

# GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2020

MEASURING THE IMPACT  
OF TERRORISM



## Quantifying Peace and its Benefits

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**NATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE  
STUDY OF TERRORISM AND RESPONSES TO TERRORISM**

**A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE  
OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
LED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

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# Executive Summary

This is the eighth 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 50 years, placing a special emphasis on trends over the past decade. This period corresponds with the rise and fall of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) using data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and other sources. Data for the GTD is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. The GTD contains over 170,000 terrorist incidents for the period 1970 to 2019.

In 2019, deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year, after peaking in 2014. The total number of deaths fell by 15.5 per cent to 13,826. The fall in deaths was mirrored by a reduction in the impact of terrorism, with 103 countries recording an improvement on their GTI score, compared to 35 that recorded a deterioration. The full GTI score takes into account not only deaths, but also incidents, injuries, and property damage from terrorism, over a five-year period.

The largest fall in the impact of terrorism occurred in Afghanistan, which recorded 1,654 fewer deaths from terrorism in 2018, a 22.4 per cent decrease from the prior year. However, Afghanistan remains the country most impacted by terrorism, after overtaking Iraq in 2018.

Nigeria recorded the second largest reduction in deaths from terrorism in 2019, with the number falling from 2,043 to 1,245, a 39.1 per cent reduction, which was mainly due to a fall in terrorism deaths attributed to Fulani extremists. This reduction occurred despite a small increase in deaths attributed to Boko Haram, which has been the most active terrorist group in the country over the past decade. Deaths from terrorism in Nigeria are now 83 per cent lower than at their peak in 2014.

Conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 96 per cent of deaths from terrorism in 2019 occurring in countries already in conflict. The ten countries with the highest impact of terrorism are all engaged in at least one armed conflict.

Despite the overall fall in the impact of terrorism across the world, it remains a significant and serious problem in many countries. There were 63 countries in 2019 that recorded at least one death from a terrorist attack and seventeen countries that recorded over 100 deaths from terrorism. However, only Afghanistan and Nigeria recorded over 1,000 deaths and both countries had significant reductions in the number of people killed in 2019. By contrast, in 2015 there were six countries that recorded over a thousand deaths from terrorism.

ISIL's strength and influence continued to decline, with deaths attributed to the group in 2019 falling to 942, down from

1,571 in the previous year. This is the first time since the group became active in 2013, that it was responsible for less than a thousand deaths from terrorism in any one year. The number of terrorist attacks attributed to the group also fell to the lowest level since it was formed, with 339 incidents attributed to the group in 2019. However, despite the decrease in activity from ISIL in the Middle East and North Africa, ISIL's affiliate groups remain active across the world, and have become especially prominent in sub-Saharan Africa where deaths attributed to ISIL affiliates increased. Twenty-seven countries experienced a terrorist attack caused by ISIL or one of its affiliates.

The expansion of ISIL affiliates into sub-Saharan Africa led to a surge in terrorism in many countries in the region. Seven of the ten countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in sub-Saharan Africa: Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali, Niger, Cameroon and Ethiopia. These countries are also facing various ecological threats, are amongst the countries with the highest population growth and suffer from low societal resilience.

The largest increase in deaths from terrorism occurred in Burkina Faso, where deaths rose from 86 to 593, a 590 per cent increase. The rise was mainly driven by three groups: the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and the Burkina Faso branch of Ansar al-Islam.

Sri Lanka recorded the second largest increase in 2019, with the Easter Sunday bombings accounting for the entirety of this increase. Sri Lanka recorded the deadliest attack of 2019 when eight coordinated suicide attacks across the country targeted churches and hotels on Easter Sunday, killing 266 people and injuring at least 500. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, with the perpetrators pledging allegiance to former ISIL-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi online.

South Asia remains the region most impacted by terrorism in 2019, despite the improvements in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. This is the second year in a row that South Asia has recorded more deaths from terrorism than any other region.

ISIL's shift to sub-Saharan Africa meant that the region recorded the second highest number of terrorism deaths, even after accounting for the substantial fall in Nigeria. Deaths attributed to ISIL affiliates in the region were recorded as far south as Mozambique and 41 per cent of all ISIL-related attacks in 2019 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

Terrorism comes with a heavy financial cost. The global economic impact of terrorism was US\$26.4 billion in 2019, 25 per cent lower than in 2018. Whilst this figure is a small

percentage of the total impact of violence on the global economy, it should be noted that the figures for terrorism are highly conservative as they do not account for many items, including the indirect impacts on business and investment, insurance costs, lost opportunity and the costs associated with security agencies in countering terrorism.

One of the more worrying trends in the last five years is the surge in far-right political terrorism, even though the absolute number of far-right attacks remains low when compared to other forms of terrorism. In North America, Western Europe, and Oceania, far-right attacks have increased by 250 per cent since 2014, with deaths increasing by 709 per cent over the same period. There were 89 deaths attributed to far-right terrorists in 2019, with 51 of those occurring in the Christchurch mosque attacks in New Zealand. There have been over 35 far-right terrorist incidents in the West every year for the past five years.

Far-right terrorism tends to be more lethal than far-left terrorism, but not as lethal as Islamist terrorism in the West. There have been 13 far-right terrorist attacks that have each killed more than ten people over the past 50 years, compared to 24 Islamist attacks, and three from other ideologies. Far-right terrorism is also more likely to be carried out by individuals unaffiliated with a specific terrorist group. Nearly 60 per cent of far-right attacks from 1970 to 2019 were carried out by unaffiliated individuals, compared to under ten per cent for both far-left and separatist terrorist groups.

There are some signs that political violence is becoming more publically acceptable, as the level of polarisation in society continues to rise. In the US, where the majority of far-right terrorism has taken place, nearly 40 per cent of both Democrat and Republican poll respondents in 2020 felt that violence for political ends was at least partially justifiable, up from less than ten per cent just two and half years earlier. Social and political instability has also been on the rise in the West, even prior to the widespread demonstrations seen in 2020. Nearly 70 violent demonstrations were recorded in the West in 2019, compared to 19 in 2011.

The rise in far-right terrorism comes at a time when Positive Peace is declining in many Western countries. The US had one of the largest deteriorations in Positive Peace, with its score deteriorating by 6.7 per cent over the past decade. If the deterioration in Positive Peace in the West continues unchecked over the coming years, the background conditions are set for further social discontent, which may increase the likelihood for violence and terrorism.

The report also looks at the application of systems thinking to terrorism, using mainly statistical techniques and



mathematical models to better understand the dynamics of terrorism and its subsequent impact on society. Terrorist groups flourish when they can increase their influence. The major drivers of influence are media coverage, recruitment of sympathisers, and finances. All of these different facets need to be tackled together to break up terrorist organisations.

There are many socio-economic factors that are associated with terrorism that are common to all countries. However, there are also notable differences between economically developed and developing countries. Some socio-economic factors associated with terrorism include:

- High levels of group grievance and a weak rule of law is correlated with terrorism across all countries.
- In the more economically developed countries, social disenfranchisement and exclusion play an important role in terrorism.
- In less economically developed countries, religious or ethnic ruptures, and corruption are more strongly associated with high levels of terrorism.

As the threat of terrorism continues to change, policymakers need to be aware of novel approaches to counter-terrorism. The European Leadership Network is developing the concept of social impact bonds in relation to terrorism, with a particular focus on securing dangerous materials that could be used in sophisticated terrorist attacks, such as radioactive medical waste. There are already over 100 development or social impact bonds globally, but to date they have not been used for security purposes. An expert contribution in this edition of the GTI looks in detail at the prospect of using social impact bonds in counter-terrorism.

# Key Findings

1

## Results

- › Deaths from terrorism fell for the fifth consecutive year in 2019 to 13,826 deaths, representing a 15 per cent decrease from the prior year.
- › The Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Russia and Eurasia, South America and South Asia regions all recorded falls in deaths from terrorism of at least 20 per cent.
- › Although terrorism has fallen in most regions, it has become more widespread in others. Seven of the ten countries with the largest increase in terrorism were in sub-Saharan Africa.
- › Burkina Faso had the largest increase in terrorism, where deaths increased by 590 per cent to 593. This was followed by Sri Lanka where terrorism deaths increased from one in 2018 to 266 in 2019.
- › Afghanistan remains the country with the highest impact from terrorism. However, terrorism deaths in the country declined in 2019 for the first time in three years.
- › The Taliban remained the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2019. However, terrorist deaths attributed to the group declined by 18 per cent to 4,990. Whether the peace talks in Afghanistan have a substantial impact on terrorist activity remains to be seen.

2

## Economic Impact Of Terrorism

- › The global economic impact of terrorism in 2019 amounted to US\$26.4 billion, a fall of 25 per cent from 2018. This was mainly driven by a fall in terrorism deaths in the Middle East and North Africa.
- › The economic impact of terrorism has fallen each year for the last five years. It is now 77 per cent lower than at its peak in 2014.
- › Afghanistan was the country with the highest economic impact, equivalent to 16.7 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- › Nine of the ten countries with the highest economic impact of terrorism suffer from ongoing conflict.
- › Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have the highest

regional economic impact, at US\$12.5 and US\$5.6 billion, respectively.

- › North America had the largest regional percentage increase in its economic impact, increasing by 44.9 per cent from the previous year, owing largely to an increase in far-right terrorism.

3

## Trends In Terrorism

- › Deaths from terrorism are now 59 per cent lower than their peak in 2014. The fall in deaths has been largest in Iraq, Syria and Nigeria.
- › The overall fall in deaths from terrorism has also led to a reduction in the number of countries experiencing deaths from terrorism. In 2019, 63 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism, the lowest number since 2013.
- › The impact of terrorism lessened in seven of the nine regions of the world in 2019.
- › South Asia recorded the largest deterioration, followed by Central America and the Caribbean. However, Central America and the Caribbean remains the region with the lowest impact of terrorism, a position it has held for the past 17 years.
- › MENA recorded the largest regional improvement for the second consecutive year. Deaths in MENA have fallen by 87 per cent since 2016, reaching the lowest level since 2003.
- › More recently, terrorist activity has been concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with both regions having recorded more terrorism deaths than MENA since 2018.

# 4

## The Shifting Landscape

- As the level of terrorist activity continues to fall in the Middle East and South Asia, new terrorist threats are beginning to emerge. The most prominent of these are the spread of ISIL affiliate groups in sub-Saharan Africa, and the emergence of far-right terrorism in Western Europe and North America.
- ISIL's global reach has steadily expanded with ISIL-related attacks recorded across seven regions: Asia-Pacific, Europe, MENA, North America, Russia and Eurasia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Outside of Iraq and Syria, ISIL-affiliated groups and individuals have perpetrated over 3,000 attacks in 48 countries since 2013.
- The number of countries recording an ISIL-related attack increased from two in 2013, to 27 in 2019.
- In the West, ISIL directed or inspired at least 78 terror attacks between 2014 and 2019, resulting in 471 fatalities. France recorded the most ISIL-related terrorism deaths, followed by the United States and Belgium. However, there was only one attack recorded in the West in 2019.
- Forty-one per cent of total ISIL-related attacks in 2019 occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting the shift in ISIL-related attacks away from the Middle East.
- Far-right terrorism has increased substantially in the West. There was one recorded far-right terrorist attack in 2010, this had increased to 49 in 2019.

# 5

## Systems And Terrorism

- There are many factors that are associated with increased levels of terrorism. High levels of group grievance and weak rule of law are correlated with terrorism across all countries.
- The socio-economic factors linked with terrorism in more economically developed countries mostly reflect social disenfranchisement and exclusion.
- Among developing nations, terrorism is associated with religious or ethnic ruptures and corruption.
- Social systems are vulnerable to shocks. A large scale terrorist attack is a shock that can change a system in long-lasting and often unexpected ways.
- The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 triggered profound changes in the US social and governance systems that have persevered for almost two decades.
- Following these attacks, indicators of perceived human rights protections, rule of law, media monitoring and regulation and judicial review and oversight deteriorated markedly.
- Influence over society and its governance is the most important factor that determines the size, longevity, and success of a terrorist group. Programs and policies that reduce the influence of groups will have the most power to disrupt terror networks.
- In order to disrupt recruitment by terrorist groups, nations need to address both recruitment methods and motivation.
- To address the motivations to join a terrorist group, both social and economic inclusion need to be promoted.

# About the Global Terrorism Index

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is a comprehensive study analysing the impact of terrorism for 163 countries covering 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 terrorist 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 the Global Terrorism Database (GTD); the most authoritative data source on terrorism today. The GTI produces a composite score so as to provide an ordinal ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism. The GTD is unique in that it consists of systematically and comprehensively coded data for 170,000 terrorist incidents.

The GTI was developed in consultation with the Global Peace Index Expert Panel. The GTI scores each country on a scale from 0 to 10; where 0 represents no impact from terrorism and 10 represents the highest measurable impact of terrorism. Countries are ranked in descending order with the worst scores listed first in the index.

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 the GTD and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).

The GTI therefore defines terrorism as 'the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.'

This definition recognises that terrorism is not only the physical act of an attack but also the psychological impact it has on a society for many years after. Therefore, the index score

accounts for terrorist attacks over the prior five years.

In order to be included as an incident in the GTD, the act has to be 'an intentional act of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor.' This means an incident has to meet three criteria in order for it to be counted as a terrorist act:

1. The incident must be intentional - the result of a conscious calculation on the part of a perpetrator.
2. The incident must entail some level of violence or threat of violence - including property damage as well as violence against people.
3. The perpetrators of the incidents must be sub-national actors. This database does not include acts of state terrorism.

In addition to this baseline definition, two of the following three criteria have to be met in order to be included in the START database from 1997:

- The violent act was aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious or social goal.
- The violent act included evidence of an intention to coerce, intimidate or convey some other message to a larger audience other than to the immediate victims.
- The violent act was outside the precepts of international humanitarian law.

In cases where there is insufficient information to make a definitive distinction about whether it is a terrorist incident within the confines of the definition, the database codes these incidents as 'doubt terrorism proper'. In order to only count unambiguous incidents of terrorism, this study does not include doubted incidents.

It is important to understand how incidents are counted. According to the GTD codebook 'incidents occurring in both the same geographic and temporal point will be regarded as a single incident but if either the time of the occurrence of the incidents or their locations are discontinuous, the events will be regarded as separate incidents.

Illustrative examples from the GTD codebook are as follows:

- Four truck bombs explode nearly simultaneously in different parts of a major city. This represents four incidents.
- A bomb goes off and while police are working on the scene the next day, they are attacked by terrorists with automatic weapons. These are two separate incidents as they were not continuous given the time lag between the two events.



**“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.”**

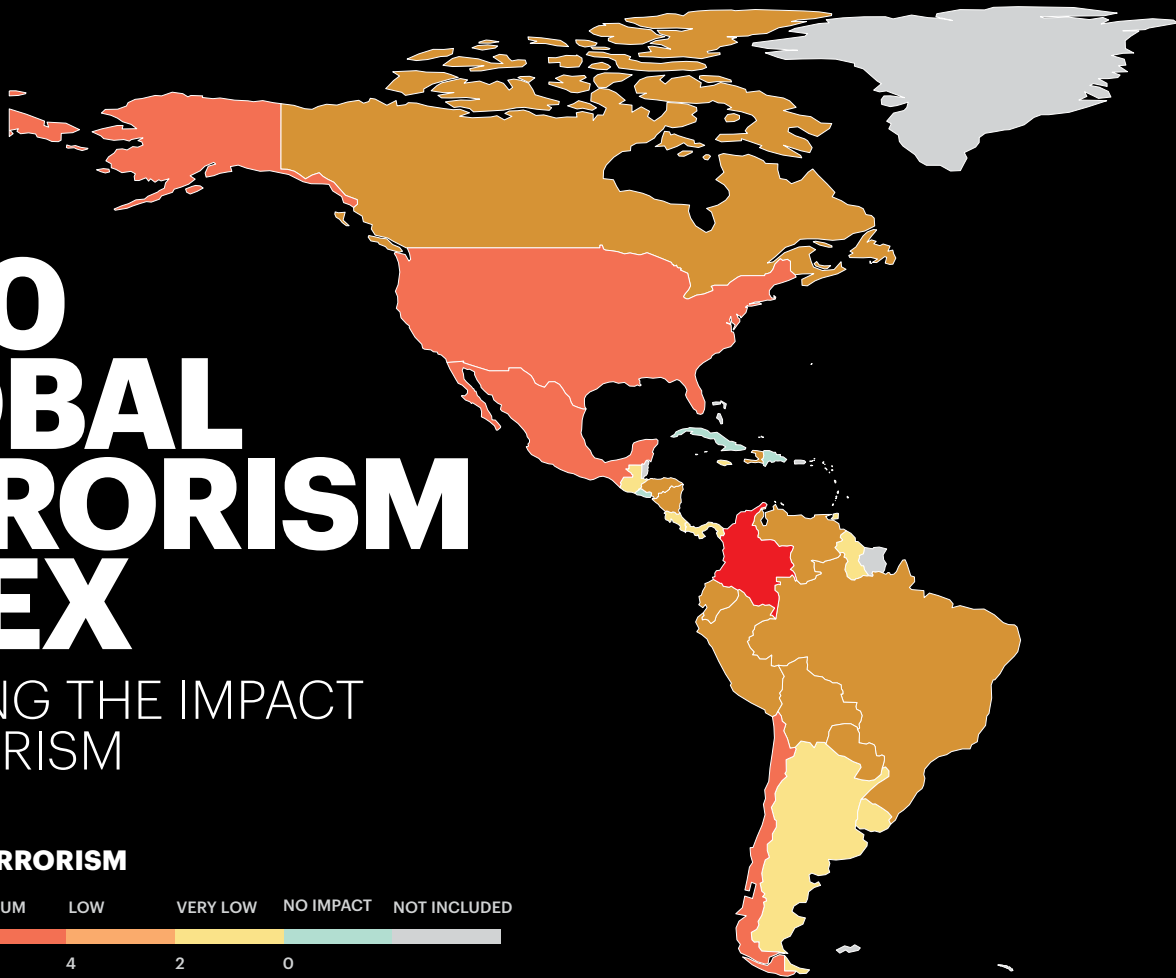
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- A group of militants shoot and kill five guards at a perimeter checkpoint of a petroleum refinery and then proceeds to set explosives and destroy the refinery. This is one incident since it occurred in a single location (the petroleum refinery) and was one continuous event.
- A group of hijackers diverts a plane to Senegal and, while at an airport in Senegal, shoots two Senegalese policemen. This is one incident since the hijacking was still in progress at the time of the shooting and hence the two events occurred at the same time and in the same place.

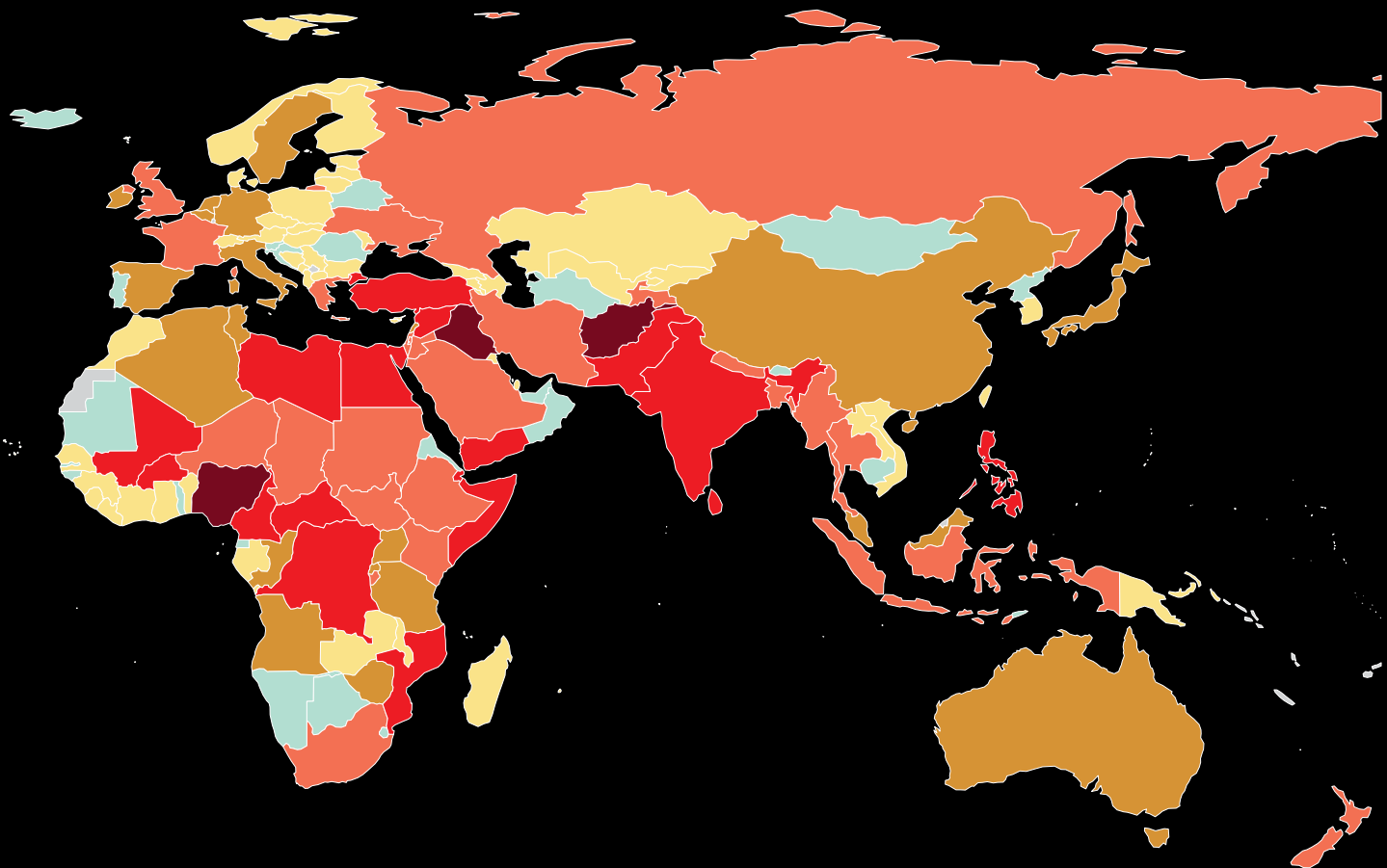
# 2020 GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM

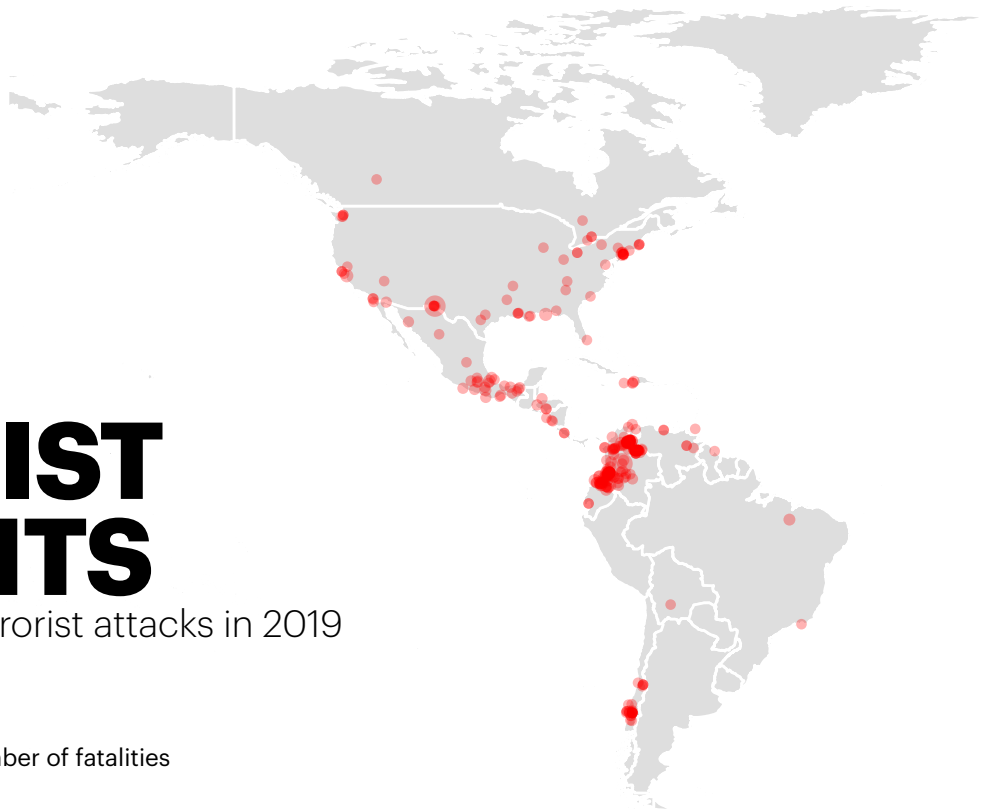
## THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM



RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	Afghanistan	9.592	↔	28	Ethiopia	5.307	↔	56	Canada	3.171	↓ 3
2	Iraq	8.682	↔	29	United States of America	5.260	↑ 2	57	Jordan	3.149	↑ 5
3	Nigeria	8.314	↔	30	United Kingdom	5.161	↓ 4	58	Tanzania	3.112	↑ 2
4	Syria	7.778	↔	31	Palestine	5.077	↑ 1	=59	Belgium	3.043	↓ 6
5	Somalia	7.645	↑ 1	32	Saudi Arabia	5.000	↓ 3	=59	Italy	3.043	↑ 3
6	Yemen	7.581	↑ 1	33	Bangladesh	4.909	↓ 3	61	Sweden	2.892	↓ 5
7	Pakistan	7.541	↓ 2	34	Chad	4.829	↑ 4	62	Ireland	2.845	↑ 7
8	India	7.353	↔	35	Burundi	4.702	↓ 2	63	Spain	2.810	↓ 4
9	Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.178	↑ 1	36	Ukraine	4.692	↓ 11	64	Bolivia	2.795	↓ 6
10	Philippines	7.099	↓ 1	37	Indonesia	4.629	↓ 2	65	Algeria	2.696	↓ 8
11	Mali	7.049	↑ 2	38	France	4.614	↓ 2	66	Netherlands	2.689	↑ 11
12	Burkina Faso	6.755	↑ 15	39	Russia	4.542	↓ 2	67	Ecuador	2.606	↑ 6
13	Cameroon	6.627	↑ 1	40	Israel	4.522	↔	=68	Brazil	2.443	↑ 6
14	Egypt	6.419	↓ 3	41	South Africa	4.358	↔	=68	Zimbabwe	2.443	↓ 1
15	Mozambique	6.400	↑ 8	42	New Zealand	4.337	↑ 79	70	Paraguay	2.414	↓ 6
16	Libya	6.250	↓ 4	43	Mexico	4.316	↑ 5	71	Bahrain	2.402	↓ 10
17	Central African Republic	6.241	↓ 2	44	Greece	4.182	↑ 2	=72	Haiti	2.355	↑ 6
18	Turkey	6.110	↓ 2	45	Tajikistan	4.180	↑ 6	=72	Nicaragua	2.355	↓ 8
19	Colombia	6.100	↔	46	Iran	4.157	↓ 7	74	Australia	2.148	↓ 2
20	Sri Lanka	6.065	↑ 35	47	Chile	4.031	↓ 2	75	Peru	2.141	↓ 8
21	Thailand	5.783	↓ 3	48	Germany	3.965	↓ 4	76	Malaysia	2.090	↓ 5
22	South Sudan	5.726	↓ 5	49	Tunisia	3.858	↑ 1	77	Republic of the Congo	2.043	↓ 7
23	Kenya	5.644	↓ 2	50	Rwanda	3.754	↑ 16	78	Honduras	2.023	↑ 20
24	Niger	5.617	↓ 2	51	Lebanon	3.661	↓ 8	79	Japan	2.014	↓ 1
25	Myanmar	5.543	↓ 1	52	Venezuela	3.658	↓ 5	80	Cote d' Ivoire	1.945	↓ 6
26	Sudan	5.401	↓ 6	53	China	3.587	↓ 11	81	Kuwait	1.795	↓ 5
27	Nepal	5.340	↑ 7	54	Angola	3.429	↓ 2	82	Ghana	1.743	↑ 4
				55	Uganda	3.278	↓ 6	83	Finland	1.721	↓ 3



RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
84	Malawi	1.635	↑ 19	112	Azerbaijan	0.296	↓ 10	=135	Cuba	0.000	↔
85	Denmark	1.484	↑ 15	113	Switzerland	0.286	↑ 3	=135	Dominican Republic	0.000	↓ 44
86	Gabon	1.43	↑ 18	114	Poland	0.239	↓ 9	=135	El Salvador	0.000	↔
87	Norway	1.297	↑ 40	=115	Jamaica	0.229	↓ 11	=135	Equatorial Guinea	0.000	↔
88	Madagascar	1.19	↓ 7	=115	Lithuania	0.229	↓ 9	=135	Eritrea	0.000	↔
89	Costa Rica	1.066	↑ 74	=115	Sierra Leone	0.229	↓ 9	=135	Guinea-Bissau	0.000	↔
90	Argentina	1.024	↓ 8	118	Liberia	0.191	↑ 7	=135	Iceland	0.000	↓ 30
91	Austria	1.016	↓ 8	119	Bulgaria	0.172	↓ 9	=135	Kosovo	0.000	↔
92	Kyrgyz Republic	0.95	↓ 8	120	Trinidad and Tobago	0.162	↑ 15	=135	Mauritania	0.000	↔
93	Kazakhstan	0.901	↓ 8	121	Zambia	0.153	↓ 9	=135	Mauritius	0.000	↔
94	Papua New Guinea	0.691	↓ 6	=122	Latvia	0.115	↓ 6	=135	Mongolia	0.000	↔
=95	Albania	0.677	↑ 13	=122	Cyprus	0.115	↓ 8	=135	Namibia	0.000	↔
=95	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.677	↓ 9	124	North Macedonia	0.105	↓ 11	=135	North Korea	0.000	↔
=97	Benin	0.663	↑ 65	125	Uruguay	0.086	↓ 5	=135	Oman	0.000	↔
=97	Guatemala	0.663	↓ 8	=126	Estonia	0.057	↓ 4	=135	Portugal	0.000	↔
99	South Korea	0.656	↑ 15	=126	Moldova	0.057	↓ 4	=135	Romania	0.000	↔
100	Georgia	0.635	↓ 11	=126	Serbia	0.057	↓ 4	=135	Singapore	0.000	↔
101	Taiwan	0.607	↓ 6	129	Lesotho	0.048	↓ 3	=135	Slovenia	0.000	↔
102	Morocco	0.565	↓ 11	130	Djibouti	0.038	↓ 19	=135	Eswatini	0.000	↔
103	Hungary	0.551	↑ 15	131	Slovakia	0.029	↓ 3	=135	The Gambia	0.000	↔
104	Armenia	0.53	↓ 11	132	Panama	0.019	↓ 1	=135	Timor-Leste	0.000	↔
105	Guyana	0.477	↑ 26	133	Qatar	0.014	↔	=135	Togo	0.000	↔
106	Laos	0.439	↓ 12	134	Uzbekistan	0.010	↑ 1	=135	Turkmenistan	0.000	↔
=107	Montenegro	0.42	↓ 11	=135	Belarus	0.000	↔	=135	United Arab Emirates	0.000	↓ 34
=107	Vietnam	0.42	↓ 11	=135	Bhutan	0.000	↓ 27				
109	Guinea	0.41	↓ 10	=135	Botswana	0.000	↔				
110	Senegal	0.391	↓ 18	=135	Cambodia	0.000	↔				
111	Czech Republic	0.315	↓ 10	=135	Croatia	0.000	↔				



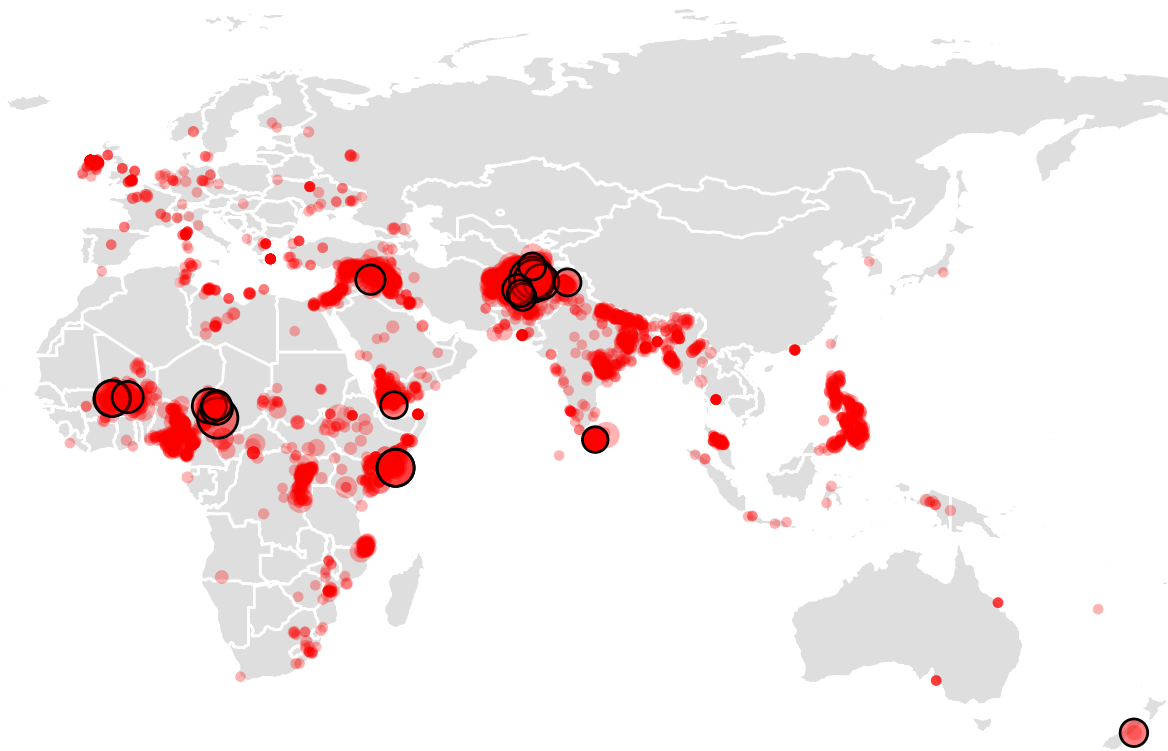
# TERRORIST INCIDENTS

The twenty most fatal terrorist attacks in 2019

● All attacks in 2019 scaled by number of fatalities

○ Worst attacks in 2019

						DESCRIPTION	
<b>1</b>	COUNTRY	<b>SRI LANKA</b>	CITY	<b>MULTIPLE LOCATIONS</b>	DEATHS	<b>266</b>	Eight coordinated attacks took place in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday targeting churches, hotels and a housing complex.
	DATE	<b>21/4/19</b>	GROUP	<b>ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND THE LEVANT (ISIL)</b>			
<b>2</b>	COUNTRY	<b>MALI</b>	CITY	<b>OGOSSOGO AND WELINGARA</b>	DEATHS	<b>157</b>	Assailants opened fire on the villages of Ogossogou and Welingara in Mopti, Mali.
	DATE	<b>23/3/19</b>	GROUP	<b>DAN NA AMBASSAGOU</b>			
<b>3</b>	COUNTRY	<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>	CITY	<b>MAYDAN SHAHR DISTRICT</b>	DEATHS	<b>129</b>	A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle and assailants opened fire on a National Directorate for Security (NDS) base in Maydan Shahr district, Wardak, Afghanistan.
	DATE	<b>21/1/19</b>	GROUP	<b>TALIBAN</b>			
<b>4</b>	COUNTRY	<b>CAMEROON</b>	CITY	<b>DARAK</b>	DEATHS	<b>101</b>	Several hundred assailants armed with rocket launchers attacked military positions in Darak, Extreme-North, Cameroon.
	DATE	<b>9/6/19</b>	GROUP	<b>BOKO HARAM</b>			
<b>5</b>	COUNTRY	<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>	CITY	<b>KABUL</b>	DEATHS	<b>93</b>	A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vest at the Dubai City wedding hall in Kabul, Afghanistan. At least 93 civilians were killed and 142 others were injured in the blast. The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the incident.
	DATE	<b>17/8/19</b>	GROUP	<b>KHORASAN CHAPTER OF THE ISLAMIC STATE</b>			
<b>6</b>	COUNTRY	<b>SOMALIA</b>	CITY	<b>MOGADISHU</b>	DEATHS	<b>84</b>	A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden truck at a police checkpoint in Darkheyneley, Mogadishu, Somalia.
	DATE	<b>28/12/19</b>	GROUP	<b>AL-SHABAAB</b>			
<b>7</b>	COUNTRY	<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>	CITY	<b>JAWDARA</b>	DEATHS	<b>74</b>	A suicide bomber detonated targeting a mosque in Jawdara, Nangarhar, Afghanistan.
	DATE	<b>18/10/19</b>	GROUP	<b>KHORASAN CHAPTER OF THE ISLAMIC STATE</b>			
<b>8</b>	COUNTRY	<b>NIGERIA</b>	CITY	<b>BADU</b>	DEATHS	<b>70</b>	Assailants attacked a funeral in Badu, Nganzai, Borno, Nigeria.
	DATE	<b>27/7/19</b>	GROUP	<b>BOKO HARAM</b>			
<b>9</b>	COUNTRY	<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>	CITY	<b>SHAKAR SHILI AND MAJID CHAWK</b>	DEATHS	<b>65</b>	Assailants attacked an unknown number of security outposts in Shakar Shili and Majid Chawk in Sangin district, Helmand, Afghanistan. At least 65 people were killed and 38 people were injured across both attacks. The victims included soldiers, police officers, intelligence officers, and civilians.
	DATE	<b>23/3/19</b>	GROUP	<b>TALIBAN</b>			
<b>10</b>	COUNTRY	<b>NIGERIA</b>	CITY	<b>RANN</b>	DEATHS	<b>60</b>	Assailants attacked Rann, Borno, Nigeria. At least 60 people were killed and dozens were reported missing in the attack.
	DATE	<b>28/1/19</b>	GROUP	<b>BOKO HARAM</b>			



					DESCRIPTION	
<b>11</b>	COUNTRY	BURKINA FASO	CITY	ARBINDA	DEATHS 57	Assailants attacked civilians and raided Arbinda, Sahel, Burkina Faso.
	DATE	24/12/19	GROUP	ISLAMIC STATE IN THE GREATER SAHARA (ISGS)		
<b>12</b>	COUNTRY	MALI	CITY	BOULIKESSI AND MONDORO	DEATHS 53	Assailants raided military camps in Boulikessi and Mondoro in Mopti, Mali. At least 15 assailants and 38 others, including soldiers and civilians, were killed and seven people were injured across both attacks. At least 60 soldiers were abducted across both incidents. 36 hostages were rescued on October 18, 2019, while the fate of the other hostages remains unknown.
	DATE	30/9/19	GROUP	JAMAAT NUSRAT AL-ISLAM WAL MUSLIMIN (JNIM)		
<b>13</b>	COUNTRY	NEW ZEALAND	CITY	CHRISTCHURCH	DEATHS 51	An assailant opened fire on Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Mosque, both in Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand. At least 51 people were killed and 50 others were injured across the two attacks. The perpetrator stated the attack was carried out in retaliation for attacks perpetrated by Muslim extremists.
	DATE	15/3/19	GROUP	ANTI-MUSLIM EXTREMISTS		
<b>14</b>	COUNTRY	AFGHANISTAN	CITY	CHORA DISTRICT	DEATHS 51	Assailants equipped with firearms and explosives-laden vehicles attacked checkpoints in Chora district, Uruzgan, Afghanistan.
	DATE	30/5/19	GROUP	TALIBAN		
<b>15</b>	COUNTRY	SYRIA	CITY	BAGHUZ	DEATHS 50	Assailants, including at least three suicide bombers, attacked Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) members in and around Baghuz, Deir ez-Zor, Syria.
	DATE	24/1/19	GROUP	ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND THE LEVANT (ISIL)		
<b>16</b>	COUNTRY	CAMEROON	CITY	DABA LAMY	DEATHS 50	Assailants, armed with knives, attacked fishermen in Daba Lamy, Extreme-North, Cameroon.
	DATE	22/12/19	GROUP	BOKO HARAM		
<b>17</b>	COUNTRY	INDIA	CITY	LETHPORA	DEATHS 41	A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle targeting a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy along Srinagar-Jammu highway in Lethpora, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, India.
	DATE	14/2/19	GROUP	JAISH-E-MOHAMMAD (JEM)		
<b>18</b>	COUNTRY	AFGHANISTAN	CITY	KUNDUZ	DEATHS 41	Assailants attacked security checkpoints in Kunduz, Afghanistan. The victims included police officers, pro-government militia members, soldiers, and civilians.
	DATE	13/4/19	GROUP	TALIBAN		
<b>19</b>	COUNTRY	AFGHANISTAN	CITY	MARUF DISTRICT	DEATHS 40	Four suicide bombers detonated explosives-laden vehicles and assailants attacked a district center in Maruf, Kandahar, Afghanistan.
	DATE	30/6/19	GROUP	TALIBAN		
<b>20</b>	COUNTRY	YEMEN	CITY	ADEN	DEATHS 40	Assailants fired missiles at a military camp during a military parade in Aden, Yemen.
	DATE	1/8/19	GROUP	HOUTHİ EXTREMISTS (ANSAR ALLAH)		

# Results

## TERRORISM IN 2019

The total number of deaths from terrorism declined for the fifth consecutive year in 2019, falling by 15 per cent to 13,826 deaths. This represents a 59 per cent reduction since the peak in 2014 when 33,438 people were killed in terrorist attacks.

The primary driver of this reduction in the number of deaths from terrorism has been a fall in the intensity of conflict in the Middle East, and the subsequent decline of ISIL in Iraq and Syria. However, the fall in deaths was not restricted to a single region, with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Russia and Eurasia, South America and South Asia regions all recording falls in deaths from terrorism of at least 20 per cent from 2018 to 2019.

The year-on-year fall in deaths mirrors a fall in the number of attacks, which dropped from 7,730 to 6,721, a 13 per cent decrease. Since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, preliminary data suggests a decline in both incidents and deaths

from terrorism across most regions in the world. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to present new and distinct counter-terrorism challenges. In particular, the increase of government deficits caused by increased public spending during the pandemic will likely have a negative impact on counter-terrorism budgets. This may result in a reduction of international assistance for counter-terrorism operations in MENA and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1,2</sup>

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) found that the decrease in the impact of terrorism was spread across many countries, with many more improving than deteriorating. In 2019, 103 countries improved their score, compared only 35 that deteriorated and 25 that recorded no change. The GTI assesses more than just the total number of deaths and incidents. It measures the full impact of terrorism, which takes into account a weighted average of all terrorist activity over a five-year period. Although the number of deaths from terrorism is now at its lowest level since 2012, terrorism is still a major global threat. Deaths remain substantially higher than a decade ago, and are still nearly twice as high as the number recorded in 2001.

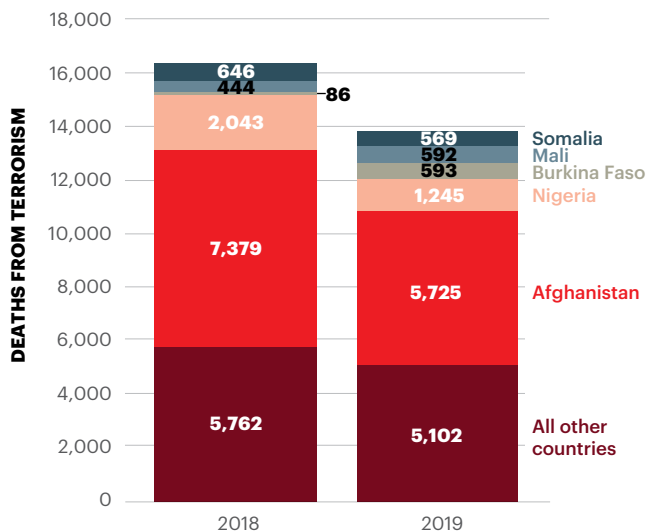
Terrorism remains a widespread problem. However, there has been substantial improvement in the number of countries experiencing terrorism. In 2019, the number of countries experiencing at least one death from terrorism decreased from 72 in the prior year to 63. Algeria, Paraguay and Peru recorded no deaths for the first time since at least 2011.

Although most regions recorded a reduction in terrorism deaths, three regions recorded an increase. Sub-Saharan Africa had the largest increase in terrorism deaths in 2019, followed by Asia-Pacific and North America.

Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of deaths in the countries with the largest number of terrorism deaths in 2019, compared to 2018. Of the countries that experienced the highest levels of terrorism, only two countries, Burkina Faso and Mali, recorded an increase in the number of deaths, while the total number of deaths fell in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Somalia. 2019 was also the first year where Burkina Faso and Mali were among the five countries worst affected by terrorism deaths.

FIGURE 1.1  
**Total terrorism deaths by country, 2018–2019**

Total deaths from terrorism fell 15.5 per cent from 2018 to 2019.

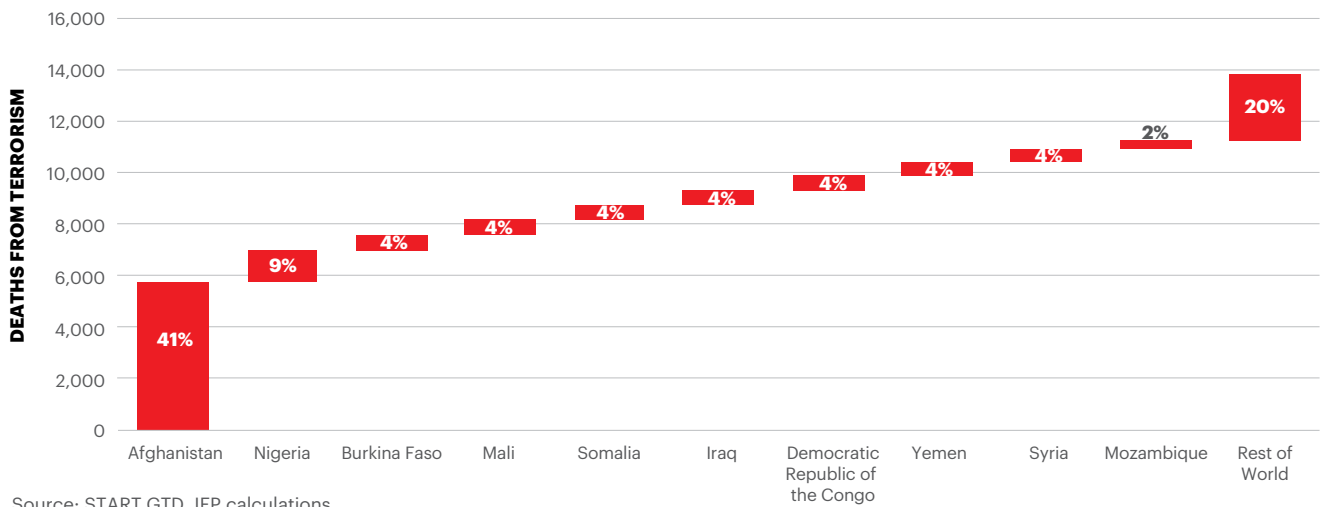


Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

FIGURE 1.2

### Deaths from terrorism by country, 2019

Ten countries accounted for 80 per cent of deaths from terrorism.

