies into three broad categories: political, nationalist/separatist, and religiously motivated terrorism. For example, far-right terrorism is classified as a form of political terrorism. There are also a few organisations that fall outside of this categorisation system, such as environmental and animal rights related terrorism, although they can be claimed to be political as they ultimately have a political aim. While there can be an overlap between these categories, the vast majority of terrorist groups have a primary purpose and self-understanding that fits into at least one of these three groups. There are also attacks that occur where the ideological basis is unclear.

Terrorism in the West represents only a small fraction of total terrorism globally. Between 2007 and 2021 there were 126,740 deaths from terrorism globally. Of these, 865 occurred in the West, or just 0.68 per cent of the total. However, terrorism in the West is notable because it occurs almost entirely outside the context of an ongoing conflict or war. Outside of the West, 92 per cent of all deaths from terrorism took place in countries involved in an ongoing conflict. In the West, not a single death from terrorism occurred in a country involved in any level of conflict.

Since 2007, 61 per cent of fatalities in the West have occurred from religious attacks. The deadliest religious attacks in the West since 2007 were the vehicular attack in Nice on Bastille Day of 2016 and the attacks in Paris in November 2015, which both resulted in 87 fatalities each. Both attacks were claimed by Islamic State. Far-right groups account for 30 per cent of all fatalities over the period. Notable are also the attacks in Norway by Anders Behring Breivik in 2011 which killed 77 people, as well as the Christchurch mosque attacks of March 2019 which resulted in 51 deaths.

FIGURE 2.6

Terrorist fatalities in the west by ideology 2007–2021

Since 2007, 60 per cent of fatalities from terrorism have been from Islamic groups. This is followed by deaths from far-right attacks which accounts for 30 per cent.
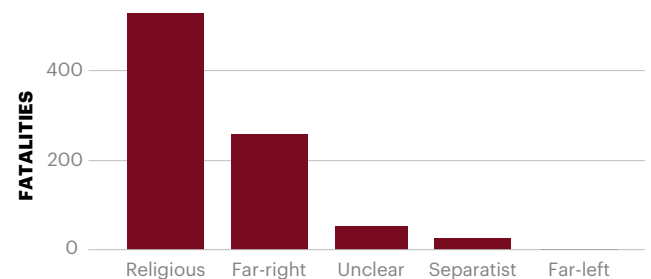
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

FIGURE 2.5

Incidents and deaths from terrorism in the West by ideology, 2007–2021

Since 2017, there have been more attacks attributed to political groups than to religious groups in the West.
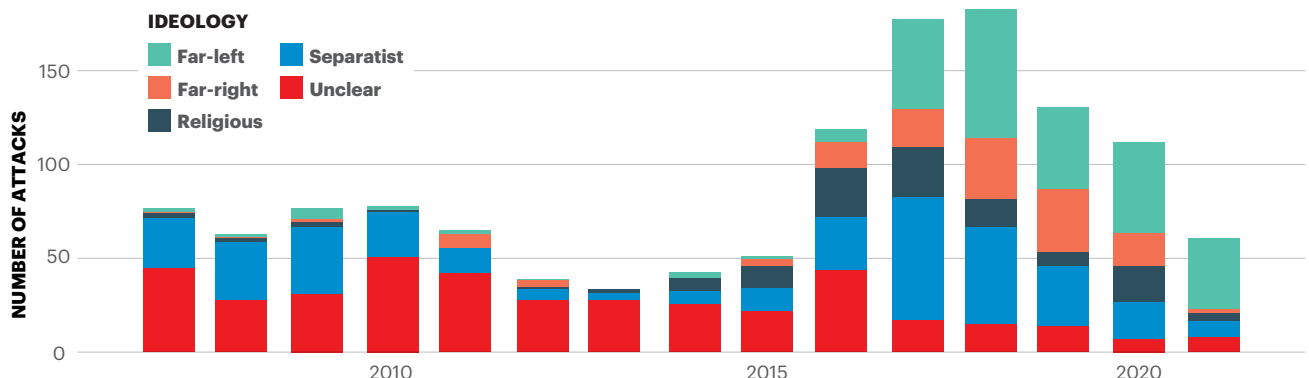
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

RELIGIOUS TERRORISM

The deadliest form of terrorism in the West over the past decade has been religious terrorism, which has almost exclusively taken the form of radical Islamist terrorism. Islamist terrorist groups or lone actors inspired by Jihadist groups were responsible for 528 deaths from terrorism in the West since 2007. The most notable surge in Islamist terrorism in the West occurred between 2015 and 2017, with 63 attacks and 457 deaths occurring in this period across 11 countries.

There were three attacks committed by religious groups in the West in 2021, resulting in two fatalities. This represents a decrease when compared to the prior year, which recorded 17 attacks and 18 deaths. Overall, 2021 recorded the lowest number of attacks and deaths attributed to religious terrorism since 2013.

However, although religiously motivated terrorism has been the deadliest form of terrorism in the West over the past decade, it has not been consistently the most common form. Since 2017, at a total of 351 attacks, there have been five times more politically motivated than religiously motivated terrorist attacks.

NATIONALIST/SEPARATIST TERRORISM

Prior to 2015, nationalist or separatist terrorism was the highest form of terrorism in the West, after which it was overtaken by religious terrorism. At the peak of activity between 2007 and 2014, there were 145 attacks conducted by separatist groups resulting in 13 deaths. Both deaths and attacks by separatist groups fell after 2015, representing less than one per cent of terrorism deaths and five per cent of attacks in the West. In 2021, only four attacks were attributed to separatist terrorist groups, an increase of two attacks when compared to the year prior.

The UK, Spain and France maintain the highest levels of separatist terrorism in the West, recording 81, 61 and 35 attacks respectively since 2007. The UK also has the highest overall fatalities as a result of separatist attacks, with eight deaths in the same period.

The most active and deadliest separatist group in the West is the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA), responsible for 65 attacks and eight deaths since 2007. However, the group's activity fell significantly following the ceasefire declared in 2010, with only four attacks in the years afterwards. The Irish Republican Army and its splinter groups in the UK and Ireland recorded the second highest number of attacks, with 57 attacks since 2007, followed by the Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) in France, who were responsible for 32 attacks. The decrease in separatist attacks within the last decade in the West was helped by the disbanding of the ETA, with no attacks claimed by the group since 2014.

POLITICAL TERRORISM

In 2018, the number of deaths and incidents from political terrorism was higher than any other form for the first time since 2007. Political terrorism in the West can be broadly divided into two sub-ideologies, far-left terrorism and far-right terrorism. Political terrorism has increased steadily over the last decade, with 73 per cent of attacks in the West being attributed to politically motivated groups and individuals. The majority of the increase in politically-motivated terrorism in the West is a result of rising far-left terrorism. In 2011, far-left groups and individuals were responsible for two attacks while far-right groups claimed five attacks. However, in 2021, far-left attacks increased significantly to 38 attacks while far-right groups claimed only two attacks. Of the politically-motivated attacks in 2021, none were attributed to any official far-right or far-left terrorist group.

There were eight countries in the West that experienced at least one instance of political terrorism in 2021, with Germany recording 19 attacks, the highest of any Western country, followed by Italy who recorded six attacks.

While the motivation can be inferred, most attacks driven by a left or right ideology are perpetrated by individuals or groups with no formal affiliation to a recognised organisation. Figure 2.7 shows of the 393 attacks in the West from far-right and far-left groups, 95 per cent were perpetrated under no formal affiliation.

FIGURE 2.7

Far-left and Far-right terrorism in the west, 2007–2021

Since 2007, more attacks have been attributed to far-left groups than far-right groups in the west.
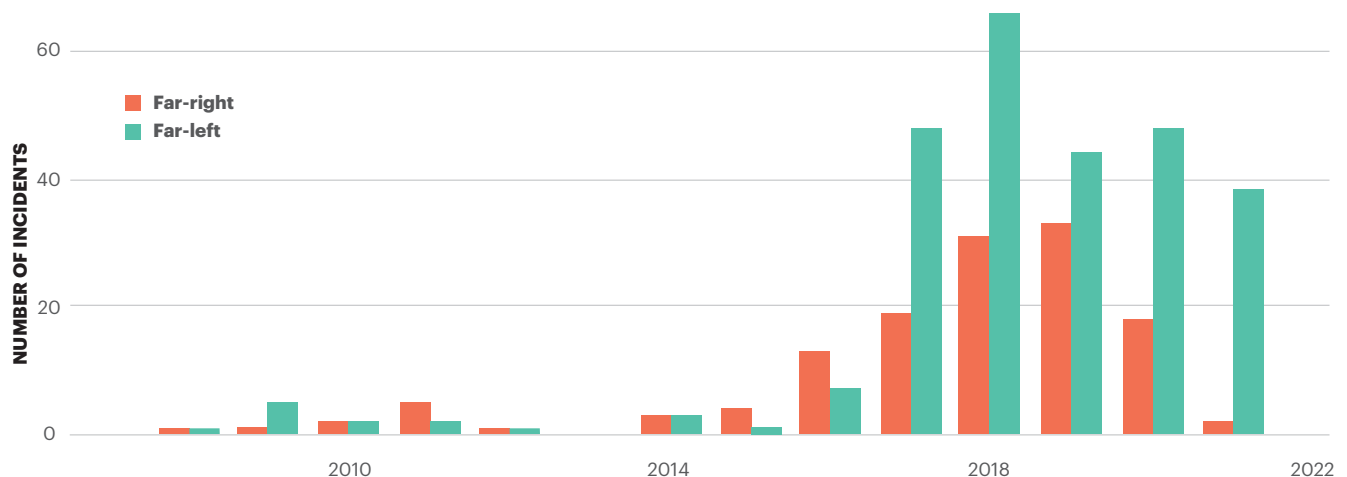
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Far-left and Far-right affiliations, 2007–2021

95 per cent of far-left and far-right attacks are perpetrated under no formal affiliation.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Weapons used in political terrorist attacks, 2007–2021

Incendiary devices have been the most common weapon for political terrorists in the West since 2015.
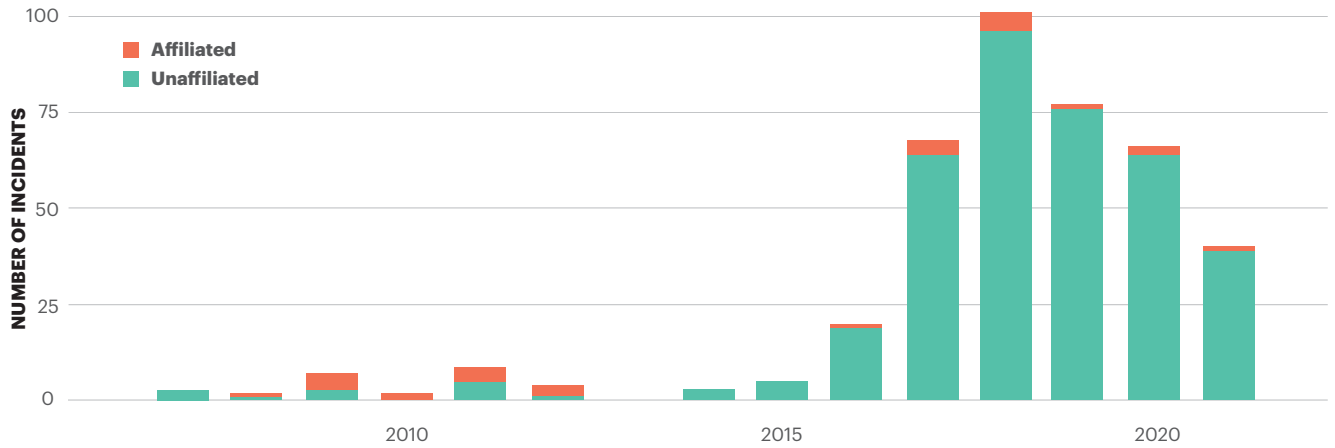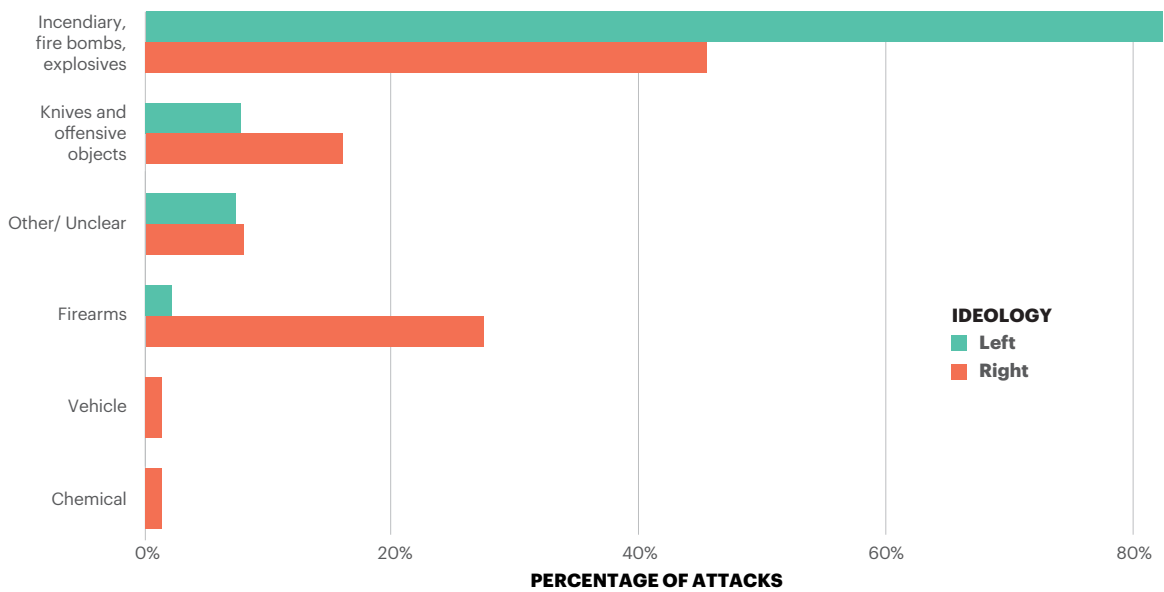
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

As shown in Figure 2.9, weapons used in far-left and far-right attacks vary. Over 80 per cent of all far-left attacks involve incendiary devices, bombs and other explosive devices. While far-right attacks use explosives in only 40 per cent of attacks, these types of attacks are more likely to use a wider array of weapons, including firearms, knives and offensive objects.

FIGURE 2.10

Targets of politically-motivated terrorism, 2007–2021

Both far-left and far-right often target government and political figures.
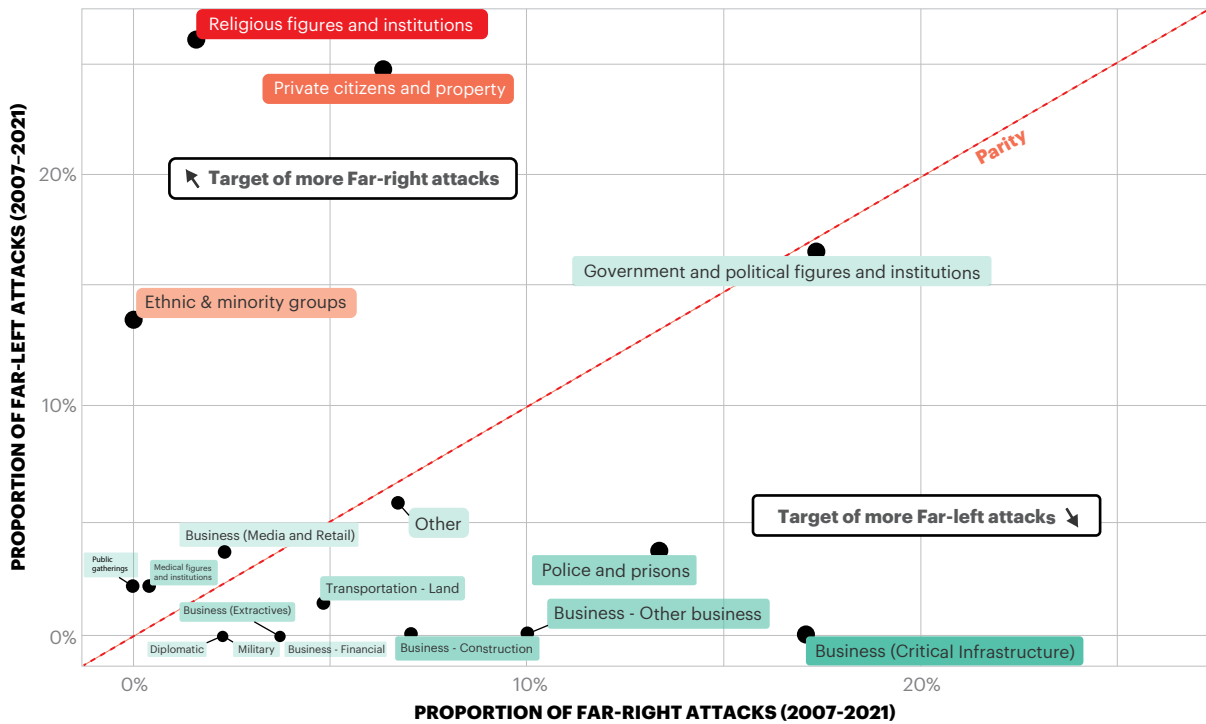
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

While far-left and far-right attacks are nominally carried out for distinct political agendas, there are overlaps in the targets chosen. Figure 2.10 shows far-right perpetrators target religious institutions, private property and ethnic minorities more often than far-left perpetrators. Conversely, far-left groups attack businesses, police and prisons more often. However, both ideologies target government institutions and/or political figures, accounting for 17 per cent of their attacks.

Some security agencies, such as the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), have responded to the trend

highlighted in Figure 2.10 by moving away from attributing terrorist activities to left-wing or right-wing groups. Instead, they focus on ideologically-motivated extremism and religiously-motivated extremism. The change in terminology addresses the fact that left-wing and right-wing groups hold similar attitudes, such as scepticism towards government and capitalism. Secondly, the change responds to a growing trend whereby no group or individual claims responsibility for an act of terrorism, with the focus being on disruption.

REGIONAL TRENDS

The impact of terrorism fell in eight of the nine regions of the world in 2021. The largest improvement occurred in Russia and Eurasia, with the region recording a 71 per cent fall in terror related deaths. Table 2.1 shows the regions of the world by their average GTI score for 2021, as well as changes in score from the prior year.

TABLE 2.1
GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011-2021

Country	Average Score	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
South Asia	5.559	-0.783	-0.203
North America	4.421	1.507	-0.298
Middle East and North Africa	3.547	-0.616	-0.294
South America	2.903	0.275	-0.049
sub-Saharan Africa	2.400	0.433	0.004
Asia-Pacific	2.045	-0.146	-0.219
Europe	1.368	-0.412	-0.284
Russia and Eurasia	0.876	-2.460	-0.405
Central America And the Caribbean	0.202	-1.132	-0.052

North America consists of two countries, the US and Canada, and neither country has a high GTI score, however the region is the only region where no countries have a nil score for terrorism. In terms of deaths and attacks the North America region had the second lowest. In 2021 there were seven terrorism deaths and eight attacks.

In 2021, South Asia was the region with the highest average score on the GTI, a position it has held since 2007. Conversely, Central America and the Caribbean recorded the lowest impact of terrorism.

A total of 33 deaths from terrorism have been recorded in the Central America and the Caribbean since 2007, with 24 per cent of those occurring in 2009. The region has not recorded a death from terrorism since 2018. However, although the region has recorded less loss of life from terrorism, it has suffered greatly from other forms of violent conflict, most prominently an increase in homicide associated with organised crime and drug-related violence

Between 2007 and 2021, the largest number of deaths from terrorism was recorded in the MENA region, at more than 49,000 deaths. South Asia recorded roughly 37,000 deaths over the same period, with another 30,500 occurring in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa had the most lethal terrorist attacks, averaging three people killed per attack respectively. Conversely, in Asia-Pacific, Europe, South America, and Russia and Eurasia, there were more terrorist attacks than total deaths from terrorism. Figure 2.11 shows total deaths and attacks for all regions from 2007 to 2021.

FIGURE 2.11
Attacks and deaths from terrorism by region, 2007–2021

The largest number of deaths was recorded in the MENA region, with over 50,000 deaths from terrorism since 2007.
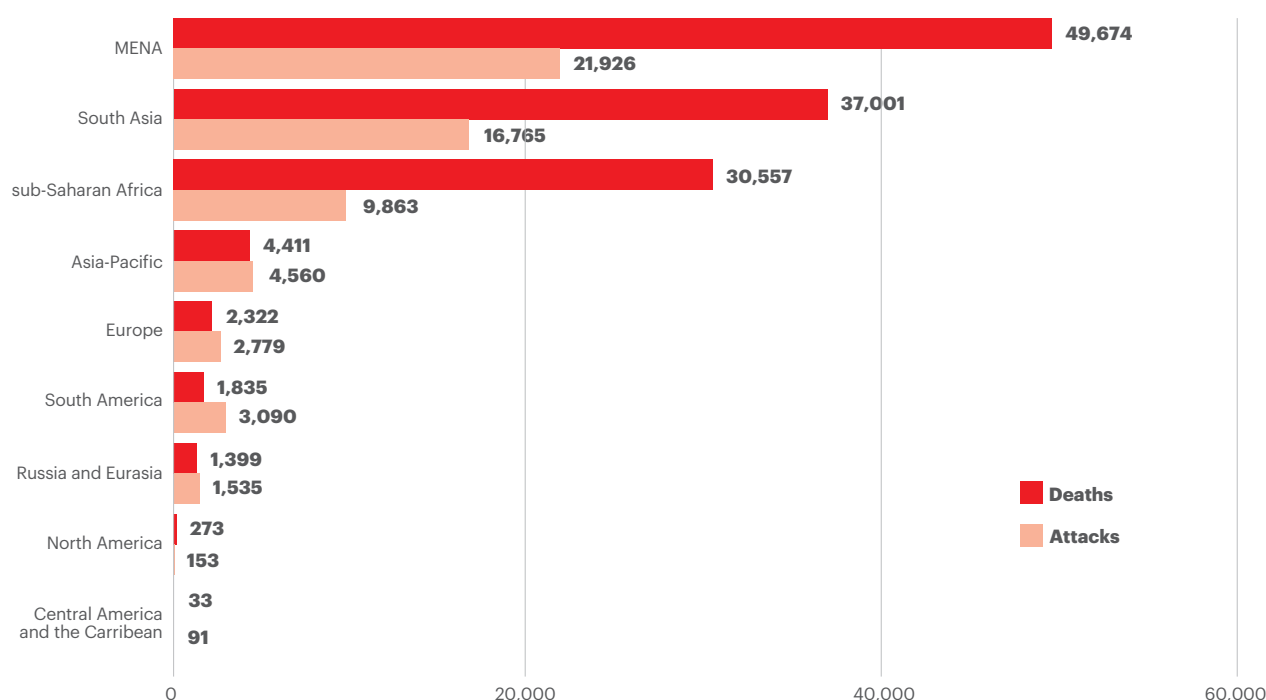
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Although the MENA region has had the highest number of deaths from terrorism since 2007, the region has recorded a substantial decline in the last four years. Deaths have fallen by 39 per cent since 2018, reaching the lowest level since 2007.

More recently, terrorist activity has been concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with both regions recording more terrorism deaths than MENA for the last three years. Collectively, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 74 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2021. Figure 2.12 shows the trend in terrorism deaths for these three regions since 2007.

FIGURE 2.12

Trend in terrorism deaths by region, 2007–2021

In 2018, the number of terrorism deaths in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa exceeded deaths recorded in MENA.
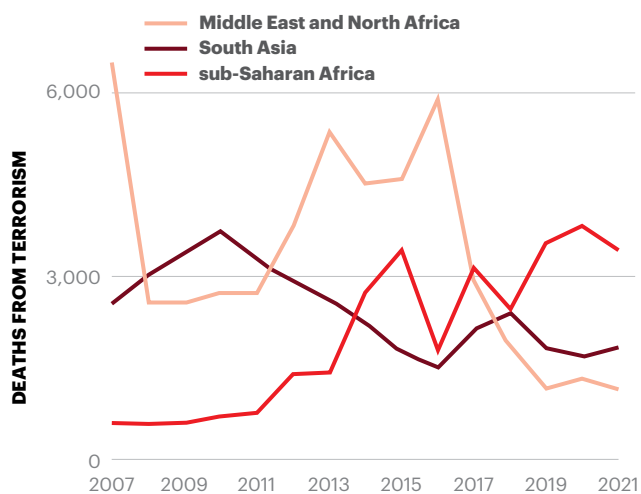
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

There were also variations by region in the tactics used by terrorist organisations. In most regions, the weapon used in the majority of attacks were firearms, followed by explosives.
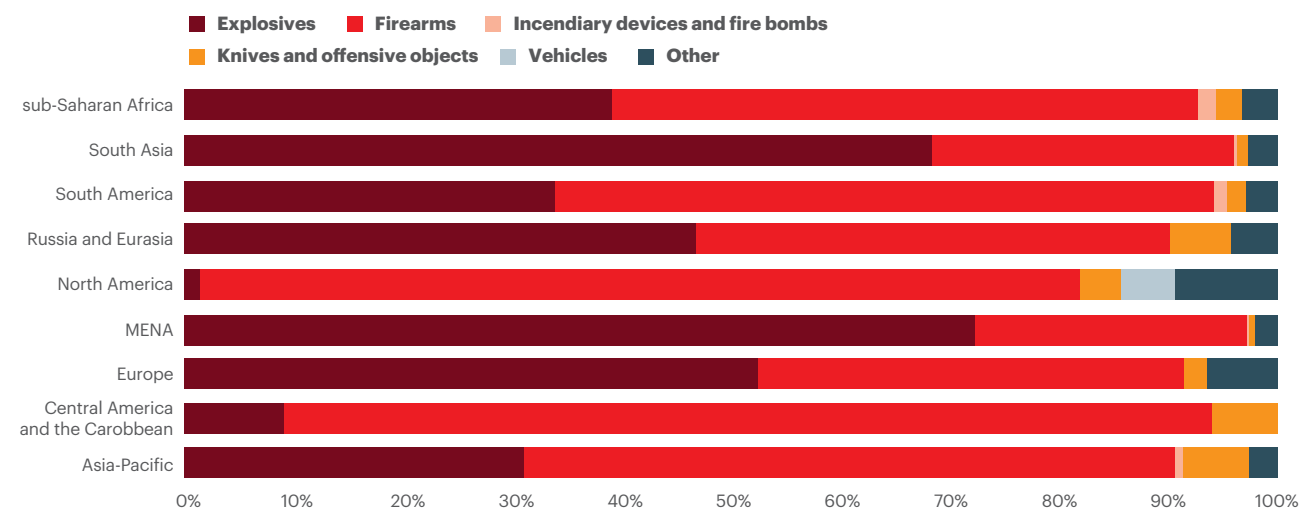
Bombings and explosions were the most common tactic in the Middle East, where they accounted for over 70 per cent of all attacks since 2007. South Asia recorded the highest number of explosive attacks in 2021 of any region in the world, with 67 per cent of the 796 attacks in South Asia using explosives as the primary weapon. However, in North America attacks using firearms were the most common tactic used, accounting for over 80 per cent of all attacks. A similar trend was observed in Central America and the Caribbean, which recorded the highest percentage of attacks with firearms as the weapon, at almost 85 per cent of all attacks.

Asia-Pacific

Ten countries in Asia-Pacific improved in 2021, compared to two that deteriorated, resulting in the impact of terrorism falling in the region for the third consecutive year. Seven countries showed no change in score last year. Myanmar and Indonesia were the only countries in the region to record a deterioration in the impact of terrorism over the past year. Fifteen terrorist groups were active in the region in 2021, with Myanmar's anti-junta resistance taking responsibility for 396 attacks, 47 per cent of all attacks. Despite this, 40 per cent of attacks were not claimed by any named terrorist group.

For the first year since 2015, the Philippines was not the most affected country and was replaced by Myanmar as the country with the highest number of deaths as a result of terrorism. Myanmar recorded 521 deaths from terrorist attacks in 2021, with an increase in both deaths and incidents when compared with the year prior. The number of deaths in the Philippines fell for the second consecutive year, from 97 deaths in 2020 to 53 deaths in 2021. Overall, the Philippines has had the highest death rate over the last decade, recording over 1,000 of the 3,250 terrorism deaths in the region.

