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THE QUESTION OF THE INTERNET AND TERRORISM

INTRODUCTION

“The internet is a prime example of how terrorists can behave in a truly transnational way; in response, States need to think and function in an equally transnational manner.”

— Ban Ki-Moon Secretary-General of the United Nations

The internet is something which society is becoming increasingly reliant on, whether it be for research, for directions or for online shopping, and every year an ever increasing number of people are getting online. This committee will consider one of the biggest costs of this increasing accessibility: terrorism online. The internet is a powerful tool which can be used to spread ideology, recruit members internationally and can also be used as a weapon in itself, indeed cyber security is an emerging security threat which is posing massive risks to national and international security. It is difficult to monitor terrorist use of the internet as websites can be easily hidden, and even if they are found and removed, they can be set up again very swiftly. Furthermore, existing websites and social media can and are being used by terror groups to communicate with their target audiences, for example Daesh (also known as the Islamic State or ISIS) are known to be using websites such as Twitter and Facebook. Terrorists have also shown that they are able to use the internet to further spread fear. Daesh once again is a key example of this, regularly publishing propaganda videos to recruit and spread fear.

In an age where the technology is becoming increasingly accessible around the world, terrorist groups such as Daesh are able to strengthen, spreading their ideology and recruit sympathisers around the world. It

is vital that member states come together to find a solution to this issue, looking at the use of the internet by recruiters as well as those being recruited, in order to combat a phenomenon which is threatening global security. Solutions to terrorism in the twenty-first century cannot simply focus on physical attacks, but also the methods being used by terrorists- the key one being the internet.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

TERRORISTS ON THE INTERNET

The internet can be used by terrorists in several ways: to communicate with one another from around the world (which can facilitate attacks being carried out), to spread propaganda, to recruit, to fundraise, and to provide information to terrorist sympathisers (for example, terror groups publish information such as how to make a bomb online). This is very concerning as the internet is facilitating terrorism and making it accessible to the wider public.

Part of the issue is that finding a definition of what constitutes a terrorism website is just as difficult as defining what constitutes terrorism, something which has no universally accepted definition. The magnitude of online material is also a problem, indeed Pentagon analysts have said that they monitor some five thousand jihadi websites (Kaplan, 2009) and this number will of course have increased since 2009. Furthermore websites that are seen as promoting terrorism have a habit of emerging then quickly disappearing again (Weimann, 2014), which makes them incredibly difficult to target. Daesh are a group that have particularly used the internet to their advantage, using social media, uploading videos and photos and recruiting new members. Videos put online by Daesh, which typically display gruesome executions, are horrifying in content, and have become a crucial part of their propaganda campaign. Although websites such as google have stated that they have a zero tolerance stance towards this sort of content, there are over 300 hours of videos uploaded to Youtube every minute (Wakefield, 2014), which makes this incredibly difficult to control or censor. This is set to become even more difficult, as internet giants such as Microsoft, Google, Apple and Yahoo have pledged to make encryption a default option to avoid the government from being able to observe what is happening on the internet - user privacy is the top of their agendas (Wakefield, 2014).

Recruitment is a major concern to countries all around the world, but particularly European countries. Recruiting young men and women online has led to thousands of people, particularly young people, leaving their home countries to join Daesh militants in Syria. Some individuals that become radicalised in Europe by militants based in Syria are unable to travel to Syria, and are instead actively encouraged to carry out attacks in their home countries. Attacks of this nature have recently been seen in the United States and Belgium. The internet also adds a transnational dimension to terrorism, and is thus a problem which cannot be dealt

with by one nation or bloc of nations alone.

Finding a solution to the issue has proved to be incredibly difficult. “Member states expect the European Union to intervene with Internet giants to remove illegal sites, carry out checks and develop a counter-narrative to prevent recruitment” (Bora 2015). However even though it has been internationally recognised that terrorists pose a major threat online, there is not a universal instrument that address the problem (UNDOC, 2012). There has been a fallout between spy agencies and tech firms (Wakefield, 2014). Security agencies need to improve their abilities to monitor terror activity online (Weimann, 2014), however tech firms are often resistant to infringement on their services.

CYBERTERRORISM

“A cyber attack perpetrated by nation states or violence extremist groups could be as destructive as the terrorist attack on 9/11”

— Leon E. Panetta (Former US Secretary of Defense)

Cyberterrorism is broadly defined as, “the use of the internet as a vehicle through which to launch an attack (Kaplan, 2009). Whilst cyber attacks can come from States as well as terror groups, the committee will focus primarily on attacks perpetrated by terrorists. Cyber attacks have become increasingly concerning in recent times. In 2012 alone, NATO saw over 2,500 significant cyber attacks (NATO Review, Date Unknown) - none broke through defenses, however it highlights the scale of the problem. One initiative currently in place to meet the threat is the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber Threats (IMPACT), which is the world’s first comprehensive alliance against cyber threats (ITU, 2012). As of yet there have not been cyber terrorist attacks, however states need to be alert and ready for the possibility of such an attack.