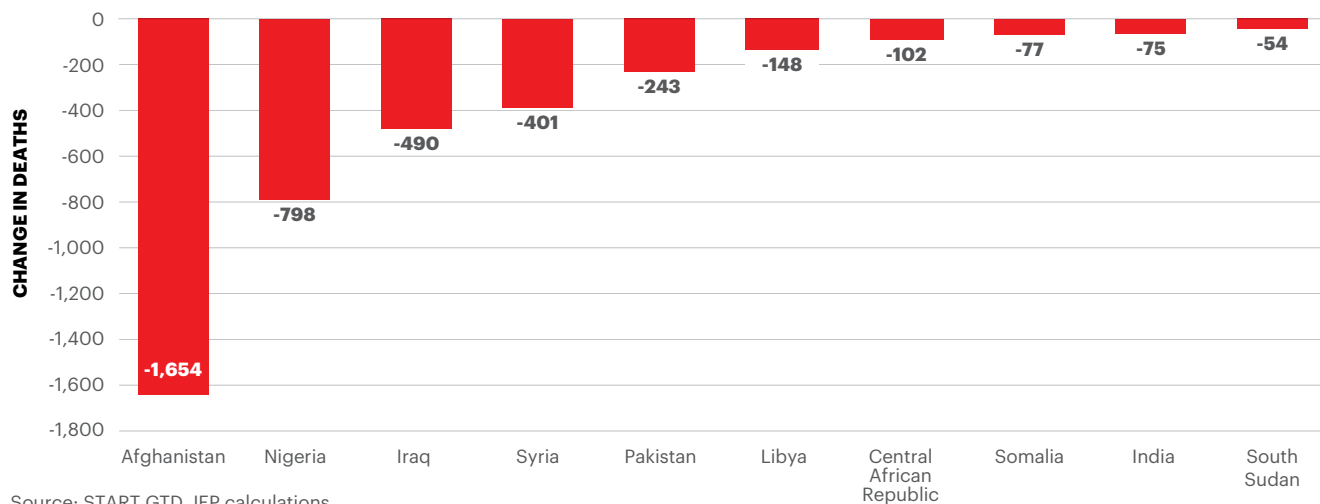


Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

FIGURE 1.3

### Largest decreases in deaths from terrorism, 2018–2019

Afghanistan had the largest decrease in the number of deaths from terrorism, reversing a steady increase in terrorism deaths since 2001.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Just ten countries accounted for over 80 per cent of all deaths from terrorism in 2019, as shown in Figure 1.2.

The most deaths in a single country were recorded in Afghanistan, accounting for 41 per cent of all deaths. This represents a slight improvement from 2018 when Afghanistan accounted for 45 per cent of global terrorism deaths.

### INCREASE AND DECREASE IN TERRORISM

Figure 1.3 shows the countries that experienced the largest decreases in terrorism deaths in 2019. Afghanistan and Nigeria experienced the two largest falls in 2019.

The fall in deaths in Afghanistan is particularly noticeable given its recent history. Since the peak of violence in 2018, deaths have fallen by just over 22 per cent in a year. This reduction was driven by a decline in terrorist deaths attributed to the Taliban

and the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State which fell by 18 and 61 per cent, respectively. The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State has faced significant territorial losses in Kunar and Nangarhar provinces following attacks by coalition and Taliban forces. Despite the fall in terrorism deaths, 2019 was still the second deadliest year on record for Afghanistan.

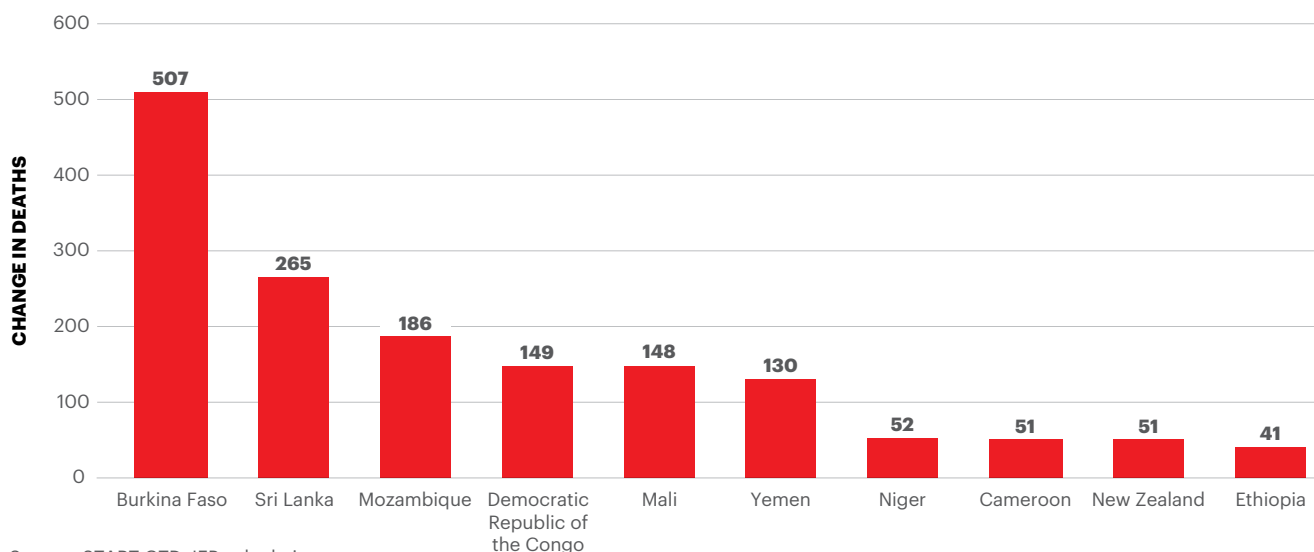
Nigeria had the second largest fall in total deaths, owing largely to a 72 per cent reduction in fatalities attributed to Fulani extremists. Despite this decrease, the number of deaths attributed to Boko Haram increased by 25 per cent from 2018 to 2019. Renewed activity by Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, including Cameroon, Chad and Niger, remains a substantial threat to the region.

Iraq had the third largest total fall in deaths, with deaths from terrorism falling 46 per cent in a single year. This was the first year since 2003 that Iraq recorded less than a thousand deaths

FIGURE 1.4

## Largest increases in deaths from terrorism, 2018–2019

Deaths from terrorism in Burkina Faso increased sixfold in 2019.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

from terrorism. The fall in deaths in Iraq can be attributed to the near total defeat of ISIL in Iraq, which has decreased the level of internal conflict.

Figure 1.4 highlights the countries with the largest increases in deaths from terrorism in 2019. While the increases were offset by much more significant decreases elsewhere, there were a number of countries with worrying increases. Seven of the ten countries with the largest increases in deaths are in sub-Saharan Africa.

The country with the largest total increase in deaths from terrorism was Burkina Faso, where the number of people killed rose from 86 in 2018 to 593 in 2019. This significant increase was predominantly driven by an increase in deaths attributed to

three known groups: the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and the Burkina Faso branch of Ansar al-Islam. Collectively, these groups accounted for almost 30 per cent of deaths in Burkina Faso in 2019. The remaining deaths were attributed to Muslim extremists and unknown perpetrators.

Sri Lanka recorded the second largest increase in 2019, with the Easter Sunday bombings accounting for the entirety of this increase. Sri Lanka recorded the deadliest attack of 2019 when eight coordinated suicide attacks across the country targeted churches and hotels on Easter Sunday, killing 266 people and injuring at least 500. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, with the perpetrators pledging allegiance to former ISIL-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi online.<sup>3</sup>

## TERRORIST GROUPS

The four terrorist groups responsible for the most deaths in 2019 were the Taliban, Boko Haram, ISIL and Al-Shabaab, as shown in Figure 1.5. These four groups were responsible for 7,578 deaths from terrorism, representing 55 per cent of total deaths in 2019. Three of these four were also the deadliest groups last year, with Al-Shabaab replacing the Khorasan Chapter of Islamic State this year. In 2012, just prior to the large increase in terrorist activity around the world, these four groups were responsible for just over 31 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 section, IEP does not include affiliates in its definition of a terrorist group. For example, ISIL refers only to the Islamic

State of Iraq and the Levant, and does not include the Khorasan chapter or Sinai Province of the Islamic State, despite the strong connections between the two groups. Similarly, Al-Shabaab is counted as a single group, rather than an affiliate of Al-Qa'ida.

The past decade has seen the largest surge in terrorist activity in the past fifty years. However, of the four deadliest groups in 2019 only Boko Haram, which operates in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, recorded an increase in the level of terrorism over the prior year.

### Taliban

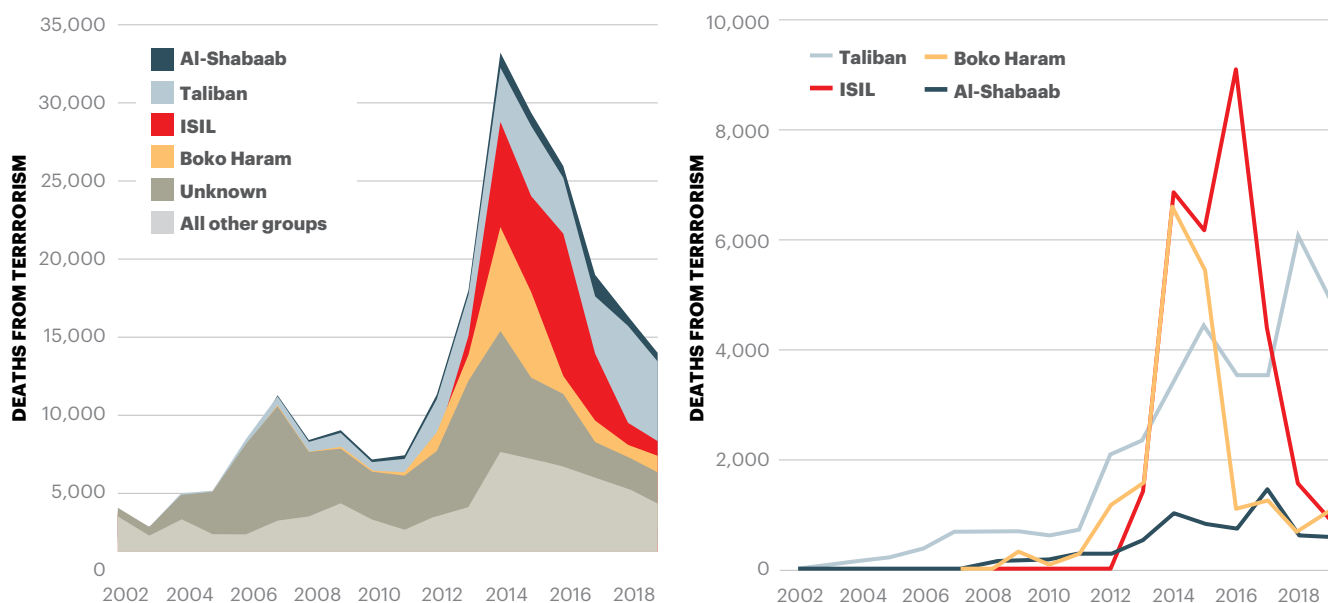
The Taliban emerged in Afghanistan in 1994 as a reactionary group that combined the Mujahideen that had previously fought against the 1979 Soviet invasion, and groups of Pashtun



FIGURE 1.5

## Four deadliest terrorist groups in 2019

The Taliban were the deadliest terrorist group for the second consecutive year.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

tribesmen. The Taliban took control of Afghanistan in 1996. 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-Qa'ida. 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 2001, the Taliban has steadily regained territory across Afghanistan. As of January 2019, it was estimated that the Taliban controlled territory home to approximately 10 per cent of the population.<sup>4</sup> Peace negotiations between the Taliban and the US progressed throughout 2019, with an agreement being signed in 2020 outlining plans for a phased withdrawal of US and coalition troops and exchange of prisoners between the Taliban and Afghan government.<sup>5</sup> The US has stated that it will withdraw all troops by May 2021. However, peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government have faced setbacks over the role of Islamic law and women's rights.<sup>6</sup>

### Changes since 2018

The Taliban were responsible for 4,990 deaths in 2019, marking an 18 per cent decrease since 2018. The total number of terrorist attacks by the Taliban increased by five per cent in 2019, rising to 1,025. However, attacks became less deadly in 2019, with an average of 4.9 deaths per attack, compared to 6.3 in 2018. Of the 1,025 attacks attributed to the Taliban in 2019, 14 per cent did not result in any fatalities while 13 per cent resulted in more than 10 deaths.

The Taliban is active solely in Afghanistan. Deaths and terrorist attacks in 2019 accounted for 87 and 72 per cent of the country's total. However, the Taliban's Pakistani affiliate group, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), was responsible for 73 deaths and 30 attacks in Pakistan in 2019, demonstrating a Taliban-related

presence outside of Afghanistan.

In January 2019, the Taliban committed their deadliest terror attack of the year when a suicide bomber and armed assailants targeted a National Directorate for Security (NDS) base in Maydan Shahr district, Wardak, Afghanistan. At least 129 people were killed and 54 people were injured in the attack.

### Tactics favoured by Taliban

In 2019, the Taliban's main targets were police and military personnel, which accounted for over half of attacks and deaths. The group's focus on state forces has been a feature of their insurgency campaign as a means to undermine state stability. In 2019, approximately 1,835 people were killed in attacks on police and military targets. As peace talks progressed throughout 2019, the Taliban continued to clash with pro-government militias, launching 88 attacks which resulted in 486 fatalities.

Civilian deaths fell by 31 per cent, from 1,140 in 2018 to 783 in 2019. Despite the decline in civilian deaths, attacks against civilians increased by 24 per cent in 2019. The majority of these attacks were bombings, which increased by 49 per cent from the preceding year. The reduction in civilian deaths caused by the Taliban was due to a fall in the number of roadside bombs and other improvised explosives used.<sup>7</sup> This decline was reflected in the fatality rate of civilian attacks in 2019, which fell from 11 deaths per attack in 2018, to 3.1 in 2019.

Armed assaults and bombings continue to be a feature of the Taliban's insurgency. Bombings were the deadliest form of attack, followed by armed assaults, with both types of attack accounting for over 1,000 deaths. While instances of bombings increased by 55 per cent in 2019, armed assaults decreased by 31 per cent. Assassinations also increased by 40 per cent in 2019, with the majority of incidents targeting police and military personnel, followed by government personnel.

## Boko Haram

Islamist group Boko Haram, formally known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, recorded a surge in terrorist activity in 2019, following a period of steady decline. Boko Haram ranked as the second deadliest terrorist group in 2019, and remains the deadliest in sub-Saharan Africa. Since its rise in 2009, Boko Haram has been responsible for thousands of deaths throughout the Lake Chad Basin region of West Africa. The salafi-jihadi insurgency has led to over 37,500 combat-related deaths and over 19,000 deaths from terrorism since 2011, mainly in Nigeria.<sup>8</sup>

Originally formed in Northeast Nigeria bordering the Lake Chad region, the terror group has spread into Chad, Cameroon and Niger. In 2016, internal tensions led to multiple Boko Haram splinter groups forming. The largest splinter group is the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), which has claimed responsibility for a number of brutal attacks targeting civilians and military personnel in 2019. Owing to data collection restrictions, attacks by both Boko Haram and ISWAP are attributed to Boko Haram in the GTD.

### Changes since 2018

Terrorism-related deaths attributed to Boko Haram increased by 46 per cent in 2019 compared to the previous year. Terrorism-related incidents also increased by 43 per cent in 2019. Despite this increase, terrorism deaths remain over six times lower than their peak in 2014.

Of the 1,068 deaths attributed to Boko Haram in 2019, 69 per cent occurred in Nigeria, while the remainder occurred in Cameroon, Niger and Chad at 20, seven and four per cent, respectively. Compared to previous years, the proportion of terrorism deaths recorded in Nigeria fell, while significant increases were recorded in Cameroon and Niger, highlighting the increased reach of the organisation into neighbouring countries.

In Cameroon, deaths attributed to Boko Haram increased threefold in 2019. The majority of terrorism deaths in Cameroon resulted from attacks on civilians and military targets at 50 and 48 per cent, respectively. The group's deadliest attack occurred in Cameroon when several hundred assailants, armed with rocket launchers, attacked military positions in Darak, Extreme-North. Over 101 deaths were recorded, including at least 37 soldiers and civilians.

Niger recorded a 176 per cent increase in terrorism deaths attributed to Boko Haram in 2019. The majority of attacks occurred in the Lake Chad Basin Region in Niger. However, attacks were also recorded in the western regions of Tillaberi and Niamey, where Boko Haram had not previously conducted attacks.

The main counter-terrorism response combating Boko Haram is the Multinational Joint Task Forces (MNJTF), which operates in conjunction with the Nigerian military. The MNJTF struggled to reclaim territory from Boko Haram in 2019 and the group maintained limited safe havens in parts of northeast Nigeria and on islands in Lake Chad, where they prevented the reestablishment of state administration, service delivery and humanitarian relief.<sup>9</sup>

### Tactics favoured by Boko Haram

Bombings, including suicide bombings, are no longer the most common form of attack used by Boko Haram. At the height of its power, Boko Haram was notorious for highly-lethal suicide bombings, which are a relatively rare terrorist tactic in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>10</sup> In 2019, suicide bombings accounted for seven per cent of all attacks by Boko Haram, a significant decline from its peak in 2017 when 46 per cent of attacks were suicide bombings. As a result, the lethality of Boko Haram's attacks has fallen dramatically, from 15 deaths per attack in 2014 to four deaths per attack in 2019.

In recent years, Boko Haram has shifted from bombings towards armed assault and hostage takings. In 2019, over 40 per cent of Boko Haram attacks were armed assaults causing 613 fatalities. Hostage taking incidents have increased by 36 per cent since 2018, accounting for 16 per cent of terrorism deaths attributed to Boko Haram.

Boko Haram had previously employed a conscious strategy to recruit women and children as suicide bombers, sometimes forcibly. However, since their peak in 2015, female suicide bombings have declined by 96 per cent. In 2019, four female suicide bombers carried out two attacks, killing nine people. More recently, the group has renewed its focus on recruiting children who were used for intelligence and support roles in order to revive its influence in the Lake Chad region.<sup>11</sup>

## Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, often referred to as ISIL, ISIS or Daesh, was the third deadliest terrorist organisation in 2019. ISIL emerged from local militant outfits in Iraq in the early 2000s, its most immediate predecessor being the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). Emerging in 2010, ISI was formed by surviving members of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and disaffected former members of the US-trained Sons of Iraq that supported US operations to dismantle AQI before the 2010 withdrawal. ISIL emerged in 2014 when emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared an Islamic Caliphate in parts of Iraq and Syria, following significant ISI territorial gains in northern Iraq.<sup>12</sup> Since then, ISIL has been responsible for over 30,000 terrorist deaths. Of these, 79 per cent were in Iraq and 17 per cent in Syria.

### Changes since 2018

ISIL-related deaths are at their lowest point since 2013. ISIL continued to suffer severe losses in 2019 as the result of successful counter-terrorism operations in Iraq and Syria. In March 2019, US and Syrian forces regained the last remnants of ISIL territory in eastern Syria.<sup>13</sup> Later in the same year, the US conducted a military operation that resulted in the death of the then ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>14</sup> Despite these severe losses, ISIL continues to conduct attacks through ' sleeper cells ' in Iraq and Syria and globally through a network of affiliated groups.

Deaths committed by the group fell from 1,571 in 2018, to 942 deaths in 2019, a 40 per cent drop from the previous year. This marks the third consecutive year of decline and a significant decrease from its deadliest year in 2016, of over 90 per cent. Attacks fell in tandem with terrorism deaths, from 559 in 2018 to 339 in 2019, with the majority of attacks occurring in Iraq.

Despite its decline, ISIL claimed responsibility for attacks in seven countries in 2019, highlighting the breadth of their operations. This included the deadliest attack of the year in Sri Lanka, when eight suicide bombers perpetrated coordinated attacks targeting hotels and churches. The attacks resulted in 266 fatalities and injured at least 500 people. The perpetrators pledged their allegiance to former ISIL-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi online.<sup>15</sup>

The number of ISIL provinces outside of Iraq and Syria continues to rise, as does the number of affiliate groups that have pledged allegiance or support to the core group. In 2019, ISIL-related attacks occurred in 27 countries, excluding Iraq and Syria, resulting in 1,784 fatalities. The group's influence has continued to push into South Asia via the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, as well as sub-Saharan Africa via the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the Central Africa Province of the Islamic State, respectively the sixth, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> deadliest terrorist groups in 2019. Section 4 discusses the rise, fall and regional shift of ISIL and its affiliates in more detail.

ISIL's defeat in Iraq and Syria has also left governments worldwide unsure what to do about nationals who left their countries to join ISIL. Many former ISIL fighters, including foreign fighters who previously travelled to join ISIL, remain in prison and security camps, predominantly in Syria. Approximately, 8,000 Iraqi and Syrian ISIL fighters are currently held, with some 2,000 foreign fighters and affiliates, including women and children.<sup>16</sup>

### **Tactics favoured by ISIL**

Over half of attacks perpetrated by ISIL were bombings or explosions, resulting in 687 fatalities in 2019. The next most common type of attack was armed assault, which made up 21 per cent of ISIL attacks in 2019, killing 114 people.

In 2019, 141 attacks were targeted specifically towards civilians, down from 266 attacks in 2018. ISIL's attacks on civilians became less deadly in 2019, with deaths declining by over 80 per cent. Civilian attacks caused an average of 1.2 deaths per attack in 2019, compared to 3.1 in 2018.

Suicide bombings have been a common tactic used by ISIL since the first recorded attacks in 2013. In 2019, the number of deaths from suicide bombings increased for the first time since 2016, owing to deadly attacks in Tunisia, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Iraq and Syria. In 2019, suicide bombings accounted for 13 per cent of all attacks by ISIL and 53 per cent of deaths attributed to the group.

## **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 Qa'ida 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.<sup>17</sup>

In more recent years, Al-Shabaab has gained global recognition following many years of deadly attacks concentrated around the capital city of Mogadishu and 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.<sup>18</sup>

### **Changes since 2018**

In 2019, terrorism deaths attributed to al-Shabaab continued to decline, by eight per cent from the prior year. Of the 578 deaths committed by Al-Shabaab in 2019, 87 per cent occurred in Somalia, compared to 13 per cent in Kenya.

The total number of terror incidents fell by 40 attacks from 2018 to 2019. Over 60 per cent of the attacks in 2019 resulted in at least one fatality. This marks a slight decline from 2018, where 64 per cent of attacks resulted in at least one death.

Deaths in Somalia decreased by 14 per cent in 2019. This was mainly driven by a decline in terrorist activity in the capital, Mogadishu, by 20 per cent. Mogadishu has long been the epicentre of terrorist activity by al-Shabaab and in 2019 over half of al-Shabaab attacks in Somalia occurred in Mogadishu, causing 280 fatalities. This includes one of the deadliest attacks of 2019 when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden truck at a police checkpoint in Darkheyneley, Mogadishu. In addition to the perpetrator, 83 people, including 17 police officers and four foreign nationals, were killed and 148 people were injured.

Conversely, in Kenya terrorism deaths attributed to Al-Shabaab increased by 83 per cent in 2019. Although deaths have begun to increase in Kenya, they still remain lower than 2014, when the group killed 256 people. The majority of terrorism deaths in 2019 occurred in the capital Nairobi, which had not recorded an attack by the group since 2015. This was followed by Garissa, Wajir, Lamu and Mandera counties, which collectively recorded 58 deaths.

In 2019, Kenya suffered its worst attack in four years when al-Shabaab operatives, including a suicide bomber, attacked the DusitD2 hotel complex in Nairobi. At least 26 people, including the five perpetrators and 21 civilians were killed.