FIGURE 2.13

Type of attack by region, 2007–2021

Explosives and firearm assaults are most the common weapons used in terror attacks all all regions.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

TABLE 2.2
Asia-Pacific GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Myanmar (Burma)	7.830	9	1.812	1.880
Philippines	6.790	16	-0.541	-0.284
Thailand	5.723	22	-1.711	-0.450
Indonesia	5.500	24	0.206	0.116
New Zealand	4.376	41	4.376	-0.523
Australia	2.438	60	2.438	-0.587
Malaysia	2.247	63	1.956	-0.660
China	1.863	67	-3.245	-0.704
Japan	1.460	71	-0.787	-0.516
Vietnam	0.407	85	0.407	-0.276
Taiwan	0.227	92	0.227	-0.180
Cambodia	0.000	93	-0.758	0.000
Laos	0.000	93	0.000	-1.968
Mongolia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
North Korea	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Papua New Guinea	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Singapore	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
South Korea	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Timor-Leste	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Regional Average			**0.231**	**-0.219**

Myanmar recorded the largest deterioration in GTI score in 2021 due to increasing political unrest in the wake of the military coup in early 2021. Myanmar jumped 15 places in 2021 and is now ranked ninth on the GTI as a whole. The country recorded 750 terrorist attacks in 2021, after only recording 25 in 2020.

Attacks in Indonesia became more lethal in 2021 and the country recorded the second highest deterioration in the Asia-Pacific region. Attacks decreased by 24 per cent while deaths rose by 85 per cent. In 2021, there were on average 1.5 deaths per attack, compared with 0.6 deaths per attack in 2020. Attacks in Indonesia were largely from separatist groups such as the Free Papua Movement (OPM) and West Papuan National Liberation Army. IS were responsible for two attacks in Indonesia in 2021, with one attack resulting in the death of four farmers at the hands of an armed assailant. IS claimed responsibility for the attack, stating it targeted Christians.

Laos recorded the largest improvement in 2021, followed by China and Malaysia. This is the first year Laos has not recorded a terrorist incident since 2005 and now has a score of zero.

Thailand recorded the second highest number of deaths in the region since 2011, with 776 fatalities. However, terrorism deaths in Thailand have decreased steadily since the peak in 2011 at 178 deaths. In 2021, only seven terror-related deaths were recorded in Thailand, half of the number of deaths in Thailand in 2020.

Central America and the Caribbean

TABLE 2.3
Central America and the Caribbean GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Mexico	2.428	61	-1.144	-0.626
Costa Rica	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Cuba	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Dominican Republic	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
El Salvador	0.000	93	-3.146	0.000
Guatemala	0.000	93	-2.752	0.000
Haiti	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Honduras	0.000	93	-2.985	0.000
Jamaica	0.000	93	-0.509	0.000
Nicaragua	0.000	93	-1.522	0.000
Panama	0.000	93	-1.522	0.000
Trinidad & Tobago	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Regional Average			**-1.132**	**-0.052**

No countries deteriorated in the region with eleven of the 12 countries recording a score of zero on the 2021 GTI, meaning that they did not experience a single terrorist incident over the past five years. Mexico was the only country to record any terrorist activity since 2017 and has been the poorest performing country in the region since 2007.

Over the last decade, seven of the 12 countries in the region recorded an improvement in their GTI score, with the remaining five countries recording no change. The Central America and the Caribbean region had the second highest average improvement in the impact of terrorism over the past decade. However, it did start from a low base.

Mexico recorded an overall improvement in GTI score over the past year, moving from 56th place in 2020 to 61st place in 2021. This is the largest improvement that Mexico has seen since 2015.

Terrorism in Mexico is predominantly politically motivated and criminal activity by cartels is not included as terrorism in this report. One such politically-motivated group is a radical environmentalist group, *Individualistas Tendiendo a lo Salvaje*, (Individuals Tending to the Wild) who claimed responsibility for a number of explosive devices planted in commercial centre[2] in 2018 and 2019.

Violence against politicians and journalists continues to threaten stability in Mexico with a large number of assassinations occurring in Mexico in the last two years. At least 102 politicians were murdered in the lead up to the election of June 2021.[3] Additionally, nine journalists were killed in 2021, the same number as the year prior.[4]

While terrorism in Mexico has declined, cartel activity continues to dominate the crime landscape, with almost six thousand incidents of cartel violence resulting in over seven thousand deaths in 2021.[5]

The remaining 11 countries in Central America and the Caribbean have remained unaffected by terrorism since 2017, despite the fact that El Salvador, and the Central America region more widely, regularly register the highest *homicide rate*s in the world.

El Salvador and Honduras have recorded no terrorist attacks since 2010.

Europe

TABLE 2.4

Europe GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Turkey	5.651	23	-1.261	-0.820
Greece	4.849	29	0.397	0.186
United Kingdom	4.770	31	-0.012	-0.398
Germany	4.729	33	1.138	-0.388
France	4.562	35	0.617	-0.674
Italy	3.687	50	0.127	-0.268
Austria	3.261	52	1.201	-0.548
Spain	2.861	55	-1.052	-0.587
Switzerland	2.522	59	0.446	-0.193
Netherlands	2.077	66	2.077	0.254
Belgium	1.745	68	0.193	-1.843
Sweden	1.660	69	-0.316	-0.561
Norway	1.109	77	-5.072	-0.471
Ireland	1.060	78	-1.238	-0.492
Romania	1.060	78	1.060	-0.463
Finland	1.007	80	0.600	-0.453
Cyprus	0.922	82	-0.321	-0.472
Lithuania	0.827	83	0.827	-0.415
Czech Republic	0.291	86	0.291	-0.218
Denmark	0.291	86	-0.951	-0.218
Kosovo	0.291	86	-2.925	-0.660
Albania	0.000	93	-0.509	0.000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.000	93	-1.822	0.000
Bulgaria	0.000	93	-1.243	0.000
Croatia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Estonia	0.000	93	-2.368	0.000
Hungary	0.000	93	-0.509	-0.291
Iceland	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Latvia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Montenegro	0.000	93	-0.892	0.000
North Macedonia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Poland	0.000	93	0.000	-0.227
Portugal	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Serbia	0.000	93	-2.061	0.000
Slovakia	0.000	93	-1.243	0.000
Slovenia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Regional Average			**-0.412**	**-0.284**

Twenty-one of the 36 countries in Europe recorded improvements in the impact of terrorism over the past year. Europe is the third best performing region, after Russia and Eurasia and Central America and the Caribbean. Only Greece and the Netherlands deteriorated last year, while 13 countries recorded no change in score. Fourteen European countries have not experienced a single terrorist attack since 2017. Of the 113 attacks in Europe in 2021, only 18 per cent or 20 attacks were claimed by known terrorist groups.

Europe recorded nine deaths from terrorism in 2021, of which six occurred in Turkey. Turkey remains the country most affected in Europe, although its score has substantially improved because of a significant reduction in deaths and attacks. Deaths from terrorism in Turkey have declined rapidly from 587 deaths in 2016, falling by 99 per cent to 13 in 2021. Attacks on civilians declined by 59 per cent between 2020 and 2021, however attacks against the military rose from two attacks in 2020 to eight in 2021.

Greece was the second most affected country in Europe, with the country recording 50 attacks, an increase of 22 per cent, however the attacks resulted in no deaths. Greece recorded the most terror attacks in Europe in 2021. The anarchy group Conspiracy of Fire Nuclei was the only group to claim responsibility for attacks, of which they claimed three. The remaining 47 attacks have been attributed to unknown far-left or anarchist groups. The majority of the terror attacks in 2021 targeted police and prisons, followed by government and political institutions and figures. Attacks targeting these groups increased by 82 per cent in 2021.

Germany recorded the second highest number of terror attacks for the region in 2021, and has the fourth highest overall impact of terrorism in Europe. This is in spite of Germany recording a 34 per cent decrease in attacks between 2020 and 2021 and no deaths as a result of these attacks compared to the 11 deaths in 2020. All of Germany's 19 terror attacks in 2021 were conducted by unnamed far-left terror groups and individuals, with the majority targeting business and critical infrastructure. Almost all of the attacks involved the use of fire bombs or incendiary devices.

The Netherlands recorded the largest deterioration in score in 2021. The Netherlands recorded two terror attacks in 2021 with no deaths, compared to one attack and no deaths in the year prior. In the first incident of 2021, a pipe bomb was detonated outside a COVID-19 testing centre in the North Holland region. No individual or group claimed the attack however, authorities reported that anti-vaccination extremists were probably responsible. In the second incident, anarchist group Revolutionary Resistance set fire to two parked police cars. No one was injured or killed and the group claimed that the vehicles were targeted as they were symbols of repression.

There were three religiously-motivated attacks in Europe in 2021, with all three attacks committed by Islamic extremists. This is the lowest number of religiously-motivated attacks in Europe since 2014 and represents a 75 per cent decrease when compared to the 12 attacks recorded in 2020. In 2021, deaths as a result of attacks committed by religious extremists were at the lowest level since 2007, with only two deaths recorded in 2021, compared with 15 deaths in 2020.

Belgium recorded the largest improvement in score in 2021, followed by Turkey and France. The wave of jihadist-inspired terrorism in Western Europe has continued to subside, with France and Belgium recording no attacks for the third consecutive year. Overall, since 2007, the impact of terrorism in Belgium has improved after peaking in 2016.

France recorded a 72 per cent decrease in attacks between 2020 and 2021, the largest decrease since 2013. Despite this, France has recorded at least one terrorist attack every year since 2007. The only terror-related death in France in 2021 was of a police administrative assistant, who was killed after being attacked by an assailant armed with a knife in a police station in the Ile-de-France region. The assailant was killed by police shortly after the attack. No group had claimed responsibility. Of the remaining six attacks in France in 2021, five were committed by unknown far-left groups and the separatist group Corsican National Liberation Front (FLNC) took responsibility for one further incident.

The United Kingdom was the third most impacted country in the region for terrorism. The country recorded 12 attacks in 2021, half the number of attacks from the previous year. Of these attacks, two resulted in fatalities. In one incident, an assailant stabbed a conservative member of parliament to death inside Belfairs Methodist church in Essex county. The suspect was arrested at the scene and authorities reported that he was linked to Islamic extremism.[6] The other incident was a bombing that killed only the assailant which was detonated inside a taxi near Liverpool Women's Hospital. The target of the attack was unclear, but the incident occurred on Remembrance Sunday. No group had claimed responsibility.

Middle East and North Africa

MENA recorded an overall improvement in the impact of terrorism last year, with 16 countries improving and three recording no change. Algeria was the only country to record a deterioration due to an increase in terror-related deaths. This is the fourth year in a row that the region has improved.

Fatalities in MENA accounted for 39 per cent of the global total deaths from terrorism between 2007 and 2021. However, since the defeat of IS, the region's share of the global total has dropped substantially, and in 2021, it accounted for only 16 per cent of total deaths, behind South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Despite thirteen terrorist groups claiming responsibility for attacks in the region in 2021, 57 per cent or 727 attacks remain unclaimed by any known group.

In MENA, the largest improvement in fatalities last year was in Syria, which recorded 488 terrorism deaths, 236 fewer deaths compared to 2020, a decline of 33 per cent. The principal driver of these improvements was the reduction in attacks perpetrated by IS, which fell by 34 per cent.

Egypt followed Syria, recording the second best improvement with 66 deaths in 2021 compared to 119 in 2020, a reduction of over 44 per cent. IS and IS - Sinai Province were responsible for 57 per cent of attacks in Egypt, accounting for over half of terrorism deaths.

TABLE 2.5

Middle East and North Africa GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Iraq	8.511	2	-1.173	-0.184
Syria	8.250	5	2.473	-0.050
Egypt	6.932	15	1.632	-0.373
Yemen	5.870	21	-1.724	-0.261
Libya	5.100	26	3.367	-0.541
Iran	5.015	27	-1.140	-0.452
Israel	4.778	30	-0.843	-0.181
Palestinian Territories	4.736	32	-0.475	-0.238
Tunisia	4.447	38	0.801	-0.286
Algeria	4.432	39	-2.510	0.105
Lebanon	3.566	51	-1.420	-0.517
Saudi Arabia	3.110	54	-0.752	-0.743
Jordan	2.594	58	0.284	-0.837
Bahrain	2.145	65	0.322	-0.475
Morocco	1.156	76	-3.494	-0.478
Sudan	0.291	86	-5.378	-0.218
Kuwait	0.000	93	-1.460	-0.158
Oman	0.000	93	-0.827	0.000
Qatar	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
United Arab Emirates	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Regional Average			**-0.616**	**-0.294**

Conversely, while attacks by IS in Iraq dropped from 353 in 2020 to 327 in 2021, deaths increased by nine per cent, indicating an increase in lethality. IS attacks in Iraq resulted in an average of 1.14 in 2021 compared to 0.98 deaths per attack in 2020.

IS have been the deadliest terror group in MENA, accounting for over 11,500 terrorism deaths since 2014. Of the attacks in MENA in 2021, IS and affiliate groups claimed responsibility for 463 attacks or 36 per cent, while another 57 per cent were not claimed by any group. However, in recent years, coalition forces have made significant progress in reducing the capacity of IS to wage mass casualty attacks. In March 2019, the US-led international coalition, alongside local forces, succeeded in regaining the remaining territory held by IS in Syria. Later, in October 2019, the US conducted a military operation that resulted in the death of the then IS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and recently killing his replacement Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi.[7]

Following the collapse of its "caliphate", IS in Iraq and Syria have reverted to clandestine tactics – operating in covert networks with an insurgent presence in rural parts of Iraq and Syria.[8]

Beyond Iraq and Syria, IS affiliate groups and supporters across the MENA region remained active in 2021, including in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. Although Tunisia increased counterterrorism efforts against IS-affiliated groups, it did record a slight increase in IS-related deaths in 2021.[9]

In Libya, IS were responsible for all of the three terrorist attacks in 2021, which resulted in four deaths. These deaths occurred as a result of the same attack, in which a suicide car bomb exploded, killing four police officers and wounding an unknown number of others at a checkpoint.

Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Libya had the largest improvements in score in the region. Jordan has not recorded a single terror attack since 2019, and has recorded a total of only 15 terror attacks since 2007, resulting in 26 fatalities.

Saudi Arabia recorded one attack in 2021, when Saudi air defences intercepted a missile or armed drone above the city of Riyadh. No one was injured or killed during the attack and a previously unknown, far-left group Alwiya Alwaad Alhaq, claimed responsibility.

Algeria was the only MENA country to deteriorate in 2021. Algeria recorded three attacks in 2021, an increase of one attack when compared to 2020. Despite the marginal increase in attacks, eight deaths were recorded in 2021, the highest number of terror-related deaths since 2018. The deadliest attack in Algeria in 2021 occurred when a roadside bomb killed five civilians and wounded three others travelling in a pick-up truck on a road in Tebessa. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility.

Since 2007, Algeria has recorded approximately 400 terror attacks and 870 deaths from terrorism. The majority of these deaths were attributed to AQIM, accounting for 63 per cent.

North America

TABLE 2.6

North America GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
United States	4.961	28	0.526	-0.576
Canada	3.882	48	2.488	-0.019
Regional Average			**1.507**	**-0.298**

The number of deaths from terrorism rose slightly in North America, from five deaths in 2020 to seven deaths in 2021. However, the total number of incidents fell from 13 in 2020 to eight in 2021. Overall, terrorist incidents have fallen 69 per cent since their peak in 2019 at 26 incidents. This is the third consecutive year of overall improvement in the number of incidents for the North America region.

The US recorded a significant improvement in the impact of terrorism in 2021, recording its lowest GTI score since 2015. In 2021, there were seven attacks and three deaths in the US, a decline in terrorism incidents when compared to the nine attacks and two deaths in 2020. Notably, the riots on Capitol Hill in January 2021 have not been classified as a terrorist act. This marks the lowest number of terror attacks in the US since 2015. Of the seven attacks, none were attributed to any known terrorist group. This includes the assailant responsible for the only terror-related death in the region in 2021, who killed a taxi

driver before driving to a police station and attacking officers in the building. The assailant was shot dead by police, who believe they were inspired by an unnamed foreign terrorist organisation. The assailant was also the subject of counterterrorism investigations from 2010 to 2013.

Over the past decade in the US there has been a shift away from religiously motivated terrorism towards politically motivated terrorism. Since 2007, there have been 84 attacks in the US which IEP attributes to politically motivated groups and individuals, compared to 19 attacks attributed to religiously motivated groups. The shift from religious to political terrorism has also been mirrored by a shift away from terrorism affiliated with specific groups, towards individuals and groups who are driven by a specific ideology, but are not formally affiliated with an organised group. Of the 161 attacks recorded between 2007 and 2021, just 19 were affiliated with a specific terrorist group.

The overall impact of terrorism fell in Canada due to a decrease in terror attacks between 2020 and 2021. Canada recorded one terror attack in 2021, compared to the four recorded in 2020. Despite this decrease in attacks, Canada recorded four deaths in 2021, an increase compared with the three recorded for 2020 and the highest death toll in the country since 2018. The 2021 attack was a car ramming incident in which an assailant hit and killed four civilians and injured another in Ontario. No group claimed the attack however officials believed that the victims were targeted because of their Islamic faith.

Canada's GTI score has deteriorated over the last decade, recording at least one terror attack every year since 2014. Since 2007, there have been 29 attacks in Canada, resulting in 27 deaths. Unaffiliated far-left anarchist groups have accounted for over a third of attacks, followed by IS inspired groups which accounted for ten per cent. The most deaths have occurred as a result of attacks by groups and individuals with links to the 'incel' (involuntarily celibate) internet subculture. An assailant who claimed to be a member of the incel community was responsible for the deadliest attack in Canada in the last decade, when he deliberately drove his vehicle into a crowd of civilians, killing ten and injuring 14 others.[10]

"Since 2007, there have been 84 attacks in the US which IEP attributes to politically motivated groups and individuals, compared to 19 attacks attributed to religiously motivated groups."

Russia and Eurasia

TABLE 2.7
Russia and Eurasia GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Russia	4.219	44	-3.328	-0.465
Tajikistan	3.988	47	-0.914	-0.596
Ukraine	2.304	62	-0.969	-0.653
Armenia	0.000	93	-0.291	-0.158
Azerbaijan	0.000	93	-2.985	-0.158
Belarus	0.000	93	-5.172	0.000
Georgia	0.000	93	-3.901	-0.460
Kazakhstan	0.000	93	-4.513	-1.756
Kyrgyzstan	0.000	93	-2.568	-0.460
Moldova	0.000	93	-2.493	-0.158
Turkmenistan	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Uzbekistan	0.000	93	-2.390	0.000
Regional Average			**-2.460**	**-0.405**

The average impact of terrorism score improved in the Russia and Eurasia region, with all countries recording improvements, apart from Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which recorded no change. The region recorded the highest improvement in the impact of terrorism globally. Overall the region recorded just one terrorist attack and two deaths in 2021, down from seven attacks and seven deaths in 2020. The number of people killed in terrorist attacks in the region has fallen every year for the past four years, and is down 99 per cent from the peak of 317 deaths in 2010. Nine of the twelve countries in the region received scores of zero in 2021, meaning that they did not register a terrorist attack in the past five years.

In 2019, Russia overtook Tajikistan to become the country most affected by terrorism in the region. Even though Russia continued to improve, with the number of attacks falling by 83 per cent, and deaths from terrorism falling by 71 per cent in 2021 compared to 2020.

Russia recorded the region's only attack in 2021. The attack occurred when a gunman killed two civilians and wounded four others after arguing with a security guard when the assailant refused to put on a mask in a government building. Law enforcement said that the gunman had planned this attack in advance and believed the COVID-19 pandemic was a conspiracy.[11] No group had claimed responsibility for the attack.

Kazakhstan reported the largest improvement in its terrorism score in the region in the past year. For the first time in the last decade, Kazakhstan recorded a GTI score of zero, meaning it has not had a terror attack or death in the last five years. Between 2011 and 2016, Kazakhstan recorded 12 terror attacks and 26 fatalities, with 73 per cent of deaths being of law enforcement and military personnel.

South America

TABLE 2.8
South America GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Colombia	7.068	14	-0.189	-0.226
Chile	6.496	18	3.315	0.515
Peru	4.471	37	-0.311	1.259
Venezuela	4.005	46	1.107	0.010
Ecuador	2.766	56	2.257	-0.582
Argentina	2.657	57	-0.489	0.224
Paraguay	2.194	64	-0.951	-0.757
Uruguay	1.322	72	0.000	-0.501
Brazil	0.951	81	-0.291	-0.476
Bolivia	0.000	93	-1.428	0.000
Guyana	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Bhutan	0.000	135	0.000	-0.010
Regional Average			**0.275**	**-0.049**

There was an overall improvement in the impact of terrorism in South America over the past year, with five countries improving their score, four recording a deterioration and two recording no change. Total deaths from terrorism fell by 41 per cent, from 157 in 2020 to 92 in 2021. However, the overall level of terrorism remains much higher than a decade ago, with Chile, Peru and Argentina significantly increasing their levels of terrorism in 2021, compared to 2011. In total, there have been 1,835 deaths from terrorism in South America since 2007, the fourth lowest total of any region.

Eight terrorist groups took responsibility for attacks in 2021, with Mapuche extremists claiming 206 attacks, resulting in one death. National Liberation Army (ELN) were the deadliest group in the region in 2021, claiming 35 attacks that killed 28 people. Only two per cent or eight attacks remained unclaimed by any terrorist group, the lowest of any region in 2021.

Colombia has the highest impact of terrorism in the region, a position it has held for the past decade, despite a minor improvement between 2011 and 2021. Deaths from terrorism declined from 151 in 2020 to 73 in 2021, with the number of incidents also declining, from 174 to 72. Of the deaths recorded in 2021, half were attributed to the ELN, with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) responsible for the other half after break-away elements announcing a rearmament in 2019.[12]

Despite continuing to record the highest level of terrorism in the region, the number of people killed in Columbia is at the lowest level since 2017. The peace agreement between the government and FARC signed in late 2016 reduced terrorist attacks significantly, with only seven FARC attacks recorded that year. Attacks by the group increased every year until 2019, when FARC committed 138 terrorist attacks in Columbia. Break-away elements were not happy with the peace accord. After this peak in 2019, FARC attacks have declined, with 31 incidents recorded in 2021, a decrease of 41 attacks when compared to the year prior. Despite this, deaths as a result of FARC attacks spiked in

2020, with 90 deaths recorded, before falling to 36 deaths in 2021.

Chile had the second highest GTI score in the region in 2021. There were 831 attacks and 11 deaths from terrorism recorded over the past decade. There were 362 terrorist attacks in the country in 2021, over half of which were attributed to extremists from the indigenous Mapuche. There has been an upsurge in the conflict between the Mapuche and the Chilean government in the past few years, with 359 attacks attributed to Mapuche extremists since 2020. The majority of these attacks have been directed against businesses active in the region.

After having no terror attacks or deaths in 2020, Peru recorded one terror attack in 2021 that killed 16 people. Revolutionary communist party and terrorist organisation Shining Path claimed responsibility for the 2021 attack, when gunmen killed at least 16 civilians in two bars in the Valley of the Rivers Apurímac, Ene and Matero (VRAEM). The group reportedly left pamphlets at the scene telling people not to vote in the upcoming presidential election and vowed that the group would clean the area of informants and traitors.[13] Shining Path has been responsible for 95 per cent of all deaths in Peru since 2007, with 2021 being their most lethal year since 2008.

South Asia

TABLE 2.9

South Asia GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Afghanistan	9.109	1	0.015	0.059
Pakistan	7.825	10	-1.388	-0.097
India	7.432	12	-0.691	-0.235
Sri Lanka	5.445	25	-0.722	-0.599
Nepal	4.693	34	-0.617	-0.538
Bangladesh	4.411	40	0.181	-0.011
Bhutan	0.000	93	-2.260	0.000
Regional Average			**-0.783**	**-0.203**

South Asia has the highest average GTI score of any region, a position it has held throughout the last decade. The impact of terrorism improved in the region from 2020 to 2021, despite Afghanistan continuing to be the most impacted country in the world by terrorism. Afghanistan is also the only country in the region to record a deterioration in score, with both the number of attacks and deaths increasing significantly prior to the fall of Kabul in August 2021. Although only 11 per cent of Afghanistan's attacks in 2021 occurred after the fall of Kabul, 31 per cent of Afghanistan's total deaths for 2021 occurred after the Taliban took power, mainly due to the lethality of IS bombing at Kabul Airport. Despite this, there were improvements elsewhere in the region, with five countries registering an improvement in score and one country, Bhutan, recording no activity for the last five years.

In 2021, 23 terror groups were active in the region, with the

Taliban accounting for 232 attacks, the most attacks. IS was the deadliest group in the region in 2021, recording 555 deaths. Overall, 54 per cent of attacks and 39 per cent of deaths were not claimed by any terror group.

The biggest improvement in the impact of terrorism in South Asia occurred in Sri Lanka, with the country recording no attacks or deaths for the second consecutive year. Nepal was the second most improved country in terms of the impact of terrorism, recording only one terrorist attack and no fatalities for the first time since 2014.

The region is home to two of the ten countries with the highest impact of terrorism, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Of the seven countries in the region, only Bhutan has a GTI score of zero, meaning that it has not recorded a terrorist attack in the past five years.

Afghanistan was the only country to deteriorate in 2021, which saw deaths from terrorism rise to 1,426 from 1,252 in 2020. The Taliban's battle for control of Kabul in early 2021 saw a 29 per cent increase in the number of terror attacks. Terrorist activity dropped considerably after the fall of Kabul, from 102 attacks per month on average to 25 attacks, largely due to the Taliban's focus on legitimising their leadership and strengthening ties with neighbouring countries. The instability of 2021 has further cemented Afghanistan's place as the country most impacted by terrorism in the world.

Pakistan remained the second most impacted country in the region in 2021. When compared with the previous year, Pakistan saw the number of attacks increase by nine per cent to 186 attacks in 2021. The number of deaths mirrored this trend, with Pakistan recording 275 deaths in 2021, an increase of 12 deaths when compared with 2020.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The impact of terrorism deteriorated slightly in sub-Saharan Africa in 2021. It was the only region to deteriorate globally. Of the 18 countries globally that recorded a deterioration between 2020-2021, eight of them were in the sub-Saharan region.

Despite this deterioration as a region, 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa recorded an improvement in their GTI score in 2021, while 22 countries recorded no terrorist incidents in the past five years. Deaths from terrorism in the region dropped slightly to 3,461, compared to 3,849 in 2020, a decrease of ten per cent. The impact for the region is calculated from the average country score, therefore there can be a decrease in deaths in one country that is substantial and lowers the overall deaths for the region, but is muted because of changes in other countries.

In total, just over 30,000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks in the region since 2007.

Niger, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burkina Faso had the largest increase in the number of people killed in terrorist attacks. Niger had the largest increase in deaths from terrorism, more than doubling when compared to 2020, with the

TABLE 2.10

Sub-Saharan Africa GTI score, rank and change in score, 2011–2021

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2011-2021	Change 2020-2021
Somalia	8.398	3	0.502	-0.091
Burkina Faso	8.270	4	8.270	0.148
Nigeria	8.233	6	0.753	-0.188
Mali	8.152	7	3.804	0.230
Niger	7.856	8	4.027	0.441
Cameroon	7.432	11	4.247	-0.193
Mozambique	7.432	13	6.923	-0.399
Democratic Republic of Congo	6.733	17	0.935	0.713
Chad	6.379	19	2.861	-0.281
Kenya	6.166	20	0.388	-0.192
Tanzania	4.530	36	3.351	-0.300
Burundi	4.310	42	4.310	0.026
Uganda	4.271	43	-1.073	1.158
Ethiopia	4.106	45	-1.136	4.106
Benin	3.759	49	-0.978	-0.595
Senegal	3.164	53	3.164	1.261
Togo	1.580	70	-1.235	-0.527
Rwanda	1.243	73	-2.701	-0.490
South Africa	1.243	73	0.351	-0.490
Mauritania	1.243	73	1.243	1.243
Angola	0.509	84	-3.389	-0.318
Gabon	0.291	86	-2.648	-0.218
Botswana	0.291	86	0.291	-0.218
Republic of Congo	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Côte d'Ivoire	0.000	93	-4.610	-2.464
Djibouti	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Equatorial Guinea	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Eritrea	0.000	93	-3.734	0.000
Eswatini	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Gambia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Ghana	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Guinea	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Guinea-Bissau	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Lesotho	0.000	93	-2.273	-2.028
Liberia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Malawi	0.000	93	0.000	-0.158
Namibia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Sierra Leone	0.000	93	-1.179	0.000
South Sudan	0.000	93	-0.227	0.000
Zambia	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Zimbabwe	0.000	93	-1.201	0.000
Mauritius	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Madagascar	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Central African Republic	0.000	93	0.000	0.000
Regional Average			**0.433**	**0.004**

number of terrorism deaths increasing to 588 in 2021. This is the highest terrorism death toll in the country since 2007. Although 43 per cent of deaths and 53 per cent of attacks were attributed to either unknown groups or to unspecified Muslim extremists, it is suspected that these attacks could be the work of either ISWA or Boko Haram who were active in the country in 2021. There were 17 deaths attributed to Boko Haram and 349 attributed to ISWA in 2021. The increase in terrorist activity in Niger is part of a larger increase across the Sahel region, with similar surges seen in Mali and Burkina Faso over the past few years.