POINTS FOR RESOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS

Due to the transnational nature of the internet, combatting terrorism online requires an international effort. Part of the problem is that although countries are fairly united in accepting the need to confront terrorism, there is no universal definition of terrorism. Confidentiality and human rights need to be a consideration when constructing a resolution, as to increase security on the internet may well require invasion of privacy.

Additionally, delegates should consider the balance between international security and national sovereignty, as terrorists using the internet to harm a certain country can be based anywhere in the world.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1988

The Morris worm, one of the first recognised worms to affect cyber infrastructure hits computers primarily in the US

December 2006

NASA forced to block emails that carried an attachment before shuttle launches out of fear that they would be hacked (NATO Review, Date Unknown)

2006

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was unanimously adopted

June 2007

US Secretary of Defense's unclassified email account hacked

2008

Creations of the International Multilateral Partnership Against Cyber-Terrorism (IMPACT), the [first UN backed cybersecurity alliance](#) launched.

2011

UN General Assembly adopts resolution 66/178 which reaffirmed importance of gathering specialist knowledge about Terrorist use of the internet

June 2013

NATO hold their first ever meeting specifically on the topic of cyber defense

2015

It is estimated that approximately 4,000 Europeans have travelled to Syria to join Daesh, many of whom will have been radicalized via the internet

13th November 2015

Terror attacks in Paris leave 130 people dead, and lead to a state of emergency being declared in France. Shortly after, Brussels goes on lockdown as it is discovered that IS militants that carried out the attacks in Paris have links to Belgium.

BLOC POSITIONS

Due to the nature of this problem there are not many clear bloc positions to note. The following regional actions have taken place:

- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (1987)
- Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (1998)
- Treaty on Cooperation among States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States in Combating Terrorism (1999)
- Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism (1999)
- Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999)
- Inter-American Convention against Terrorism (2002)
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations Convention on Counter Terrorism (2007) Economic Community of West African States directive on fighting cybercrime (2009)

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON CYBERCRIME

At the moment this is the sole legally binding instrument which addresses criminal activity on the internet. This convention calls for members of the European Union to adopt legislation which requires Internet service providers to save specific dates on their servers for up to 90 days if requested to do so by legal officials (UNODC, 2012). The EU has called upon member states to act in response to the terrorist threat, and have frameworks in place which may not always be internet specific but do cover activities that take place via the internet.

Specific countries within Europe have also taken action. The United Kingdom has been at the forefront of legislation to counter use of the Internet for terrorist purposes over the past decade (UNODC, 2012). In the UK it is possible to be charged with the offence of “committing acts in preparation for terrorism”, which includes acts online (UNODC, 2012). Following the attacks in Paris on the 13th of November, France officially declared themselves to be in a national state of emergency, which gives them increased power to take down any website they view to be ‘terrorist.’

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THE QUESTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT ZONES