### **Tactics favoured by Al-Shabaab**

Al-Shabaab have consistently utilised bombings, armed assaults and assassinations as its main modes of attack. Over 57 per cent of terrorism deaths attributed to al-Shabaab in 2019 were the result of bombings, while armed assaults and assassinations accounted for 15 and 11 per cent of deaths, respectively.

The highest proportion of al-Shabaab attacks in both Somalia and Kenya were directed at civilians, followed by government targets. Although attacks against civilians declined in 2019 by 13 per cent respectively, civilian deaths increased, indicating an increase in attack lethality. In 2019, civilian attacks caused an average of 3.2 deaths per attack, compared to 1.9 deaths per attack in 2018.

# 10

## COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

Table 1.1 highlights the ten countries most impacted by terrorism according to the 2020 GTI, and how they have ranked on the index since its inception in 2002.

Despite a fall in the number of deaths from terrorism overall, there was no change in the ten countries most impacted by terrorism. Afghanistan, Iraq and Nigeria maintained their position as the first, second and third most impacted countries by terrorism, respectively, for the second consecutive year. However, there was some movement within the rankings, with Somalia overtaking Pakistan to be the fifth most impacted country and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) overtaking the Philippines to be the ninth most impacted country. This is the second time Somalia has been ranked in the five countries with the highest impact of terrorism.

The DRC and Yemen were the only two countries amongst the ten most impacted to record a deterioration in score from 2018 to 2019. Every other country in the ten most impacted improved its 2020 GTI score, with the largest improvement occurring in Pakistan, followed by Syria and Nigeria.

Conflict continued to be the primary driver of terrorist activity for the countries most impacted by terrorism in 2019. Five of the ten countries were classified as being in a state of war: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, Somalia and Yemen. The remaining five were involved in minor conflicts. Specific drivers of terrorism among these ten countries include prolonged insurgencies in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Somalia, exacerbated tensions between splinter terror groups and national governments in Yemen, and the shifting activity of the ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

TABLE 1.1

### Ten countries most impacted by terrorism, ranked by GTI score

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

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Afghanistan	16	13	11	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	1
Iraq	29	7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Nigeria	35	25	26	32	12	13	17	11	11	6	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	3
Syria	107	105	55	63	49	57	39	46	56	14	6	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
Somalia	43	38	42	36	30	9	6	6	6	5	7	7	6	7	7	6	6	5
Yemen	44	31	39	39	36	30	22	20	10	9	8	8	8	6	6	7	7	6
Pakistan	12	10	6	6	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	5	5	5	7
India	2	2	3	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	5	6	7	8	8	8	8	8
Democratic Republic of the Congo	25	20	24	25	25	20	12	5	8	11	13	17	18	17	13	11	10	9
Philippines	13	8	10	12	14	12	8	9	9	10	11	9	10	11	12	10	9	10

Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

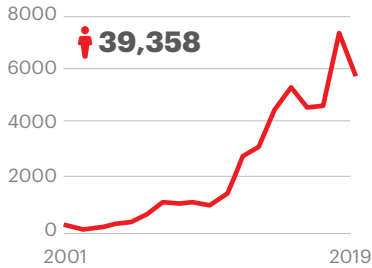
## Afghanistan

GTI RANK  
**1**

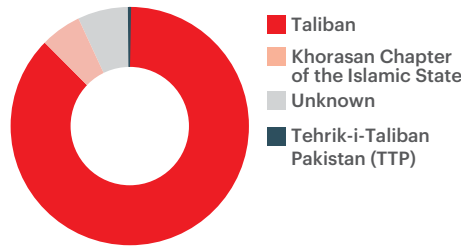
GTI SCORE  
**9.592**

**5,725** DEAD  
**6,221** INJURED  
**1,422** INCIDENTS

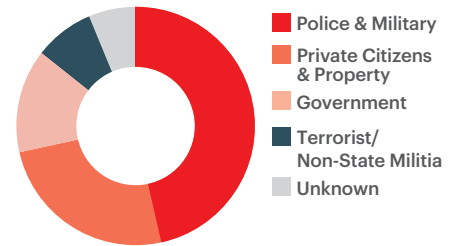
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Despite a decline in terrorist deaths from 2018 to 2019, Afghanistan remains the country most impacted for the second consecutive year.

Afghanistan accounted for 41 per cent of deaths from terrorism globally, with the Taliban being responsible for 87 per cent of these fatalities. During 2019 deaths from terrorism declined by 22 per cent, falling to 5,725. While this reduction in the number of deaths provides some optimism, it is the second highest number of deaths recorded from terrorism in Afghanistan since the 2001 US-led invasion.

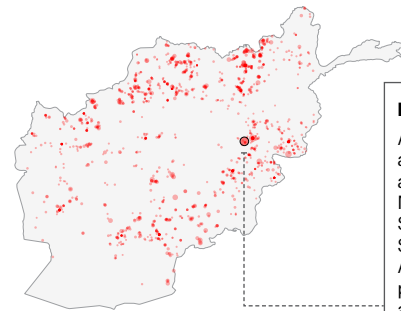
In 2019, terrorism was widespread in Afghanistan with terrorist incidents recorded in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and deaths recorded in every province except Panjshir. The largest number of deaths from terrorism were recorded in Kunduz province with the majority of deaths attributed to the Taliban. In 2019, there were 500 deaths in Kunduz province, a 77 per cent increase from the prior year.

While the Taliban remains the most active terrorist group in Afghanistan, deaths attributed to the group fell by 18 per cent in 2019 as US-led counter-terrorism operations intensified.<sup>19</sup> However, despite the decline in terrorism deaths, the group continued to mount large-scale attacks across Afghanistan and total attacks by the group increased by six per cent. The Taliban were responsible for one of the deadliest terror attacks of 2019 when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle and assailants opened fire on a National Directorate for Security (NDS) base in the Maydan Shahr district in January 2019. The attack resulted in at least 129 fatalities and 54 injuries.

The Taliban retained a focus on police and military targets in 2019, recording 508 attacks and over 2,900 fatalities. Although civilian deaths decreased by 45 per cent, attacks against civilians did increase by 25 per cent.

The peace negotiations between the Taliban and the US continued into 2019 with both sides seeking to reach an agreement. In February 2020, an agreement was signed outlining plans for a phased withdrawal of US and coalition troops and exchange of prisoners between the Taliban and

### Worst attacks



**MAYDAN SHAHR DISTRICT**  
A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle and assailants opened fire on a National Directorate for Security (NDS) base in Maydan Shahr district, Wardak, Afghanistan. At least 129 people, including three assailants, were killed and 54 people were injured in the attack. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the incident.

Afghan government.<sup>20</sup> The Taliban is reported to control or influence over 12 per cent of Afghan districts, and contests a further 34 per cent, meaning the threat to Afghanistan remains strong.<sup>21</sup>

The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, the ISIL branch active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, was the second deadliest terror group in the country. The group was responsible for six per cent of terror-related deaths in 2019, a five per cent decrease from the previous year. In 2019, the Khorasan Chapter conducted 55 attacks resulting in 320 deaths.

The Khorasan Chapter has been significantly weakened since 2018 as a result of military operations by the Afghan government, the Taliban and US forces.<sup>22</sup> However, despite recent losses of territory and fighters, the Khorasan Chapter is believed to still have sleeper cells in cities such as Kabul and Jalalabad.<sup>23</sup>

The presence of the Khorasan Chapter continues to challenge the Taliban. In 2019, the Khorasan Chapter was active in seven provinces, compared to the Taliban who conducted terror attacks across all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Sixteen clashes were recorded between the Taliban and the Khorasan Chapter in 2019, mostly in Kunar and Nangahar provinces.<sup>24</sup> These provinces are located along the border with Pakistan and have served as operational bases for the Khorasan Chapter since the group's inception in 2015.<sup>25</sup>

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

## Iraq

GTI RANK

2

GTI SCORE

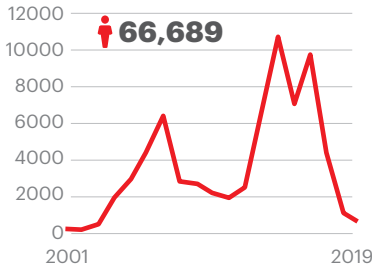
8.682

564  DEAD

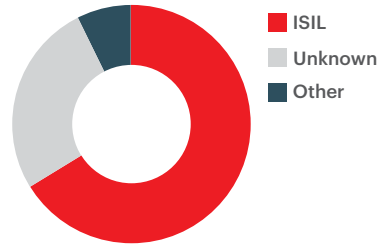
1,029  INJURED

495  INCIDENTS

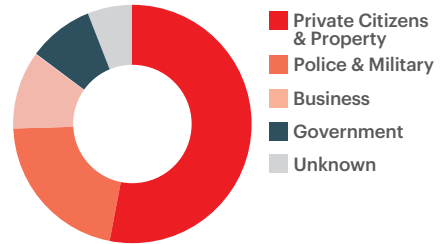
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Iraq recorded a reduction in terror-related deaths for the third consecutive year in 2019, with less than a thousand deaths recorded for the first time since the US invasion in 2003. The number of deaths from terrorism decreased from 1,054 in 2018 to 564 in 2019, a 46 per cent decrease. There was also a significant decline in the number of terrorist attacks, which more than halved from 1,131 in 2018 to 495 in 2019.

Terrorism and battle-related deaths have fallen significantly since their peak in 2014, with both reporting a 95 per cent decrease. Since 2001, there have been 66,689 deaths from terrorism in Iraq.

Terrorist activity in Iraq continues to be dominated by ISIL, with the group accounting for 66 per cent of all deaths in 2019. However, terror-related deaths attributed to ISIL have fallen substantially since their peak in 2016. ISIL was responsible for 374 deaths in 2019, a 53 per cent decline from the previous year.

Consistent with a decrease in ISIL's terrorist activity, civilian deaths caused by the group also declined, falling by 69 per cent. The lethality of attacks on civilians has also decreased substantially from its peak in 2014 at 7.7 deaths per attack, to one death per attack in 2019.

The types of attacks conducted by ISIL have also shifted in recent years. There has been a notable decline in the number of complex, multi-stage attacks, such as car bombings and suicide attacks which require developed logistical networks.<sup>26</sup> Bombings and explosions declined by 80 per cent since their peak in 2016. In the same period, infrastructure attacks and armed assault increased by 225 and 41 per cent, respectively. Armed assaults by ISIL have predominantly targeted civilians and security forces. The majority of infrastructure attacks since 2016 have been incendiary attacks against farms, small businesses and civilian residences.

Suicide bombings by ISIL also fell in 2019, declining by 42 per cent from 2018, and have fallen 91 per cent since their peak in 2016. Of the 258 attacks perpetrated by ISIL in Iraq in 2019, 19 attacks or seven per cent were suicide bombings. This decrease

### Worst attacks



#### BAGHDAD

Assailants opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators and set fire to buildings in Al-Khilani Square, Rusafa, Baghdad, Iraq. At least 25 civilians, including photojournalist Ahmed Mehna, were killed and 120 others were injured in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the incident; however, sources suspected the involvement of Popular Mobilization Forces (Iraq).

in suicide bombings may be attributed to successful counter-terrorism measures and a decline in fighter numbers.<sup>27</sup>

Iraqi security forces continued to work with international partners to target ISIL sleeper cells and weapons caches in 2019.<sup>28</sup> In October 2019, the US conducted a military operation that resulted in the death of the then ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fall in deaths from terrorism in 2019, ISIL remains a substantial threat. In Iraq, ISIL continues to operate in rural areas and has sought to re-establish support among populations in Ninevah, Kirkuk, Diyala, Saladin and Anbar provinces.<sup>30</sup>

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

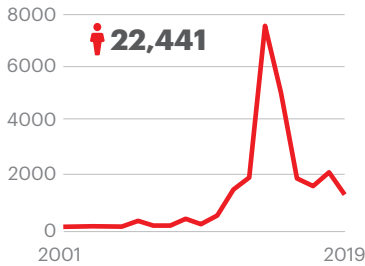
## Nigeria

GTI RANK  
**3**

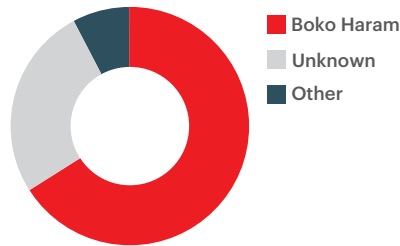
GTI SCORE  
**8.314**

**1,245** DEAD  
**419** INJURED  
**411** INCIDENTS

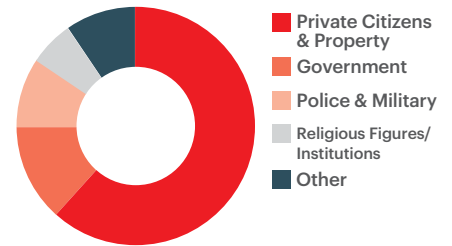
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Total deaths from terrorism in Nigeria fell to 1,245 in 2019, a 39 per cent decrease from the prior year. Terror-related incidents also fell by 27 per cent, marking the lowest level of terrorist violence in Nigeria since 2011. This decline in terrorism deaths and incidents in Nigeria was driven by a significant reduction in violence attributed to Fulani extremists.

Despite an overall decline in terrorism, Boko Haram, Nigeria's deadliest terrorist group, recorded an increase in terrorist activity mainly targeted at civilians. Terror-related deaths and incidents attributed to Boko Haram in Nigeria increased by 25 and 30 per cent respectively from the prior year. Over the past year Boko Haram increased attacks on military targets, with deaths rising from 26 in 2018 to 148 in 2019.

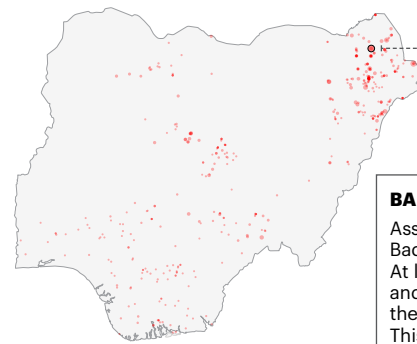
However, the number of suicide bombings attributed to Boko Haram fell significantly for the second consecutive year. In 2019, Boko Haram carried out 11 suicide bombings causing 68 fatalities. Suicide bombings accounted for six per cent of all terror-related incidents by Boko Haram in 2019, marking an 89 per cent decline from their peak in 2017. Boko Haram was also notorious for its use of female and child suicide bombers. However, since their peak in 2015, female suicide bombings have declined by 96 per cent. In 2019, four female suicide bombers carried out two attacks, killing nine.

Boko Haram was responsible for Nigeria's deadliest terrorist attack in 2019 when assailants attacked a funeral in Badu, Borno State. At least 70 people were killed and 10 others were wounded in the attack and ensuing clash.

The two main factions of Boko Haram, the Islamic State West African Province (ISWAP) and the followers of Abubakar Shekau, are both engaged in an insurgency campaign against the Nigerian government. Since 2015, a multinational task force comprised of Cameroon, Chad and Niger assisted the Nigerian government in attacking territory held by Boko Haram.<sup>31</sup>

Violence by the two main factions of Boko Haram have taken a large toll on the civilian population, particularly in northeast Nigeria, where continued attacks have internally displaced more

### Worst attacks



#### BADU

Assailants attacked a funeral in Badu, Nganzai, Borno, Nigeria. At least 70 people were killed and 10 others were wounded in the attack and ensuing clash. This was one of three attacks in Borno on this day. No group claimed responsibility for the incident; however, sources attributed the attack to Boko Haram.

than two million people and caused a further 240,000 Nigerian refugees to flee to neighbouring countries.<sup>32</sup>

In 2019, Fulani extremists were responsible for 26 per cent of terror-related deaths in Nigeria at 325 fatalities. This was a 72 per cent fall from the prior year, while incidents declined by 62 per cent.

The Fulani extremists do not constitute a single terrorist group. Certain deaths within the ongoing conflict between pastoralists and the nomadic Fulani have been categorised as terrorism and attributed to extremist elements within the Fulani. This categorisation is reflective of terrorism used as a tactic within an ongoing conflict. There are an estimated 14 million Fulani in Nigeria, with substantial populations also in Guinea, Senegal, Mali, and Cameroon.

The majority of terrorist activity related to Fulani extremists occurred in the states of Kaduna, Plateau and Benue. Terrorist violence declined in most states in which Fulani extremists operate, except Kaduna which recorded a 77 per cent increase in terror-related deaths. Of the 111 attacks attributed to Fulani extremists, over 59 were armed assaults.

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

## Syria

GTI RANK

4

GTI SCORE

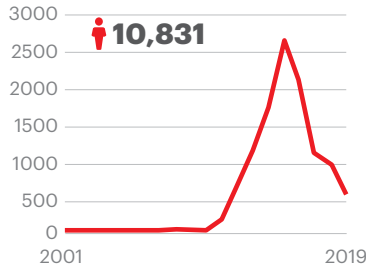
7.778

517  DEAD

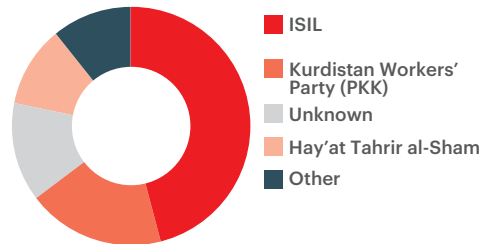
979  INJURED

211  INCIDENTS

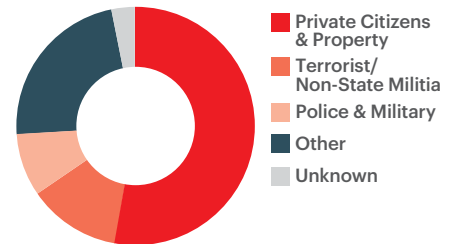
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Following the de-escalation of conflict in Syria, deaths from terrorism decreased by 44 per cent to 517 in 2019. Battle-related deaths in Syria have also continued to decline alongside terrorism deaths, falling by 46 per cent in 2019.

Despite this decline in deaths from terrorism, terror-related incidents increased by 36 per cent in 2019. This increase in terrorist activity was primarily driven by an increase in attacks by the three deadliest groups in Syria: ISIL, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Collectively, these three groups accounted for 74 per cent of terror-related deaths in 2019.

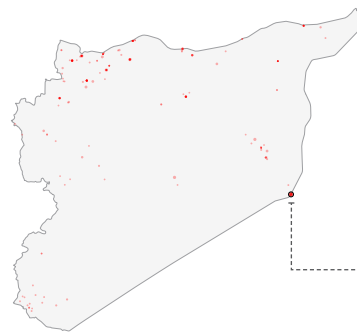
HTS emerged from al-Nusra, an Al-Qa'ida affiliate in Syria, and later changed its name to Jabhat Fateh al-Sham before it merged with four other rebel groups and rebranded as HTS in January 2017.<sup>33</sup>

The PKK and HTS increased attacks against civilians, whereas ISIL conducted more attacks against police, military and militias in 2019. Civilian attacks attributed to HTS increased as HTS consolidated its control over parts of Aleppo and Idlib provinces in north-western Syria.<sup>34</sup> Attacks by the PKK on civilians more than doubled in 2019, as violence between the PKK, Syrian and Turkish forces escalated in north eastern Syria.

ISIL remained the deadliest terrorist group in Syria for the sixth consecutive year. Although attacks by ISIL increased by 31 per cent between 2018 and 2019, deaths attributed to the group fell by 67 per cent in the same period. The lethality of ISIL attacks against civilians declined substantially from an average of 24 deaths per attack in 2018 to three deaths per attack in 2019, a decline of 90 per cent. This change was driven by a significant reduction in mass casualty suicide bombings targeting civilians, and a shift in focus to non-state militia and other terrorist groups.

ISIL was responsible for the deadliest terror attack in Syria in 2019 when assailants, including at least three suicide bombers, attacked members of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in and around Baghuz. At least 50 people, including 16 SDF members,

### Worst attacks



#### BAGHUZ

Assailants, including at least three suicide bombers, attacked Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) members in and around Baghuz, Deir ez-Zor, Syria. At least 50 people, including 16 SDF members and 34 assailants, were killed in the blasts and ensuing clash. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for the incident.

were killed in the attack and ensuing clash. Attacks against the SDF accounted for the majority of terrorism deaths attributed to ISIL in 2019, with 145 people being killed.

In 2019, terror-related incidents occurred in 11 of Syria's 14 provinces, highlighting the geographic spread of terrorism. The majority of attacks occurred in Aleppo, at 42 per cent, followed by Raqqa, Deir ez-Zor and Al Hasakah. The province of Aleppo recorded the largest increase in deaths from terrorism, with 201 deaths in 2019, compared to 53 in 2018. Attacks against civilians in Aleppo more than doubled between 2018 and 2019.

In March 2019, the US and SDF announced they had regained the final territorial stronghold of ISIL in eastern Syria.<sup>35</sup> However, even in the absence of territorial claims, ISIL maintains a low-level insurgency in Syria and Iraq.<sup>36</sup> Syria also faces the issue of dealing with former ISIL fighters and ISIL-affiliated civilians detained in SDF-secured detention centres and displacement camps. Approximately, 8,000 Iraqi and Syrian ISIL fighters are currently held, with some 2,000 foreign fighters and affiliates, including women and children.<sup>37</sup>



# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

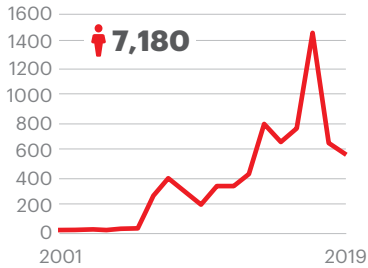
## Somalia

GTI RANK  
**5**

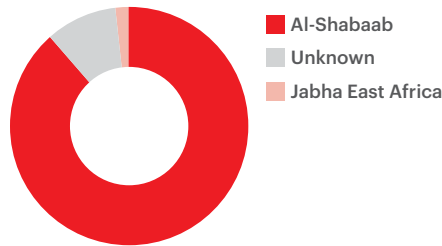
GTI SCORE  
**7.645**

**569** DEAD  
**765** INJURED  
**239** INCIDENTS

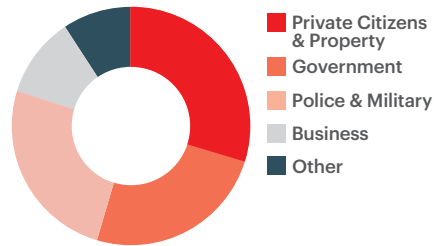
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



In 2019, terrorism deaths in Somalia fell to their lowest level since 2013, declining by 11.9 per cent to 569 deaths when compared to the prior year. Terror-related incidents also fell by 16 per cent to 239 reported attacks in 2019.

Al-Shabaab was responsible for 88 per cent of all deaths in 2019, which resulted in 503 fatalities. This marks a 14 per cent decline since 2018.

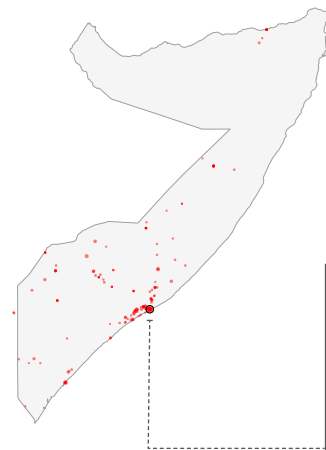
Al-Shabaab continued to conduct bombings against civilians and businesses as well as targeted assassinations of key government figures. Civilian deaths accounted for 36 per cent of terrorism deaths attributed to the group, followed by businesses at 22 per cent and government targets at 20 per cent.

Al-Shabaab's presence is predominantly felt in the country's southern provinces. Most attacks occurred in the capital city of Mogadishu where 44 per cent were carried out. Although the number of attacks on civilians in Mogadishu declined by 22 per cent, civilian deaths more than tripled, highlighting the increase in the lethality of attacks. This increase in lethality was driven by a series of particularly deadly attacks, including a truck bombing by Al-Shabaab in December 2019 which killed more than 84 people at a police checkpoint.