Uganda had the largest deterioration in score in 2021, as a result of three incidents resulting in four deaths and 40 people injured. This is the first year Uganda has recorded any terror attacks since 2015. IS was responsible for two incidents, while the Allied Democratic Forces claimed responsibility for the remaining incident. Uganda's deadliest incident was when a suicide bomber killed two police officers in the Central region. Another attack involving two suicide bombers took place near the parliament building three minutes later. A fourth person was killed and a total of 37 people were wounded across both locations. IS claimed responsibility for both attacks, attributing them to its Central African Province.

Somalia returned the highest GTI score in the region, being ranked as having the third highest impact from terrorism in the world in 2021. Despite this, Somalia recorded an improvement over the past year, with terrorism deaths falling from 341 in 2020 to 308 in 2021, a ten per cent decrease. The primary driver of the fall in terrorist activity in Somalia was the reclaiming of the capital Mogadishu and other territories held by Al-Shabaab by US security and African Union peacekeeping forces. However, Al-Shabaab continues to be the most prominent terror group in Somalia, with almost 90 per cent of deaths being as a result of Al-Shabaab attacks in 2021. This is still considerably lower than during the peak of the group's activity in 2017, when over 1,461 deaths were attributed to them.

Central African Republic was the most improved country in the region in 2021, returning a GTI score of zero for the first time. The country has not recorded a terrorist attack since 2016. Mozambique recorded the largest decline in the number of terrorist attacks between 2020 and 2021. Deaths from terrorism declined by 82 per cent, from 507 in 2020 to 93 in 2021, and are now at their lowest level since 2017. The fall in deaths in Mozambique was driven by a marked decrease in deaths attributed to IS, with the group being responsible for only seven attacks in 2021, compared to 22 in 2020.

3

Terrorism in the Sahel

SUMMARY

The Sahel region faces many converging and complex social, economic, political and security challenges. These are likely to continue to undermine the development of the conditions necessary for Positive Peace, ensuring the Sahel would remain trapped in a cycle of violence and vulnerability.

The inability of several Sahelian governments to provide effective security has encouraged terrorist groups to continue their activities, making the Sahel increasingly more violent, with deaths rising ten times between 2007 and 2021. Figure 3.1 highlights the increases in total deaths in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Total deaths recorded in 2021 were 732, 574 and 588, respectively. Groups such as Islamic State (IS) continue to wage a violent campaign in the region, with deaths in the Sahel accounting for 35 per cent of global total of terrorism deaths in 2021, compared with just one per cent in 2007.

The pervasive insecurity has also led locals to take action to defend themselves with the appearance of localized militias, such as the Dan Nan Ambassagou Association ("those who put their trust in God") adding to the cycle of violence, raising the prospects of semi-territoriality, where control of the territory is contested between government and non-state actors.[1] Anecdotal evidence and fieldwork research indicates that both Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) are solving family, land and cattle disputes. They provide swift and effective justice non-state actors provide security, justice, education and other core services that locals need, adding to the accepted assumption that state institutions are slow, inefficient, sporadic, and corrupt.[2]

In the Sahel, over the last few years, the terrorism environment has gone through several changes, as new groups emerged, other merged, adapting to the local, regional and international counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. This gave rise to what has been termed the 'jihadisation of banditry' as criminal groups look to use religion to defend their criminal actions.[3] Some of the groups had chosen to join the al-Qaeda franchise or the Islamic State franchise, which may also explain the increase in violence. A closer look at the data also highlights that most attacks occurred in border regions, where governmental control is generally low and the military tends to operate out of fortified bases.
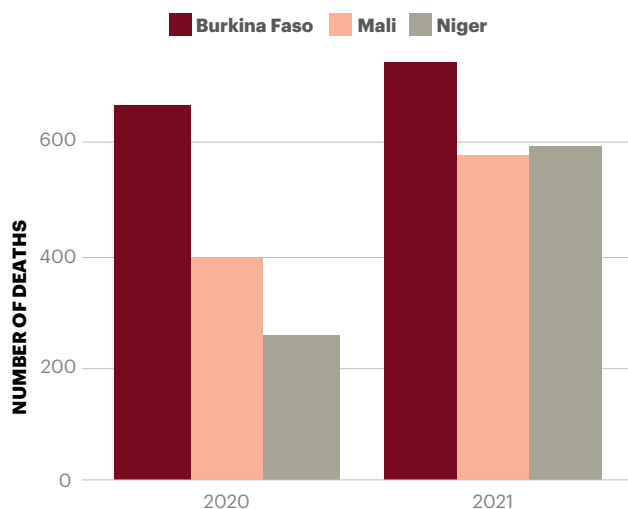
FIGURE 3.1

Changes in deaths in the Sahel, 2020–2021

Deaths in Mali and Niger significantly increased between 2020 and 2021.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

With its challenging terrain, distinct local practices, and porous borders, local leaders in the Sahel have tremendous autonomy; they operate as political entrepreneurs, making calculated decisions as to where to operate, how, and against whom. They exhibit greater willingness to negotiate or shift allegiances, as their principal goal is survival.[4] This type of pragmatism is also present with those deemed as bandits, typified by the notorious Dogo Gide, a Nigerian bandit, known to cooperate with Ansaru, with the terrorists even supporting a raid against a rival gang.[5] The implications for the security environment are substantial, as the head of a terrorist group may not be theologically wedded to the transnational jihadi networks. This raises the prospect of a larger shift in jihadi strategic thinking in that historically, jihadis commitment to ideological purity meant that they weakened their ability to build and hold a state, but this pragmatic shift raises the prospect of sustained, low-intensity conflict that would facilitate a takeover sometime in the future.[6]

Figure 3.2 shows the trends in both terrorist incidents and deaths from terrorism since 2007. Deaths and incidents increased across every country in the region other than Mauritania and Chad, and every country in the Sahel other than Mauritania and Chad recorded at least 40 deaths from terrorism in 2021.

Niger had the largest increase in deaths from terrorism, with deaths more than doubling over the past year. This is the highest terrorism death toll in the country since 2007. Although

the majority of deaths were attributed either to unknown groups or to unspecified Muslim extremists, it is suspected that these attacks could be the work of either Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) or Boko Haram who were active in the country in 2021.

The rise in terrorist activity in Niger is part of a larger increase across the Sahel region, with similar surges seen in Mali and Burkina Faso over the past few years. One possible reason for the rise in violence in Niger is that Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'adati wal-Jihad (JAS) and ISWA appear to operate in those areas, whereas Ansaru seem to operate in Kaduna State, Nigeria. There is also evidence of jihadi activity in the Cote d'Ivoire, aimed at fermenting religious and ethnic tensions. A small village along the border with Burkina Faso, Kafolo, had seen two major attacks in 18 months. Locals and the Ivorian government attributed the attacks to Fulani jihadis. The attacks led many Fulanis to leave the area, as they feared reprisals (adding to the already large displacement); and, second, it brought a large military presence which has discouraged villagers from going to the fields, as they fear being attacked.[7]

Terrorist activity has been primarily concentrated in the Lake Chad Basin, comprising parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, and the Central Sahel area along the Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger border. There is also evidence that the violence is encroaching on the coastal states, with some activities occurring in Benin and Togo.[8]

FIGURE 3.2

Incidents and deaths from terrorism in the Sahel, 2007–2021

Both incidents and deaths increased by well over 1,000 per cent from 2007 to 2021.
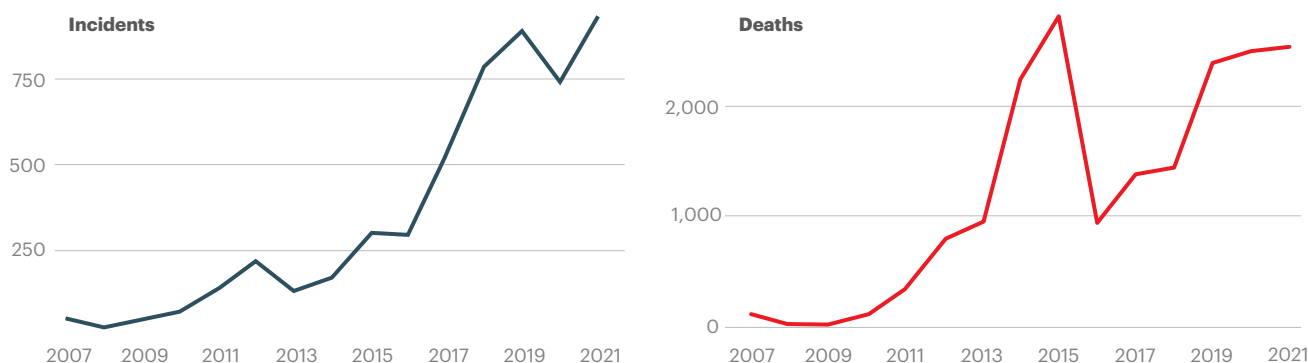
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

FIGURE 3.3

Terrorist attacks in the Sahel, 2007–2021

Most terrorist attacks occur away from major urban centers.
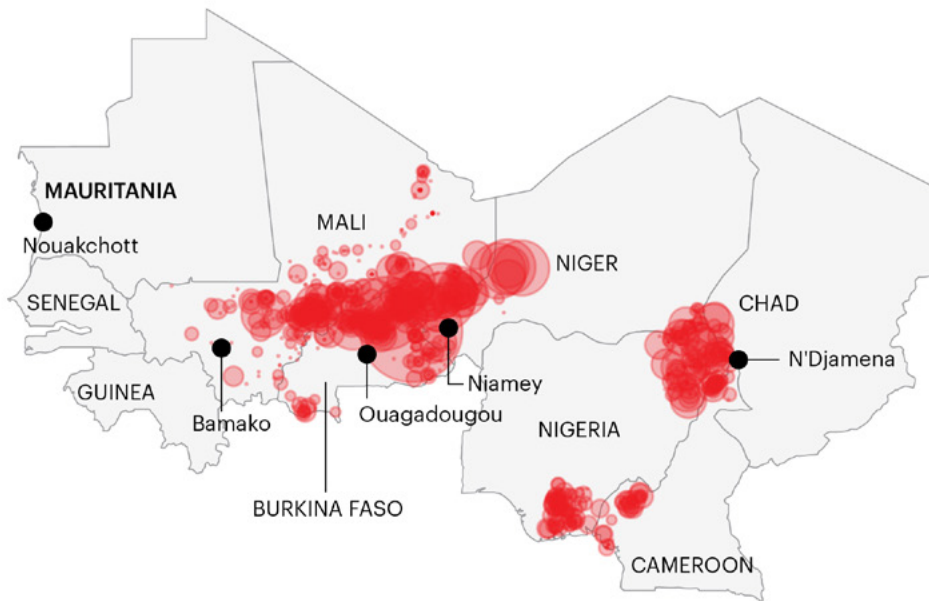
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Figure 3.3 shows the distribution of terrorist deaths in the Sahel between January 2007 and December 2021. Burkina Faso recorded 732 deaths from terrorism in 2021, its second highest number of deaths (scoring 8.270 on the GTI). Although the majority of deaths were attributed either to unknown groups or to unspecified Muslim extremists, it is suspected that these attacks could be the work of either ISWA or Boko Haram who were active in the country in 2021. There were 17 deaths attributed to Boko Haram and 349 attributed to ISWA in 2021. It is therefore unsurprising that Burkina Faso recorded the largest deterioration in peacefulness on the 2021 Global Peace Index (GPI), falling 13 places.

Mali in 2021 recorded its highest number of terrorist attacks and deaths since 2011. Attacks and deaths from terrorism in Mali increased by 56 per cent and 46 per cent respectively, when compared with the previous year. This is the largest year-to-year increase since 2017, continuing an upward trend that began with the 2015 declaration of a state of emergency in the wake of the Radisson Blu Hotel attack in Bamako. This is possibly why Burkina Faso and Mali are the epicentres of the Sahel crisis, in part because groups such as JNIM and ISWA solidified their presence in the region.

FIGURE 3.4

Positive feedback loops supporting terrorist organisations

This diagram shows the nodes and linkages of a terrorist support system.
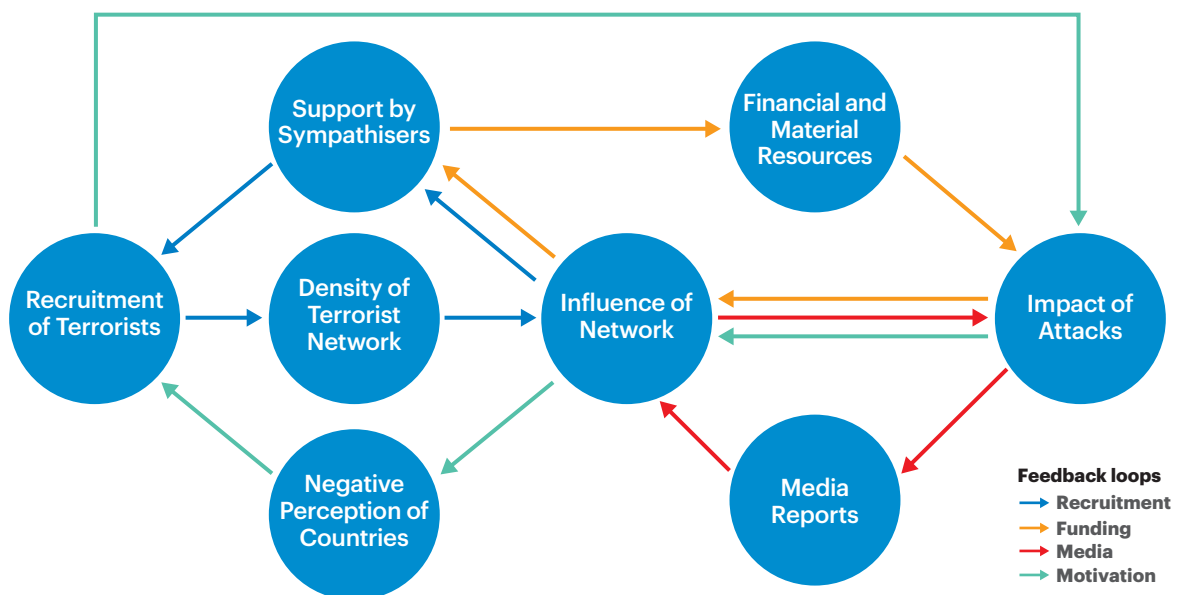
Source: Schonenberger et al., (2014); IEP adaptation

The presence of these groups has had a cascading effect on the general security, with an increase in intra- and inter-tribal violence and a spike in the formation of militias looking to provide self-defence, as government forces seem unable to respond to the rise in terrorist and criminal activity. There has also been more violence between the groups, possibly because they are vying for supremacy and dominance.[9] This is seen in respect to Boko Haram which had broken into three groups Jama'at Ahl al-Sunna li-Da'wa wal-Jihad (the original Boko Haram, known as JAS), the ISWA, and Ansaru.

Deaths in Nigeria fell by 51 per cent in 2021, following three years of successive increases. This decline was due to a fall in deaths attributed to Boko Haram and ISWA, particularly in the Borno region where deaths fell by 71 per cent. ISWA overtook Boko Haram as the deadliest terror group in Nigeria in 2021 and, with an increased presence in neighbouring countries such as Mali, Cameroon, and Niger presents a substantial threat to the Sahel region. One possible explanation for the decline of Boko Haram was the death of their leader Abubakar Shekau in 2021.[10]

Following the 2012 Tuareg rebellion, the occupation of Timbuktu by jihadis, and the establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Azawad, the international community, with the consent of the Malian government authorised the dispatch of a large French and African Union-led forces. The operations have had some tactical successes such as killing key leaders, although it did not prevent AQIM and JNIM from growing and expanding their operations. To escape, jihadis seem to have moved away from Mali, establishing a presence in Burkina Faso, Central Mali, northern Chad, and northern Nigeria, leading to an increase in terrorist attacks in those areas. In July 2021, President Macron announced that the number of French troops in Mali would be reduced to approximately 2,500-3,000 by early 2022, which could encourage a jihadi resurgence.[11] However, some targeting errors and human rights abuses by local troops have powered AQIM's recruitment and damaged support for governments.[12]

Thus far, international and regional responses to the violence have failed to prevent rising levels of terrorism, made worse by the region having some of the highest population growth, significant increases in food insecurity and widespread displacement.

There are indications that terrorism activities are spreading westward, with some terrorist activity in Benin and Togo. One possible explanation for the increase in activity is groups looking to exploit internal political instabilities brought about by coups or attempted coups in several coastal countries. For example, for years, Benin had been one of Africa's most stable democracies however, differences between President Patrice Talon and the opposition has led to some instability, public demonstrations and insecurity.[13] Moreover, the decision of the transitional government in Chad in August 2021 to reduce its security presence along the "three-border region" from 1,200 troops to just 600, could have given the groups more freedom to operate,[14] although the security situation in Chad seemed to have improved from 2020 to 2021.

TERRORISM IN THE SAHEL: CONTEXT

Terrorism usually occurs as a tactic within a conflict setting, and as a tactic by groups looking to bring about political change. Several factors are fuelling the current crisis in the Sahel.

Firstly, the presence of groups such as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) which had been looking for the opportunity to frame the struggle as part of a broader ideological, theological, political, social, economic, and cultural movement. Over the last decade, AQIM has reframed its engagement to gain support from elements within the Tuareg,[15] leading it to form ties with groups such as Ansar al-Dine, al-Murabitoun, and Katiba Macina.

Secondly, the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (IS) and its intention to have regional hubs led to the formation of ties with local actors such as Boko Haram, which led to the emergence of the ISWA and the ISGS.[16]

Thirdly, ecological degradation has affected the security environment, forcing people to search for new grazing routes, arable land, and water facilities, and general security. Conversely, when looking at Northwest Nigeria, the terrain is conducive to support an insurgency, as the forests provide both security but also sources of revenue.[17]

Three types of terrorist groups operate in the Sahel. Firstly, there are the transnational jihadi groups with official links to al-Qaeda (AQIM, JNIM) or the Islamic State (ISWA, ISGS). The second type of group focuses on local issues; framing their actions through an ethnic-nationalist-religious paradigm (Ansar Dine,[18] al-Mourabitoun[19], and the Katiba Macina[20]). The third type of groups emerge as a response to specific situations and events such as the Dan Nan Ambassagou Association. The Association appeared around 2016, claiming to provide self-defence to Bambaras who have a grudge against the Fulanis.[21] Another example are the Koglweogos (Mooré: kogle 'to protect'; weogo 'territory') operating mainly in Burkina Faso of whom there are around 50.[22]

MILITIAS TO JIHADISTS

The Sahel faces security challenges with ethnic-nationalist insurgent groups, terrorist organisations, and criminal enterprises. At times, they cooperate, at other times they fight,[23] and sometimes they amalgamate or even cooperate in carrying out operations.[24]

Although AQIM carried out one attack in 2021 it remains a major threat as it increasingly operates as al-Qaeda's main franchising official, promoting al-Qaeda's ideology, helping to train recruits, as well as provide advice and support to new and existing groups. The key purpose for AQIM is to infuse local issues with al-Qaeda's transnational jihadi campaign, as seen in its decision to reach out and form strategic alliances with elements within the Tuaregs, such as Ansar Al Dine and JNIM.

Figure 3.5 underlies the links between jihadis, as the groups have evolved since the early 1990s when the dominant group was the Algerian Armed Islamic Group, which had many members who had travelled to Afghanistan in the 1980s. Over

FIGURE 3.5

Evolution of Salafi-jihadi groups in the Sahel Salafi-jiahdi Sahel

Many terrorist groups split or merge into other groups.
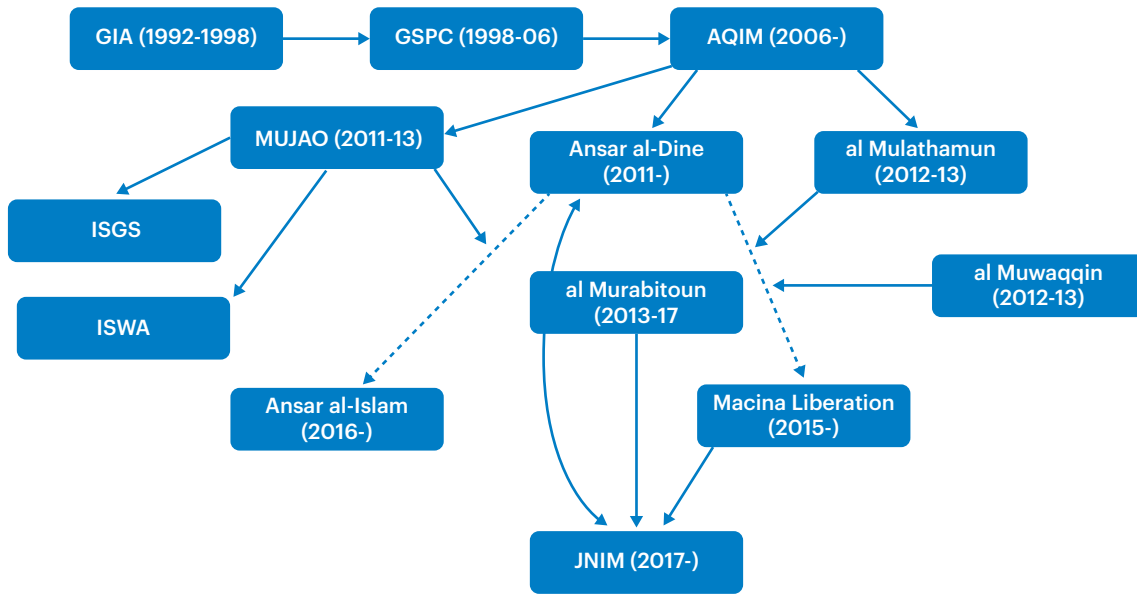
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

time, as their influence wane or change, individuals leave to form their own groups.

TERRORIST TACTICS: ALLIANCE FORMATION: PASTORALIST POPULISM VERSUS HIERARCHICAL SYSTEM

A close look at some of the actions of the key Jihadi groups in the region leads one to see two different strategies of alliance formation. Studies suggest that JNIM uses pastoral populism to form alliances, whereas ISWA employs a more hierarchical system.[25] The pastoral populism model resonated with many Fulanis as it highlights and exploits Fulani grievances on taxes, corruption, injustice, lack of resources, and discrimination.[26]

The difference between the two approaches is significant and impacts the level of violence as under pastoral populism, the focus is on horizontal local alliance building involving less violence, as the group looks to persuade others to join, leading them to not to claim sole responsibility for actions against civilians. This approach is a commonly used by al-Qaeda. It is worth noting that in 2010, bin Laden had warned Droukdel against toppling local governments before the jihadi movement had sufficient strength to establish and uphold an Islamic State.[27] AQIM has sought to embody the loose network approach.[28] The advantage is less violence, but it also means the groups are working to undermine state institutions as they look to create their own sub-systems. Nevertheless, JNIM's commitment to terrorise the population remains with the death toll rising to 207 deaths in 2021, almost five times the amount recorded for 2020. JNIM's lethality seems to have increased as in 2020 the rate was 3.9 deaths, but by 2021, it was 4.1 deaths. Figure 3.6 shows the relative likelihood of AQIM and JNIM attacking different targets.

The ISWA model involves greater acts of violence and brutality,

including a greater targeting of civilian populations, possibly, as under the ISWA model combatants are given the right to do as they pleased with the spoils that they get from an attack.[29] Thus, with this in mind it was unsurprising that ISWA overtook Boko Haram as the most active terrorist group in Niger in 2021, with the group being responsible for 23 attacks in the country with an average casualty rate of 15.2 deaths per attack. Deaths because of ISWA attacks accounted for 60 per cent of the total casualties in Niger. A similar trend is visible in Nigeria where civilian casualties from ISWA attacks were at 84 per cent.

FIGURE 3.6

Attacks targeting civilians in Burkina Faso and Mali compared to the rest of the Sahel

JNIM is more likely to attack military targets whereas AQIM is more likely to engage in attacking targets that are neither military, government nor private property.
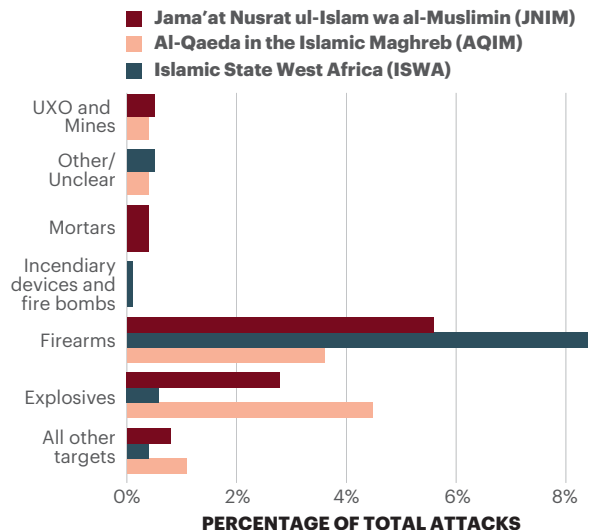
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

THE KILLING OF LOCAL LEADERS

A pattern seems to be emerging in the Sahel whereby terrorist groups are targeting chiefs, mayors, council members, and religious leaders, creating a power vacuum in the area (see Figure 3.7).[30] Such a tactic adds to the political-economic-social-cultural chaos as these leaders not only administered, manage, and oversee many institutions and systems, they coordinate between local, regional, and national governments and the people.[31] An additional benefit of this tactic for the Islamists is that the power vacuum leads to local power struggles between different actors all vying for supremacy, leading the government (military) to respond with greater force and polices that cripple local economies.[32]

HARD COUNTERTERRORISM MEASURES

Since the 2012 Tuareg uprising, the region has seen an increase in the use of hard counterterrorism measures, as governments with the support of the international community had looked to challenge non-state actors. The local, national defence force and the international-led engagement either through Operation Serval or the AU peacekeeping mission (African-led International Support Mission to Mali, AFISMA) have led to the killing of many terrorists, including Abdelmalek Droukdel, the head of AQIM and a member of AQ's "management committee".[33] However, decapitation programmes create new challenges including internal competition as individuals first fight for the leadership, and secondly, they go through a period of having to cement their authority, which often means more violence.[34] There is also the possibility that the new leader may also be more ruthless than their predecessors. For example, Abu Ubaidah Youssef al-Annabi replaced Droukdel as the leader of AQIM. Throughout his life, Annabi has called for more attacks against France and French targets whereas Droukdel appeared more pragmatic in his approach to promoting the jihadi agenda, possibly because of his experience with the short-lived Islamic Emirate of Azawad.

The international force and the training given to local security forces have produced mix results because the regions surrounding Burkina Faso's borders with Niger and Mali have experienced the most terror attacks, 72 per cent of all 2021 attacks in the Sahel. One explanation was the presence of the international force in Mali, which has pushed the terrorists across the border; a common method for groups to avoid assaults, as these forces are limited in terms of where they may operate.