INTRODUCTION

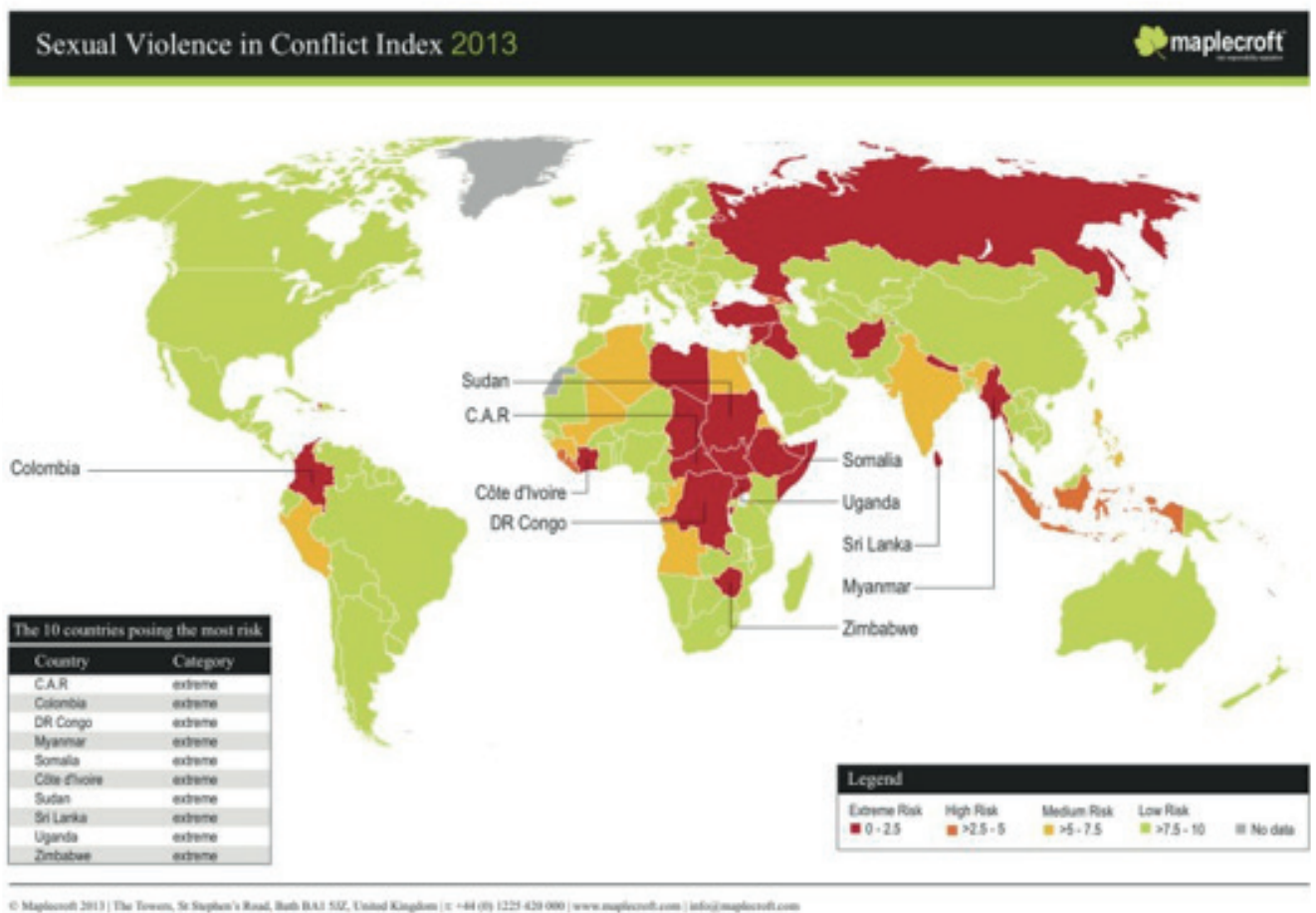
“Sexual violence in conflict needs to be treated as the war crime that it is; it can no longer be treated as an unfortunate collateral damage of war.”

— UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict
Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura

Conflict-related sexual violence has been a feature of war for generations worldwide. During war and armed conflict, sexual violence is frequently used as a means of psychological warfare in order to humiliate the enemy. Wartime sexual violence may occur in a variety of situations, including institutionalized sexual slavery, wartime sexual violence associated with specific battles or massacres, and individual or isolated acts of sexual violence. Lawlessness during wars and civil conflicts can create a culture of impunity towards human rights abuses of civilians. In 2008, the United Nations Security Council argued that “women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instill fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group.” Although women and girls tend to be the primary victims of such violence due to their vulnerability, men and boys have also been known to become victims to such assaults. Although war rape has been documented throughout history, laws protecting civilians in armed conflict have tended not to recognize sexual assault.

In addition, the threat or use of sexual violence as a form of ill treatment in detention settings is evident in many situations. The targeting of

individuals on the basis of their (actual or perceived) sexual orientation has come to light as a form of social control employed by certain armed groups in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and elsewhere. In recent months, sexual violence in the context of rising violent extremism has captured the attention of the world. This transnational threat makes it more urgent than ever to confront the challenge of engaging non-State actors.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For centuries, sexual violence in conflict was tacitly accepted as unavoidable, though it is anything but an incidental problem in war. Precise data is lacking, but estimates point to very large numbers: between 100,000 and 1,000,000 German women were raped by Soviet soldiers at the end of World War II, perhaps 200,000 women conscripted to work as “comfort women” for the Japanese armies in that same war, up to 50,000 rapes in Bosnia in the early 1990s, as many as 64,000 sexual assaults in Sierra Leone’s wars in the 1990s, and uncounted assaults in other wars. (Heineman 2008, p. 5) As estimates show during World War II, all sides of the conflict were accused of mass rapes, yet neither of the two courts set up by the victorious allied countries to prosecute suspected war crimes - in Tokyo and Nuremberg - recognized the crime of sexual violence.