In 2019, Somali security forces, supported by the US and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), continued to exert pressure on al-Shabaab through coordinated counter-terrorism operations.<sup>38</sup> This included 37 airstrikes against al-Shabaab operatives.<sup>39</sup> In response to increased counter-terrorism operations, Al-Shabaab have shifted their focus to urban areas like Mogadishu, making it increasingly difficult for US and Somali forces to target the terror group given their close proximity to civilians.<sup>40</sup>

Whilst counter-terrorism efforts have reduced terrorist activity in Somalia, Al-Shabaab retains control over 20 per cent of the country, including areas in the Jubaland region and along the border with Kenya.<sup>41</sup> The group has been able to move freely, extort local populations and forcibly recruit fighters, some of whom were children.<sup>42</sup> In 2019, the group's membership was estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000 fighters.<sup>43</sup>

### Worst attacks



#### MOGADISHU

A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden truck at a police checkpoint in Darkheyneley, Mogadishu, Somalia. In addition to the assailant, 83 people, including 17 police officers and four foreign nationals, were killed and 148 others were injured in the blast. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the incident.

Jabha East Africa was the only other active terror group in Somalia, claiming responsibility for 12 deaths in 2019. The group pledged allegiance to ISIL in 2016 and since then has launched small-scale attacks causing 63 fatalities.<sup>44</sup> Jabha East Africa consists of former al-Shabaab fighters and citizens from Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.<sup>45</sup> In 2019, the majority of deaths attributed to Jabha East Africa were the result of armed assaults targeting civilians, police and military targets.

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

## Yemen

GTI RANK

6

GTI SCORE

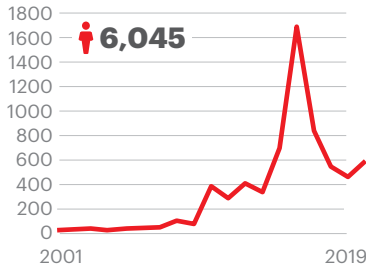
7.581

555  DEAD

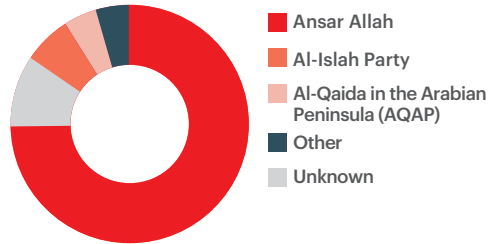
762  INJURED

561  INCIDENTS

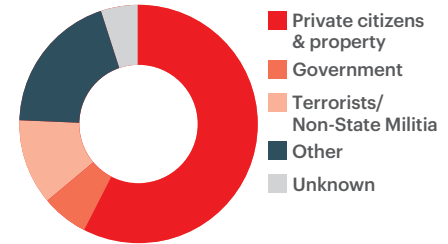
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Deaths from terrorism in Yemen rose to 555 in 2019, a 31 per cent increase from 2018. Yemen also experienced a 67 per cent increase in total terrorist attacks, driven primarily by an increase in violence by Ansar Allah. Despite the rise in terrorism in 2019, deaths have declined by 66 per cent from their peak in 2015.

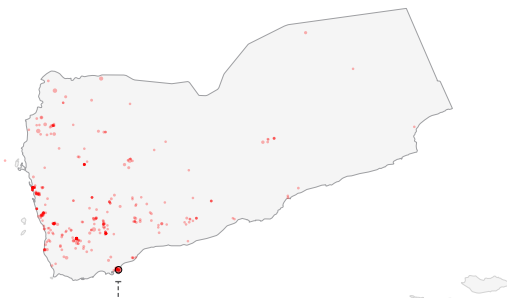
Yemen remains mired in a prolonged civil war. Since 2015, the war has resulted in over 100,000 fatalities, of which 12 per cent have been civilians killed in targeted attacks.<sup>46</sup> Approximately 23,000 deaths occurred as the result of conflict in 2019, marking a decrease of 25 per cent from 2018, but remaining the second deadliest year of the war.<sup>47</sup> The conflict has displaced nearly 400,000 Yemenis in 2019, contributing to the already fragile situation that the UN has described as “the world’s worst humanitarian tragedy”.<sup>48</sup>

Ansar Allah was the deadliest terror group in Yemen for the fourth consecutive year, accounting for 75 per cent of deaths from terrorism. Deaths attributed to Ansar Allah increased by 65 per cent in 2019, following three years of consecutive decline. The group mainly targeted civilians which accounted for 62 per cent of their victims, followed by the military at 16 per cent.

Attacks by Ansar Allah doubled in 2019, with bombings accounting for the majority of attacks, at 53 per cent. This was followed by hostage taking and armed assaults which accounted for 20 and 15 per cent of attacks, respectively. The number of bombings and armed assaults more than doubled in 2019, while the number of hostage taking incidents increased by 19 per cent.

Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains in an active conflict with both the forces of ousted President Hadi and Ansar Allah, to which it is ideologically opposed.<sup>49</sup> In 2019, AQAP was responsible for 25 deaths, down from 65 in the previous year. Most of these attacks were in the southern and central governorates of Hadramawt and Abyanand, and mainly targeted other terror groups or non-state militia. AQAP activity has dropped by 89 per cent in Yemen since peaking in 2015. In 2019, AQAP retained areas of influence in Yemen, though the group has been pushed back by the Republic of Yemen Government and UAE-backed local security forces.<sup>50</sup>

### Worst attacks



#### ADEN

Assailants fired missiles at a military camp during a military parade in Aden, Yemen. At least 40 people were killed and another 24 people were injured in the attack. This was one of two incidents in Aden on this day. Houthi extremists (Ansar Allah) claimed responsibility for the attack.

The year 2019 saw a continued decline in the activity of ISIL affiliates in Yemen. Of the five ISIL affiliates that have been active in Yemen in the past five years, only the Adan-Abyan Province of the Islamic State remains. The Adan-Abyan Province of the Islamic State was responsible for two terrorist attacks in 2019, targeting police and non-state militia. Both attacks attributed to the Adan-Abyan Province of the Islamic State were suicide bombings.

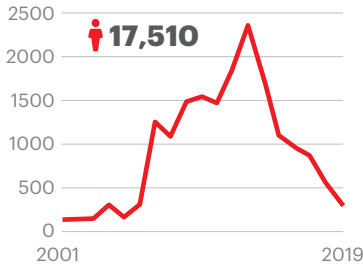
# Pakistan

GTI RANK  
**7**

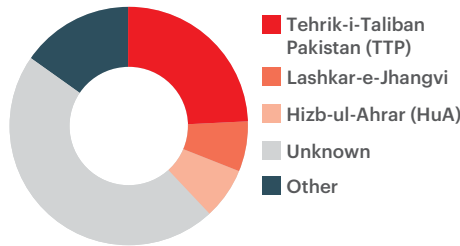
GTI SCORE  
**7.541**

**300** DEAD  
**654** INJURED  
**279** INCIDENTS

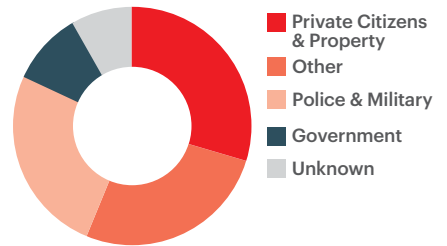
## Total deaths since 2001



## Deaths by group



## Attacks by target



In 2019, Pakistan recorded its lowest number of terror-related deaths since 2006. Deaths declined by 45 per cent, falling from 543 in 2018 to 300 in 2019. Terrorist activity has continued to decline steadily since peaking in 2013 with the number of deaths and incidents falling by 87 and 86 per cent, respectively.

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was the deadliest terror group in 2019, overtaking the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State. TTP was responsible for 73 terror-related deaths in 2019, followed by Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Hizb-ul-Ahrar (HuA) who were responsible for 21 and 20 deaths, respectively. Collectively, the three deadliest groups accounted for 38 per cent of terror-related deaths in 2019. However, the majority of deaths from terrorism in Pakistan were from small-scale attacks that were not attributed to any group.

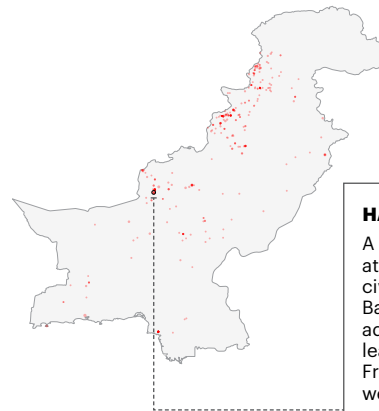
The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State is no longer one of the deadliest terror groups in Pakistan, recording nine deaths and seven attacks in 2019. The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State first emerged in Pakistan in 2014 and has been responsible for 696 deaths since. After recording its deadliest year in 2018, deaths attributed to the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State declined by 96 per cent in 2019.

The trend of reduced terrorism reflects the continued decline in activity of TTP, LeJ and the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, Pakistan's deadliest terrorist groups over the past decade. TTP has been responsible for at least 4,500 deaths since 2009, which accounts for over half of all terrorism deaths by known groups in Pakistan. Since recording its deadliest year in 2010, the group has recorded a 90 per cent decline in terrorism deaths.

Since peaking in 2013, LeJ has also recorded a steady decline in terrorist activity. LeJ claimed responsibility for just one attack in 2019, however it was the deadliest attack of the year. Twenty-one people were killed when a suicide bomber detonated at a market in Hazar Ganji, Balochistan.

The significant reduction in terrorism can be attributed to ongoing counter-terrorism operations undertaken by Pakistani

## Worst attacks



### HAZAR GANJI

A suicide bomber detonated at a market targeting Hazara civilians in Hazar Ganji, Balochistan, Pakistan. In addition to the bomber, at least 20 people, including a Frontier Corps (FC) member, were killed and 48 people were injured in the blast. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) each separately claimed responsibility for the attack. A TTP spokesperson later denied any involvement in the incident.

military and security forces against a number of groups including the TTP and the Khorasan Chapter. In 2015, the Pakistani Government implemented the National Action Plan to crack down on militant strongholds in North Waziristan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Of the 37 terror groups active in Pakistan in 2015, only ten were still active in 2019.

The most impacted regions in 2019 were Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which merged with the previously highly impacted FATA in May 2018.<sup>51</sup> Collectively, the two regions recorded 77 per cent of attacks and 85 per cent of deaths in 2019. The most frequent forms of terrorism in these regions were bombings and armed assaults targeting civilians and police and military personnel.

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

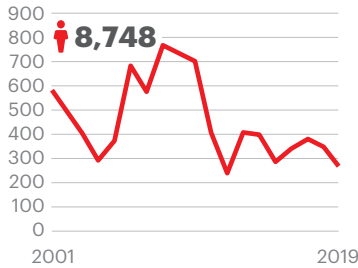
## India

GTI RANK  
**8**

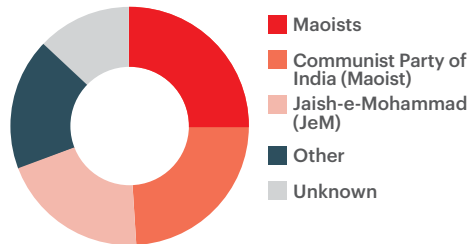
GTI SCORE  
**7.353**

**277** DEAD  
**439** INJURED  
**558** INCIDENTS

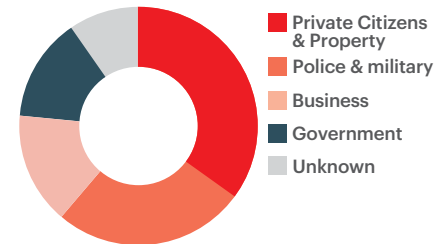
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



There were 558 terrorist attacks and 277 deaths from terrorism recorded in India in 2019. This marks a fall in both deaths and attacks of over 20 per cent since 2018. Compared to other countries amongst the ten most impacted, India faces a wider range of terrorist groups, with Islamist, communist, and separatist groups active across the country.

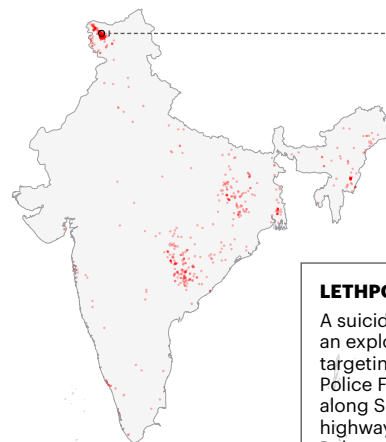
India has the lowest number of terrorism deaths among the ten countries most affected by terrorism, and the lowest lethality rate of attacks. The other nine countries had an average of 2.1 deaths per attack in 2019, while India recorded an average of 0.5 deaths per attack. Most of the attacks which did not result in fatalities were bombings targeting police and military personnel, followed by civilians. These bombings were predominantly carried out by Maoist groups.

There are a large number of terrorist groups in India, however many are seeking political recognition and often their attacks are not aimed at causing fatalities. Over half of terror attacks in 2019 were non-lethal with only 27 per cent of attacks resulting in more than one death. Only 14 of India's 35 active terrorist groups were responsible for fatalities in 2019.

In 2019, Maoists, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were responsible for over two thirds of the total deaths and almost half of the total attacks. Deaths attributed to Maoists and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) declined by 33 and four per cent, respectively. However, deaths attributed to JeM increased by 69 per cent to 54 as the group claimed responsibility for India's deadliest attack in 2019. Forty-one people were killed in Jammu and Kashmir when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle targeting a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy along the Srinagar-Jammu highway.

India continues to deal with terrorist activity on a number of different fronts. These threats include terrorism related to the ongoing territorial disputes in Kashmir, a Sikh separatist movement in the northern state of Punjab, and a secessionist movement in the north-eastern state of Assam. Meanwhile, a violent Maoist-inspired left-wing insurgency has re-emerged

### Worst attacks



#### LETHPORA

A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle targeting a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy along Srinagar-Jammu highway in Lethpora, Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, India. In addition to the assailant, 40 officers were killed and 20 others were injured in the blast. Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) claimed responsibility for the incident.

across central India in what has been dubbed the "red corridor", following the realignment of various Naxalite factions under the Communist Party of India (Maoist) in 2004, after the movement's near-total government defeat in the 1970s.

Jammu and Kashmir remained the region most impacted by terrorism in 2019, with 165 attacks, resulting in 103 deaths, most of which were perpetrated by Islamist groups. The three most active groups were Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Both JeM and LeT have also been active in Pakistan and Afghanistan, though most of their attacks are carried out in India.

The second most impacted region was Chhattisgarh, in the centre of the red corridor. Chhattisgarh suffered 85 attacks in 2019, resulting in 53 deaths, all from Maoist extremists.

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

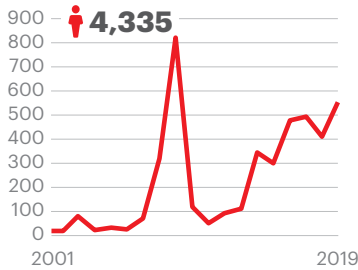
## Democratic Republic of the Congo

GTI RANK  
**9**

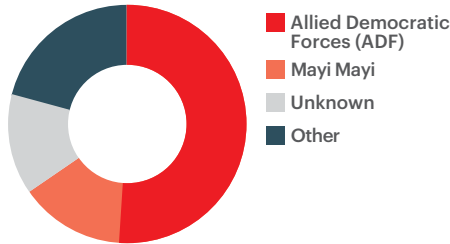
GTI SCORE  
**7.178**

**559** DEAD  
**103** INJURED  
**213** INCIDENTS

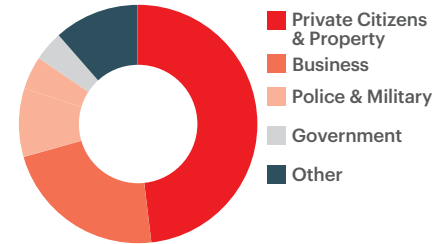
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



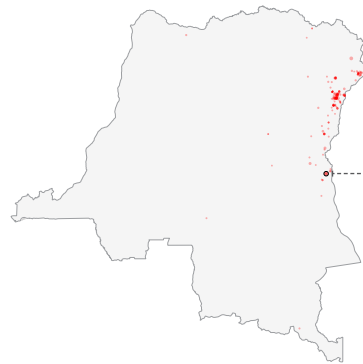
The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) recorded a resurgence of terrorist activity in 2019 after a fall in deaths the previous year. Deaths from terrorism increased by 36 per cent to 559 deaths in 2019, compared to 410 in 2018. Terror-related incidents also rose from 135 in 2018 to 213 in 2019, marking a 58 per cent increase. This increase in terrorist activity was driven by renewed action from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and community militias known as Mayi Mayi groups, as well as the emergence of four new militias.

The ADF was responsible for 285 deaths from terrorism in 2018, a 45 per cent increase from the previous year. Terror attacks attributed to the ADF also increased by 73 per cent in 2019. Throughout 2019, the ADF predominantly attacked civilians, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and UN peacekeepers in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. Attacks against civilians almost doubled between 2018 and 2019 and civilian deaths accounted for 89 per cent of total deaths attributed to the ADF in 2019, at 254 fatalities. ADF attacks against civilians were mostly hostage taking incidents or armed assaults carried out by small groups of fighters using firearms or machetes.<sup>52</sup> In late 2018, ISIL publically recognised the ADF as an affiliate group, and claimed responsibility for some ADF attributed attacks.<sup>53</sup> However, there has not been a significant change in tactics or weapons used since the ADF's public affiliation with ISIL.<sup>54</sup>

In 2019, terrorist activity attributed to the Mayi Mayi continued to increase, with attacks rising by 172 per cent. The Mayi Mayi are a loose collection of local militias based in the Kivu regions, some of whom engage in terrorism. Terrorism attacks attributed to the Mayi Mayi have predominantly targeted civilians and businesses, with civilian deaths increasing threefold in 2019. Mayi Mayi militias also conducted attacks on Ebola treatment centres in North Kivu and Ituri provinces causing at least eight fatalities including patients, health workers and police officers. The attacks prompted aid agencies and the World Health Organization (WHO) to withdraw some foreign health workers from the region.<sup>55</sup>

North Kivu remains the region most impacted by terrorism in the DRC, accounting for 46 per cent of attacks and 62 per cent

### Worst attacks



Assailants opened fire on Banyamulenge civilians and set fire to residences in High Plateau, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo. At least 36 people were killed and other people were injured in the assault. No group claimed responsibility; however, sources attributed the attack to the Mayi Mayi and the Resistance to the Rule of Law in Burundi (Red-Tabara).

of deaths in 2019. Terrorism deaths increased by 23 per cent in North Kivu, driven by an increase in terrorist activity attributed to the ADF and the Central Africa Province of the Islamic State. The majority of terror-related incidents in North Kivu were armed assaults and hostage taking incidents targeting civilians, resulting in 284 fatalities.

Ituri and South Kivu were the second and third deadliest regions in 2019. There were 89 terrorism deaths recorded in Ituri, which was almost double the number from the prior year. The increase was mainly attributed to the ADF and the Mayi Mayi. In South Kivu, terrorism deaths increased from 13 in 2018 to 69 in 2019. This included the deadliest attack in the DRC in which at least 36 people were killed when assailants opened fire on Banyamulenge civilians and set fire to residences in High Plateau, South Kivu. The attack was attributed to Mayi Mayi militias.

# 10 COUNTRIES MOST IMPACTED BY TERRORISM

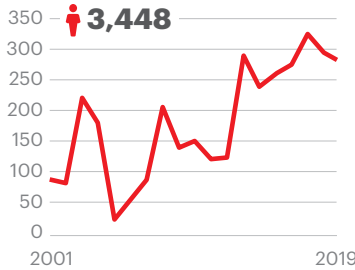
## Philippines

GTI RANK  
**10**

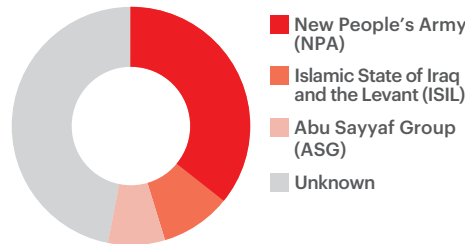
GTI SCORE  
**7.099**

**284** DEAD  
**393** INJURED  
**348** INCIDENTS

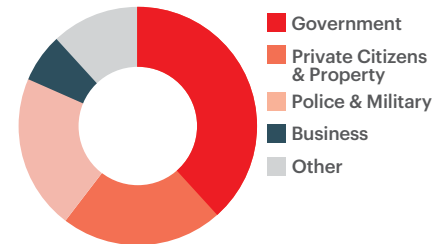
### Total deaths since 2001



### Deaths by group



### Attacks by target



Terrorism deaths in the Philippines declined for the second consecutive year in 2019, to 284 deaths. Terror-related incidents also decreased by 18 per cent from 424 in 2018 to 348 in 2019. Despite a slight reduction in terrorist activity, the Philippines remains the only Southeast Asian country to be ranked in the ten countries most impacted by terrorism.

The communist New People's Army (NPA) was the most active terrorist organisation in the Philippines. The NPA was responsible for over 35 per cent of deaths and 38 per cent of terror-related incidents in 2019, at 98 and 132 respectively. However, terrorist activity attributed to the NPA has declined since 2018 with incidents and deaths falling by 26 and eight per cent, respectively. The NPA has been engaged in an insurgency against the Filipino government for five decades and has been the deadliest terror group in the Philippines since 1970.

In 2019, the NPA conducted attacks across 37 provinces. The group was most active in the provinces of Negros Oriental and Negros Occidental, causing 31 deaths collectively. However, NPA attacks on the island of Negros have fallen by 25 per cent since 2018. This decline follows a counter-insurgency operation, named Operation Sauron, undertaken by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) against the NPA.<sup>56</sup> Despite the overall reduction in terrorist violence against police, military and government targets, civilian attacks increased 17 per cent in 2019. Approximately 53 per cent of NPA attacks on the island of Negros were against civilians, resulting in 15 fatalities.

In the Philippines, ISIL conducts terrorist operations both on its own and through its affiliates: Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Maute group.<sup>57</sup> These groups have all pledged allegiance to ISIL since 2014. Groups affiliated with ISIL in the Philippines continued to recruit and train fighters in 2019.<sup>58</sup> The Philippines remained a destination for foreign terrorist fighters from Indonesia, Malaysia, and countries in Europe and MENA.<sup>59</sup>

ISIL was the second deadliest group in the Philippines, causing 26 deaths from four attacks in 2019. Two of the four attacks

### Worst attacks



#### IGASAN

Assailants opened fire on civilians attending a community forum with the military in Igasan, Sulu, Philippines. Nine people and six assailants were killed and 14 people, including seven assailants, were injured in the attack. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) claimed responsibility for the incident.

attributed to ISIL in 2019 were coordinated suicide bombings of a Cathedral in Jolo, Sulu that targeted civilians and military personnel. Since their emergence in the Philippines in 2016, ISIL and affiliated groups in the Philippines have waged four suicide bombings resulting in 44 fatalities. Compared to other active groups in the Philippines, ISIL attacks have been significantly more lethal, causing an average of 3.4 deaths per attack.

The third deadliest group in the Philippines was ASG, recording 21 deaths in 2019. Deaths attributed to the group increased by 62 per cent from 2018 to 2019. In the same period, the number of attacks declined by 33 per cent, indicating an increase in attack lethality. In 2019, the majority of deaths attributed to ASG were armed assaults targeting civilians and police and military personnel. The group was also responsible for the deadliest attack recorded in the Philippines in 2019. Fifteen people were killed when assailants opened fire on civilians attending a community forum with the military in Igasan, Sulu.