In line with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States rules on military coups, Mali has had sanctions impose on it, in the hope of restoring elections and democracy. The government responded by asking the Danish force to leave, and expelling the French ambassador. There are indications that Russian private military contractor Wagner Group is in Mali suggesting that the government could be looking to develop relations with Moscow.[35] Moreover, there are also indications of increased Chinese interest in the Sahel with Beijing providing US$ 45.5 million to the security and counterterrorism operations of the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

FIGURE 3.7
Terrorist groups instability

A clear tactic of terrorist groups is to foster instability by either demanding obedience or killing locals leader to create a power vacuum that they fill.
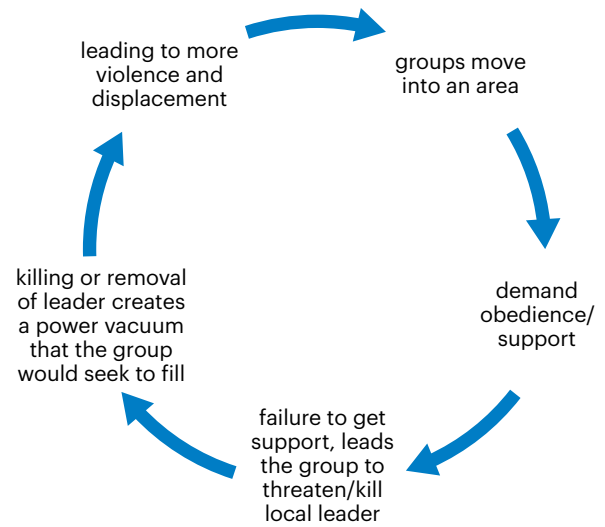
Source: IEP

CRIME AND TERRORISM

Historically, criminal activity has been present in the Sahel. One centre is Northern Mali, which has served as a key crossroad in transnational smuggling networks for licit and illicit goods ranging from fuel, cigarettes and foodstuffs to drugs, arms, and people. The desire to sustain these routes impact corruption levels, as those engaged in these trades form ties with officials to facilitate the trade. There are indications that competition over the routes and the revenue gained from these illicit activities are putting further pressure on already strained social structures and inter-tribal, inter-ethnic relations.[37]

Kidnapping it is a common tactic used by terrorist organisations. There has been a substantial increase in these activities across the region most notably in Burkina Faso. Figure 3.8 shows that terrorism is also associated with organised crime, namely kidnapping, human trafficking, arms smuggling, and narcotics. There has been a substantial increase in kidnapping in the Sahel (Figure 3.9), with 7 reported incidents in 2016 to 111 in 2019. Looking at AQIM, kidnapping has reportedly netted the group over US dollars 110 million since 2003.[38]

FIGURE 3.8
Correlation between GTI and Organised Crime Index Score, 2021

The higher the terrorism impact, the more likely is the presence of organised criminal activities.
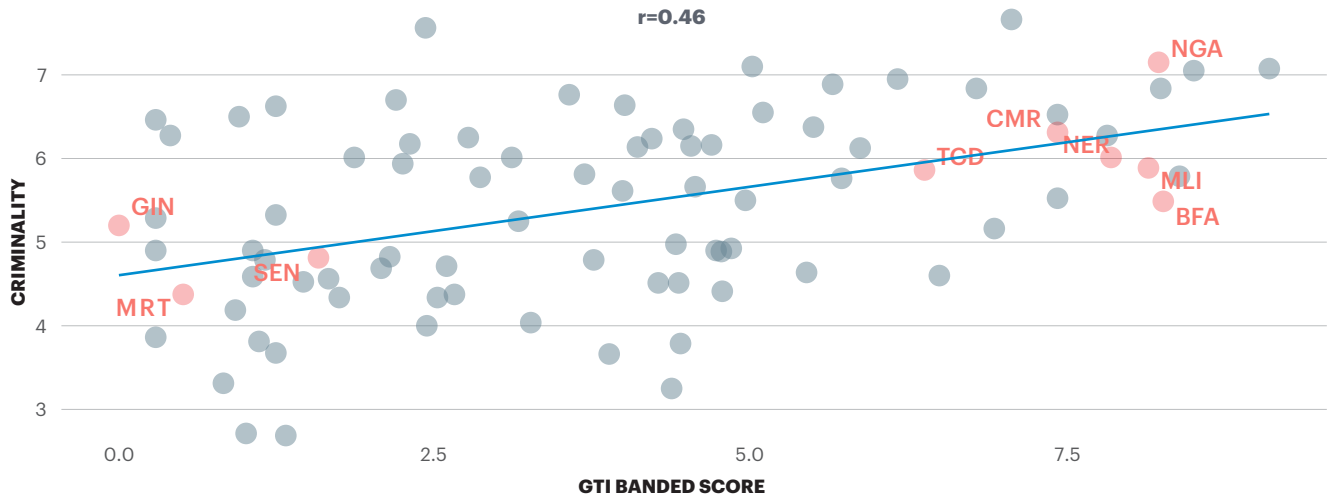
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, OCI, IEP calculations

FIGURE 3.9
Kidnapping in the Sahel, 2007–2020

Over the last decade, the number of kidnapping incidents in the Sahel has increased substantially.
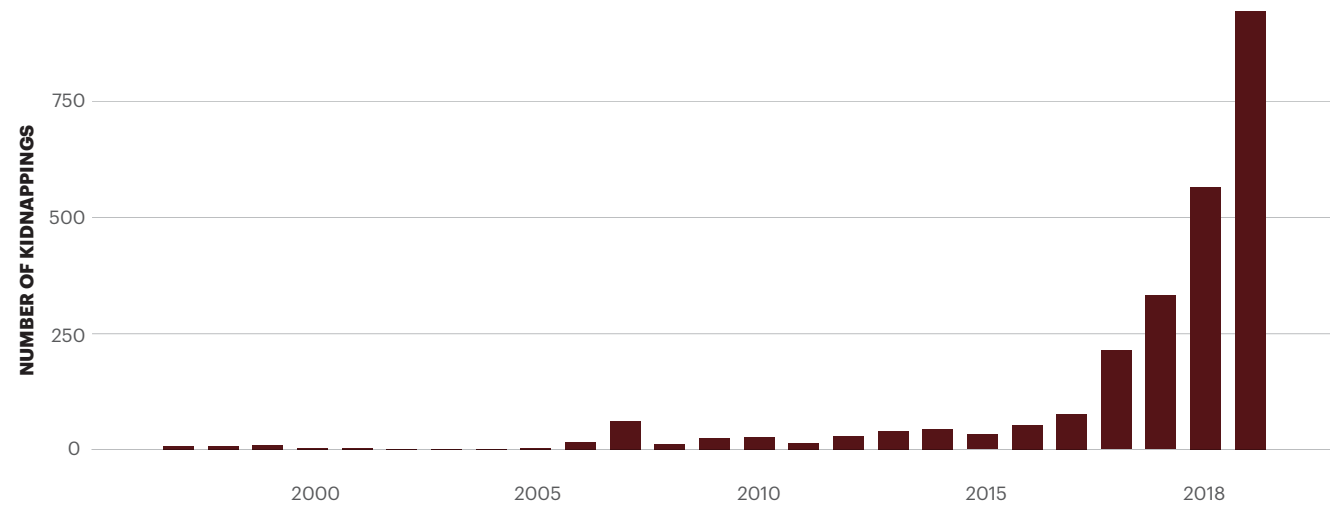
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, ACLED, IEP calculations

ECOLOGICAL THREATS AND TERRORISM IN THE SAHEL

Based on IEP's Ecological Threat Report (ETR), *water risk* is the most severe catastrophic threat for six countries in the Sahel, followed by *food risk* for three countries. *Rapid population growth* is a multiplier for all countries in the region. In particular, Niger has the highest projected population growth with an increase of 161 per cent by 2050, or an increase from 25.1 million people to 65.5 million.

The Sahel holds the world's highest concentration of hotspot countries – these are the countries most likely to collapse when exposed to further shocks. Six of the ten countries within the Sahel are classified as "hotspots", meaning they have low levels of resilience and a high or extremely high catastrophic threat score: Chad, Cameroon, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria. Many of these areas are already experiencing armed conflict.

Table 3.1 details the ETR scores of the countries in the Sahel region. The majority of countries in the region, six out of ten, face extremely high and high risk from ecological threats, while the remaining four face medium risk.

FIGURE 3.10

Ecological threat in the Sahel

The majority of countries in the Sahel region receive an extremely high or high ETR score.
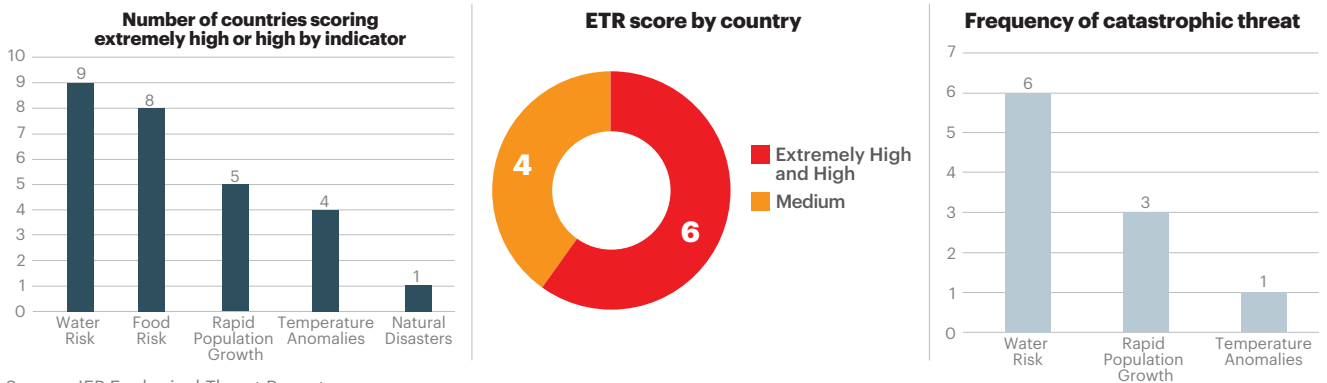
Source: IEP Ecological Threat Report

FIGURE 3.11

Sub-national ETR score and deaths from terrorism, Sahel, 2021

The higher the ETR score, the higher the ecological threat.
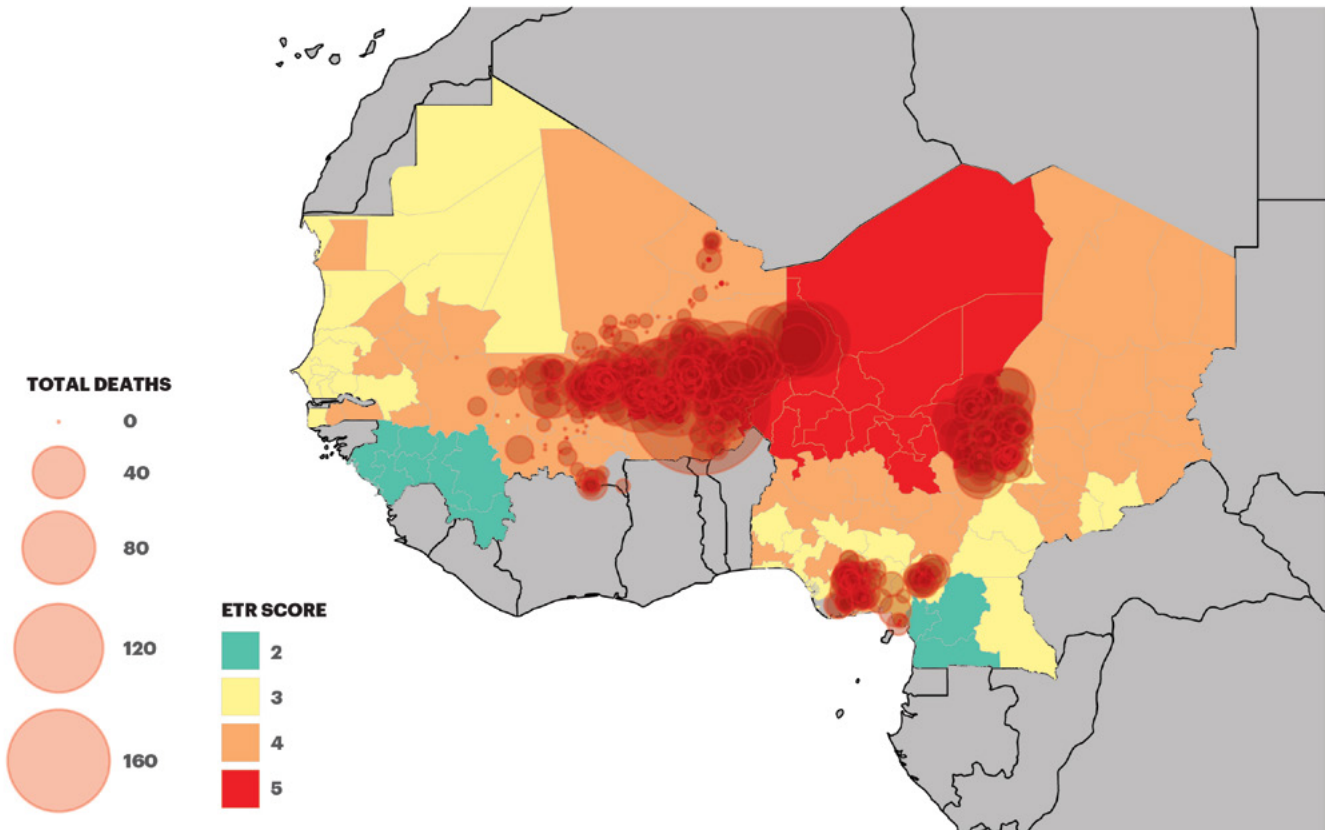
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

TABLE 3.1

Overview of ETR scores, Sahel region, 2021

Eight of the ten countries in the Sahel region rank in the bottom half of the ETR.

	ETR Score	ETR Rank	Projected Population Change (2021 – 2050)	Max Threat
Niger	5	177	177	Rapid Population Growth
Burkina Faso	4	165	165	Water Risk
Nigeria	4	156	156	Water Risk
Mali	4	153	153	Water Risk
Chad	4	148	148	Food Risk
Mauritania	4	137	137	Water Risk
Gambia	3	129	129	Water Risk
Senegal	3	124	124	Water Risk
Guinea	3	87	87	Food Risk
Cameroon	3	85	85	Food Risk

Source: IEP Ecological Threat Report

Table 3.2 shows the correlation between the GTI and the ETR. It shows that the presence of terrorism is most correlated with food and water insecurity. These coincide with the two greatest risks that the Sahel face.[39]

WATER RISK AND TERRORISM

The Sahel size means that rainfall varies drastically when comparing the north and south, with the latter having around 800mm annually whereas the north can receive at little as 100-200mm chiefly in June, July, and August. Niger, Nigeria, and Mali are watered by the Niger River, whereas Senegal and Mauritania by the Senegal rivers. Water scarcity and access to only dirty water have caused enormous damage and harm to the local population. It is worth noting that fetching water is considered a woman's job, often falling to young girls who must work on average six km to fetch water (each container weights about 15kg[40]). The walk is arduous and dangerous, making girls vulnerable to abduction and sexual violence.[41]

Water risk is the most common threat in the region, with all ten countries scoring extremely high or high on this indicator; this is because water has a strategic value. Consequently, water scarcity has been the cause of conflict. Understanding the context of water scarcity in relation to terrorism is key because even though no group in the Sahel has yet to make water scarcity a reason for using violence, the lack of water or concern over access or issues relating to quality and quantity of the water contribute to the conditions in which terrorist groups operate and thrive.

Conversely, water could be used as a tool of coercion exacerbating water insecurity, therefore those that have access to or control over the war could use it as a tool for recruitment.[42]

TABLE 3.2

Relationship between terrorism and ecological threats

The impact of Terrorism is closely correlated with ecological threats related to food and water insecurity. These are the two largest risks facing the Sahel.

	GTI 2022
Food Risk Score	0.438
ETR Score	0.428
Resource Scarcity Domain Score	0.39
Water Risk Score	0.326
Rapid Population Growth Score	0.292
Natural Disasters Score	0.279
Catastrophic Score	0.261
Natural Disasters and Temperature Change Domain Score	0.257
Temperature Anomaly Score	-0.068

Source: IEP

FIGURE 3.12

Terrorist attacks in the Sahel, 2021

Terrorist incidents tend to occur near waterways and routes.
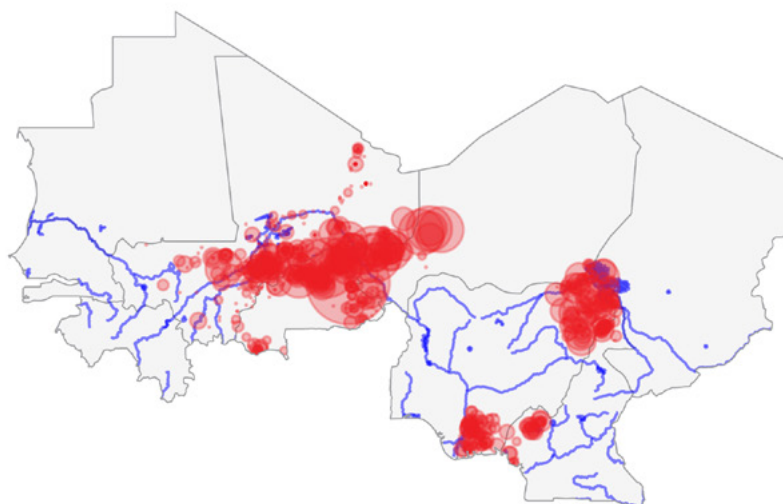
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

WATER RISK, FOOD INSECURITY AND RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND TERRORISM

The changes in the climate have led to more droughts and floods.[43] These undermine food production in the region, destroying diverse human settlements and causing widespread displacement.[44] Linked to the food risk element is the lack of land protection. Reportedly, in 2020, over 43 million people in the six Sahelian countries face[45] food insecurity (Phase 2) and almost 18 million people are in either crisis or emergency (Phase 3+) state.[46] One report looking at the water situation around Lake Chad highlighted that not only are there around 30 million people across Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon competing over dwindling water supplies but that Boko Haram looks to exploit this situation.[47] For example, by controlling the water they can demand a tax for access, they can use it to demand that families provide recruits; or they can use the need for water to forcefully conscript individuals.

Historically, food insecurity had motivated insurgencies and revolutions, but increasingly groups such as Islamic State, Boko Haram and al-Shahab used food in their tactics, raising questions as to whether there is a link between terrorism and food availability.[48] One possible link between terrorism and food insecurity refers to the lawless environment that arises in areas affected by prolong conflict, which influences the cost of the production and distribution of food, market inefficiencies, and poor or the lack of proper governance. Food insecurity could also affect terrorist groups, as they would need to search for food too, as was the case with Boko Haram, which created a food crisis in Northern Nigeria and Lake Chad, which ended up affecting it, compelling it to head to Cameroon as it searched for food security.[49] A separate issue relating to food security is access or lack of, which could be a tactic, aimed at generating anti-government sentiments and create a political void that the group would seek to fulfil.

Many of the Sahelian countries are experiencing rapid population growth, which puts more pressure on fragile institutions and limited resources. Rapid population growth could be a significant factor in facilitating terrorism activities as it adds to the overexploitation of limited resources and inhabitable spaces, which in turn intensifies socioeconomic differences and possibly gives rise to more violence and terrorism.[50] In the mid-2010s, Cameroon authorities claimed that high poverty rates, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition encouraged many young Cameroonians to cross over to Nigeria. Reports indicate that Boko Haram sought to take advantage of the poverty and lack of opportunity with reports indicating that young men were faced with a stark choice, join Boko Haram or stay at home, do nothing, and put more pressure on the family, which was struggling to eat. Boko Haram offered between US$600 – US$800 each month, whereas those lucky to get a job could at best earn US$72 a month.[51]

"Many of the Sahelian countries are experiencing rapid population growth, which puts more pressure on fragile institutions and limited resources."

BOX 3.2

Food insecurity and malnourishment

Food insecurity refers to a situation when people do not have secure access to safe and nutritious food that they need for normal growth and development. Sub-Saharan Africa as a region with very high rates of undernourishment, Figure 3.13 shows thinness by sex in the region. According to this, males tend to have higher rates of thinness in the region.

In 14 of the 44 sub-Saharan African countries covered in the GPI, more than ten per cent of young males suffer from very high levels of thinness. Seven of these are among the ten least peaceful countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and five are

among the ten countries with the highest levels of terrorism in the region.

Ten per cent or more of young males suffer from very high levels of thinness in eight of the ten countries in the Sahel.

The connection between thinness, undernourishment and conflict is an under-researched area with limited available data. Analysing these relationships could be important to better understand how malnourishment contributes to broader conflict in society, particularly among its young men.

FIGURE 3.13

Thinness in Africa by Sex, 2016

In sub-Saharan Africa, thinness in males in some countries is three times as prevalent when compared to females in the 5-19 age bracket.
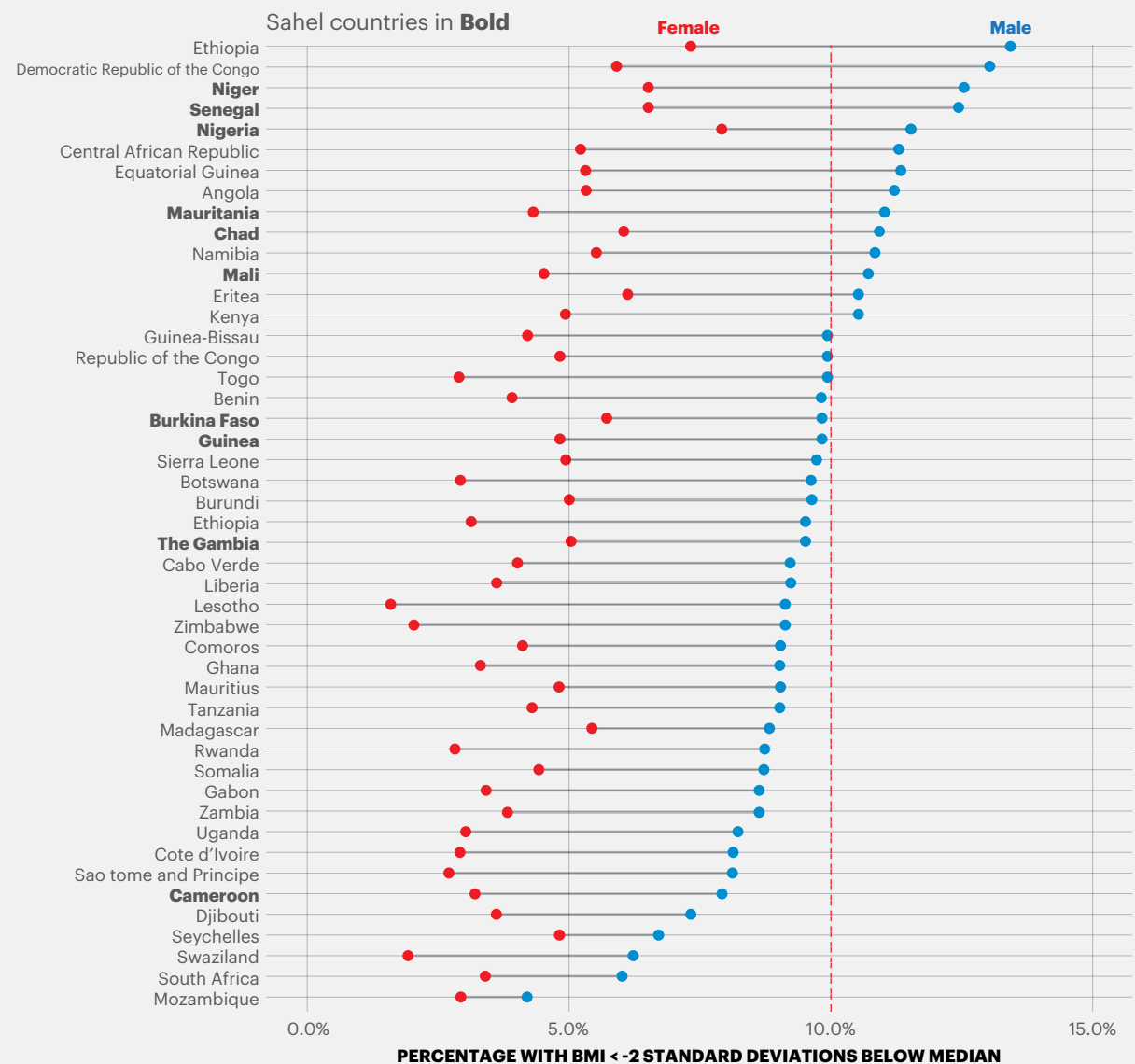
Source: WHO, IEP calculations

RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL: SYSTEMIC THREATS AND POSITIVE PEACE

The ETR shows that the Sahel faces high threats from water and food security and rapid population growth. With low levels of Positive Peace (see Text Box 3.3), the Sahel lacks the coping capacity to adequately adapt to a changing risk landscape. This combination of threats and low Positive Peace lead to the Sahel to be identified as a regional hotspot in the ETR.

Figure 3.15 shows the levels of Positive Peace in the Sahel. The Sahel scores lower than the global average across all eight Pillars of Peace. Levels of Positive Peace have also remained consistent with only moderate improvements and deteriorations since 2009. The Sahel lags behind the global average the most in *High Levels of Human Capital*, *Acceptance of the Rights of Others*, *Equitable Distribution of Resources* and *Sound Business Environment*.

Weaknesses in these pillars affect the regions' ability to mitigate the risks it faces. The remainder of this section highlights some of the challenges these present.

Well-Functioning Government
Across the region, states (systems) are very fragile, which creates a space for non-state actors to come and look to provide basic services. Issues with law and order have meant that militia groups are formed either for an immediate defensive purposes or for more long term reasons. A good example of this is the proliferation of the Koglweogo in Burkina Faso.[52] Alternatively, as is the case in Northwest Nigeria, lack of governance has led to the proliferation of banditry, with some reports suggesting that there are as many as 30,000 bandits in the area, spread over 100 gangs. Some gangs could have as many as 2,000 fighters.[53]

High Levels of Corruption
There are many examples as to the link between corruption and sustained conflict. Notably, the Sahelian countries' security services have faced countless allegations of corrupt practices, which not only emphasises low confidence in their abilities, but emphasise a strong possibility that defence aid would be wasted. The situation is made worse by the fact that Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria have adopted a doctrine that identifies corruption as a strategic threat.[54]

Low Levels of Human Capital
A skilled human capital base reflects the extent to which societies educate citizens and promote the development of knowledge, thereby improving economic productivity, care for the young, political participation and social capital. These are absent in the Sahel which mean that individuals need to look for ways to support themselves and their families.

BOX 3.3

Positive Peace

Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. It encapsulates the set of developmental factors that generate resilient societies, that is, societies that are capable of protecting their citizens from negative shocks and recovering more rapidly and completely in their aftermath.

The concept of Positive Peace was first introduced in the 1960s, as a complement to the traditional idea of peace. This idea was predicated on the absence of violence and fear of violence, and as such, it was known as a negative interpretation of peace. As a counterpoint, Positive Peace was defined as the presence of a number of factors that promote socio-economic development and societal resilience.

IEP has developed a conceptual and statistical framework to measure Positive Peace in countries and communities, based on eight critical areas, or Pillars, of socio-economic development: Acceptance of the Rights of Others, Free-Flow of Information, Equitable Distribution of Resources, Good Relations with Neighbours, Well-Functioning Governments, Low Levels of Corruption, High Levels of human Capital and Sound Business Environment. This is shown in Figure 3.14.

FIGURE 3.14

The Pillars of Positive Peace

A visual representation of the factors comprising Positive Peace. All eight factors are highly interconnected and interact in varied and complex ways.

