

Terrorism Defined

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The term “terrorism” means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience.

The term “international terrorism” means terrorism involving citizens or the territory of more than one country.

My 3-Line Definition:

A Terrorist is a member of a group lacking in rightful authority, who uses the publicity and fear generated by acts of violence against her citizenry merely as a means to alter certain aspects of the public policy of a recognized nation-state.

More Detailed Descriptions of what a Terrorist is and is not:

“X is a Terrorist IFF...”

1. Member of an unrecognized politically, religiously, or philosophically affiliated agency, group, or entity whose goal is to alter specific aspects of the foreign or domestic public policy of a recognized nation-state through acts of violence or threat of violence, that cause physical, psychological, sociological, emotional and/or financial harm to citizens of that nation-state, its holdings, protectorates, allies and/or any international organizations, states, or legitimate political entities to which it may belong, fund, recognize or support (e.g. NATO, Israel, the Red Cross, etc.).
 - a. These acts may occur within the boundaries of the nation-state itself, or upon its citizens, institutions, assets, or agents abroad.
 - b. These acts are motivated by a desire to “achieve maximum publicity...and, finally, it is intrinsic to a terrorist act that is usually intended to produce psychological effects far beyond the immediate physical damage”. (W.H. adviser Brian Jenkins, 1987)
 - c. These acts typically, but not necessarily, target citizens who are not in any way directly tied to, in direct association with, work for, directly support, or have direct power of influence over, the policy and/or policy makers with whom the terrorist has taken umbrage.
2. Intends these actions to bring about recognition/legitimatization of the member’s organization, its goals, demands, and/or cause(s) through the widespread publicity associated with its actions; in this manner inflicting a general fear that non-compliance with the demands will result in further acts taken against the citizenry.
3. Knowingly plans, aids, supports, funds or otherwise forwards the aims or actions of terrorist groups, or who has the intention of facilitating such acts which typically are considered to be crimes, violations of the rules of war (if in a state of war), or inflict any of the previously mentioned harms for the previously stated reasons.
4. Believes s/he is acting in a manner consistent with, and/or prescribed by the doctrines of faith by which the affiliation is constituted, regardless of the general acceptability or legitimacy of those beliefs as viewed by those outside the group.

“X is Not a Terrorist IFF...”

1. Member of a rightful authority, be it a nation-state or a recognized military, paramilitary, security, intelligence or defense organization, or else a politically, religiously, or philosophically affiliated agency, group, or entity recognized by national and/or international law, treaty or convention. Who may undertake actions, including those acts which may inflict similar effects as terrorism, but actions which nonetheless are conducted in accordance with state laws, regulations, and policies, with the support and acceptance of the citizenry of the nation and its policy makers, and which are acknowledged as legitimate aspects of foreign or domestic public policy, wherein the harm(s) inflicted do not exceed a level of proportionality respective to the legitimate goals of warfare, national or international security, peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention, or like causes.
2. Acts alone, or acts without guidance by, or membership in, a legitimate or illegitimate organization, and who acts without the intention of supporting any such organization, regardless of the methods involved and their similarity to terrorist actions (e.g. the “Unabomber”).
3. An individual or group that targets specific military and/or strategic infrastructure components as a prelude to, or as a pre-emptive strike in, the declaration of war by a rightful authority against a rightful authority.
4. A legitimate political leader who effectively creates fear and/or terror in the citizens of his/her nation as a means to control the populace, dissenters or would-be dissenters as a means to stabilizing governmental control as long as a level of proportionality towards these goals is maintained. Failure to maintain proportionality may lead to war crimes, but cannot be considered *terrorism per se*.
5. A legitimate political leader who effectively creates fear and/or terror in the citizens of a his own, or a subjugated nation, during a war or post-war occupation where the terror is used as a means to control either or both populace(s) to prevent significant strategic or tactical loss, hardships, destruction and or deprivations to the soldiers and military assets necessary for the successful conduct of the war. The legitimate use of terror can include policies of fear taken against citizens, dissenters, and active or would-be: dissenters, saboteurs, revolutionaries, spies, and assassins as long as the terror tactics are used solely as a means to stabilizing governmental control, and only as long as a level of proportionality is maintained. Failure to maintain proportionality may lead to war crimes, but cannot be considered *terrorism per se*.
6. Member of an unrecognized politically, religiously, or philosophically affiliated agency, group, or entity whose goal is to alter specific aspects of the foreign or domestic public policy of a recognized nation-state through acts of violence or threat of violence, that cause physical, psychological, sociological, emotional and/or financial harm solely to its own members and/or affiliates.

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