Conflict-related sexual violence occurs in homes, fields, places of detention, military sites, and camps for refugees and displaced persons. It occurs at the height of conflict, during population displacement, and continues well after a conflict ends. Acts of sexual violence are committed during attacks on civilian centres, or during looting raids. Women and girls are often targeted whilst performing daily chores, such as collecting food, water and wood. Women and children have been abducted by armed groups and kept in sexual slavery, or forced into combat roles, while both genders have been raped, subjected to sexual mutilation, humiliation and torture while in detention. (Bastick, Grimm and Kunz 2007, p. 13) Whilst not offering any comprehensive answer to the very complex question of “why” sexual violence is committed, some examples of motives can be identified for its use in armed conflict, although they are not necessarily exhaustive:

- Torture and humiliation, aimed at gaining control over victims, and ensuring their compliance
- Used as a means of destroying family and community structures, most overtly when armed groups commit public rapes in front of the community
- Instill terror in a population, and to incite flight from a given territory
- Conflict-ridden countries often lack a robust justice system, so no retribution is inflicted

Sexual violence has serious social consequences for survivors, their families and communities. In most societies, the victims are severely stigmatized. Female survivors face marginalization and social exclusion,

and they may even be murdered by their family, in a so-called “honor killing”. Both during and after conflict, when abuses become known, victims of war rape risk finding themselves in situations of social isolation and are often abandoned by their husbands and rejected by their communities, thus the ordeal is not over with the survival of the act of abuse. A climate of stigma is therefore created surrounding the event, making victims feel unable to speak about their abuse, and so there is a long-term effect that can only, to a limited extent, be dealt with by the victim him/herself.

For example, since civil unrest began in South Sudan in December 2013, there have been 53,079 new arrivals at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya, many of them unaccompanied minors, with a corresponding increase in reports of sexual assault, teenage pregnancies and forced marriage. Sexual violence perpetrated by non-State armed groups, including those pursuing extremist ideologies in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Nigeria, Mali, Libya and Yemen, was of grave concern during 2014 and efforts to degrade or destroy the capacity of groups like Daesh, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Ansar Dine and Al-Qaida affiliates are an essential part of the fight against conflict-related sexual violence.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1949

Rape and enforced prostitution were included in the Fourth Geneva Convention as war crimes.

1993

UNGA adopts the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It identifies three main categories of violence against women, namely physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, within the general community, and that perpetrated or condoned by the State. It explicitly recognizes that women in conflict situations are especially vulnerable to violence.

1998

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) recognized sexual slavery, forced prostitution, sterilization, pregnancy, and sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity under its jurisdiction. It enters into force in 2002.

2007

UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict is launched, with the aim of using a more systematic UN-wide approach to end sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations

2008

UN Security Council signs Resolution 1820, demanding the “immediate and complete cessation by all parties to armed conflict of all acts of sexual violence against civilians.” It also affirms the Council’s intention, when establishing and renewing state-specific sanction programs, to consider imposing “targeted and graduated” measures against warring factions that have committed rape and other forms of violence against women and girls.

2014

The United Kingdom hosts the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, held in London in June 2014. At this forum, several States made new commitments and the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict was launched.

BLOC POSITIONS

THE WESTERN BLOC

More-economically developed nation states from the Western part of the world have addressed conflict-related sexual violence as an international crime, and have frequently come together to discuss multiple resolutions in order to combat this pressing issue, such as the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, or signing the pivotal Resolution 1820 of 2008, which directly addressed the issue at hand. The United Kingdom has also played a central role in combatting sexual violence by hosting the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in 2014.

THE MIDDLE EASTERN BLOC

Nation states in this region are likely to work together and cooperate in undertaking more pragmatic tasks in order to achieve possible solutions. An example of this is border control, which aims to protect uprooted populations and monitor the movement of arms, troops and resources (such as the Sudan-Chad border), and joint-crime prevention night patrols such as the ones undertaken with the local police in Liberia.

ADVICE TO DELEGATES

The widespread nature of sexual abuse in conflict and post-conflict missions, and the gravity of damage that is caused requires an appropriate response from the Security Council. Delegates should consider:

- Ways in which to improve survivors' ability to report crimes of sexual violence committed during emergency periods
- Witness protection programs
- Improvements in the health sector, which plays a critical role in response to, and accountability for, conflict-related sexual violence
- Specialized health, police, prosecution, and judicial units that can optimize accountability for sexual violence as an international crime

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APPENDICES

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