FIGURE 3.15

Positive Peace in the Sahel compared to global average

The Sahelian countries record a low score on the *Acceptance of the Rights of Others, Equitable Distribution of Resources*, and *Sound Business Environment* Pillars.
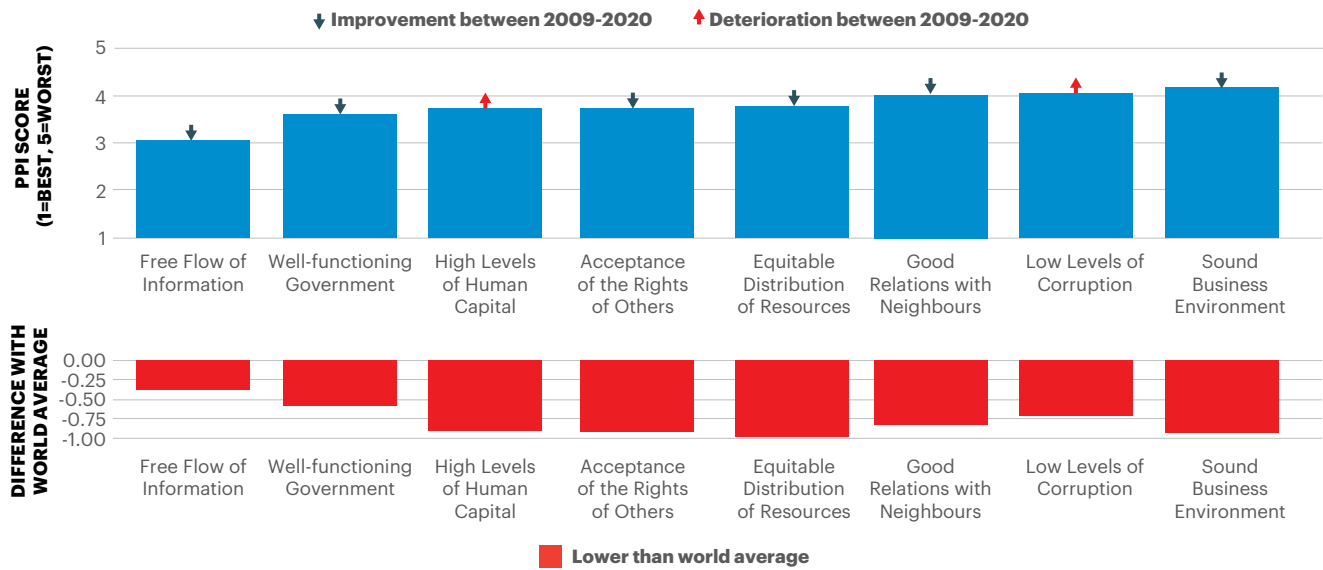
Source: IEP

Equitable Distribution of Resources and Sound Business Environment

Peaceful countries tend to ensure equity in access to resources such as education, health, and to a lesser extent, equity in income distribution. Moreover, Sahelian countries' business environment is easily affected by climate change and by global economic trends. For example, the Sahelian countries rely heavily on livestock and agricultural markets, which are easily affected by ecological changes. Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and to a lesser degree, Niger have also made great strands in developing their oil and/or minerals but these are impacted by world market's unpredictability resultant in highly volatile economic growth impacting development goals.

Acceptance of the Rights of Others

Peaceful countries often have formal laws that guarantee basic human rights and freedoms, and the informal social and cultural norms that relate to behaviours of citizens. The GTI indicates that there has been a substantial rise in civilian fatalities in Burkina Faso (seven-fold between 2018 and 2019), such violence could support recruitment because individuals recognise that membership could provide security.[55]

"Ongoing violence has taken a large toll on the civilian population, leading to widespread displacement, disruption of agricultural production, livelihoods and cross-border trade, and restricted affected populations from accessing basic services."

REGIONAL CASE STUDIES

BURKINA FASO, MALI AND NIGER BORDER AREA

The last five years have seen a significant increase of terrorist attacks in the Central Sahel, predominantly at the intersection of the Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger borders, with over 1,600 terrorist deaths recorded in the three countries in 2021, up from around 1,300 in 2020.

The incursion of jihadi groups, such as ISWA and JNIM, could explain the increase. There have also been more clashes between these two groups, culminating in the death of Abubakar Shekau in mid-2021. One possible explanation for the uptake in terrorist attacks around the Lake Chad area and in Maiduguri[56] was the reinstatement of Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the leader of ISWA and the possible defection of Boko Harams fighters to ISWA following Shekau's death.[57]

Terrorist groups have sought to exploit intercommunal tensions between agriculturalists and pastoralists, further exacerbating the fragile security situation. For instance, JNIM has sought to embed itself into local communities by portraying itself as a defender of ethnic groups, such as the Fulani in Mali.[58] Similarly, ISWA has sought to take advantage of intercommunal conflicts between the Fulani and Tuaregs in the Mali-Niger border area.[59] By exploiting existing tensions, both groups have been able to co-opt disaffected individuals into taking up arms against either rival groups, or government forces.

Other interesting developments were terrorist activities or attempts to carry out operations in some of the coastal countries. Côte d'Ivoire had experienced six terrorist attacks, with the use of improvised explosive devices.

FIGURE 3.16

Total incidents and deaths from terrorism in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, 2007–2020

Terrorist activity in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger began to increase considerably after 2016.

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger share many challenges, including weak institutions, corruption, lack of infrastructure, and difficulty controlling their vast borders.[60] In addition to growing insecurity, the region has also faced prolonged periods of drought and flooding, which has had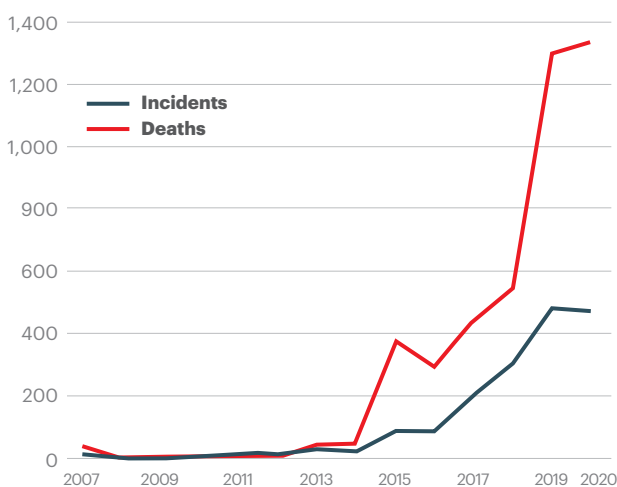 a severe impact on fragile livelihoods and people's capacity to feed themselves in the region.[61] Moreover, these countries have some of the highest population growth rates in the world.

In November 2019, the World Food Programme reported a "three-country crisis" in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which has led to the displacement of one million people, while 2.4 million require food assistance.[62] In Burkina Faso, the most affected administrative units – the Sahel and Centre-Nord – account for almost 900,000 internally displaced people (IDPs). These administrative units are also facing the highest threats from water scarcity and population growth.

Similarly, in Niger, the country's security challenges are compounded by rapid population growth, and facing the greatest threat from terrorism in the country. The administrative units of Tillabéry, Diffa and Tahoua have the largest population growth rates.

In Mali, the administrative units of Mopti and Gao, account for the majority of terrorist activity in the country. *Water risk* is the greatest threat for the Mopti administrative unit and compounded by high population growth.

THE LAKE CHAD REGION

In the Lake Chad region, which comprises parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, conflict is complicated by several ecological threats including water scarcity, high population growth, drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity.[63] Within the region, approximately 90 per cent of livelihoods rely on lake water and rainfall.[64]

Worsening droughts, erratic rainfall and desertification, confounded by an unprecedented security crisis driven by persistent terrorist and violent extremist attacks, as well as ethnic, religious, and farmer-herder conflicts over land use.[65] At the same time, the rise of Boko Haram has resulted in thousands of deaths throughout the Lake Chad Basin region of West Africa.

Boko Haram and ISWA have sought to exploit existing fragilities by taking control of large areas of territory around Lake Chad. The groups have also aligned with local communal conflicts and their leaders to gain recruits by siding on divisions between ethnic groups, such as the Fulani ethnic groups in Nigeria, as well as the long-standing farmer-herder violence over water and grazing areas.[67]

The deteriorating environmental conditions in the Lake Chad Region and associated disruption to agricultural production, and widespread poverty have enabled the spread of Boko Haram and ISWA across the region.[68] Both groups have positioned themselves as alternative service providers and facilitated recruitment by offering employment to those whose livelihoods have been impacted by recurring ecological threats, particularly youths, and consequently been able to expand their influence.[69] In particular, ISWA has reportedly provided basic

FIGURE 3.17
Total incidents and deaths from terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin⁶⁶, 2007–2020

Terrorism deaths in the Lake Chad region peaked in 2015, at over 2,200 deaths.
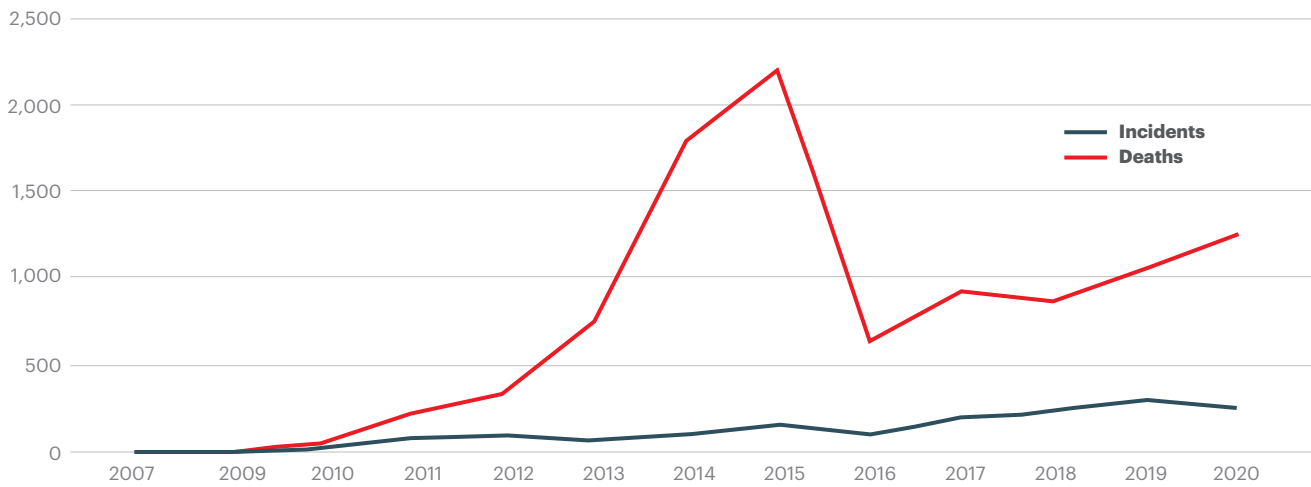
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, IEP calculations

services and law enforcement in areas under its control, thereby building ties with local communities.[70]

Regional security forces have often struggled to contain the militias and regain territory taken by Boko Haram and ISWA. In 2014, the African Union authorised a Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising of soldiers from Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger to assist the Nigerian government in attacking territory held by Boko Haram. The United States has also provided military capacity-building assistance for national security forces and logistics and advisory support for the MNJTF.[71] However, governments in the Lake Chad Basin region face competing security priorities. For instance, in Cameroon, personnel have redeployed from fighting ISWA in the north to the west of the country following the outbreak of a separate secessionist conflict in 2017. More broadly, governance deficits, lack of public trust and socio-economic fragilities across the Lake Chad Basin region may hinder lasting security gains.

Ongoing violence has taken a large toll on the civilian population, leading to widespread displacement, disruption of agricultural production, livelihoods and cross-border trade, and restricted affected populations from accessing basic services.[72] As of 2020, there were an estimated 2.7 million IDPs in the Lake Chad Basin.[73] The majority were in Nigeria, with an estimated 1.9 million IDPs in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe state.[74] The administrative units of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Kano in Nigeria and Extrême-Nord in Cameroon have recorded the most deaths from terrorism since 2007. In particular, the state of Borno in Nigeria has recorded the most terrorist activity of any subnational area in the Sahel, with 867 attacks and 6,581 deaths from terrorism. The number of attacks peaked in 2019, but has remained consistent in the last 18 months.

CONCLUSION

Within the Sahel, there is a nexus between systemic failures, violent conflict, resource degradation, and pervasive insecurity. The countries suffering from the worst ecological degradation are also among the most violent because people lack basic security.

It is unlikely that the current actions taken by the local governments and the international community will be enough to reverse the vicious cycles of conflict, insecurity and resource degradation in the Sahel. Particularly as it seems that local and regional terrorist actors are adapting their tactics, increasing their activities and the lethality of their campaigns, as they look to exploit political vacuums, which suggests, at least when it comes to JNIM a shift in tactics from terrorism to insurgency, as the group looks to build alliances and create the condition for limited governance. ISWA on the other hand seems wedded to engage in terrorism, specifically using violence, fear, publicity, and the targeting of civilians to spread its message and impose its will on the public.

Addressing the multiple crises in the region calls for a systemic approach, whereby key elements within the system are identified and addressed as standalone cases, which will create a better overall outcome. Put differently, it is more effective to have four projects with a forty percent success rate than one with an eighty percent rate. One way to address the insecurity is through a systematic approach that would encourage the development of Positive Peace, as moderate, local leaders are political entrepreneurs, which raises the prospect of working through established institutions to address the needs of the people.

4

Terrorism and Conflict

Conflict is the primary driver of terrorism. All of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism in 2021 were involved in an armed conflict[1] in the preceding year. Four of those, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Syria, had conflicts that resulted in over 1,000 deaths in a calendar year.

The link between conflict and terrorism is strong because as the intensity of the conflict increases, violence against both the police and the military becomes more acceptable, as is violence against civilians perceived to be associated with the enemy. Other than a higher intensity of general violence, there are also larger concentrations of weapons, and a lack of state control over the territory.

Terrorism is generally used as a method for achieving tactical or strategic goals, as seen in the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. Furthermore, as the intensity of the conflict increases, the psychological barriers against large-scale violence diminishes.

Terrorism appears to be contracting into conflict areas, with a higher percentage of attacks happening in conflict zones. Since 2007, 92 per cent of deaths from terrorism have occurred in a conflict zone. However, over the last three years, 95.8 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurred in conflict affected countries, increasing to 97.6 per cent in 2021.

Figure 4.1 shows the average lethality of terrorism attacks for countries in conflict, countries with a minor conflict, and for countries not experiencing conflict. As the intensity of conflict increases, so does the lethality of terrorist actions. Attacks in countries experiencing conflict are six times as lethal as in countries not experiencing conflict, as shown in Figure 4.2.

The data reveals that not only has the lethality of individual terrorist attacks increased as the conflict intensifies, but the frequency of such attacks also rises. Figure 4.3 shows there is a significant statistical relationship (r=0.51) between the intensity of an internal armed conflict and the number of terrorist attacks per year. Countries with the highest rates of battle related deaths per year, such as Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq, had higher levels of terrorist activities. Moreover, in any given internal armed conflict, a ten per cent increase in the number of terrorist attacks per year is associated with a 4.7 per cent increase in the number of battle deaths per year.[2]

In many conflict environments, violence is not only aimed at the government but rather takes place between extremists who look to dominate a disputed territory. This competition influences a

FIGURE 4.1

Percentage of deaths by conflict type, 2021

Most deaths from terrorism occur in the context of an armed conflict.
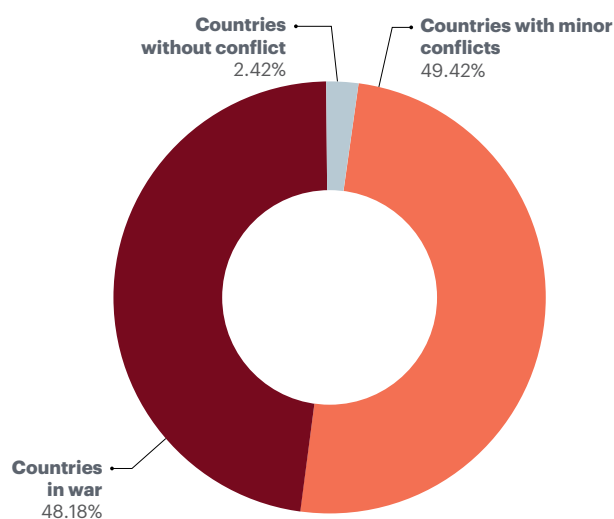
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

FIGURE 4.2

Fatality rates of terrorist attacks by conflict type, 2020

Terrorist attacks in countries in conflict are six times deadlier than in countries without conflict.
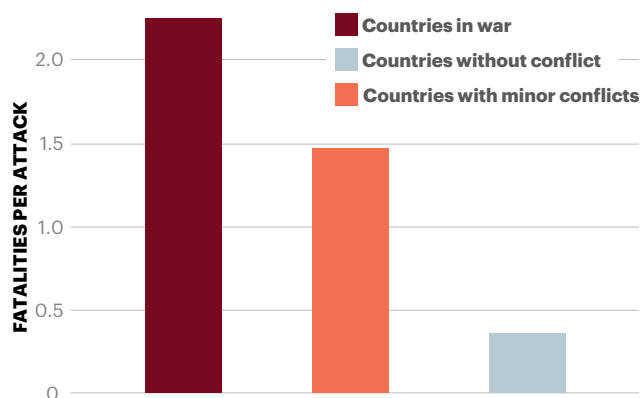
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

FIGURE 4.3

Conflict intensity and terrorism, 2007–2020

The number of terrorist incidents has a strong correlation with the number of battle deaths.
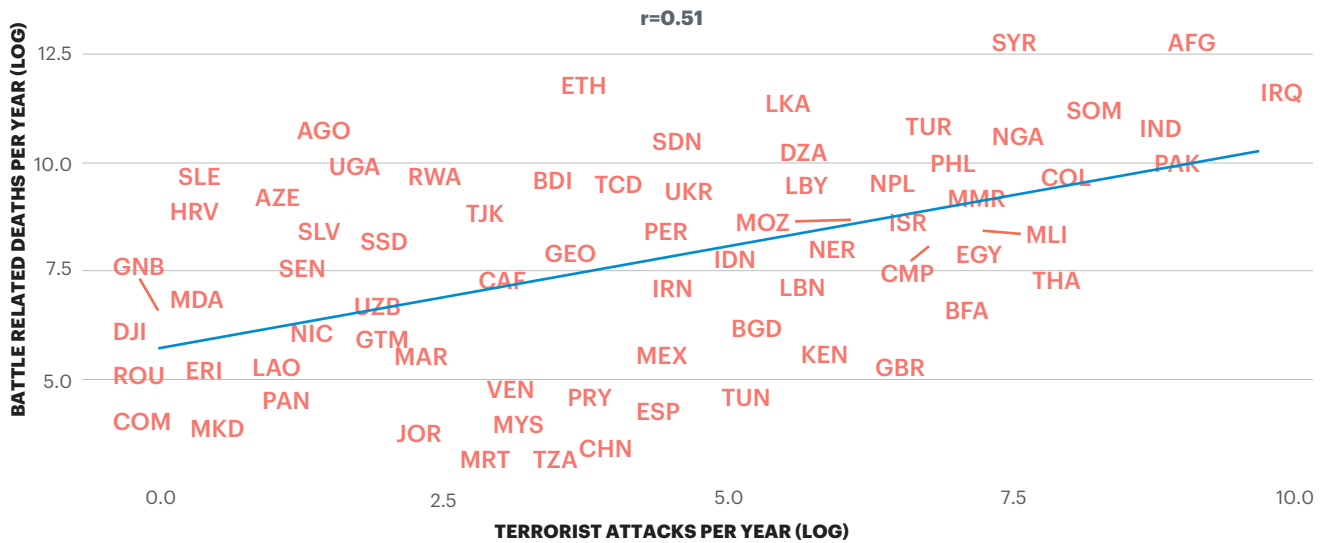
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

group's strategy and tactics, as some would choose to use terrorist tactics against both the opposing group, but also against citizens deemed to be aligned with the other group. This approach was promoted by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and his group, al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad), as he was looking to bring about a civil war in Iraq. Groups such as the Islamic State – Sinai Province, for example, would look to attack both military and civilians targets to provoke overreaction by the state in the hope of aligning the civilian population with them.[3] In areas where a group may have more sympathisers, it may want to focus its attacks against state institutions or the military and police and less against civilians as it looks to win over the population.

This was the case in Syria. The conflict began in Hama with a popular demonstration that cascaded into one of the worst conflicts in modern history. Attempts by the regime to crush the demonstration with tanks galvanized opponents of the regime, who formed opposition groups, some with backing from foreign governments. As the conflict intensified, groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, Kurdish People's Protection Units, and others emerged, some of whom fought each other as they looked to control contested territory. The legacy has been tragic, with hundreds of thousands dead and 12 million people displaced.[4]

Geographically, Figure 4.4 shows that 80 per cent of all terrorist attacks occur within 50 km of a conflict. Although 97 per cent of terrorist deaths are in countries in conflict, there are many countries where not all of the country is classified as being in a conflict.

FIGURE 4.4

Proximity of terrorist attacks from armed conflict

80 per cent of terrorist incidents occur within 50 km of violent conflict.
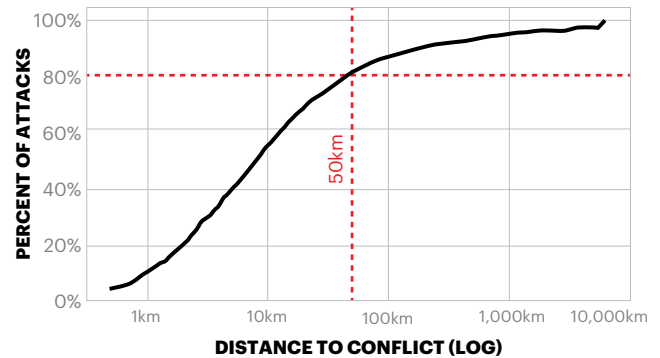
Source: Dargonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

"80 per cent of all terrorist incidents have occurred within 50 kilometres of a zone where a conflict is taking place."

TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY

In a conflict environment, the distinction between terrorism and insurgency is at times difficult to perceive. Both insurgents and terrorists look to bring about political change through violence.

A terrorist group and an insurgent group can be distinguished on the following criteria:[5]

- An insurgent group is involved in conflicts with more than 1,000 casualties and where more than 100 members of the group itself have died.

- Insurgent groups look to hold and seize territory, were they can and do exercise control over a population. They also operate in the open as armed units, and they can engage in mass mobilisation.[6]

Three per cent of groups in the GTI could be classified as insurgent groups; they are listed in Table 4.1. Except for al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and the Islamic State – Sinai Province, all other groups were involved in some form of armed conflict against state authorities.[7]

Seven insurgent groups in Table 4.1 operate in the MENA or sub-Saharan Africa regions. Table 4.1 also shows the longevity of these groups. Notably, although many groups conduct activities across multiple countries, they do not meet the criteria of an insurgent group in multiple countries because of their limited impact. Boko Haram is the only group that could be classified as an insurgent group that is carrying out a campaign in more than one country.

The patterns of behaviour and conflict engagement displayed by insurgent groups are complex. Figure 4.5 shows that terrorist groups and insurgent groups frequently target the police and the military. This reflects the use of terrorism as a tactic, with the police and the military considered as the main 'enemy forces'. In the Sahel, the group Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) is more likely to attack military targets to achieve its goals, as it wants to impose its rule over the population and therefore does not want to alienate the local population. Groups like al-Shabaab attack both civilian and military targets, whereas Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) prefers targeting civilian and private businesses.

Figure 4.6 shows that insurgent groups are responsible for nearly two-thirds of deaths from known groups. This occurs despite the fact that insurgent groups represent only three per cent of all terrorist groups.

In Niger, in 2021, attacks caused on average 7.9 deaths per attack, compared to 3.8 in 2020. This is of particular concern and highlights the growing sophistication and organisational capabilities of ISWA. In Burkina Faso, the lethality rate of JNIM attacks in 2021 was almost 16 deaths per attack, compared with four deaths per attack in 2020.

TABLE 4.1

Terrorist groups that could be classified as insurgent groups
Most insurgent groups have been operating since 2007 in the sub-Saharan Africa and MENA regions.

Group	Country	Region	Years of Operation	Ideology	Sub-ideology	Terrorist Deaths	Victims Deaths	Total Deaths
Taliban	Afghanistan	South Asia	2007 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	2156	9473	11629
Islamic State (IS)	Iraq	MENA	2007 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	390	8418	8808
Boko Haram	Nigeria	sub-Saharan Africa	2007 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	1049	7401	8450
Al-Shabaab	Somalia	sub-Saharan Africa	2007 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	1213	6649	7862
Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)	Pakistan	South Asia	2007 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	1037	3939	4976
Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)	Iraq	MENA	2007 - 2013	Religious	Islamic	124	3691	3815
Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI-M)	India	South Asia	2007 - 2021	Separatist/ Ethno-nationalist	Separatist	134	2006	2140
Islamic State - Sinai Province	Egypt	MENA	2013 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	227	1490	1717
Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)	Yemen	MENA	2009 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	247	1344	1591
Boko Haram	Cameroon	sub-Saharan Africa	2014 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	326	1224	1550
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	Turkey	Europe	2009 - 2021	Separatist/ Ethno-nationalist	Separatist	309	1041	1350
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)	Colombia	South America	2007 - 2021	Political	Far-Left	153	1097	1250
Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	Nigeria	sub-Saharan Africa	2017 - 2021	Religious	Islamic	269	954	1223

Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

FIGURE 4.5
Likelihood of attacking specific targets, insurgent vs terrorist, 2011–2021

Insurgent groups are more likely to target police, military or government officials.
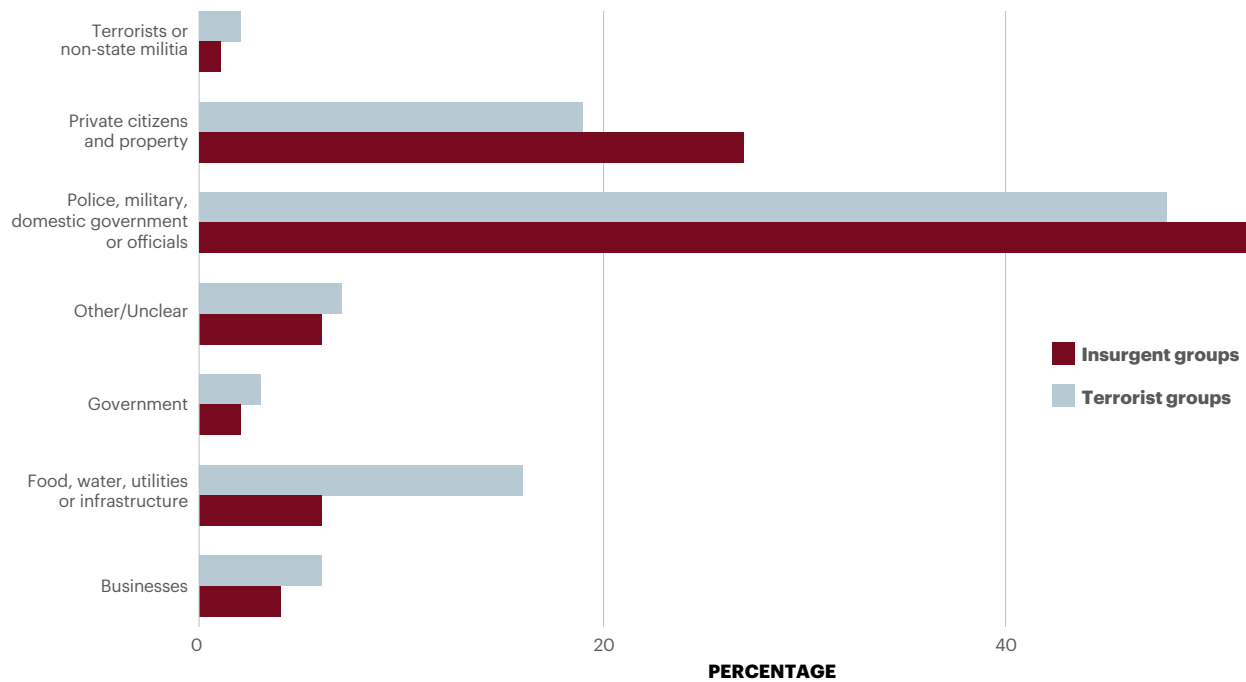
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

FIGURE 4.6
Comparison of fatalities, incidents and injuries between insurgent and terrorist groups

Insurgent groups are responsible for more fatalities than known terrorist groups.

Source: Dargonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

FIGURE 4.7
Distribution of insurgent and terrorist group survival

Insurgent groups are active for significantly longer than terrorist groups.
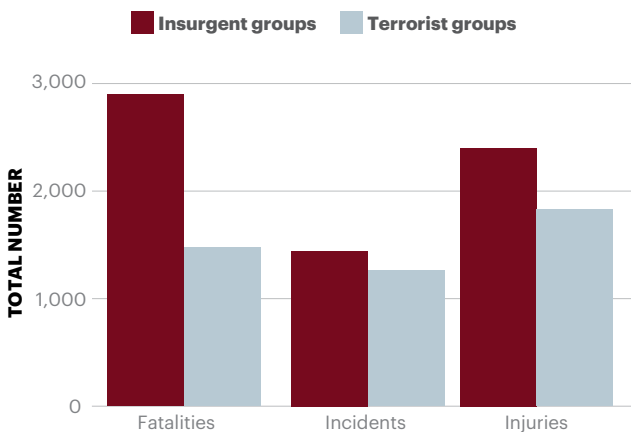
Source: Dragonfly TerrorismTracker, UCDP, IEP calculations

Figure 4.7 shows the number of years in which insurgent and terrorist groups have committed at least one attack. On average, insurgencies are active for 11.8 years. In contrast, the majority of terrorist groups are on average active for around 4 years. It should be noted that a terrorist group could transition to an insurgent group, or transition back to a terrorist group, reflecting the tactics it uses. Boko Haram underlined this, as at one point (2014-2015) the group was responsible for over 1,000 casualties per year, making it one of the most dangerous groups in the world. During that time, the group was more capable of challenging the Nigerian military, but with fewer members and

resources, it reverted back to using more traditional terrorist tactics. To escape the Nigerian military, it was forced to Boko Haram was forced to seek refuge in Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, bringing violence to those areas.