## COVID-19 AND TERRORISM

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The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to worsen the impact of terrorism in certain regions, and present complex challenges for national and international counter-terrorism responses.

The COVID-19 pandemic could present opportunities for terrorist organisations to consolidate and expand their operations and territory, as governments turn their focus from counter-terrorism operations to addressing the public health crisis. Where a state's presence is already weak, or contested, there could be an opportunity for terrorist organisations to become alternate service providers, gaining favour with local populations through the delivery of essential services or social care.<sup>60</sup>

The pandemic might also provide a captive audience for terrorist organisations, facilitating radicalisation and recruitment efforts.<sup>61</sup> Both al-Qaida and ISIL have issued formal statements on the pandemic, offering guidelines to stop the spread of the virus, but also with messaging aimed at new recruits. Al-Qaida has suggested that non-Muslims in the West should use this period to convert to Islam.<sup>62</sup> ISIL has urged its followers to actively continue to wage global jihad, and to take advantage of strained security and government forces to launch attacks.<sup>63</sup>

Far-right groups have also viewed the pandemic as an opportunity to fuel existing narratives with a rise in racism, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic or anti-immigrant hate speech.<sup>64</sup>

However, the pandemic has also presented operational challenges for terrorist groups, with curfews and travel restrictions making it increasingly difficult for terrorists to move, recruit, raise revenue or launch attacks.<sup>65</sup> Measures taken to combat the virus have also reduced crowds, and therefore reduced the number of potential terrorist targets.<sup>66</sup> For global organisations, such as ISIL, the pandemic is likely to have an impact on the execution of large-scale, sophisticated attacks overseas. However, for terror groups operating locally, or lone actors, the impact may be less severe.<sup>67</sup>

The increase of government deficits caused by increased public spending during the pandemic will likely have negative impact for counter-terrorism budgets.<sup>68</sup> Overall, the reduction in counter-terrorism budgets may hinder domestic or international

counter-terrorism operations, particularly in MENA and sub-Saharan Africa.

The COVID-19 pandemic has already impacted operations undertaken by the global coalition to defeat ISIL. Some members of the international coalition have announced the withdrawal, or planned withdrawal, of forces from Iraq due to fears of the spread of COVID-19.<sup>69</sup> The pandemic has also delayed plans for the repatriation of former ISIL affiliates, which include many women and children, who remain in Al-Hol camp in Syria.

Regional counter-terrorism efforts in the Sahel may also be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. 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), 5,100 French troops and an additional 500 special forces from 13 European countries under a newly established task force.<sup>70</sup> In the future, countries providing support to the governments of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger could draw back the deployment of troops or resources to refocus on their own domestic needs.<sup>71</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic presents an additional burden on governments in the Sahel, who were already struggling to provide basic services. Jihadist groups in the region have already had some success in gaining local support by exploiting existing ethnic tensions and positioning themselves as alternative service providers.<sup>72</sup>

There are signs that jihadist groups in sub-Saharan Africa are exploiting the turmoil caused by the pandemic to launch attacks and gain territory. In Mozambique, the Central Africa Province of the Islamic State took over a strategic port in the north of the country in September 2020, declaring a new outpost in the establishment of a caliphate.<sup>73</sup> In Nigeria, violent attacks in the first six months of the 2020 exceeded the total recorded in 2019. Much of this violence was attributed to the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) and Fulani extremists. ISWAP were responsible for the deadliest attack of the year so far in June 2019, when operatives ambushed Foduma Kolowombe village in Borno state.<sup>74</sup> Eighty-one residents were killed in the attack while six others were injured.

# 2

# Economic Impact of Terrorism

## OVERVIEW

The global economic impact of terrorism was estimated to be US\$26.4 billion in 2019. This is 25 per cent less than the prior year and the fifth consecutive year that it has declined. The improvement over the last four years is largely driven by the declining level of terrorism in Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria.

Since its peak of \$116 billion in 2014, the economic impact has decreased by 77 per cent reflecting the reduction in terrorism deaths, injuries and attacks globally. This is the fifth consecutive year of decline.

The total economic impact of terrorism includes the direct cost of terrorism deaths, injuries and property damage, as well as the indirect costs from deaths, injuries, property damage and GDP losses. It also includes a multiplier effect on the direct costs. Direct costs are expenditures incurred by the victim, the perpetrator and the government. Indirect costs accrue after the fact and include the present value of the long-term costs arising from the incidence of terrorism, such as lost future income and physical and psychological trauma.

These estimates are considered highly conservative, as there are many items that are not included in the methodology due to the

difficulty in obtaining globally comparable data, such as reduced tourism, business activity, production and investment, in addition to counter-terrorism expenditure and government spending on securitisation.

Table 2.1 presents a full breakdown of the categories included in the 2019 economic impact estimate. The multiplier effect represents the economic benefits that would have been generated if all relevant expenditure had been directed into more productive alternatives. A summary of the methodology is provided at the end of this section and a comprehensive explanation of how the economic impact of terrorism is calculated is provided in Appendix C.

Since 2014, the economic impact of terrorism declined by 65 per cent in Nigeria, 79 per cent in Syria and 95 per cent in Pakistan and Iraq, totalling \$84.3 billion across the four countries. These four countries have largely contributed to the fall in the economic impact of terrorism.

Figure 2.1 shows the trend in the economic impact of terrorism globally from 2000 to 2019. The impact of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks is highlighted separately.

TABLE 2.1

### The economic impact of terrorism, constant 2019 \$US, billions, 2019

Deaths account for more than half of the economic impact of terrorism.

Indicator	Direct	Indirect	Multiplier	Total Economic Impact of Terrorism
Deaths	1.88	12.42	1.88	16.18
GDP losses	-	9.31	-	9.31
Property damage	0.33	-	0.33	0.66
Injuries	0.04	0.21	0.04	0.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>21.93</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>26.43</b>

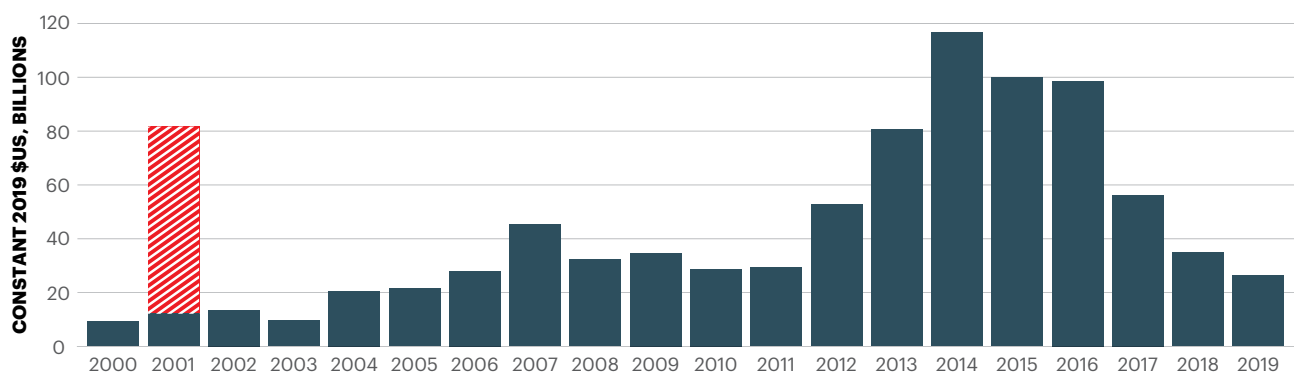
Source: IEP



FIGURE 2.1

### The trend in the economic impact of terrorism, 2000–2019

The global economic impact of terrorism peaked in 2014.



Source: IEP

In 2019, all four categories in the model decreased from the prior year. This has resulted in the impact of terrorism declining by \$8.7 billion, or 25 per cent from 2018.

The largest percentage decline was seen on the GDP losses category, which decreased by 31 per cent, or \$4.2 billion from 2018. This was followed by terrorism deaths, which decreased by 21 per cent, or \$4.4 billion.

Since the peak in 2014, the impact of terrorism deaths has declined by 81 per cent, or \$67.8 billion. Table 2.2 presents the trend in the economic impact of terrorism indicators from 2014 to 2019.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the share of the total economic impact of terrorism in 2019 by indicator. Deaths from terrorism were the largest category in the model at 61.2 per cent amounting to \$16.2 billion in 2019. This was followed by GDP losses at 35.2 per cent of the total, or \$9.3 billion.

TABLE 2.2

### Change in the economic impact of terrorism, constant 2019 \$US, billions, 2014–2019

In 2019, the economic impact of terrorism decreased by 25 per cent from 2018.

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change 2018-2019	Percentage Change 2018-2019
Deaths	83.9	69.4	78.2	39.7	20.6	16.2	-4.4	-21%
GDP losses	28.5	27.6	16.5	14.6	13.5	9.3	-4.2	-31%
Injuries	1.3	1.3	1.5	0.6	0.33	0.29	-0.04	-11%
Property destruction	2.1	1.1	1.6	0.9	0.73	0.65	-0.08	-11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>115.8</b>	<b>99.6</b>	<b>97.9</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>-8.7</b>	<b>-25%</b>

Source: IEP

## ECONOMIC IMPACT BY COUNTRY AND REGION

The total global economic impact of violence was estimated at \$14.5 trillion for 2019, equivalent to 10.6 per cent of global GDP. This figure covers 18 variables including military, homicide, incarceration and terrorism.

The economic impact of terrorism is smaller than many other forms of violence, accounting for approximately 0.1 per cent of the global economic impact of violence in 2019.<sup>1</sup> Although the economic impact of terrorism is relatively low compared to other forms of violence globally, such as interpersonal violence, terrorism and its consequential economic costs are disproportionately concentrated across a few countries.

In 2019, Afghanistan was not only the country most affected by terrorism it also had the highest economic cost of terrorism, equivalent to 16.7 per cent of its GDP. This was however a decrease of 2.8 percentage points from 2018 where the cost of terrorism was 19.5 per cent. No other country in 2019 experienced a cost of terrorism greater than four per cent of its GDP. Syria had the second highest economic cost of terrorism as a percentage of GDP, equivalent to 3.4 per cent, followed by Nigeria at 2.4 per cent.

Conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 95 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurring in countries with ongoing conflict. When combined with countries with high levels of political terror, the number increases to over 99 per cent. Consequently, countries suffering from armed conflict experience a significantly higher economic impact of terrorism. Overall, nine of the ten countries with the highest economic cost from terrorism as a percentage of GDP in 2019 are engaged in armed conflict, or suffering from high institutional and social fragility.<sup>2</sup>

Table 2.3 shows the ten countries most affected by the economic cost of terrorism as a percentage of their GDP. All of these countries, other than Sri Lanka, were engaged in at least one conflict in 2019.

Table 2.4 displays the ten countries with the largest increase and decrease in their economic impact from 2018. Iraq had the largest decline, with a 71 per cent decrease, equal to \$6.7 billion. Nigeria had the second largest decline, falling by \$1.1 billion.

Sri Lanka has the largest increase in its economic impact at \$954 million, followed by New Zealand at \$532 million and the United States at \$297 million.

### IMPACT BY REGION

The economic impact of terrorism varies substantially between regions, as shown in Table 2.5. In 2019, 86 per cent of the economic impact of terrorism was recorded in three regions: sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and MENA.

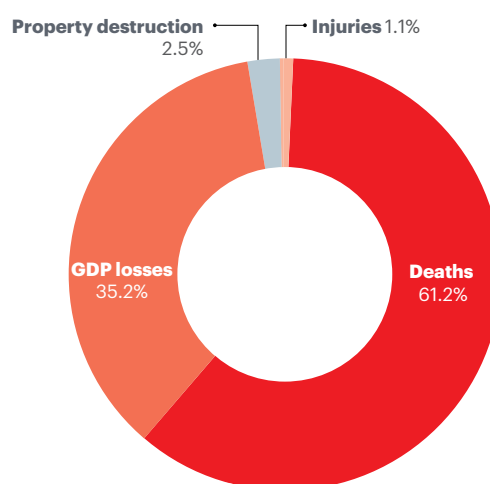
Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia recorded the highest economic impact at \$12.5 and \$5.6 billion respectively, with

MENA accounting for an additional \$4.7 billion.

Central America and the Caribbean, and Russia and Eurasia are the regions with the lowest economic impact, at \$113 and \$162 million, respectively. This is approximately one per cent of the global economic impact of terrorism.

FIGURE 2.2  
**Breakdown of the economic impact of terrorism, 2019**

Deaths account for just over 61 per cent of the economic impact of terrorism.



Source: IEP

TABLE 2.3  
**The ten most affected countries by the economic cost of terrorism, 2019**

Nine of the ten countries with the highest economic impacts of terrorism are suffering from ongoing conflict.

Country	Economic Cost of Terrorism as Percentage of GDP	GTI 2020 Rank
Afghanistan	16.7%	1
Syria	3.4%	4
Nigeria	2.4%	3
Burkina Faso	1.9%	12
Mali	1.9%	11
Somalia	1.2%	5
Iraq	1.1%	2
Yemen	1.0%	6
Sri Lanka	1.0%	20
Central African Republic	0.9%	17

Source: IEP

TABLE 2.4

### The ten countries with the largest increases and decreases in the economic impact of terrorism, 2018–2019

DECREASE			INCREASE		
Country	Change in the Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019 \$US, millions)	Percentage Change	Country	Change in the Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019 \$US, millions)	Percentage Change
Iraq	-6,749.7	-71%	Sri Lanka	954	23471%
Nigeria	-1,122.9	-9%	New Zealand	532.7	
Afghanistan	-909.8	-20%	United States	297.1	125%
Syria	-684.2	-44%	Burkina Faso	270	552%
Libya	-492.3	-81%	Egypt	135.4	60%
Pakistan	-377.6	-45%	Yemen	92.9	33%
Iran	-191	-93%	Mali	89.1	31%
Indonesia	-180.6	-86%	Myanmar	65.4	132%
Canada	-131.2	-99%	Mozambique	63	129%
India	-121.1	-16%	Germany	59.5	1176%

Source: IEP

Table 2.6 displays the change in each region's economic impact from 2018 to 2019. North America had the largest percentage increase, increasing by 44.9 per cent from the previous year, the equivalent of \$165.9 million. The region's deterioration was driven by the United States, which recorded an increase of \$297 million, or 125 per cent from 2018, as deaths from terrorism rose from 16 to 35. The primary driver of this rise was an increase in far-right terrorism.

MENA's economic impact fell by eight billion dollars from 2018, the largest regional decline. This was a 63 per cent reduction from 2018. Iraq's economic impact falling by \$6.7 billion accounted for the majority of the region's improvement.

TABLE 2.5

### The economic impact of terrorism by region, 2019

Region	Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019 \$US, millions)	Impact as a Percentage of Global Total
Sub-Saharan Africa	12,459.19	47.1%
South Asia	5,649.11	21.4%
Middle East and North Africa	4,736.38	17.9%
Asia-Pacific	1,663.83	6.3%
Europe	600.67	2.3%
North America	535.52	2.0%
South America	511.20	1.9%
Russia and Eurasia	161.99	0.6%
Central America and the Caribbean	113.22	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,431.11</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: IEP

TABLE 2.6

### Change in the economic impact of terrorism by region, 2018–2019

The economic impact of terrorism increased by just under 45 per cent in North America.

Region	Change in the Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019 \$US, millions)	Percentage Change
North America	165.9	44.9%
Asia-Pacific	387.8	30.4%
Europe	-16.2	-2.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	-613.6	-4.7%
Central America and the Caribbean	-7	-5.8%
South Asia	-435.8	-7.2%
South America	-88.7	-14.8%
Russia and Eurasia	-76.2	-32.0%
Middle East and North Africa	-8,026.20	-62.9%
<b>Total Change</b>	<b>-8,710.10</b>	<b>-24.8%</b>

Source: IEP

**"MENA's economic impact fell by eight billion dollars, from 2018, the largest regional decline."**

## CASE STUDY: THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TERRORISM IN AFRICA

Both North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa have seen an increase in the spread of terrorism over the past five years. Although the number of deaths has fallen in Nigeria, other countries have seen a considerable increase. Much of this increase in terrorist activity has been concentrated in the Sahel region. However, last year brought a surge in terrorist activity as far south as Mozambique.

Of the 18 UNDP focus group countries outlined in Box 2.1, nine are considered to be in medium or high intensity conflict and one country – Sudan – is considered to be suffering from high institutional and social fragility.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, the economic impact of terrorism in Africa was \$13 billion. This represents a ninefold increase since 2007. The region's global share of the economic impact of terrorism has increased from 3.1 per cent in 2007 to 49.2 per cent in 2019.

### BOX 2.1

#### UNDP Case Study – Focus on 18 African Countries

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identified 18 focus countries in the African continent in its project 'Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: A Development Approach'. The 18 countries were categorised into three groups:

- **Epicentre countries** including Libya, Somalia, Nigeria and Mali
- **Spill-over countries** including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger and Tunisia
- **At-risk countries** including Central African Republic, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Morocco and Sudan.

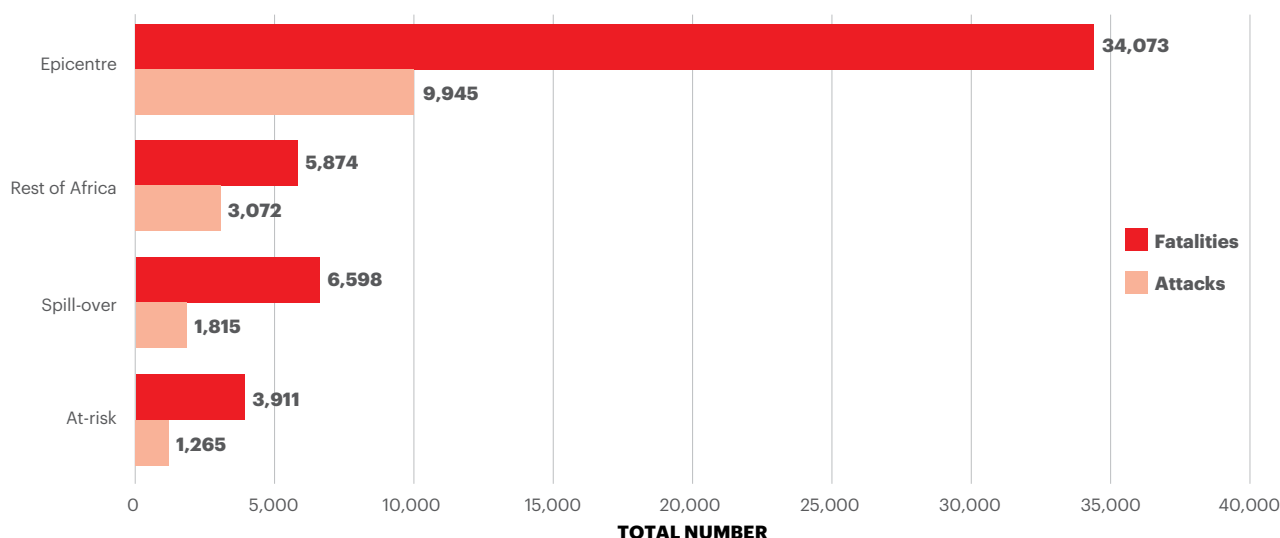
The impact of terrorism in Africa over the last decade is estimated at \$171.7 billion. However, this is a highly conservative estimate and would be much higher if the costs for lost business investment, tourism, lost informal economic activity, extra security spending, counter-terrorism and refugee or internally displaced persons could be included.

Figure 2.3 shows the total number of terrorist attacks and fatalities from terrorist attacks in Africa between 2007 and 2019, broken down by the focus groups – epicentre, spill-over, countries at-risk as well as for the rest of Africa. The majority of terrorist activity and incidents have taken place in the epicentre countries, which have suffered 62 per cent of the total attacks and 68 per cent of the total fatalities in Africa.

FIGURE 2.3

### The levels of terrorist activity in Africa, 2007–2019

The four epicentre countries – Libya, Somalia, Nigeria and Mali – have suffered 62 per cent of the total attacks and 68 per cent of the total fatalities from terrorism in Africa.



Source: START GTD, IEP

The epicentre, spill-over and at-risk countries account for the majority of the economic impact of terrorism in Africa. This is not surprising given the disproportionate levels of terrorist activity in the focus countries compared to the rest of Africa.

Nigeria has incurred the largest economic impact from 2007 to 2019 at \$142 billion. See Table 2.7 for the country level breakdown.

Table 2.8 displays the breakdown of the costs included in the

model. The four epicentre countries – Nigeria, Mali, Somalia and Libya – incurred majority of the economic impact relative to the spill-over or at-risk countries. Consequently, the four epicentre countries have accounted for 86.8 per cent, or \$149.1 billion, of Africa's economic impact of terrorism since 2007. Whereas, the spill-over countries have suffered \$5.4 billion, the equivalent of 3.1 per cent of the total and at-risk countries \$3.0 billion, the equivalent of 1.8 per cent of the total. The rest of Africa accounts for 8.3 per cent of the region's total impact.

TABLE 2.7

**The economic impact of terrorism by UNDP focus group category, constant 2019 \$US, billions, 2007–2019**

Epicentre		At-risk		Spill-over	
Country	Impact	Country	Impact	Country	Impact
Nigeria	\$141.90	Sudan	\$2.31	Cameroon	\$2.06
Libya	\$4.90	Central African Republic	\$0.41	Kenya	\$1.27
Somalia	\$1.20	Uganda	\$0.16	Tunisia	\$0.55
Mali	\$1.10	Morocco	\$0.07	Chad	\$0.45
		Senegal	\$0.05	Burkina Faso	\$0.42
		Tanzania	\$0.05	Ethiopia	\$0.33
				Niger	\$0.30
				Mauritania	\$0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$149.08</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3.04</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5.40</b>

Source: IEP

TABLE 2.8

**Breakdown of the economic impact of terrorism by focus group, constant 2019 \$US, millions, 2007–2019**

	GDP Losses	Impact of Fatalities and Injuries	Impact of Property Damage	Total
<b>Epicenter</b>	\$101,475.55	\$46,487.55	\$1,120.18	\$149,083.28
<b>Rest of Africa</b>	\$-	\$13,745.89	\$466.70	\$14,212.59
<b>Spill-over</b>	\$-	\$5,278.34	\$121.67	\$5,400.01
<b>At-risk</b>	\$-	\$2,973.67	\$69.05	\$3,042.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$101,475.55</b>	<b>\$68,485.45</b>	<b>\$1,777.60</b>	<b>\$171,738.60</b>

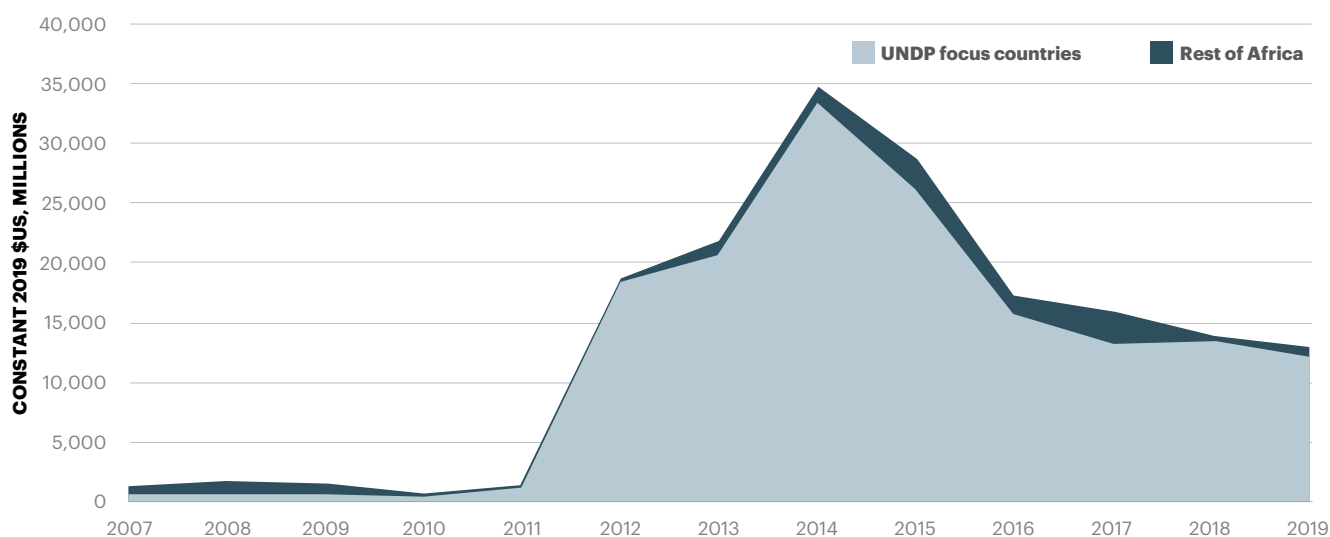
Source: IEP

Note: GDP losses are only included when a country experiences over 1,000 terrorism fatalities.