This section looks at the relationship between terrorism and indicators from the Global Peace Index (GPI) and the Positive Peace Index (PPI) for OECD countries and the Rest of the World. The aim is to identify different motivators between wealthier counties and less wealthy countries.

There were 24 indicators that had statistically significant levels of correlation with terrorism in OECD countries, compared to 15 indicators for countries in the Rest of the World category. Although some factors are the same, there are many distinct differences between the two groups for the factors that correlate significantly.

Some of the indicators in Table 4.2 are linked conceptually to violence and are included in the GPI, such as the *Militarisation*, *Internal Peace* and *Safety and Security* domains. These indicators correlate with the level of terrorist activity.

Other indicators that correlate across the OECD and the Rest of the World are the *Political Terror Scale*, *Acceptance of the Rights of Others* from the PPI, and the *Attitudes* domain from the PPI. In all, there were only eight non-conflict indicators that overlapped between the two groups. This is a very small group of overlapping indicators, compared to statistically significant indicators that were unique to each group.

It highlights that the drivers of terrorism are different between OECD countries and the Rest of the World. As such, different approaches are needed, depending on the context of a particular country.

The set of indicators shown in Table 4.2 is statistically linked to terrorism. Statistically significant correlations above 0.3 are shown.

Advanced Economies (OECD):

The indicator with the highest level of statistical significance was *Youth not in employment, education or training*. Interestingly, this indicator did not correlate significantly with the Rest of the World grouping. The lack of youth opportunity can fuel disenchantment that a terrorist group can exploit in its recruitment campaigns.[8] An active youth cohort, especially through employment, is less likely to be persuaded to resort to acts of violence, particularly if political grievances are considered.[9] However, addressing business development is a holistic undertaking and needs to be approached from many directions.

Interestingly, many of the indicators with the highest statistical significance could be classified as indicators of societal equity. These include *Acceptance of the Rights of Others*, exclusion by socio-economic group, equality of opportunity, and law to support equal treatment of population segments.

The other interesting grouping of indicators revolve around *political terror*, *access to small arms* and *militarisation*. These indicate that the societies that are accustomed to violence more

TABLE 4.2

Correlations with terrorism in OECD countries and the Rest of the World

Political terror and the intensity of internal conflict are associated with terrorism in both OECD countries and the rest of the world.

Index	Indicator	OECD	Rest of the world
PPI	Youth not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)	0.62	0.18
GPI	Political Terror Scale	0.55	0.57
GPI	Safety & Security	0.54	0.45
GPI	Militarisation	0.53	0.24
GPI	Access to Small Arms	0.53	0.27
GPI	Internal Peace	0.52	0.61
PPI	Exclusion by Socio-economic Group	0.50	0.23
PPI	Acceptance of the Rights of Others	0.49	0.43
GPI	Intensity of Internal Conflict	0.47	0.55
GPI	Nuclear and Heavy Weapons	0.47	0.21
PPI	Attitudes	0.45	0.40
GPI	Violent Crime	0.44	0.27
GPI	External Peace	0.44	0.35
PPI	Freedom of the Press	0.42	0.16
PPI	Law to Support Equal Treatment of Population Segments	0.40	0.27
GPI	Deaths from External Conflict	0.40	0.15
PPI	Equality of Opportunity	0.40	0.20
PPI	Free Flow of Information	0.39	0.28
GPI	Military Expenditure (% GDP)	0.39	0.19
GPI	UN Peacekeeping Funding	0.39	0.06
GPI	Perceptions of Criminality	0.38	0.04
PPI	Equitable Distribution of Resources	0.38	0.30
GPI	Refugees and IDPs	0.37	0.29
GPI	Violent Demonstrations	0.37	0.40
PPI	Access to Public Services	0.35	0.32
PPI	Group Grievance	0.35	0.50
PPI	Individuals Using the Internet	0.34	0.28
PPI	Gender Inequality	0.34	0.32
PPI	Quality of Information	0.33	0.13
PPI	Factionalised Elites	0.32	0.38
PPI	High Levels of Human Capital	0.31	0.22
GPI	Ongoing Conflict	0.31	0.68
GPI	Deaths from Internal Conflict	0.29	0.77
PPI	PPI Overall Score	0.27	0.35
GPI	Political Instability	0.22	0.35
GPI	Internal Conflict	0.21	0.67
PPI	Low Levels of Corruption	0.20	0.34
PPI	Rule of Law	0.18	0.30
PPI	Institutions Domain	0.10	0.30
PPI	External Intervention	0.10	0.31
GPI	Neighbouring Countries Relations	-0.06	0.32

likely to commit it. *Political terror* has one of the highest correlations for both groups and involves extra-judicial killings, torture, and imprisonment without trial.

Looking at the tens of thousands of Europeans that chose to join Islamic State (IS), relative deprivation was an important factor. Many were socio-economic underperformers, which contributed to their radicalisation. A study of 378 German foreign fighters found that only six per cent finished post-school training, two per cent went into further education, and a third had criminal convictions. One in five were registered as unemployed and just 12 percent had a job, although those who did have a job, had a low-paying job.[10] A study of over 2,000 citizens that joined al Qaeda in the aftermath of 9/11 showed that motivators were frustration, status seeking, identity seeking and thrill seeking.[11]

Rest of the World: Most deaths from terrorism occur in the context of broader violent conflict when compared to the OECD countries. Therefore, as would be expected, conflict indicators show a higher level of correlation with the GTI in developing economies, which include Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia where many of the victims of terrorism lived. Moreover, violence and instability are likely to affect development outcomes, because the lack of security means development projects are less likely to start and to be successfully completed.

The factors that correlated the strongest for the Rest of the World could loosely be classified as weak institutions and fractionalisation. The two indicators with the strongest correlations were *political terror* and *group grievances*. Other statistically significant indicators were *political instability, low levels of corruption, and fractionalised elites*.

DISRUPTING TERRORIST GROUPS AND NETWORKS

It is important to understand some of the motivations behind why some individuals join terrorist groups. For example, relative deprivation and alienation serve as the pull and push factors for some recruitment. IS looked to identify vulnerable young European men and women, primarily ones feeling angry, resentful and alienated, and it promised them a new life and new opportunities. In the Sahel, different strategies were used. For example, one of Boko Haram's strategies was to offer between US$600 – US$800 each month to those that joined its ranks, whereas those lucky enough to get a job could at best earn US$72 a month.[12]

Some groups such as IS also engage in incredible brutality, as a way to keep individuals within their ranks, as members know that attempts at leaving would be severely punished.[13] The ability to leave becomes even more challenging when the group controls an area and operates away from urban centres.

The factors underpinning the workings of a terrorist group could be represented as nodes in a network, and the linkages represent the influence that each node has on the next. The nodes and the linkages between them form feedback loops allowing the group to operate and thrive, as shown in Figure 4.8. Disrupting these links can limit the group's efficacy and lead its members to abandon it.

Acts of brutality and violence can serve as recruitment tools, as was the case with IS. While most of the population may reject such attacks, some susceptible individuals may see it as a sign of strength by a particular terrorist network. The network may then use such perceptions to enhance its influence internally and among potential recruits. In turn, this greater influence may lead to more recruits, which enables the network to perpetrate further high-impact attacks. This is known as the media and influence feedback loop and is represented with red arrows in Figure 4.8.

High-impact attacks and the availability of funding to carry out such attacks may also boost the number of non-affiliated sympathisers. These individuals support the network financially by promoting its agenda. This funding loop is represented with yellow arrows in the figure. Similarly, the motivation and recruitment feedback loops contribute to the maintenance and cohesion of the network.

Disrupting one particular node could break a loop and seriously hamper part of the network's operations. The node corresponding to the influence of the network is the only node to participate in all loops. As such, it is potentially the most critical for actions aimed at dismantling networks. However, the most successful actions will look at the overall system and attack it systemically.

Attempts to dismantle a network would need to recognise why the network has influence with potential recruits, sympathisers and funders. For instance, potential recruits could be youth without proper employment who do not feel represented in their societies. Joining a radical group could provide these youths with a sense of engagement and identity. It is then critical to assess the reason for this perceived lack of representation, and what could be done through institutions and encoded norms of a society to improve representativeness.[14]

FIGURE 4.8
Positive feedback loops supporting terrorist organisations

This diagram shows the nodes and linkages of a terrorist support system.
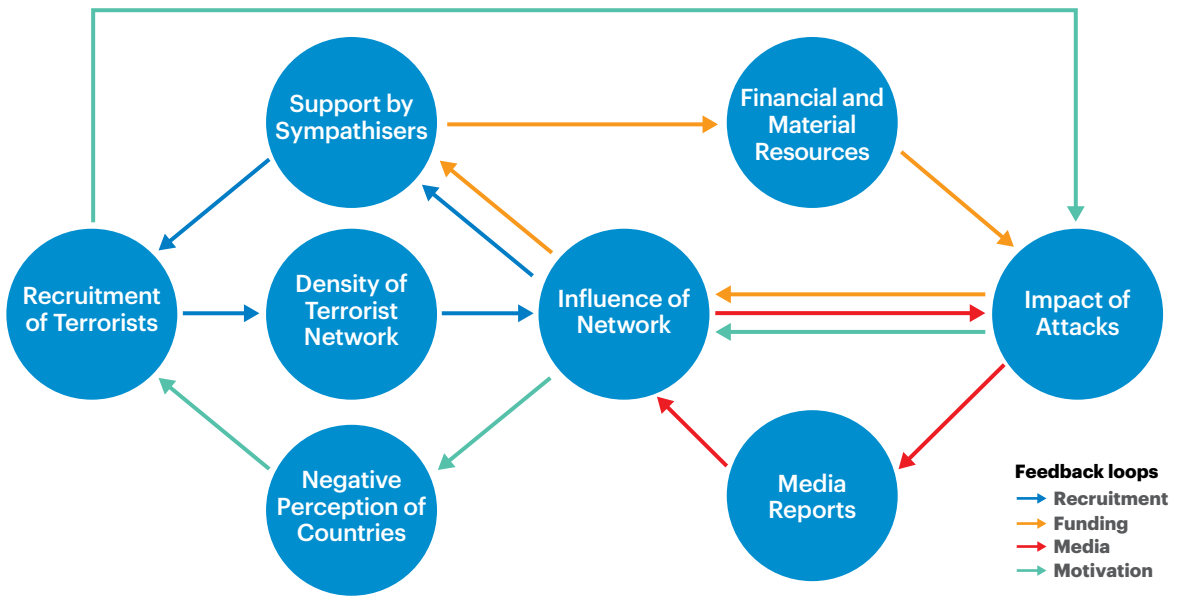
Source: Schonenberger et al., (2014); IEP adaptation

THE LIFE SPAN OF A TERRORISM GROUP

Figure 4.9 shows there is a sharp decline in the number of active terrorist groups after the initial year of operation. For example, in 2007 there were 139 active terrorist groups. Of those, just 73 were active a year later, and by 2021, just 29 were active. There is a similar pattern if 2015 is used as the base year, with 84 active groups diminishing to 46 in 2018, and down to 32 by 2021.

The terrorist groups that tend to survive for more than ten years seem to have entrenched support networks, specifically in terms

of recruitment and funding. This may also affect the way they use violence, extremist groups who are unable to rely on external sources of support and must rely on the local population focus their attacks on military, police, and government entities as they look to create instability. Others may choose to turn to mass casualty attacks on groups not aligned with them as a way to publicise their agenda, their growing sophistication, and reach as seen for example with Al-Shabaab's Westgate Shopping Centre attack (2013) and the 2015 Garissa University attack.

FIGURE 4.9

Terrorist group survival, 2007–2021

Most terrorist groups disband, merge with other groups or are dismantled within a year of being formed.
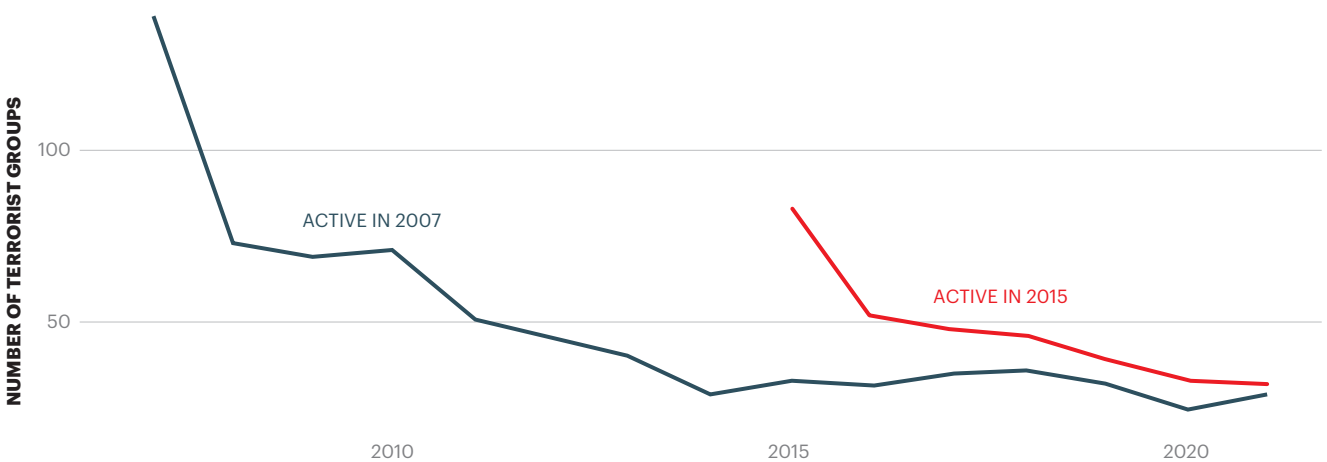
Source: Terrorism Tracker, IEP Calculations

FIGURE 4.10
Main factors influencing terrorist group recruitment

To properly disrupt recruitment, both the method and the motivation would need to be addressed.
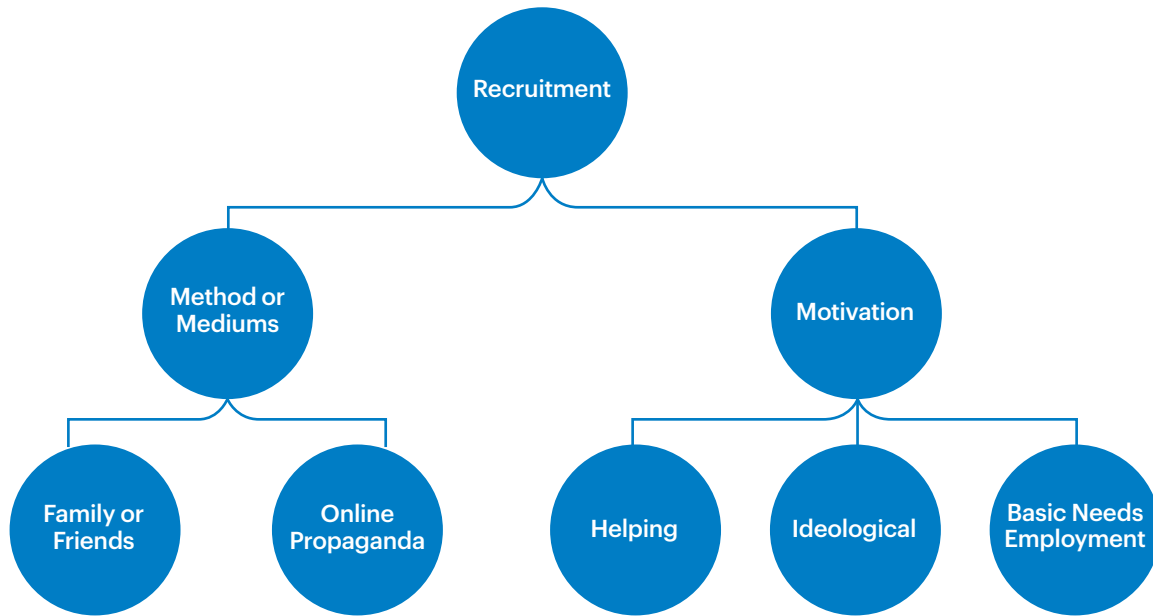
Source: IEP

RECRUITMENT

How terrorist groups recruit individuals is varied and changes depending on whether the group operates within the OECD or the Rest of the World. In the former, the groups would look to identify vulnerable individuals, many of whom are angry and alienated, in their recruitment agendas. In the Rest of the World, the focus would range from offering economic incentives and highlighting corruption and a lack of respect for basic human rights on the part of the government.[16]

Two strategies commonly used to reduce recruiting involve disrupting either the methods or mediums used for recruitment. This means how potential recruits are approached and what message is conveyed to them. In most cases, the approach is done through the influence of family or friends or the influence of online propaganda (Figure 4.10).

The proximity of an individual to members of a terrorist group has a profound influence on whether or not the individual will join. For example, around 58 per cent of current or former IS members report being influenced by either immediate or extended family, or close friends that were members.[17] Interestingly, much in the same way families can be a source of radicalisation; they can also guide members away from this path, turn them to the authorities or limit the time spent in terrorist groups.

Terrorist groups routinely utilise social media to promote their political agendas and attract individuals to their cause. Nearly 50 per cent of current or former members of IS indicate they were radicalised through passive consumption of material on social media.[18]

Monitoring of social media feeds by law enforcement is thus crucial in identifying key accounts and individuals who are

accessing the material, seeking to recruit others, or expressing a desire to provide financial or material aid to them.[19] Social network analysis has proven to be useful in identifying the perpetrators.

Terrorist groups can also provide a powerful sense of belonging to disenfranchised individuals. Being in a group is conducive to survival because it offers protection from potential threats. These groups have encoded norms and patterns of behaviour that allow members to quickly determine who belongs and who does not. In extreme circumstances, an individual's identity may become fused with their group, leading them to carry out extreme self-sacrificing behaviour such as suicide bombings.[20]

IMPACT OF ATTACKS

Terrorist groups that carry out mass-casualty attacks receive more coverage, and these can serve as a recruiting tool for a group. This was something that began with 9/11 but was promoted by Zarqawi, who not only oversaw many acts of violence, such as the 2003 bombing of the Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf that left more than 90 people dead and the 2005 Amman bombing in which over 50 people died. The higher the degree of notoriety a group has, the more likely it is to attract potential recruits or become a source of inspiration for other would-be terrorists.[21]

Limiting the media exposure of terrorist groups minimises their opportunity for political influence. The media can also have a positive impact following a terrorist attack by acting as a peacemaker, communicating community solidarity and public awareness of security threats in a non-dramatic way.

LEAVING A TERRORIST GROUP

Factors cited by many former terrorists for leaving a group

might dissuade others from joining in the first place. Some of the primary reasons for leaving groups like IS are moral apprehension with their treatment of civilians, women, foreign fighters and their own members, a lack of food and poor living conditions, and corruption. Interestingly, these issues are not unique to IS. Similar factors have been cited by individuals leaving other militant groups.[22] This highlights the stark difference between expectations and reality, and is an effective counter-narrative for discouraging those seeking to join a terrorist group.

This suggests that a potentially effective way to disrupt recruitment is to educate vulnerable youth about the harsh reality of belonging to and operating for a terrorist group. Showing potential recruits the violence of the actions and the emptiness of the promises may dissuade some of them from joining.

POLITICAL PATHWAYS

One way that can lead to the end of a terrorist group is when the group transitions into the political sphere. This was arguably the case with the Irish Republican Army and the Nepalese Maoists.[23] This insight presents a persistent moral dilemma on how willing a government should be to negotiate with violent extremist groups in an attempt to cease violence.

Two recent and prominent examples of former terrorist groups ending through political solutions are the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)(CPN(M)) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). While both groups ended using politics, the means by which this was achieved varied considerably.

In the case of both FARC and the CPN(M), the effectiveness of the government to implement the peace deal and provide for the needs of the people is key to preventing further terrorism.

More generally, the CPN(M) and the FARC are not the only groups that have transitioned into governments or political parties. Over the years, other groups such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador have also entered into the political process.

REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES OF COLOMBIA (FARC)

Founded in 1964 by Manuel Marulanda and Jacobo Arenas, the FARC was the military wing of the Colombian Communist Party. At the time, the FARC claimed to represent the interests of Colombia's rural population. Drawing influence from Marxism, it claimed it was committed to redistributing wealth. It also opposed the influence of foreign multinational corporations. The conflict between the FARC, which by 2001 had around 17,000 combatants, and successive Colombian governments claimed the lives of over 220,000 people. It also uprooted more than five million people from their homes.

The FARC conducted a series of kidnappings, assassinations, and bombings for several decades. The group also had links to drug trafficking, which brought in millions of dollars of revenue.

Recruitment was done in part under duress and in part through economic or ideological methods. One study suggested that 20 per cent of recruits were forced recruits, 20 per cent joined because of the allure of weapons and uniforms, 16 per cent joined because of promises of a salary and good treatment, and 12 per cent joined out of political convictions.[24]

There were many attempts to engage the FARC in peace talks. One such attempt took place in Havana, Cuba, in November 2012. Although these talks made some progress, a series of violations of ceasefires on both sides stalled the process.[25] Nevertheless, diplomatic efforts by Cuba, Chile, Venezuela and Norway helped prevent further deteriorations in relations.

A second breakthrough occurred in 2015 when the FARC declared a month-long ceasefire. This prompted the government to cease military activity against the group. The FARC responded by extending the ceasefire, which ultimately led to the government and the FARC agreeing to reach a peace agreement within six months. A referendum to ratify the deal was narrowly defeated due to the belief the agreement was too lenient on the FARC.[26] Despite this setback, the government and the FARC continued efforts to develop a deal. Instead of conducting another referendum, the new agreement was sent directly to the national congress for ratification..

The peace agreement aimed to address poverty and inequality as well as conflict and the political system. The agreement allowed the FARC to transform into a political party through legal and technical assistance from the government. The political party operated under the name "Revolutionary Alternative Common Force" which notably shares the FARC acronym in Spanish.[27] The deal guarantees the political party five seats in the upper house and five seats in the lower house until 2026 regardless of electoral results. The peace agreement that ended more than 50 years of violence was so historic that it earned the then-president, Juan Manuel Santos, a Nobel Peace Prize.

Late in 2021, the US recognised the legitimacy of the agreement and lifted its designation of the FARC as a terrorist group because "it no longer existed as a unified organisation that engages in terrorism or terrorist activity or has the capability or intent to do so". The move would allow for greater flexibility in the US participating in aid and developments projects that involve former fighters. For example, efforts to remove landmines or replace illegal coca leaf crops.[28]

However, while the majority of the FARC have disarmed and demobilised, not all members agreed, leading to the splintering and creation of two dissident rebel groups, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) and Segunda Marquetalia. These groups have both been designated terrorist organisations by the US. The commander of the latter group, Hernán Velásquez, has been reportedly killed in Venezuela in an attack carried out by mercenaries seeking to cash in on rewards for his capture or death.[29,30]

Although the FARC is no longer regarded as a terrorist group, there are significant questions about the 2016 peace deal. In 2020, it was reported that only 4 per cent of the accord's rural reform measures had been completed.[31] Likewise, the peace deal included the eradication of coca crops on which many people depend for their livelihoods. The eradication of crops had

unintended side effects such as damaging other plants and soil. This has prompted some to consider turning back to violence.[32] The loss of coca crops has also generated competition for control of the dwindling supply of crops, gold mines, and smuggling routes. Such activity represents a considerable challenge to the 2016 peace accords.

COMMUNIST PARTY OF NEPAL (MAOIST)

In 1996, the CPN(M), launched a "people's war" against the Nepalese State. The conflict officially ended in 2006, though some residual violence continued. Around 13,000 lives were lost in the conflict.

Back in the 1990s, drawing influence from Mao Zedong, Nepal's Maoists intended to capture state power and establish "new people's democracy." Before launching their military campaign, the group issued a 40-point list of demands to then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The demands were mainly nationalist, concerned with improving the economic conditions of Nepal's poor and ending corruption and the caste system. The Maoists also called for a new constitution, as they wanted to see the replacement of the monarchy with a republic.[33]

The conflict underlined the high levels of poverty, low levels of economic development, as well as deep social and political grievances that many harboured against the Nepalese state.

Tactically, the Maoists pursued a hit-and-run strategy involving armed assaults referred to as "people's actions". They also carried out sabotage and guerrilla activity. They developed an effective propaganda campaign that helped them recruit. In 1998, they adopted a military campaign aimed at controlling rural areas from which they could launch more campaigns and expand their influence.[34] This change in tactics meant that once they controlled areas, they undertook coercive recruitment, particularly of young people, leading some human rights groups to accuse them of employing child soldiers.[35] Once they controlled territory, they looked to establish local governments and courts.[36]

A key event that impacted the violence occurred in June 2001 when Crown Prince Dipendra shot and killed King Birendram, Queen Aishwarya, and eight other people. The Nepalese royal massacre added to the growing political, social and economic chaos and galvanised the Maoists who sought to capitalise on the death of the respected king.

In November 2001, the Maoists initiated a military campaign against military, police, and government facilities across the country. They also attacked bridges and other critical infrastructure, claiming that foreign imperialists were building them. They also targeted government buildings and banks.[37] It was this campaign that led the United States to designate them a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under Executive Order 13224, and as a "terrorist organization" from the Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL) under the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Nevertheless, the increased insecurity led Prime Minister Deuba to declare a state of emergency and to call on the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) to support the government against the Maoists. The RNA had stayed out of the conflict, claiming it was an internal matter for the police.

With the military involvement, the nature of the conflict changed, as the military undertook counter-insurgency operations, which increased non-combatant casualties, with 85 per cent of the 13,000 fatalities occuring between 2001 and 2006.[38]

The deteriorating security situation led King Gyanendra to suspend the elected parliament and install a caretaker prime minister, which intensified the demands for political change. Although the general population suffered, the rural population identified the state as the cause for their hardship and they continued to support the Maoists.[39]

In January 2003, facing increased pressure from international isolation and losses in the field, the Maoists accepted a ceasefire. Over the next three years, the king and the Maoists negotiated, though the process was affected by King Gyanendra's February 2005 coup, which compelled the Maoists to ally with the other parties, as the goal was to change the political situation. The Maoists recognised they were making no inroads in the urban centres and their attacks on the military had little impact. It seemed that the Maoist leadership appreciated that rising anti-monarchy sentiments made the time ripe to promote a republican campaign while emphasising that they intended to support a peaceful transition.[40]

Eventually in November 2006, Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was reached and the slow transition away from conflict began. Key to the process was a decision by King Gyanendra to reinstate parliament and invite the mainstream Seven-Party Alliance (SPA) to implement its roadmap and a rewriting of the constitution.

The CPA led to an internal split within the Maoist movement, as factions became the rule of thumb. The largest faction was the Communist Party of Nepal or CPN(M), which in 2009 changed its name to the Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M). The party made it clear that it intended to promote its agenda through the political process.

The ousting of King Gyanendra, whose policies seem to put pressure on the brittle peace accords, enabled the Maoists, mainly the UCPN-M faction and its allies, to form a government. However, the government was relatively unstable due to failures to demobilise and reintegrate combatants and tensions between the different parties, which led to the government resigning in 2009. The resignation increased the risk of civil unrest.[41]

Concerns over the potential of conflict led the Maoists to work with the Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (Morcha), an alliance of five Madhes-based parties. They formed a government in August 2011. The return of the Maoists to power provided some stability, but more importantly, it facilitated an agreement over what to do with the Maoist combatants. The November 1 agreement gave the Maoist combatants a choice to either integrate into the national army or take voluntary retirement from the PLA with a cash package. Over 6,500 combatants opted to join the newly constituted Nepalese Army.[42]

In 2012, Mohan Baidya, an important Maoist leader, chose to break away from the UCPN-M and created the Communist Party of Nepal (Revolutionary Maoist) (CPN-RM). This faction, popularly known as the 'dash Maoists', remained interested in

continuing the military campaign to bring about political change. Two years later, Netra Bikram Chand, an important leader within the CPN-RM broke away to form his own movement.[43] In 2019, the Nepalese government designated the Netra Bikram Chand-led Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist-Chand) as a criminal group because the group had gone underground and Chand, who had started out with the Maoists back in the 1990s, had said he wanted a return to violence. He was in hiding for a couple of years but in 2021, he signed a three-point agreement with the government and appeared on stage with Prime Minister Oli highlighting the rapprochement.

The presence of these groups sustained some of the political violence in Nepal. Political parties had trouble in reaching a conclusion about the future of Nepal and the constitution due to a lack of support for identity based federal structures favoured by the Maoists.[43]

The reform was finally achieved on 20 September 2015, when 507 of 598 of the Constituent Assembly members supported a new constitution. The purpose of the new document was to consolidate Nepal's transformation from a centralised Hindu kingdom to a federal and secular republic. However, many Madhesi oppose the new constitution and new federal structure as they felt they would face increased marginalisation.[44] Clashes between the security services and Madhesi activists left 60 people dead.

In 2017, a seminal event took place, which underlined the drastic change throughout the Maoist movement, as the Communist Party of Nepal–Maoist Centre allied with the United Marxist Leninist (UML), to form what came to be known as the Left Alliance, which laid the foundation for the emergence of the Nepalese Communist Party. To many former Maoists, the event emphasised a change into the kind of politics they could not have imagined before the start of the war.[45]

The People's War launched a process that brought about a drastic change in Nepal, ending the monarchy, the establishment of a federated republic and challenged many key social hierarchies, such as caste, ethnicity, and gender.

EXPERT
CONTRIBUTIONS

The Technology of Terror: from Dynamite to the Metaverse

DR CHRISTINA SCHORI LIANG, *HEAD, TERRORISM AND PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM, GENEVA CENTRE FOR SECURITY POLICY*

INTRODUCTION

We are currently witnessing a democratisation of new and emerging technologies. In the past, advanced technologies were only accessible to scientists, government officials and the military. Today, advanced technologies are available as an open source. Modern technologies are ubiquitous, cheap, and easy to use. While technology can be a driver of development and prosperity, it can also be instrumentalised by extremists who can exploit them in unanticipated and lethal ways.

Never in history have violent non-state actors been so globally connected, resourceful, dynamic, well-funded, and technologically savvy. There are three reasons for this. The first is that in the past advanced technology was only in the hands of the few; today two thirds of the world carry in their hands a smartphone which is millions of times more powerful than the Apollo 11 guidance computers that sent humans to the moon in 1969. The second is that new technologies have dramatically expanded terrorist groups' global reach, the ability to indoctrinate and recruit instantly at no cost and in relative anonymity anywhere in the world. Thirdly, terrorists now have access to military grade technology. Many of the technologies that exist today are dual-use technologies that can be utilised for both peaceful purposes and military goals.

Exploitation of modern technologies by non-state actors can be traced back to the closing decades of the 19th century. Terrorist groups have for more than a century stuck to two primary weapons: dynamite and firearms (most notably the Kalashnikov).[1] Soon after Alfred Nobel invented dynamite in 1867, anarchist movements shared instructions on its use, unleashing a wave of attacks in over 50 countries.[2] The release of the Kalashnikov rifle (AK-47) in the 1950s facilitated the second global wave of political violence. Used by insurgents, organised criminal groups, terrorists and "freedom fighters", the indestructible Kalashnikovs continue to kill a quarter of a million people every year.[3]

Non-state actors have thus always been interested in obtaining and mastering innovative weapons. According to "lethal empowerment theory", new technologies will be rapidly adopted and adapted by violent non-state actors when they are accessible, cheap, simple to use, transportable, concealable, and effective. Terrorists are interested in weapons that are useful in a wide range of contexts - "that magnify effects, are symbolically resonant and can be given to unexpected uses [4]." It is thus important to be vigilant in analysing how actors will leverage and innovate new technologies for malicious purposes, in order to confront the "unknown unknowns" and not repeat the mistakes based on a "failure of imagination", as highlighted in the 9/11 Commission Report.[5]

One key example was Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Between 2001-2006, IEDs were responsible for 70 per cent of combat casualties in Iraq and 50 per cent in Afghanistan. A rigorous study of declassified IED data gathered between 2006 and 2014 in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated that insurgents kept pace with the expensive technological countermeasures. IEDs were originally activated by pressure plates, but later modified so that they could be set off with mobile phones. The study revealed that IEDs were just as likely to detonate and kill or maim in 2014 as in 2006. Moreover, use of IEDs increased, from 1,952 in 2006 to 5,616 in 2009 in Afghanistan.[6]

The US appropriated more than US$ 21 billion to the anti-IED effort, but insurgents adapted with low-end simple innovations accessible on the open market. The US failure in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan can be partly attributed to the fact that although US defense forces were formidable, they were ineffective against the asymmetrical techniques of the non-state violent actors it was fighting. As General Montgomery Meigs noted in 2007, "There's a three trillion dollar a year investment in information technology…and our opponents can go to the world marketplace in information technology and get literally for

free off of the Internet very robust codes, cryptographic means, instant communications, sensors which they can repurpose in multiple ways[7]." It has, and will become, increasingly difficult for conventional armed forces to combat the technologically savvy capabilities of extremists and terrorist groups in the grey zone that they are operating in.

TECHNOLOGICAL AMPLIFICATION: THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

In 1991, the US National Academy of Sciences made the now famous prediction that "tomorrow's terrorist may be able to do more harm with a keyboard than with a bomb." The internet and social media, and the hardware to access it – the smart phone - have become new digital weapons of war. Extremists have used these tools to conduct psychological operations, recruitment, planning and conducting attacks, financing and to ensure anonymity.

Technology for Psychological Operations

In the 5th century Sun Tzu wrote that, "all warfare is based on deception." Terrorists have long understood the power of psychological operations. Osama bin Laden faxed his diatribes and fatwas to the media. Today, technology enables terrorists to have unprecedented access to the eyes and neurons of millions of people via the internet and social media.

While social media companies are only 20 years old, they have reshaped modern life in both positive and negative ways. Social media helped launch the #MeToo and BlackLivesMatter social justice movements. Social media also amplified extremist groups, feeding divisive movements based on race, gender, culture, politics and religion, including white supremacist groups, Incels, extreme Salafi-Jihadists as well as others.[8]

The social media business model depends on harvesting attention in order to monetise it. Algorithms are designed to appeal to the human psyche and act as a mirror of our deepest desires and fascinations. Content creators exploit the algorithms of social media platforms and leverage the power of human emotions by leveraging attention-grabbing content.

As a result, social media collect data on everything and everyone, facilitating groups to meet. While also regrettably becoming an impressive tool to manipulate and mobilise people to conduct crime, kill, terrorise, maim, start an insurgency and support others to partake in conflict and even war. The effective use of psychological operations was proven by the ability of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in recruiting worldwide and 41,490 people from 80 countries were affiliated with ISIL.[9] Some were enticed into believing they were joining a

utopia or a humanitarian mission; others were promised medical school and jobs.

Terrorists used master manipulators to inspire, and mobilise tailoring specific messages according to language and culture. Anwar al-Awlaki, a American-Yemeni and leading propagandist for Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), used Facebook and YouTube to recruit. He radicalised many, including Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to detonate a bomb on a plane. This foiled terrorist attack justified ordering a drone strike which ultimately killed al-Awlaki.[10] His propaganda remains nonetheless even more influential in the wake of his killing than before his death. From 2016-2020 a total of 89 Western extremists indicated a connection to Al-Awlaki. His ideology has survived, including his "44 ways to conduct Jihad", which has proliferated online like "postcards from the dead."[11]

Videos are used to terrorise opponents, muffle opposition and radicalise others to join. In Afghanistan "snuff videos" that record an actual murder being committed are used to inflame and radicalise Afghanis to become extremists and were used to warn and prevent would-be spies or traitors from reporting across enemy lines. The Taliban recorded IED attacks with mobiles and uploaded them on Twitter to recruit, raise funds and build morale. A strategic mix of intimidation and offers of amnesty were designed to create the sense of an inevitable victory. In August 2021, the Taliban's strategic messaging based on both coercion and persuasion may have led them to conquering and winning without fighting in some of the best-defended cities in Afghanistan in August 2021.[12]

Baby Wolves: recruiting the next generation of extremists

Social media act as an effective amplifier to attract naïve youth to extremism. In 2016, social media platforms played a role in 90 per cent of radicalization cases.[13] In 2018, a research report that analysed the strength of the ISIL network on Facebook was able to map the connections between 1,000 ISIL-supporting profiles among 96 countries, and concluded that ISIL's presence on the social media platform was pervasive, professionalized and growing.[14]

Right-wing extremists are especially interested in recruiting and shaping the next generation of extremists. They recruit youth online in the places they frequent the most, such as YouTube, Twitch, Steam, and DLive. Together these platforms host around approximately two and a quarter billion monthly users, providing terrorists a huge base to recruit.

Over two billion active users visit YouTube every month and watch more than one billion hours of videos daily.[15] This provides extremists a vast recruiting ground; the

videos they create provide moral support, train, as well as encourage viewers to launch attacks; including step-by-step procedures for building improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the best places to plant them.

The EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) has classified gaming (adjacent) platforms as 'hotbeds' for radicalisation. Twitch is a livestreaming service focused on gaming and eSports. It has 30 million average daily visitors with 21 per cent between the ages of 13 – 17. Twitch was used by the terrorist to livestream his attack on a Synagogue in Halle, Germany. Steam is the largest digital distribution platform for PC games, with 120 million monthly users.[16] It has games that include living out extremist fantasies of Germany winning World War II.[17] Discord, another platform tailored to gamers, is an important part of the digital far-right ecosystem. With over 140 million monthly users, it hosts hundreds of private servers where neo-Nazi ideology, far-right narratives, and hateful memes are shared.[18,19] The Charlottesville 'Unite the Right' rioters connected and organised via Discord servers.

Technology inspires copy-cat terrorism

Terrorists elicit copy-cat terrorism responses worldwide. A string of Salafi-Jihadist attacks on soft targets that terrorised entire cities began with the attack in Nice on June 2016, which influenced the Berlin Christmas market attack in December 2016 and the Barcelona attack in August 2017. In March 2015, another string of far-right terrorist attacks began with the attacks on two mosques in Christchurch. The perpetrator killed 51 people while livestreaming his deadly attack through Facebook Live. During the first 24 hours after the attack, Facebook removed 1.5 million copies of the video. It inspired copy-cat attacks in El Paso, Poway, Baerum, Oslo and Halle. Terrorists now follow a similar copycat modus operandi: 1) post a manifesto online; 2) attack a target group while live-streaming on the internet, and 3) post best practices, lessons learned and calls for imitation.

Funding hate online

Hate is profitable. White supremacist groups raise funds by monetising hateful content. They "industrialise" their fundraising campaigns by soliciting for cryptocurrencies. A FATFMENA report on money laundering claimed that terrorists financed themselves using such platforms as Facebook, YouTube, GoFundMe, Telegram and WhatsApp.[20] A UK Times investigation learned that extremists – ISIL and Combat 18 - earned thousands per month with big-brand advertising on their most popular videos, including well-known companies - Mercedes Benz and Waitrose.[21]

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

While policy makers need to counter the use of existing technologies by violent non-state actors, they also need to keep an eye on emerging technologies. In the past military technology tended to develop in a closed system, whereas today we have entered a stage of unprecedented open innovation. Individuals and private groups are free to not only buy, use, and distribute them, but also to invent and repurpose them."[22] Already in 2008, the Lashkar-e-Taiba group attacked Mumbai for 36 hours, with ten extremist perpetrators who were able to plan, coordinate and carry out their mission using advanced devices including GPS and mobile phones to acquire real-time situational awareness. It signaled a new brand of urban warfare characterised by symbolic attacks, multiple targets, and high casualties, resulting in over 170 dead, and more than 300 people injured. This event demonstrated how quickly new technologies such as GPS could be repurposed for nefarious aims.

3D Printing

Today, emerging technologies are accessible to extremists who are actively following hackerspaces. Students used 3D printing technology to produce a drone they coupled with an Android phone's navigation system, allowing it to fly without an expensive navigation system and shared lessons learned. Hobbyists can turn to Amazon.AMU.Com for multiple free technologies.

In 2020, a German right-wing terrorist in Halle used online manuals and a 3D printer to print parts of his gun, spending $50 dollars. The attempt failed but his goal was to demonstrate the viability of improvised weapons.

Autonomous vehicles

In the future autonomous vehicles could lead to multiple malicious attack scenarios including replicating the deadly vehicular terrorist attacks conducted from 2016-2017 in Barcelona, Berlin, London, New York, Nice, and Stockholm. In 2011, Ansar al-Islam built a driverless car with remote controlled machine guns. In 2016, ISIL turned a car into a remote-controlled weapon with a heating unit to simulate life.[23]

Drones

In 2011, an Al Qaeda sympathiser attempted to use a grenade-laden remote-controlled plane to bomb the US Capitol. Since 2016, ISIL has been using drones to carry out intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions. ISIL conducted attacks with drones carrying explosives,[24] and formed an "Unmanned Aircraft of the Mujahedeen" unit.[25] It pinned down Iraqi security forces during one 24-hour period in Syria executing 70 drone missions.[26]

In November 2021, explosive-laden quadcopter drones were used to try to assassinate the Iraqi prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, at his home. The attack showed that armed non-state actors can use drones to instill terror and enforce political change. Recent drone attacks attributed to the Houthi movement in Yemen involving multiple drones engaged in long-range flights also signal how violent non-state actors will engage in the future.[27] In 2026, more than a million drones will be carrying out retail deliveries, creating new vulnerabilities. The Global Counterterrorism Forum released the Berlin Memorandum on Good practices for Countering Terrorist Use of Unmanned Aerial Systems.[28]

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI will have a large impact on security and is the quintessential dual-use technology. AI can benefit terrorists by giving them access to widely available high-tech products. These include launching "slaughterbots", autonomous vehicles to deliver explosives in rapid, coordinated attacks. All the components to create them are available off-the-shelf. AI potentially will allow adversaries to act with micro-precision, but at macro-scale and with greater speed. AI will enhance cyberattacks and digital disinformation campaigns and can target vulnerable youth in many new ways.

The Metaverse

The metaverse is a virtual reality world characterised by a three-dimensional, multi-sensory experience. For terrorists it can build their expanding arsenal. Today, someone interested in discussing Siege Culture, a neo-Nazi ideology, will most likely have to read about it on the *Siege Culture* website which may no longer be online. In the metaverse, people can actually meet with the author of Siege, neo-Nazi James Mason, or his AI double. The metaverse can also resurrect Anwar Al Awlaki or Osama bin Laden, further expanding their extremist ideologies. Coordinating attacks will be easier with extremists being able to do preemptive reconnaissance missions in the virtual world before engaging in the physical attacks.

THE WAY FORWARD

Combatting the nefarious use of new technologies is not easy. Encryption technology shields terrorists from companies' attempts to deplatform them from social media.[29] Diffusion of dual-use technologies will continue to empower extremists. It is therefore important to enforce regulation as was done to reduce dynamite bombings in Europe or deal with the social causes driving extremists conduct bombings as was done in the US in the early 20th century.

It is also paramount to inform the public of new risks, just as was done in 2022 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that warned that domestic extremist groups had developed credible and specific plans to attack the US power grid, or similar warnings about ransomware attacks against critical infrastructure by Australia, US, and UK.[30]

One of the greatest priorities is to inoculate youth and warn them of the subversive nature of the internet and social media.[31] This will have to be integrated into education policies which can devote resources to "digital citizenship" and critical use of social media as well designing national action plans to prevent violent extremism.[32] At the same time it is important to work together with the big five tech giants to create public-private partnerships. Their combined market value of 9.3 trillion U.S. dollars enables them enough resources to help create an internet that promotes democratic values instead of destroying them.[33]

As we witnessed in the first modern terrorism wave, Nobel's invention of dynamite quickly let the proverbial genie out of the bottle with 125 different dynamite varieties.[34] This was coupled with a reluctance of governments to restrict and regulate it. The global community must find better responses and build greater knowledge of irregular and psychological warfare. Recent conflicts have demonstrated that professional militaries lack the operational agility commensurate with their size and training in a security threat landscape that is being driven by violent non-state actors, criminals, extremists, hackers, bloggers and Youtubers who have successfully harnessed technology to achieve their strategic goals.[35]

In the US, two decades of the "war on terror" and the hardening of its domestic defenses have generated unexpected consequences, including heightened domestic extremism and social unrest. The exposure of people to incitement via the web has caused a widespread infection of resentment, misinformation and conspiracy theories which is creating cycles of rage that are weakening not only the US but democracies worldwide. The greater public has lost trust in government and its ability to create law and order', and the global pandemic is adding fuel to the fire.

Countries are now faced with one of the biggest dilemmas regarding counter-terrorism: designing effective counter-terrorism measures while at the same time preserving liberal-democratic values. The security community needs to wake up to the challenge of emerging technologies, especially digital technologies. Although the internet and social media look far more innocuous than dynamite, they could be considered the social dynamite of this generation.[36]

Why Morocco's Counterterrorism Evolution Matters to Africa

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Following the 2003 Casablanca attacks, Morocco began a profound transformation of the Kingdom's counterterrorism strategy. In the immediate aftermath, legislators and policymakers confronted national security challenges, including enhancing security for potential vulnerable targets and addressing conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism. This article outlines some of Morocco's noteworthy changes in the country's counterterrorism approach since 2003 and measures results against the current African terrorism landscape. In addition, it details how the newly opened United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) programme office for counterterrorism and training in Rabat will aid in developing, strengthening and advancing law enforcement and whole-of-society counterterrorism responses for the African continent.

THE ATTACKS

On May 16, 2003, in Casablanca, Morocco, 12 members of *al-Salafiya al-Jihadiya*, a Salafi-jihadi terrorist organisation affiliated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), attacked the Farah Hotel, the Jewish Community Centre, a Jewish restaurant, a Jewish cemetery, and a Spanish social club. The selection of targets suggested that terrorists wanted to destroy the symbols of Morocco's religious tolerance and modernity[1]. The attacks left 45 people dead, including 12 suicide terrorists, and wounded 100[2]. Although considered small and unsophisticated compared to other international terrorist operations, the five bombings left an indelible mark on the country's psyche. The attacks marked the introduction of suicide terrorism in Morocco, represented the expansion of the Al-Qaeda terrorist threat to Morocco, and the end of the belief that the country was immune to the political trends of the Arab Middle East because of its Sunni heritage and open approach to Islam[3].

It is believed that the planning for the attacks began in November 2002 in the Karian Toma district, considered to be a hard-to-police Casablanca district with high unemployment and illiteracy rates[4]. Within weeks terrorists recruited a group of young men and introduced them to suicide terrorism training material. Once indoctrinated, recruits undertook physical conditioning training in the proximity of Karian Toma, produced a small batch of explosives and tested them at a cemetery before embarking on large-scale production[5].

With May 16 in sight, the terrorists prepared for the attacks by watching videos evocative of the awaited afterlife. Having prayed and promised to meet again in paradise, they began the final stage of the operation.[6]

A TURNING POINT

In the lead-up to the May 16 attacks, Morocco had already experienced a sharp increase in terrorist operations against civilians, however, most of those operations did not involve explosives or suicide terrorists[7]. The Casablanca attacks set in motion a new wave of internationally-inspired domestic terrorism that would be eventually attested by the 2007 and 2015 Casablanca attacks; the 2011 attacks in Marrakech as well as the 2018 attacks in Imlil.

The 2003 Casablanca—and subsequent—attacks prompted the Moroccan government to enhance its counterterrorism policies to address changing terrorist tactics, accelerated operational tempo and increased lethality. Law 03.03, passed two weeks after the 2003 attacks, became the first of a series of legislative reforms enhancing Morocco's legal counterterrorism framework[8]. This law expanded the definition of terrorism to include incitement. It introduced sentencings in line with the classification of terrorism as a major crime for active participation in terrorist related activities, including a minimum of a 10-year sentence. In addition, Law 03.03 expanded the duration of police custody in cases of terrorism and enhanced both intelligence-gathering and

counterterrorism investigations procedures[9].

The Moroccan government also recognised that the 2003 attacks required a comprehensive response that went beyond legal reforms. While many blamed economic and social conditions for the attacks, the nature of the attacked galvanised the will of the entire country to reject and combat terrorism. At the government level, the attacks exposed the need for improved security of vulnerable or 'soft' targets and tighter monitoring of suspects. To impede the movement of terrorists in and out of the country, there was a need for improved border management and better trained and equipped law enforcement and security forces[10]. Within the framework of its preventive approach, the country embarked on implementing what experts and analysts often refer to as a *tri-dimensional* counterterrorism strategy that is largely but not exclusively aimed at addressing different components of the terrorist threat through security, socio-economic development policies as well as supporting the religious field.

FROM BENEFICIARY TO CONTRIBUTOR

Morocco's multidimensional response has proven effective even if the nature of the threat has meant it was not possible to prevent all terrorist attacks or the damage they caused to the tourism sector[11]. Nevertheless, results suggest that despite more than 1,000 Moroccan nationals joining the Islamic State (IS) and other terrorist groups in war zones[12], the country dismantled more than 200 terrorist cells and made more than 3,500 terrorism-related arrests over the past two decades, thereby possibly avoiding more than 300 planned terrorist actions[13]. While no country can defeat terrorism with just arrests, Morocco's law enforcement actions have undoubtedly weakened terrorist organisations in the country while reducing the appeal of violent extremism at home[14]. It reorganised its religious sector to counter terrorist narratives and recruitment, adopted a proactive national security strategy, updated its legislative and regulatory texts, and strengthened its state agencies in charge of security, human development, and international cooperation[15]. It has spearheaded the integration of women in Morocco's prevention and countering of violent extremism conducive to terrorism (PCVE) efforts, which are now seen as a best practice in the Arab World and globally[16]. The Kingdom also became much more active in multilateral counter-terrorism activities, such as joining the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and co-chairing the Foreign Terrorist Fighter Working Group of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)—whose *Hague-Marrakech Memorandum* was the basis of the landmark UN Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). In 2015 it went on to take over the role of GCTF co-chair and to form a Group of Friends to counter terrorism at the United Nations[17].

Morocco's active role in fighting terrorism suggests the country's understanding of the threat; the interconnectedness of its counterterrorism methods; the application of combined soft and hard measures; the facilitation of information sharing practices; and the promotion of international cooperation as the *sine qua non* of counterterrorism.

Besides being a member of the GCTF and the Global Coalition, Morocco has aligned closely with US and European counterterrorism efforts. For example, the United States holds an annual joint exercise in Morocco, Tunisia and Senegal known as *Africa Lion*—to increase interoperability with international partners and counter malign activity in North Africa and Southern Europe[18]. More recently, Morocco has also shared intelligence that helped lead to the arrest of terrorists or foil attacks in France, Belgium, India[19], Italy[20], Spain[21], Germany, Burkina Faso, and Sri Lanka[22]. Morocco's domestic and regional PCVE efforts, such as its imam training programme, have also been widely promoted and earned respect amongst European countries as possible models for other parts of the broader Middle East and North Africa region[23]. Such integration and evolution of both hard and soft approaches to counterterrorism have cemented the country's close cooperation with other countries including its neighbouring countries of the Sahel and West Africa regions.

NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY

Morocco's counterterrorism arrangements, capacities, and commitment have catapulted the country into a different category. Unsurprisingly, many see the Kingdom as a strong international counterterrorism partner playing a vital role in ensuring and promoting Africa's peace, security, and stability[24]. But as the continent confronts a dramatic change in the scope, pace and proximity of the terrorist threat, neither Morocco nor the rest of the continent can afford to rest on its laurels. With 41% of all IS-related attacks globally, Africa has replaced the Middle East as the epicentre of the global terrorist threat[25]. Today, it seems there is almost universal agreement amongst academics, policy-makers, and practitioners that decades of Western-backed efforts have not succeeded in blunting the spread of terrorism in Africa, whether inspired by Al-Qaeda, Islamic State or local groups[26].

This is partly because the terrorism landscape in Africa has changed in the post-colonial period from one marked mostly by violent extremist groups focused mostly on local objectives to one in which local groups have increasingly aligned themselves and become networked with global terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. With their senior leaders subject to intense security pressure in the core, these groups have themselves had to move from pyramidal and centralised command-and-control

structures to more networked and decentralised models. This has made local terrorists' affiliations to 'global' terrorist networks a trend and a lifeline to increased support, expertise, funding, recruitment, and reputational standing. Operationally, closer, and stronger links between long-lived insurgencies, opportunistic transnational criminals, and violent extremists have improved terrorist groups' prospects of survival while diminishing the long-term effects of military action against them.

Today, the African terrorist terrain is now more crowded than four decades ago[27]. These groups are reported to have been responsible for the deaths of 12,500 people in 2020[28] showing that terrorist attacks are both more frequent and lethal than previously. Terrorist violence both feeds on and exacerbates the increased political instability in West Africa and the Sahel, complicating efforts to address underlying socio-economic and humanitarian conditions conducive to violent extremism. Regrettably, more than 20 years after 9/11, the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban is bringing back the nightmarish thought that global jihadi terrorist groups may once again find a safe haven where they can reorganize and thrive[29].

ONE WAY FORWARD

Looking ahead, a comprehensive response, particularly aimed at addressing the need for enhanced counterterrorism investigative capacities is a good starting point for consideration. No country in Africa, let alone around the globe, will arrest itself out of the rising threat of terrorism. But without strong counterterrorism law enforcement-led interventions the fight is not likely to succeed. Moroccan law enforcement successes in thwarting attacks while adopting responses that observe the rule of law and human rights provide a good example for the rest of the continent.

Morocco's recent signing of a host country agreement with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to establish a Programme Office for Counter-Terrorism and Training in Africa offers one way forward. UNOCT's Rabat Office was officially inaugurated on June 24, 2021, with the support of and in close cooperation with the Kingdom. The Programme Office in Rabat has been established as a specialised training centre for the African security, law enforcement and judicial communities. Since its opening, the Office has developed a multi-level training curriculum with foundational, intermediate, advanced, and training-the-trainer levels to build specialised technical capacities of Member States in Africa. Since many of the countries in West Africa lack the resources to provide their own specialised counter-terrorism training, UNOCT's Rabat Programme Office is focused on delivering counterterrorism capacity-building programs on five main specialised areas: counterterrorism investigations; border

security management; preventing and combating violent extremism; prison management; and prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration. The curriculum also provides for train-the-trainer and higher-level courses as a means of helping beneficiary countries sustain their enhanced capacities over the long term.

Morocco, along with UNOCT, envisage that capacity-building in these five areas will provide a steppingstone for African countries to build more sustainable, human rights-compliant and effect law enforcement responses to the continent's evolving terrorist threats.

The views and opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

"Morocco's active role in fighting terrorism suggests the country's understanding of the threat; the interconnectedness of its counterterrorism methods; the application of combined soft and hard measures; the facilitation of information sharing practices; and the promotion of international cooperation as the sine qua non of counterterrorism."

Sub-Saharan Africa at a Crossroad

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ABSTRACT:

A perfect storm is brewing in Sub-Sahara Africa. Increased terrorism activity, drastic climate change, persistent failures of the ruling elites, and heightened ethnic tensions have created the conditions to bring about several coups. These coups pose a major challenge for security, stability, and development, as they are underpinned by a willingness to use violence to foster political change. Changes in perceptions about peace and violence indicate there is the danger that persistent insecurity would accelerate system collapses across the region.

Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing massive changes. The region, which is home to more than a billion people, is at a major crossroads. The emergence of a technological savvy middle class looking to capitalize on increased connectivity, new working practices, and improved communication underlines the tremendous progress that has taken place throughout the continent.[1] There have been improvements in purchasing power parity-adjusted per-capita income and primary education. And yet Sub-Saharan Africa is facing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, amplified geopolitical tensions, the need to contain irregular migration and the use of hard counterterrorism measures to deter and destroy the rising threat from Salafi-jihadi groups.

The overwhelming focus on governance as it relates to security has led to reduced attention to addressing systemic shortcomings across the region. This shift has had disastrous consequences as it has meant that development support is primarily centered on security, and not on issues that exist outside of the security matrix.[2] Salafi-jihadis and bandits have looked to exploit socio-economic-political vacuums as they look to exploit grievances. Furthermore, established political actors have also been at work undermining much of the progress. This is seen by the number of coups that had taken place across the region since 2020, which have led to the imposition of economic sanctions.