FIGURE 2.4

### Trend in the economic impact of terrorism in Africa, 2007–2019

The UNDP’s 18 focus countries have suffered 92 per cent of the economic impact of terrorism in Africa since 2007.



Source: IEP

This rise in the intensity of terrorist activity has resulted in the economic impact of terrorism in the 18 focus countries increasing from \$661 million in 2007, to \$12.3 billion in 2019, an increase of over 1,760 per cent.<sup>4</sup> Over the same period, terrorist attacks increased from 288 to 1,577, and fatalities associated with terrorism increased from 1,328 to 5,522 across the 18 focus countries. Figure 2.4 displays the trend in the economic impact of terrorism in Africa.

The increase in the economic impact since 2007 is largely driven by Nigeria. Table 2.9 shows the total economic impact for each of the 18 focus countries as well as total attacks and fatalities. Of the 18 countries, Nigeria has suffered the highest economic impact of terrorism, equal to \$142 billion since 2007.

TABLE 2.9

### Terrorism in UNDP's focus countries, 2007–2019

The economic impact of terrorism was the largest in Nigeria, at \$US142 billion since 2007.

Country	Number of Terrorist Attacks	Number of Fatalities	Economic Impact of Terrorism (Constant 2019, \$US million)
Nigeria	4,383	23,354	141,889.4
Libya	1,923	1,876	4,909.0
Sudan	821	1,630	2,307.0
Cameroon	615	2,011	2,062.7
Kenya	600	1,314	1,271.3
Somalia	3,060	7,126	1,158.4
Mali	579	1,717	1,126.5
Tunisia	77	163	551.9
Chad	58	632	447.3
Burkina Faso	225	782	423.0
Central African Republic	306	1,910	414.1
Ethiopia	97	621	334.7
Niger	134	1,071	303.6
Uganda	66	241	159.3
Morocco	9	32	69.6
Senegal	19	51	47.7
Tanzania	44	47	45.0
Mauritania	9	4	5.5

Source: START GTD, IEP

## VIOLENCE CONTAINMENT EXPENDITURE IN AFRICA

In 2019, the world spent \$1.8 trillion on *military expenditure*, \$1.6 trillion on internal security and \$246 billion on private security. These violence containment expenditures on securitisation amounted to over \$3.6 trillion.

It is difficult to estimate how much of this violence containment expenditure is directly counter-terrorism related, particularly in countries in conflict.<sup>5</sup> However, at least some of the global expenditure on securitisation is directed towards countering terrorism. Of the \$3.6 trillion spent on securitisation in 2019, \$90 billion was spent in Africa, the equivalent of 2.5 per cent of the global total. The 18 focus countries spent \$34 billion, or 38 per cent of Africa's total expenditure.

Across Africa, there has been a slow growth in the amount spent on securitisation since 2007, contrary to the declining global trend. Globally, securitisation expenditure has decreased by 6.1 per cent since 2007. This has mainly been driven by decreases in internal security expenditure. However, Africa has increased violence containment expenditure by one per cent over the same period.<sup>6</sup> The epicentre group of countries increased securitisation expenditure by 13.4 per cent from 2007, with the spill-over countries increasing their violence containment spending by 6.8 per cent, and at-risk countries decreased their spending by 1.6 per cent.

Nigeria had the highest violence containment spending of any of the 18 focus countries, having spent \$137 billion since 2007. Sudan and Morocco spent the second and third most on securitisation at \$81.4 and \$72.1 billion respectively, since 2007. Morocco and Sudan are both considered at risk countries and Sudan is classified as suffering from high institutional and social fragility. Table 2.10 shows the focus countries' expenditure on securitisation in 2019.

## REFUGEES AND IDPs

The economic impact of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) are not explicitly included in the economic impact of terrorism. At least 26 per cent of the world's refugee population is hosted in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>7</sup> While terrorist activity is not a singular cause of forced displacement, IEP has found terrorism is linked to armed conflict and political terror which lead to displacement.<sup>8</sup>

Across the 18 focus countries, the total economic impact of refugees and IDPs between 2007 and 2019 was \$451 billion. This estimate accounts for lost production, consumption and investment in the country of origin and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees annual expenditure.<sup>10</sup>

Within the focus countries, the economic impact of refugees and IDPs has increased more than threefold since 2007, increasing from \$12.1 billion to \$43.5 billion in 2019. Table 2.11 displays the economic impact of refugees and IDPs in 2007 and 2019.

The at risk countries have incurred the majority of the impact since 2007. However since then, the economic impact of refugees and IDPs in the epicentre countries has increased by

nearly 1,600 per cent, an increase of \$19.8 billion. In 2019, Nigeria and Sudan had the largest economic impact of refugees and IDPs at \$14.7 billion and \$12.9 billion, respectively.

TABLE 2.10

### The UNDP focus countries' expenditure on securitisation, constant 2019 \$US, billions, 2019

Nigeria had the highest violence containment spending of any of the eighteen focus countries in 2019 at \$9.4 billion.

Country	Securitisation Expenditure
Nigeria	9.4
Sudan	4.1
Morocco	5.2
Libya	4.7
Tunisia	1.6
Kenya	1.5
Mali	1.2
Ethiopia	1.0
Chad	0.4
Tanzania	1.0
Senegal	0.7
Uganda	0.6
Burkina Faso	0.7
Cameroon	0.5
Mauritania	0.5
Niger	0.4
Somalia	0.1
Central African Republic	0.04

Source: START GTD, IEP

TABLE 2.11

### The economic impact of refugees and internally displaced persons by focus group, constant 2019 PPP, millions

The four epicentre countries – Libya, Somalia, Nigeria and Mali – have recorded the largest increase in the economic impact of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Focus Group	2007	2019	Percentage Change
At-risk	10.0	14.3	43%
Epicentre countries	1.2	21.1	1596%
Spill-over	0.9	8.1	818%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>259%</b>

Source: IEP

## VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA AND THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL ECONOMY

Africa is home to some of the highest levels of informal economic activity in the world. Informal economic activity is the activity in an economy that is not included in the regulated economy and tax system, such as street vendors or other unregistered businesses.<sup>11</sup> From 2010 to 2017, the informal sector in sub-Saharan Africa was estimated at 34 per cent of GDP, while in MENA it was estimated at 20 per cent of GDP.

The informal sector is an important source of employment and income. The informal sector's estimated contribution to economic activity is largest in the epicentre countries, equivalent to 43 per cent of GDP. This is followed by the at-risk countries at 42 per cent of GDP and the spill-over countries at 36 per cent of GDP.

In the last decade, the size of the informal economy has been declining across the world, including in Africa. Although informal economic activity has been declining globally, the decline in the focus countries since the increase in terrorist activity post-2007 has been greater than Africa's average decline. This may indicate that terrorist activity has a dampening effect on informal economic activity.<sup>12</sup>

A case study of the economic impact of Boko Haram in North Eastern Nigeria identified three channels through which terrorism impacted economic activity:

1. Conflict leads to the disorganisation of production as businesses and farms close down.
2. The physical destruction of capital such as roads and buildings impedes production.
3. Displacement of labour.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 2.5 displays the lost value in informal economic activity in 16 countries for which data was available.

As well as reducing activity in the informal economy, terrorism can also have a significant impact on activity in the formal economy. Countries with higher levels of violent extremism had weaker economic growth than countries with low or no violent extremism. Over the last 70 years, GDP growth in high peace countries is approximately two percentage points higher per annum than countries with low levels of peace.<sup>14</sup>

Between 2002 and 2016, epicentre countries on average had a 17 per cent decline in GDP per capita. On the contrary, at risk and spill-over countries, on average, increased their GDP per capita by 47 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively, over the same period.<sup>15</sup>

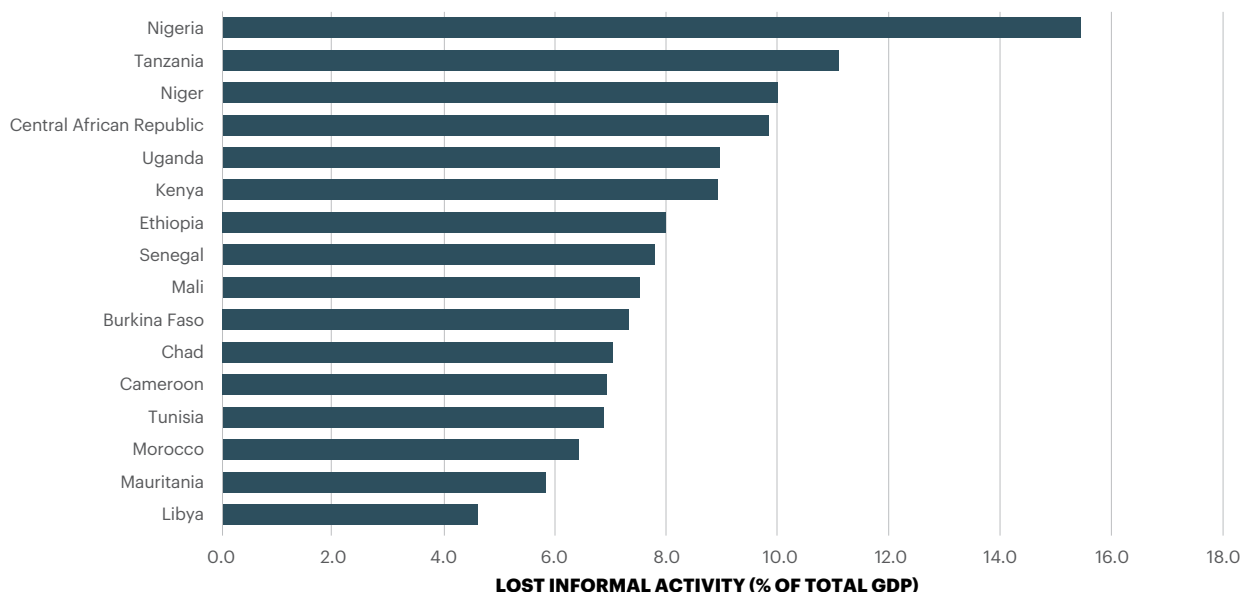
Additionally, violent extremism can impact political stability and macro-economic volatility. For example, inflation is estimated to be three times higher, and ten times more volatile, in low peace countries compared to high peace countries. IEP has found that since 1980, high peace countries have twice the foreign direct investment inflows as low peace countries.

The economic impact of violent extremism on both the formal and informal economy in any given country depends on multiple factors. In general, violence reduces investment in capital intensive sectors, lowers productivity and reduces returns.

FIGURE 2.5

### Lost value from informal economic activity, percentage of GDP, 2007–2015

The lost value of economic activity between 2007 and 2015 in the focus countries ranges from 4.6 per cent of GDP in Libya to 15.5 per cent of GDP in Nigeria.



Source: UNDP



## ESTIMATING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TERRORISM

The economic impact of terrorism model includes the costs from four categories: deaths, injuries, property destruction, and the GDP losses from terrorism. The GDP losses included in the model are a country's losses in economic activity as a result of

terrorism. GDP losses are included when the total of all terrorism deaths in a year is more than 1,000 people. More detail is given in Box 2.2.

### BOX 2.2

#### **The economic impact of terrorism model**

The economic impact of terrorism is calculated using IEP's cost of violence methodology. The model for terrorism includes the direct and indirect cost of deaths and injuries, as well as the property destruction from incidents of terrorism. The direct costs include costs borne by the victims of the terrorist acts and associated government expenditure, such as medical spending. The indirect costs include lost productivity and earnings as well as the psychological trauma to the victims, their families and friends.

Unit costs for deaths and injuries are sourced from McCollister et al. (2010). To account for the income differences for each country, the unit costs are scaled based on country GDP per capita relative to the source of the unit costs.

The analysis uses data on incidents of terrorism from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) that is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. The data provides

the number of deaths and injuries for each incident as well as the extent of property destruction.

In addition, the data provides estimated dollar values of property destruction for a sample of incidents. The property destruction estimates from the GTD are then used to generate costs of property destroyed by various types of terrorist attacks. Each of the different property costs is further calibrated by country income type such as countries belonging to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development group (OECD), high-income non-OECD, upper middle income, lower middle income and lower income country groups.

Terrorism has implications for the larger economy depending on the duration, level and intensity of the terrorist activities. Where countries suffer more than 1,000 deaths from terrorism, IEP's model includes losses of national output, equivalent to two per cent of GDP.

# 3

# Trends in Terrorism

## TRENDS SINCE 2002

There have been several distinct phases in terrorist activity over the past two decades, as shown in Figure 3.1. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, most terrorist activity globally was concentrated in Iraq and Afghanistan for nearly a decade. After the events of the Arab Spring and the emergence of ISIL, there was a surge in terrorism across the Middle East, most notably in Syria and Iraq, with a concurrent surge in Nigeria. At its peak in 2014, over 33,000 people were killed in terrorist attacks in a single year.

The past five years saw the end of the surge in terrorism across the globe, with deaths from terrorism declining every year since 2014, falling by 59 per cent in total. The largest decreases occurred in Iraq and Syria, with deaths in Nigeria fluctuating year on year. The winding down of the Syrian civil war, the collapse of ISIL, and increased counter-terrorism coordination at both the state and international level have all played a role in

reducing the impact of terrorism around the world. Although terrorism declined in most countries over this period, there was a steady increase in Afghanistan, with deaths increasing by 439 per cent from 2009 to 2019.

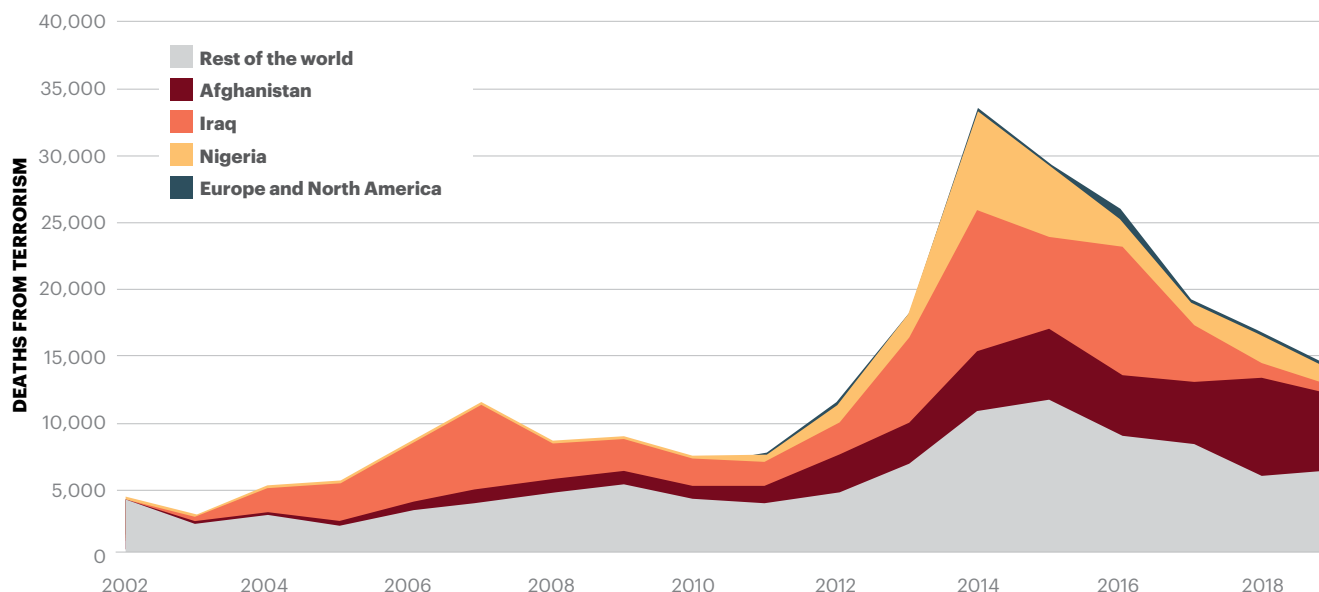
In the West, terrorist attacks and deaths from terrorism reached their highest point slightly after the global peak, with incidents peaking in 2015 when 340 attacks were recorded, and deaths peaking in 2016 when 233 people died in terrorist attacks. Although the impact of radical jihadist terrorism has subsided in the West over the past five years, there has been a rise in the level of far-right terrorism. The number of deaths from far-right motivated terrorism in the West has increased by 709 per cent over the past five years, rising from 11 deaths in 2014, to 89 deaths in 2019.

The overall fall in deaths from terrorism has also led to a

FIGURE 3.1

### Deaths from terrorism, 2002–2019

Total deaths have decreased 59 per cent from their peak in 2014.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

reduction in the number of countries experiencing deaths from terrorism. In 2019, 63 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism, the lowest number since 2013. The number of countries peaked in 2016, when 78 countries recorded at least one death. However, despite this decrease the number of countries remains substantially higher than earlier this century. In 2004, just 39 countries recorded at least one death, as seen in Figure 3.2.

Between 2002 and 2006, there was never more than one country in a year that recorded more than a thousand deaths from terrorism. As the level of terrorism increased, so too did the number of countries experiencing extremely high numbers of deaths. From 2012 until 2017 there were at least four countries per year who recorded more than a thousand deaths from terrorism.

While the number of countries experiencing more than a thousand deaths from terrorism has dropped in the past two years, there has been an increase in the number of countries experiencing between one hundred and one thousand deaths. In 2019, there were 16 countries in this bracket with the majority of these countries experiencing ISIL-related attacks. This follows the expansion of ISIL affiliated groups in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

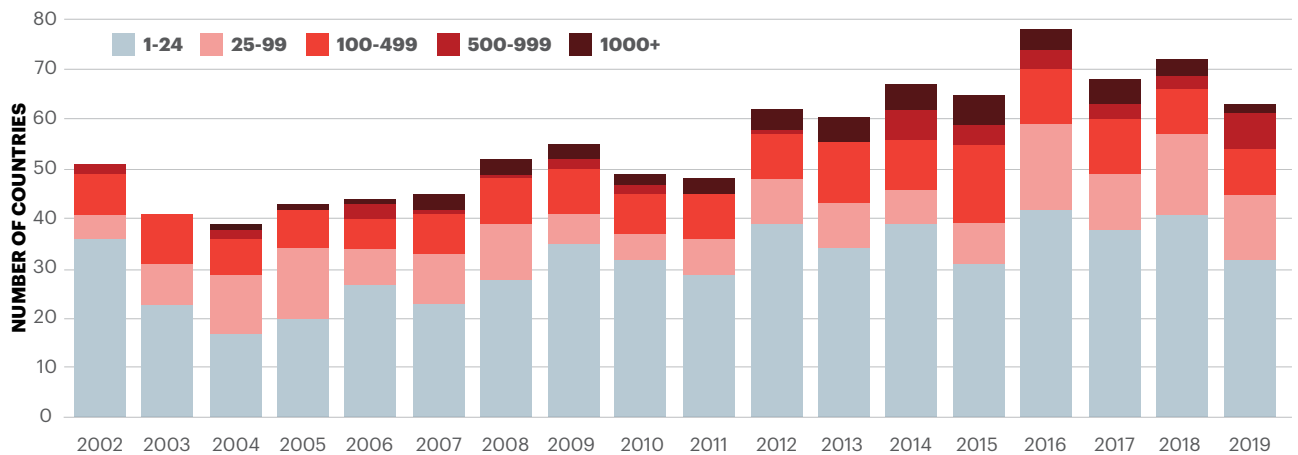
Conflict has been the primary driver of terrorism since 2002. Every one of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism from 2002 to 2019 was involved in an armed conflict, meaning that they had at least one conflict that led to 25 or more battle-related deaths. There were 236,422 deaths from terrorism between 2002 and 2019. Of these deaths, just under 95 per cent, or 224,582, occurred in countries involved in conflict.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the trend in deaths from terrorism by conflict type. During the peak of terrorist activity in 2014, most deaths from terrorism occurred in war zones, meaning countries that had registered over one thousand deaths from conflict in a single year. However, since peaking in 2014 the number of deaths from terrorism in war zones has dropped by 70 per cent. Similarly, terrorism deaths in non-conflict countries have steadily declined since peaking in 2014, by 74 per cent. However, there was a slight increase in 2019 owing to the attacks in New Zealand and Sri Lanka.

There has been a fluctuation in terrorism deaths in countries involved in minor armed-conflict, which is where there were between 25 and 1000 battle-related deaths in a single year. Although terrorism deaths in minor armed-conflict countries declined by 30 per cent in 2019, terrorism deaths are still over three times higher than in 2002, representing the growing

FIGURE 3.2  
**Distribution of deaths from terrorism, 2002–2019**

In 2019, 63 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism, the lowest number since 2013.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

FIGURE 3.3  
**Deaths from terrorism by conflict type, 2002–2019**

Over 96 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurred in countries currently experiencing a conflict.



Source: UCDP ACD, START GTD, IEP calculations

threat of ‘medium-intensity’ terrorism.

As shown in Figure 3.4, deaths from conflict and deaths from terrorism tend to move in tandem. The last decade has seen a significant increase in both the level of conflict and the impact of terrorism around the world. In 2014, battle-related deaths reached a 25-year high while deaths from terrorism reached their highest level since the GTD began collecting data. While the total number of deaths from terrorism is much smaller than the total number of battle deaths, the percentage change in both has been very similar, particularly from 2011 onwards.

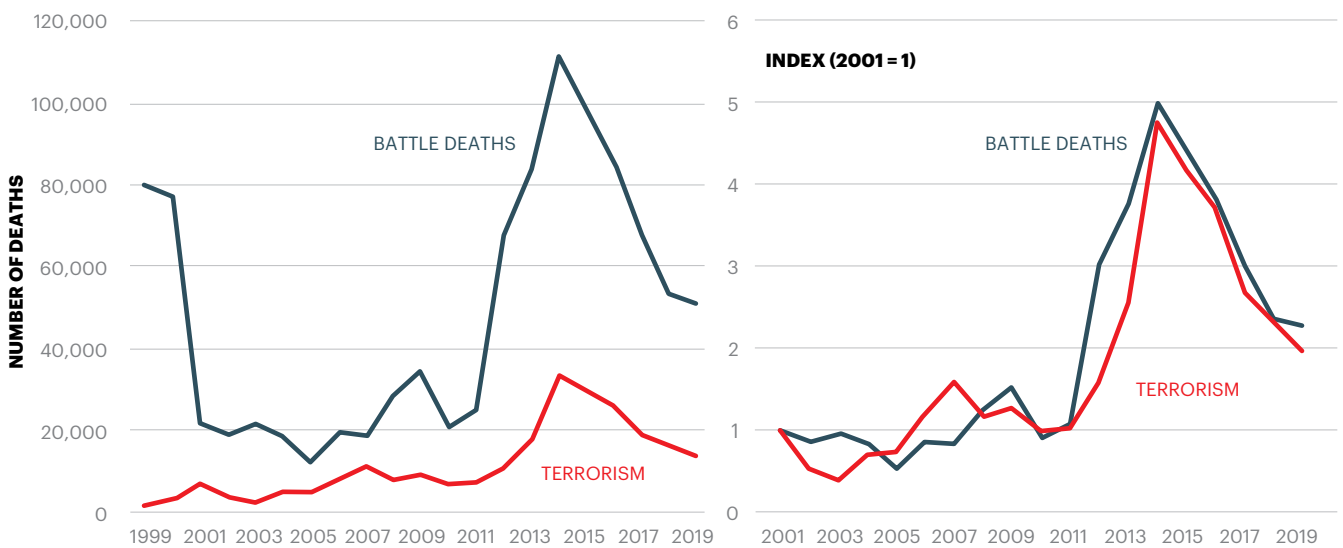
Although deaths from terrorism and deaths from conflict tend to move in tandem, terrorism still represents a distinct tactic

and type of conflict, even with countries involved in an ongoing armed conflict.