To help the region return to its pre-pandemic trajectory,

there is a need to challenge the encoded norms in relation to aid and building state capacity. Such an approach is seen in security stabilisation and the need for it before undertaking aid work. Alternatively, there is a reliance on a security-development nexus, which calls for aid work to occur in conjunction with security operations.[3] These types of operations were visible in the Balkans in the 1990s and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Several factors call for a systemic approach to address some of the critical issues currently affecting sub-Saharan Africa. Firstly, an appreciation for the need for long-term engagement, aimed at changing perceptions of violence and how to foster change. Just because the region is affected by coups and insecurity does not mean that its people have turned their back on democracy. For instance, the Afrobarometer indicates that 67 per cent of respondents support the democratic process, though many of those surveyed expressed serious concerns about the abilities of political leaders to deal with difficult issues like corruption.[4] Secondly, the metrics upon which success or failure are measured must be changed. There needs to be a willingness to invest in many projects that only have a moderate chance of success as opposed to only taking on projects deemed to have a high likelihood of success. Having several projects with modest success is more effective than having a single one with a high degree of success. Thirdly, developing a systemic approach that looks to address ecological changes and create the conditions for the demographic dividend is key to the region's survival.[5]

A GENERAL FAILURE TO RESOLVED CONFLICT AND THE 'SECURITY TRAFFIC JAM'

The 2021 Global Peace Index and the 2022 Global Terrorism Index highlight the deteriorating security situation in Sub-Saharan Africa and particularly in the Sahel. Across the region, violence is rising, whether in the shape of Salafi-jihadi activity, banditry, or coups. However, what is of greater concern, is that there is little evidence that the situation is likely to change soon, as insecurity becomes more pervasive, which in turn leads to more

violence and a reduction in Positive Peace.

The February Revolution in Libya, which led to the overthrow of Muammar al-Qaddafi in October 2011, precipitated a chain of events throughout North Africa and the Sahel. His violent removal after 42 years empowered the Salafi-jihadis who were to play an important role in the 2012 Tuareg uprising in Mali, which eventually led to them capturing Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal. The Salafi-jihadis were ultimately defeated, and the Islamic Emirate of Azawad came apart.[6]

The failure to properly resolve the conflict in Northern Mali by addressing the root problems had a snowballing effect. It gave rise to political, social, and economic tensions that have spread from the north causing intercommunal violence in the Mopti and Ségou regions between Dogon and Fulani. It has also led to intercommunal violence and jihadi activity in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger exacerbating current instability.

Persistent inability by successive Malian governments to resolve differences amicably gave rise to the emergence of Dogon, Fulani, and Bambara militias. Communities were compelled to arm themselves to ensure their safety as the governments could not protect them. Similar developments occurred in Burkina Faso between the Mossi and the Fulani leading to several clashes. The most notable example of how events have deteriorated relates to an incident in January 2019, when a Koglweogo ('guardians of the forest') group attack a Fulani village and killed over 40 people.[7] The event led many to flee as they searched for security.

The response by local and international actors to the rise in instability has led to a focus on security governance, creating what is referred to as a 'security traffic jam'. This is a situation when international actors look to multidimensional and comprehensive approaches aimed at rebuilding state capacity in fragile or failed states.[8] Simply put, too many actors do similar things while ignoring other vital issues.

Since 2012, several security operations have taken place in the Sahel. These have ranged from the EU Training Mission (EUTM) to the French-led counterterrorism operation (Operation Serval, Operation Barkhane, and the Takuba Initiative), and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. In addition, there is also the G5-Sahel Initiative and other unilateral, security operations including an increase in private entities being brought in to help end the insecurity.

The focus on stabilization makes sense, although what tends to undermine such operations is a lack of uniformity. For instance, Germany's approach to security stabilization is different from France's. The German effort is more civilian-oriented, aimed at linking the political process to the security situation, with little developmental focus. This is because the German Defense and Foreign Ministries focus on the political, and they look for political dialogue.[9] Moreover, and rather interestingly, Germany has opted for a light footprint in advertising their engagement. There are several possible explanations for this ranging from the desire to limit liability, and a preference to work behind the scenes. The problem is that such an approach could discourage local elites from publically backing a project,[10] which means there is less local buy-in.[11] The French have taken a different approach, centering their engagement along military lines as they promote training and counterinsurgency.[12] The intention has been to defeat the insurgents, leading to the killing of many jihadi fighters, including the leader of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi. The French have also seized and captured many weapons.

Nevertheless, the security situation remains precarious as shown in the 2021 Global Peace Index and the 2022 Global Terrorism Index.

SYSTEMIC POLITICAL FAILURE AND THE RISE IN MILITARY COUPS

Military coups are reaching epidemic proportions in sub-Saharan Africa. Between 2020 and 2022, there have been eight coup attempts, five of which were successful. This development has raised concerns that Africa is sliding back to the situation of the mid-1960s when the continent was plagued by coups.[13]

Coups are products of systemic failures relating to corruption, mismanagement, and poverty. Instigators of coups frequently claim that their actions seek to address these structural problems.[14] The Afrobarometer highlights that in 19 African countries, six in ten respondents noted that corruption has increased. A similar number also expressed that their governments were doing a poor job in addressing corruption.[15]

The consequence of rampant corruption in government institutions is a failure to provide society with basic services that are fueling internal conflict and making the state vulnerable to outside influences. In Mali, for example, corruption has allowed a patronage system to blossom, impunity to run wild, and ultimately undermined security and development efforts, which is why the country remains at the bottom of the human development index.[16]

Weak governance systems and a lack of sufficient resources to provide basic public service which is particularly poor in the Sahel, undermines development and growth. For example, whereas in countries such as France, there are 89 civil servants per 1,000 inhabitants, Burkina Faso has eight civil servants, Mali has six, and in

Niger, three per 1,000 inhabitants.[17] In a similar vein, corruption also leads to poverty as business, governance and everyday life is affected. It is unsurprising that countries that rank at the bottom of the development table, also experience high rates of corruption. Mali for example ranks 184 out of 189 countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index with 50 per cent of the population living on less than US$1.90 and trapped in a vicious cycle.[18]

These big issues not only limit the ability of serious reformers from entering the political arena, but paralyses the system where although there have been political transitions, the political class has not changed significantly from the early 2000s.[19] Such political-economic issues may lead to two different forms of violence. Firstly, individuals may be more prone to engage in terrorist activity due to the potentially lucrative nature of kidnappings which have been on the rise in the Sahel region for over a decade. Secondly, ineffective governance and a lack of change may prompt individuals to resort to violence against government institutions as this is perceived as the only way to change circumstances.

ECOLOGICAL THREATS AND POPULATION MOVEMENT AS A SECURITY THREAT

The IPCC has identified Africa as one of the region's most vulnerable to the impacts of environmental changes, placing over 180 million people at risk of dying.[20]

The region faces rising temperatures inland and throughout the subtropics, increased frequency of extreme heat events, increases in aridity, and changes in rainfall. Notably, the effect of these ecological threats is not uniform across Africa's regions. On the one hand, greater levels of rainfall in East Africa are likely to cause more flooding, raising the incidence of water-borne diseases and damaging infrastructure. On the other hand, West Africa is expected to experience less rainfall, which places more pressure on already strained food production thereby undermining food security and harming human health and development. Furthermore, Southern Africa is likely to see a significant decline in rainfall and a greater risk of drought that could lead to greater population movement, as people search for security. What is a concern is that not only is the region experiencing major climate changes, but it is also home to youthful, fast-growing, high-fertility populations, which add more pressure on a fragile ecosystem and weak governance system.

In some cases, the tensions between groups have grown so severe that other actors have been encouraged to step in to protect minority groups. For example, when ecological threats compelled the Nigerian Djerma

sedentary farmers to migrate north because they faced opposition from the Fulani and Daoussak who formed militias similar to Ganda Izo ("sons of the soil") to defend themselves, it led to a rise in extrajudicial killings around the Tillabéri region. A similar situation is occurring in Burkina Faso. For example, when President Kaboré's government passed a law calling for the training of armed militias (known as "volunteers for the defense of Faso") to help defend villages and sectors from possible Koglweogo attacks, it led to intercommunal tensions. The focus on arming militias did not address the ecological issues that were causing population movement.

On a macro-level, it is evident that drastic ecological changes are leading to violence between different community groups in the Mopti Region, Mali. The Dogon, who are sedentary farmers, make up around six per cent of the region's 1.6 million inhabitants, and Fulanis, the seminomadic cattle herders who make up approximately by percent of the population, clash. Changing climate has led to greater competition for resources and compelled the Fulani to search for new water sources.[21] Similar issues are occurring in Burkina Faso where many Mossis have been forcibly displaced from their ancestral homes to the western and northern parts of the country. In 2015, as the Salafi-jihadis were being pushed out of Mali, they crossed over to Burkina Faso where they found many aggrieved Fulani who were to form a local Salafi-jihadi group, called Ansarul Islam. Under the leadership of a Burkinabe Fulani preacher, Ibrahim Malam Dicko, the group launched an insurgency campaign.[22]

In sum, for many locals, the failure of the state to protect them or to foster ethnic tensions stems from mismanagement of the state by ruling elites.

THE CRIME-TERROR NEXUS

There has been a large increase in terrorist activity in the Sahel and also in criminal activity. The contours of the groups normally match ethnic and social stratification lines, which is common in segmented societies. Notably, the bandits and the Salafi-jihadis position themselves not only as being against the State but as offering an alternative.[23]

There are several reasons why local and international actors have been unable to end the Salafi-jihadi and criminal threats. Firstly, the political-socio-economic vacuum. The inability of Sahelian states to provide security beyond the urban centers has allowed nefarious actors to move in and provide the services that one would expect from the government. For example, in 2021 the Islamic State in West Africa has claimed that its zaket (charity) office has raised US $157,000 during Ramadan and the preceding month.[24] This in turn allows the group – right or

not – to claim that it is forming a bond with the local population as part of their rural engagement.[25] The purpose behind this strategy is twofold. Firstly, by collecting zaket, Salafi-jihadis look to form a relationship with the local community. They are not operating as marauders, looking for instant treasure. Secondly, it is a constant reminder that the state and its institutions are not present in the rural areas and that the jihadis are working towards creating their proto-states.

Both criminals and Salafi-jihadis have looked to exploit the region's youthful high population. Easterlin's youth bulge theory highlights the relationship between high levels of entry-level job competition, youth unemployment, and a youthful age structure.[26] Möller added another dimension to the youth bulge theory pointing to the way those opposing the state, look to recruit these disgruntled youth, by offering money, resources, security, and a promise of a better future.[27] These factors underlie why countries with a youthful population that has little prospects for meaningful employment are likely to see higher rates of conflict.[28]

POSITIVE PEACE

Systemic issues require systemic solutions. This is why these issues should not be addressed individually but rather concurrently as proposed through the Positive Peace formula, an idea that first emerged in the 1960s. Scholars such as Johan Galtung argued that peace was predicated on the absence of violence and fear of violence, and as such, it was known as a negative interpretation of peace.[29] The Institute for Peace and Economics has taken the concept further looking at and for factors that promote socio-economic development and societal resilience, taking the view that the way to build and sustain peaceful societies requires a revision in attitudes, institutions, and structures. Positive Peace identifies developmental factors that lead to resilient societies.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

With proper support, assistance, and encouragement sub-Saharan Africa would continue to see growth and development. Many of the world's key minerals lie there. It is also the world's largest free trade area with enormous potential for growth and development. However, without systemic and structural changes within the political, social, economic sectors, and how the development and aid community approach sub-Saharan Africa, the damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, increased terrorism activity, and the growing menace of organized crime, many of the gains of the last three decades could easily disappear.

There is an overreliance and focus on traditional counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies. Somewhat unsurprisingly, although these policies have improved the quality of Sahelian militaries and have notched some major successes against terrorist leaders, they have not facilitated greater security partially because this counterterrorism architecture is meant to adapt and react to specific events, as opposed to engaging in a structural overhaul. It may also mean that key issues such as corruption or 'Big Man' politics[30] (individuals who exert authority over autonomous sub-leaders through material support and affirmation) have been addressed. Moreover, the overreliance on security governance has meant that innovative solutions are not considered. For example, one way to deal with the ecological pressures is to invest in forest restoration, which is significant as African forests account for a third of the world's total tropical forests.[31] Restoring these forests would not only assist in capturing carbon but it has a monetary value of around $25 billion a year, which Sahelian countries would be able to claim. Restoring the forests and finding better options cooking with wood and the use of kerosene lamps would also have substantial health benefits.

In principle, security stabilisation and the security-development nexus are sensible as it is not possible to undertake development work when insecurity is pervasive. However, security stabilisation is a challenging concept, emerging at a specific time (the 1990s) and in a particular region (the Balkans) where NATO and the EU faced very different challenges from what is currently taking place in the Sahel. Moreover, both the security and development issues are very different from the Balkans. This is why there is a need for new thinking, which Positive Peace provides. Woven into the Positive Peace formula is first a call to identify what are the pull and push factors contributing to why individuals resort to or accept violent political reform. Secondly, Positive Peace draws on a conceptual and statistical framework that calls for the *Acceptance of the Rights of Others, Free-Flow of Information, Equitable Distribution of Resources, Good Relations with Neighbours, Well-Functioning Governments, Low Levels of Corruption, High Levels of human Capital* and *Sound Business Environment*.

A

GTI Ranks & Scores, 2022

GTI Rank	Country	2021 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2020–2021)
1	Afghanistan	9.109	0.058
2	Iraq	8.511	-0.184
3	Somalia	8.398	-0.091
4	Burkina Faso	8.27	0.148
5	Syria	8.25	-0.05
6	Nigeria	8.233	-0.188
7	Mali	8.152	0.23
8	Niger	7.856	0.441
9	Myanmar	7.83	1.88
10	Pakistan	7.825	-0.097
11	Cameroon	7.432	-0.193
12	India	7.432	-0.235
13	Mozambique	7.432	-0.399
14	Colombia	7.068	-0.226
15	Egypt	6.931	-0.373
16	Philippines	6.79	-0.284
17	Democratic Republic of the Congo	6.733	0.713
18	Chile	6.496	0.515
19	Chad	6.379	-0.281
20	Kenya	6.166	-0.192
21	Yemen	5.87	-0.261
22	Thailand	5.722	-0.45
23	Turkey	5.651	-0.82
24	Indonesia	5.5	0.116
25	Sri Lanka	5.445	-0.599
26	Libya	5.1	-0.541
27	Iran	5.015	-0.452
28	United States of America	4.961	-0.576
29	Greece	4.849	0.186
30	Israel	4.778	-0.181
31	United Kingdom	4.77	-0.398
32	Palestine	4.736	-0.238
33	Germany	4.729	-0.388
34	Nepal	4.692	-0.538
35	France	4.562	-0.674

GTI Rank	Country	2021 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2020–2021)
36	Tanzania	4.53	-0.3
37	Peru	4.471	1.259
38	Tunisia	4.447	-0.286
39	Algeria	4.432	0.105
40	Bangladesh	4.411	-0.011
41	New Zealand	4.376	-0.523
42	Cote d' Ivoire	4.31	0.026
43	Burundi	4.271	1.158
44	Russia	4.219	-0.465
45	Uganda	4.106	4.106
46	Venezuela	4.005	0.01
47	Tajikistan	3.988	-0.596
48	Canada	3.882	-0.019
49	Ethiopia	3.759	-0.595
50	Italy	3.687	-0.268
51	Lebanon	3.566	-0.517
52	Austria	3.261	-0.548
53	Benin	3.164	1.261
54	Saudi Arabia	3.11	-0.743
55	Spain	2.86	-0.587
56	Ecuador	2.766	-0.582
57	Argentina	2.657	0.224
58	Jordan	2.594	-0.837
59	Switzerland	2.522	-0.193
60	Australia	2.438	-0.587
61	Mexico	2.428	-0.626
62	Ukraine	2.304	-0.653
63	Malaysia	2.247	-0.66
64	Paraguay	2.194	-0.757
65	Bahrain	2.145	-0.475
66	Netherlands	2.076	0.254
67	China	1.863	-0.704
68	Belgium	1.745	-1.843
69	Sweden	1.66	-0.561
70	Senegal	1.58	-0.527
71	Japan	1.46	-0.516

GTI Rank	Country	2021 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2020–2021)
72	Uruguay	1.321	-0.501
73	Rwanda	1.243	-0.49
73	Togo	1.243	1.243
73	South Africa	1.243	-0.49
76	Morocco	1.156	-0.478
77	Norway	1.109	-0.471
78	Ireland	1.06	-0.492
78	Romania	1.06	-0.462
80	Finland	1.007	-0.453
81	Brazil	0.951	-0.476
82	Cyprus	0.922	-0.472
83	Lithuania	0.828	-0.415
84	Mauritania	0.509	-0.318
85	Vietnam	0.407	-0.276
86	Angola	0.291	-0.218
86	Czech Republic	0.291	-0.218
86	Denmark	0.291	-0.218
86	Gabon	0.291	-0.218
86	Kosovo	0.291	-0.66
86	Sudan	0.291	-0.218
92	Taiwan	0.227	-0.18
93	Albania	0	0
93	United Arab Emirates	0	0
93	Armenia	0	-0.158
93	Azerbaijan	0	-0.158
93	Bulgaria	0	0
93	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	0
93	Belarus	0	0
93	Bolivia	0	0
93	Bhutan	0	0
93	Botswana	0	0
93	Central African Republic	0	-2.464
93	Republic of the Congo	0	0
93	Costa Rica	0	0
93	Cuba	0	0
93	Djibouti	0	0
93	Dominican Republic	0	0
93	Eritrea	0	0
93	Estonia	0	0
93	Georgia	0	-0.46
93	Ghana	0	0
93	Guinea	0	0
93	The Gambia	0	0
93	Guinea-Bissau	0	0
93	Equatorial Guinea	0	0
93	Guatemala	0	0

GTI Rank	Country	2021 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2020–2021)
93	Guyana	0	0
93	Honduras	0	0
93	Croatia	0	0
93	Haiti	0	0
93	Hungary	0	-0.291
93	Iceland	0	0
93	Jamaica	0	0
93	Kazakhstan	0	-1.756
93	Kyrgyz Republic	0	-0.46
93	Cambodia	0	0
93	South Korea	0	0
93	Kuwait	0	-0.158
93	Laos	0	-1.968
93	Liberia	0	0
93	Lesotho	0	0
93	Latvia	0	0
93	Moldova	0	-0.158
93	Madagascar	0	-2.028
93	Macedonia (FYR)	0	0
93	Montenegro	0	0
93	Mongolia	0	0
93	Mauritius	0	-0.158
93	Malawi	0	0
93	Namibia	0	0
93	Nicaragua	0	0
93	Oman	0	0
93	Panama	0	0
93	Papua New Guinea	0	0
93	Poland	0	-0.227
93	North Korea	0	0
93	Portugal	0	0
93	Qatar	0	0
93	Singapore	0	0
93	Sierra Leone	0	0
93	El Salvador	0	0
93	Serbia	0	0
93	South Sudan	0	0
93	Slovakia	0	0
93	Slovenia	0	0
93	Swaziland	0	0
93	Turkmenistan	0	0
93	Timor-Leste	0	0
93	Trinidad and Tobago	0	0
93	Uzbekistan	0	0
93	Zambia	0	0
93	Zimbabwe	0	0

50 Worst Terrorist Attacks in 2020

Rank	Country	Date	State/Province	Organisation	Fatalities	Attack type
1	Afghanistan	26/8/21	Kabul	Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP)	170	Explosives
2	Burkina Faso	5/6/21	Sahel	Unknown - Jihadists	160	Firearms
3	Afghanistan	22/7/21	Kandahar	Taliban	100	Firearms
4	Afghanistan	8/5/21	Kabul	Unknown - Jihadists	86	Explosives
5	Burkina Faso	18/8/21	Sahel	Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)	80	Firearms
6	Niger	2/1/21	Tillabéri	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	70	Firearms
7	Burkina Faso	14/11/21	Sahel	Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)	53	Firearms
8	Afghanistan	8/10/21	Kunduz	Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP)	50	Explosives
9	Afghanistan	15/10/21	Kandahar	Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP)	47	Explosives
10	Afghanistan	15/10/21	Kandahar	Islamic State - Khorasan Province (ISKP)	47	Explosives
11	Niger	21/3/21	Tahoua	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	46	Firearms
12	Niger	21/3/21	Tahoua	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	46	Firearms
13	Niger	21/3/21	Tahoua	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	45	Firearms
14	Burkina Faso	23/12/21	Nord	Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)	41	Firearms
15	Myanmar	20/9/21	Sagaing	Anti-junta armed group	40	Firearms
16	Niger	16/8/21	Tillabéri	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	37	Firearms
17	Iraq	19/7/21	Baghdad	Islamic State (IS)	35	Explosives
18	Mali	3/12/21	Mopti	Unknown - Jihadists	33	Firearms
19	Mali	15/3/21	Gao	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	33	Other/Unclear
20	Iraq	21/1/21	Baghdad	Islamic State (IS)	32	Explosives
21	Mali	6/10/21	Ségou	Unknown - Jihadists	30	Firearms
22	Myanmar	23/8/21	Magway	Unknown	30	Explosives
23	Niger	2/1/21	Tillabéri	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	30	Firearms
24	Nigeria	25/4/21	Borno	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	30	Firearms
25	Niger	16/11/21	Tahoua	Unknown - Jihadists	25	Firearms

Rank	Country	Date	State/Province	Organisation	Fatalities	Attack type
26	Chad	4/8/21	Lac	Boko Haram	24	Firearms
27	Nigeria	15/3/21	Borno	Boko Haram	22	Other/Unclear
28	Afghanistan	30/4/21	Logar	Taliban	21	Explosives
29	India	3/4/21	Chhattisgarh	Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI-M)	21	Grenade
30	Niger	28/7/21	Tillabéri	Unknown - Jihadists	21	Firearms
31	Mali	8/8/21	Gao	Unknown - Jihadists	20	Firearms
32	Myanmar	24/6/21	Sagaing	Unknown	20	Firearms
33	Nigeria	19/12/21	Borno	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	20	Firearms
34	Somalia	17/8/21	Mudug	Al-Shabaab	20	Firearms
35	Somalia	15/6/21	Banaadir	Al-Shabaab	20	Explosives
36	Somalia	14/4/21	Shabeellaha Dhexe	Unknown - Jihadists	20	Explosives
37	Somalia	5/3/21	Banaadir	Al-Shabaab	20	Explosives
38	Burkina Faso	4/8/21	Sahel	Unknown - Jihadists	19	Firearms
39	Mozambique	24/3/21	Cabo Delgado	Islamic State (IS)	19	Firearms
40	Niger	17/4/21	Tillabéri	Unknown - Jihadists	19	Firearms
41	Nigeria	13/3/21	Borno	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	19	Firearms
42	Burkina Faso	26/4/21	Sahel	Unknown - Jihadists	18	Firearms
43	Democratic Republic of the Congo	15/2/21	Nord-Kivu	Islamic State (IS)	18	Firearms
44	Niger	31/7/21	Tillabéri	Unknown - Jihadists	18	Firearms
45	Nigeria	7/7/21	Adamawa	Boko Haram	18	Firearms
46	Nigeria	13/4/21	Borno	Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA)	18	Firearms
47	Mali	16/8/21	Mopti	Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM)	17	Firearms
48	Mali	8/8/21	Gao	Unknown - Jihadists	17	Firearms
49	Niger	20/8/21	Tillabéri	Unknown - Jihadists	17	Firearms
50	Somalia	9/1/21	Jubbada Hoose	Al-Shabaab	17	Explosives

C

GTI Methodology

The GTI ranks 163 countries based on four indicators weighted over five years. A country's annual GTI score is based on a unique scoring system to account for the relative impact of incidents in the year. The four factors counted in each country's yearly score are:

▶ total number of terrorist incidents in a given year
▶ total number of fatalities caused by terrorists in a given year
▶ total number of injuries caused by terrorists in a given year
▶ total number of hostages caused by terrorists in a given year

Each of the factors is weighted between zero and three, and a five year weighted average is applied in a bid to reflect the latent psychological effect of terrorist acts over time. The weightings shown in Table C.1 was determined by consultation with the GPI Expert Panel.

The greatest weighting is attributed to a fatality.

HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE OF A COUNTRY'S GTI SCORE

To assign a score to a country each incident is rated according to the four measures. The measures are then multiplied by their weighting factor and aggregated. This is done for all incidents and then all incidents for each country are aggregated to give the country score. To illustrate, Table C.2 depicts a hypothetical country's record for a given year.

TABLE C.1

Indicator weights used in the Global Terrorism Index

Dimension	Weight
Total number of incidents	1
Total number of fatalities	3
Total number of injuries	0.5
Total number of hostages	0.5

TABLE C.2

Hypothetical country terrorist attacks in a given year

Dimension	Weight	Number of incidents for the given year	Calculated raw score
Total number of incidents	1	21	21
Total number of fatalities	3	36	108
Total number of injuries	0.5	53	26.5
Total number of hostages	0.5	20	10
Total raw score			**166.5**

Given these indicator values, this hypothetical country for that year would be assessed as having an impact of terrorism of

(1×21) + (3×36) + (0.5×53) + (0.5×20) = **166.5.**

FIVE-YEAR WEIGHTED AVERAGE

To account for the after effects of trauma that terrorist attacks have on a society, the GTI takes into consideration the events of previous years as having a bearing on a country's current score. For instance, the scale of the 2011 terrorist attacks in Norway will continue to have a psychological impact on the population for many years to come. To account for the lingering effects of terrorism, the prior four years are also included in the scoring with a decreasing weight each year. Table C.3 highlights the weights used for each year.

TABLE C.3
Time weighting of historical scores

Year	Weight	% of Score
Current year	16	52
Previous year	8	26
Two years ago	4	13
Three years ago	2	6
Four years ago	1	3

LOGARITHMIC BANDING SCORES ON A SCALE OF 1-10

The impact of terrorism is not evenly distributed throughout the world. There are a handful of countries with very high levels of terrorism compared to most countries which experience only low levels or no terrorism. To produce a more equally distributed index, the GTI uses a base 10 logarithmic banding system between 0 and 10 at 0.5 intervals.

As shown in table C.4 this mapping method yields a total number of 21 bands. This maps all values to a band of size 0.5 within the scale of 0-10. In order to band these scores, the following method is used:

1. Define the Minimum GTI Score across all countries as having a banded score of 0.

2. Define the Maximum GTI Score across all countries as having a banded score 10.

3. Subtract the Minimum from the Maximum GTI scores and calculate 'r' by:

   a. root = 2 X (Highest GTI Banded Score – Lowest GTI Banded Score) = 2 X (10–0) =20

   b. Range = 2 X (Highest Recorded GTI Raw Score – Lowest Recorded GTI Raw Score)

   c. $r = \sqrt[root]{range}$ -1 for all values of root between 1 to 21

This method produces the set of bands used in the GTI listed in table C.4.

TABLE C.4
Bands used in the GTI

Band number	Bands	Band cut off values	Band number	Bands	Band cut off values
1	0	0	12	5.5	572.17
2	0.5	0.78	13	6	1020.02
3	1	2.17	14	6.5	1817.8
4	1.5	4.65	15	7	3238.95
5	2	9.07	16	7.5	5770.53
6	2.5	16.94	17	8	10280.19
7	3	30.95	18	8.5	18313.55
8	3.5	55.92	19	9	32623.89
9	4	100.4	20	9.5	58115.81
10	4.5	179.62	21	10	103527.2
11	5	320.76			

D

Change in terrorism data sources

Until the previous edition, the GTI used the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) as a key source of data. However, internal difficulties meant that GTD data was no longer up-to-date, which prompted IEP to switch to the TerrorismTracker.

Both sources have similar definitions for terrorism, with data from the GTD and the TerrorismTracker being broadly consistent. However, the way the TerrorismTracker classifies violent events means that the number of terrorism incidents and fatalities obtained from this source tends to be lower in some countries and regions than the GTD's.

TerrorismTracker has a strict exclusion of acts of warfare from its records. The effect of this can be seen by comparing the incidents recorded in TerrorismTracker with those recorded in the GTD in Afghanistan for the year of 2019.

In this year, the GTD recorded 5,725 terrorism deaths in the country. Conversely, the TerrorismTracker recorded 1,169 terrorism deaths over the same period. Criminal acts are also excluded by the TerrorismTracker but were computed in the GTD. For example, if a terrorist organisation commits an act of violence that is not necessarily terrorism, such as robbing a bank to secure funding. Therefore, Mexico saw a reduction in incidents in the TerrorismTracker when compared to the GTD.

The TerrorismTracker does not have a tendency to record less terrorist events in more peaceful regions such as Europe and North America.

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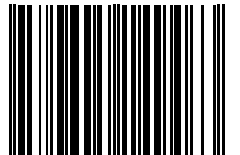**f** GlobalPeaceIndex

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