Figure 3.5 shows deaths by target type in countries in conflict, from 2002 to 2019. Even in conflict situations, far more people are killed in terrorist attacks targeting civilians, than attacks targeting police, the military, and infrastructure targets. Over the last two decades just under 99,000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks on police, the military, and infrastructure targets in conflict. By contrast, nearly 126,000 people were killed in attacks targeting civilians in conflict countries.

FIGURE 3.4  
**Deaths from terrorism and conflict, 1999–2019**

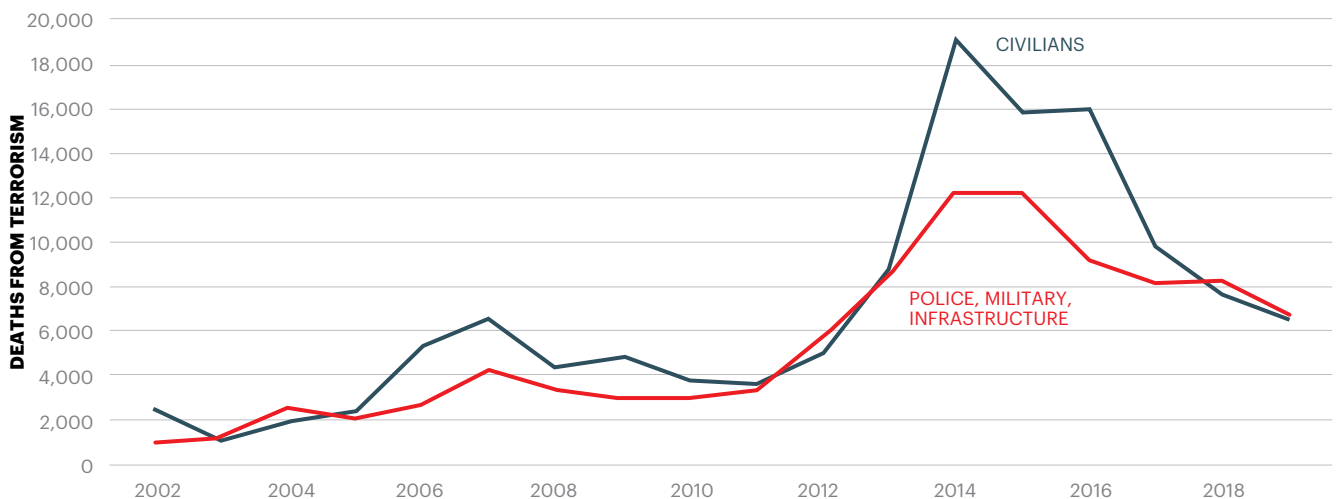
Both deaths from terrorism and battle deaths rose nearly 400 per cent between 2001 and 2014.



Source: UCDP, START GTD, IEP calculations

FIGURE 3.5  
**Deaths from terrorism by target type in countries in conflict, 2002–2019**

Even in conflict situations, civilians are more likely to be terrorist targets.



Source: UCDP, START GTD, IEP calculations

## REGIONAL TRENDS

The impact of terrorism lessened in seven of the nine regions of the world in 2019, which saw a consistent decline in terror-related deaths and incidents.

The largest improvement occurred in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for the second consecutive year. South Asia had the largest deterioration, followed by Central America and the Caribbean. The deterioration in South Asia was predominantly caused by the large increase in deaths in Sri Lanka as a result of the Easter Sunday bombings. In Central America and the Caribbean, the deterioration was due to an increase in the number of countries recording terrorist activity compared to the previous year, including Costa Rica, Honduras and Trinidad and Tobago. Table 3.1 shows the regions of the world by their average GTI score for 2019, as well as changes in score from 2018 and from 2002, the first year measured by the GTI.

TABLE 3.1

### Average GTI score and change by region

South Asia had the highest average impact from terrorism in 2019.

Region	Overall Score	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
South Asia	5.829	0.702	0.270
North America	4.216	-0.440	-0.202
Middle East and North Africa	3.950	1.600	-0.349
sub-Saharan Africa	2.739	1.056	-0.035
South America	2.525	1.056	-0.260
Asia-Pacific	2.108	0.475	-0.034
Europe	1.414	0.323	-0.124
Russia and Eurasia	1.399	-0.388	-0.338
Central America and the Caribbean	1.099	0.669	0.079

In 2019, South Asia was the region with the highest average score on the GTI, a position it has held since 2002. Conversely, Central America and the Caribbean recorded the lowest impact of terrorism for the past 17 years, although it was one of the two regions to deteriorate in the last year.

A total of 237 deaths from terrorism have been recorded in Central America and the Caribbean since 2002, with 11 per cent of those occurring in 2019. Although the region has recorded less terrorism deaths compared to other regions, it has suffered greatly from other forms of violent conflict in the past decade.

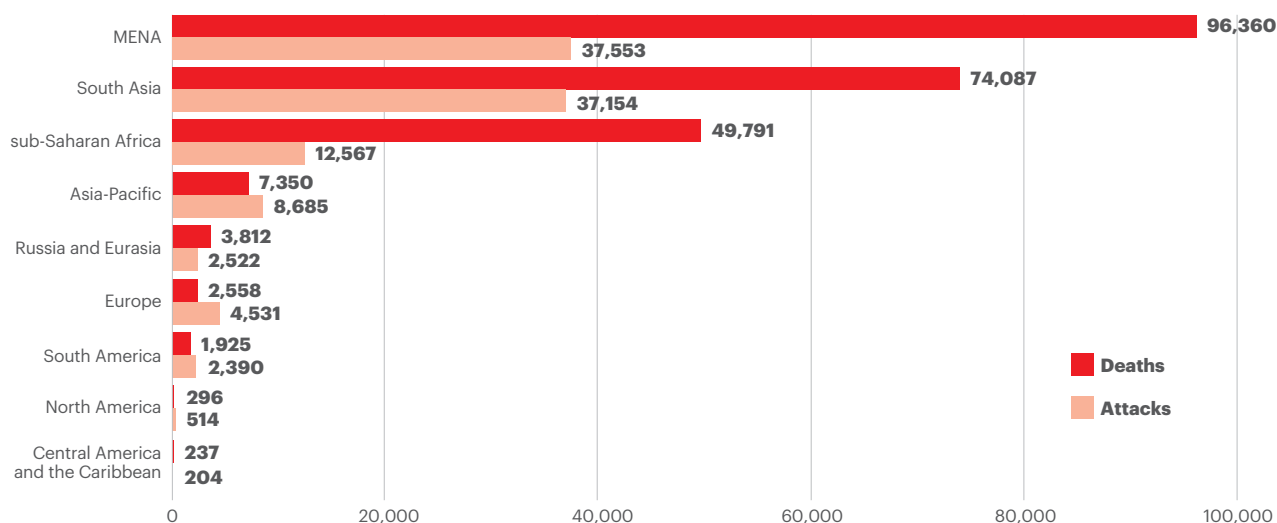
Between 2002 and 2019, the largest number of deaths from terrorism was recorded in MENA, at more than 96,000 deaths. South Asia recorded roughly 74,000 deaths over the same period, with another 50,000 occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. MENA, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa also had the most lethal terrorist attacks, averaging 2.6, two and four people killed per attack respectively. Conversely, in Asia-Pacific, Europe, South America and North America, there were more terrorist attacks than total deaths from terrorism. Figure 3.6 shows total deaths and attacks for all regions from 2002 to 2019.

**"The impact of terrorism lessened in seven of the nine regions of the world in 2019."**

FIGURE 3.6

### Attacks and deaths from terrorism by region, 2002–2019

The largest number of deaths was recorded in the MENA region, with over 90,000 deaths from terrorism since 2002.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Although the MENA region has had the highest number of deaths from terrorism since 2002, the region has recorded a substantial decline in the past three years. Deaths in MENA have fallen by 87 per cent since 2016, reaching the lowest level since 2003. More recently, terrorist activity has been concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with both regions recording more terrorism deaths than MENA in 2018 and 2019. Collectively, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounted for over 80 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2019. Figure 3.7 shows the trend in terrorism deaths by region since 2002.

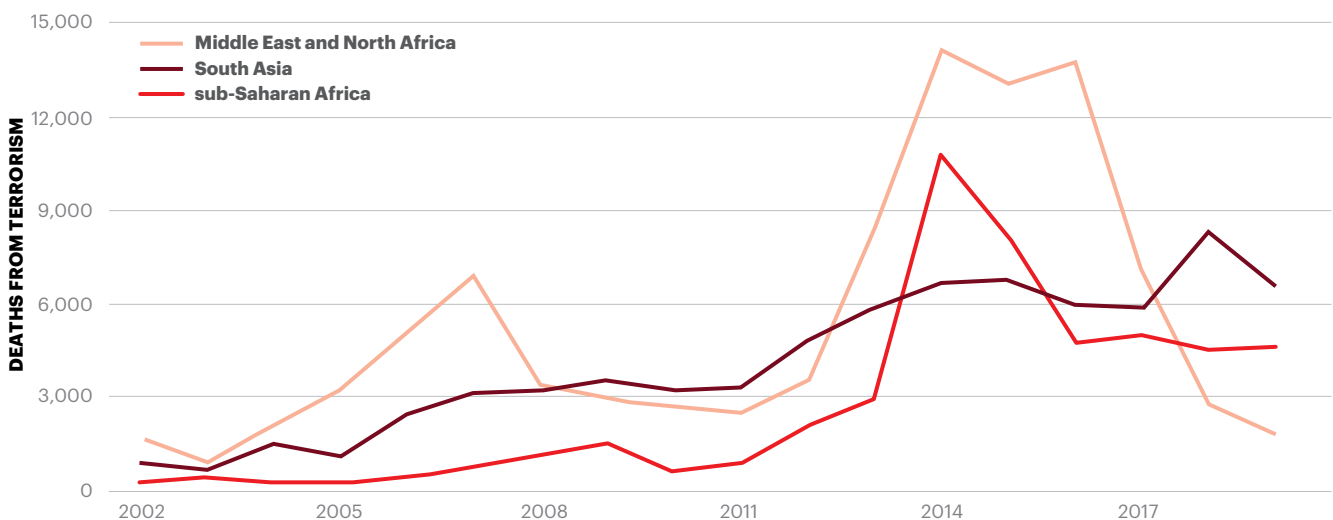
most regions, the majority of attacks came from bombings and explosions, followed by armed assaults.

Bombings and explosions were the most common tactic in the MENA region, where they accounted for two thirds of all attacks. However, in North America arson attacks against places of worship were the most common tactic used, with 112 attacks recorded since 2002. Although there were far fewer total attacks in Central America and the Caribbean, assassinations as a percentage of total attacks were higher there than in any other region.

There were also variations by region in the type of terrorist attacks most commonly employed, as shown in Figure 3.8. In

FIGURE 3.7  
**Trend in terrorism deaths by region, 2002–2019**

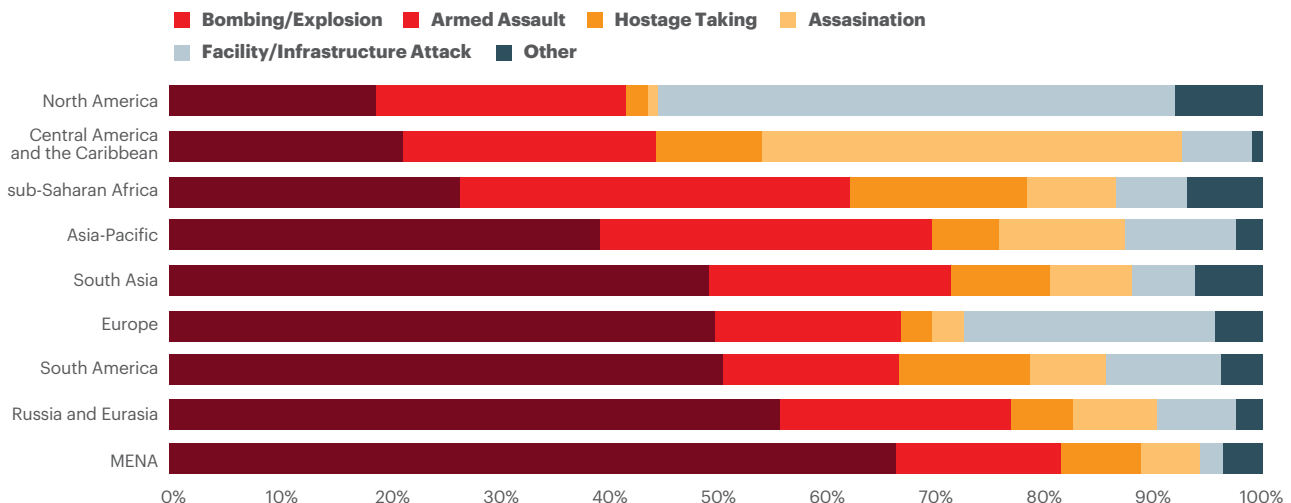
In 2018, the number of terrorism deaths in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa exceeded the number of deaths recorded in MENA.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

FIGURE 3.8  
**Type of attack by region, 2002–2019**

Bombings and armed assaults are the most common forms of terrorism in most regions.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

## Asia-Pacific

TABLE 3.2

### Asia-Pacific GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Philippines	7.099	10	1.093	-0.041
Thailand	5.783	21	1.737	-0.246
Myanmar	5.543	25	2.312	0.025
Indonesia	4.629	37	-1.770	-0.441
New Zealand	4.337	42	4.261	4.194
China	3.587	53	0.482	-0.879
Australia	2.148	74	2.033	-0.504
Malaysia	2.090	76	1.594	-0.587
Japan	2.014	79	0.470	-0.277
Papua New Guinea	0.691	94	0.233	-0.673
South Korea	0.656	99	0.503	0.360
Taiwan	0.607	101	0.607	-0.401
Laos	0.439	106	-1.304	-0.594
Vietnam	0.420	107	0.115	-0.579
Cambodia	0.000	135	-3.127	0.000
Mongolia	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
North Korea	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Singapore	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Timor-Leste	0.000	135	-0.210	0.000
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>0.475</b>	<b>-0.034</b>

Eleven out of 19 countries in Asia-Pacific improved from 2018 to 2019, reducing the impact of terrorism in the region for the second consecutive year. Five countries showed no change in score last year. Besides Cambodia, these were all countries that showed no terrorist activity since at least 2008. A further three deteriorated in 2019 as a result of an escalating impact of terrorism: Myanmar, New Zealand and South Korea.

New Zealand recorded the largest deterioration in GTI score in 2019 due to the Christchurch attacks of March 2019. Fifty-one people were killed when an anti-Muslim extremist carried out two consecutive mass shootings at mosques in the city of Christchurch. Prior to this New Zealand had no deaths from terrorism.

China recorded the largest improvement in 2019, closely followed by Papua New Guinea, Laos, Malaysia and Vietnam. Laos is one of just four countries in the region to have reduced the impact of terrorism below 2002 levels.

The Philippines was the most affected Asia-Pacific country in 2018, followed by Thailand. While some of their regional neighbours have experienced intermittent terrorist activity, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar and China have been consistently impacted for the last decade. Other than Myanmar, these countries recorded an improvement in their score.

Deaths from terrorism in Asia-Pacific account for just over three per cent of the global total since 2002, and of those 7,350 fatalities, over 3,000 have occurred in the Philippines.

The deadliest incident in the Philippines last year was an armed assault on civilians and military personnel that killed at least 15 and civilians and wounded a further 14 in the town of Igasan, Sulu. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) claimed responsibility for the attack. The jihadist militant group has been active since the early 1990s and is now considered the East Asia Division of ISIL. ASG was responsible for at least 14 terrorist attacks in the Philippines last year, resulting in 21 deaths.

Thailand recorded the second highest number of deaths in the region since 2002, with over 1,900 fatalities. Terrorism deaths in Thailand increased in 2019 for the first time since 2014, rising by 23 per cent.

## Central America and the Caribbean

TABLE 3.3

### Central America and the Caribbean GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Regional Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Mexico	4.316	43	2.418	0.235
Haiti	2.355	72	0.395	0.175
Nicaragua	2.355	72	2.336	-0.597
Honduras	2.023	78	1.870	1.031
Costa Rica	1.066	89	1.066	1.066
Guatemala	0.663	97	-0.370	-0.668
Jamaica	0.229	115	0.229	-0.243
Trinidad & Tobago	0.162	120	0.162	0.143
Panama	0.019	132	-0.076	-0.019
Cuba	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Dominican Republic	0.000	135	0.000	-0.177
El Salvador	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
<b>Regional average</b>			<b>0.669</b>	<b>0.079</b>

Five out of 12 Central American and Caribbean countries deteriorated last year, resulting in an overall regional deterioration. Significant deteriorations in score were recorded in Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Haiti and Trinidad and Tobago.

Cuba and El Salvador have remained unaffected by terrorism over the study period, despite the fact that El Salvador regularly registers one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

Guatemala, Nicaragua, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Panama all improved in score from 2018 to 2019. Guatemala recorded the largest improvement in the region with no terrorist attacks recorded in 2019. Nicaragua recorded the second largest improvement in the region with incidents declining from seven in 2018 to three in 2019, and no deaths recorded. The Nicaraguan Patriotic Alliance (APN) claimed responsibility for three bombings, including one which damaged a bridge leading to Nicaragua's most important port.<sup>1</sup> The APN had not claimed responsibility for any attacks before 2019, and are believed to be an opposition group to the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega.<sup>2</sup>

Costa Rica recorded the largest deterioration in score in the region. The country had recorded no terrorist activity until 2019, when two terrorist incidents were recorded. The first bombing targeted headquarters of the legislative assembly, while the second targeted the offices of a television station, both in San Jose City. No fatalities were recorded from either attack.

Mexico has recorded the highest impact of terrorism in the region every year since 2007. Mexico recorded an 18 per cent increase in terrorism in 2019, driven by a noticeable increase in attacks on journalists. There were 26 terrorist attacks last year, with a total of 20 fatalities. Terrorism in Mexico has frequently targeted journalists and the media, with these attacks making up 39 per cent of attacks and 26 per cent of deaths recorded since 2002.

## Europe

Europe recorded improvements in 23 of its 36 countries in 2019 and is the third best performing region, after Central America and the Caribbean and Russia and Eurasia. Eight countries deteriorated last year, while five recorded no change in score.

Europe recorded 58 deaths from terrorism in 2019, of which 40 occurred in Turkey. Turkey remains the most affected country, although its score did improve based on a significant reduction in deaths and attacks from 2015 to 2019. Attacks on government and police targets declined by over 60 per cent in 2019. However, attacks against civilians increased by eight per cent.

The United Kingdom was the second most affected country in Europe. However, attacks fell by 17 per cent in 2019. There were four deaths recorded in 2019, up from two in 2018. Three fatalities were the result of a stabbing on London Bridge, attributed to a jihadi-inspired extremist. The New Irish Republican Army claimed responsibility for a shooting in Northern Ireland, which resulted in the death of a journalist. The majority of attacks in 2019 occurred in Northern Ireland, where 69 incidents were recorded. Terrorism in Northern Ireland remains largely related to the conflict between republicans and unionists there.

Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded the largest improvement in score in 2019, followed by Austria and Sweden. There were just two terrorist attacks recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019, compared to six the previous year. Overall, since 2002, the impact of terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina has improved. Out of 24 attacks recorded since 2002 none were attributed to known terrorist groups. The majority of attacks were attributed to unknown perpetrators, five to Muslim extremists and one to the Wahhabi Movement. Seven fatalities were recorded between 2002 and 2019, with none recorded in 2019.

Austria recorded no terrorist attacks in 2019, while Sweden recorded just one attack and no fatalities. This marks the lowest level of terrorist activity in Austria and Sweden for four and six years, respectively. The lone attack recorded in Sweden occurred when an anti-Muslim extremist opened fire on a mosque in Malmo.

Norway, Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands had the most severe deteriorations in 2019. Norway recorded one terrorism

death in 2019, a result of two coordinated attacks by the same perpetrator. The perpetrator, a white supremacist, carried out two shootings in the same day, including an attack against a mosque in Baerum.

TABLE 3.4

### Europe GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Regional Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Turkey	6.110	18	1.941	-0.425
United Kingdom	5.161	30	0.794	-0.269
France	4.614	38	0.874	-0.398
Greece	4.182	44	0.763	0.025
Germany	3.965	48	1.502	-0.295
Belgium	3.043	59	2.614	-0.593
Italy	3.043	59	0.422	-0.133
Sweden	2.892	61	2.797	-0.619
Ireland	2.845	62	2.759	0.125
Spain	2.810	63	-2.190	-0.545
Netherlands	2.689	66	1.276	0.372
Finland	1.721	83	1.721	-0.305
Denmark	1.484	85	1.484	0.527
Norway	1.297	87	1.297	1.221
Austria	1.016	91	1.006	-0.639
Albania	0.677	95	0.063	0.257
Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.677	95	-1.089	-0.711
Hungary	0.551	103	0.522	0.370
Montenegro	0.420	107	0.115	-0.579
Czechia	0.315	111	0.086	-0.551
Switzerland	0.286	113	-0.307	0.019
Poland	0.239	114	-0.200	-0.238
Lithuania	0.229	115	0.229	-0.229
Bulgaria	0.172	119	-1.417	-0.200
Cyprus	0.115	122	-0.295	-0.171
Latvia	0.115	122	-0.076	-0.114
North Macedonia	0.105	124	-3.973	-0.196
Estonia	0.057	126	0.000	-0.058
Serbia	0.057	126	0.057	-0.058
Slovakia	0.029	131	-0.124	-0.028
Croatia	0.000	135	-1.033	0.000
Iceland	0.000	135	0.000	-0.029
Kosovo	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Portugal	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Romania	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Slovenia	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
<b>Regional average</b>			<b>0.323</b>	<b>-0.124</b>

Denmark recorded two attacks in 2019, a minor escalation from 2018 when just one attack was recorded. The two attacks in 2019 were bombings, targeting a police station and a tax authority office, both in Copenhagen. No fatalities were reported and no group took responsibility for the attacks. Denmark has recorded



ten attacks and two deaths from terrorism since 2002, with both deaths attributed to jihadi-inspired extremists.

The Netherlands has recorded at least one terrorist attack every year since 2014. In 2019, four people were killed when a jihadi-inspired extremist opened fire on civilians on a tram in Utrecht. Of the remaining three attacks in 2019, two were committed by unknown perpetrators, while the remaining attack was attributed to animal rights extremists.

Hungary recorded one attack in 2019 after two years with no recorded terrorist attacks. Neo-Nazi extremists claimed responsibility for an arson attack on a Jewish community centre in the capital, Budapest. No fatalities or injuries were recorded.

## Middle East and North Africa

TABLE 3.5

### Middle East and North Africa GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Iraq	8.682	2	4.976	-0.570
Syria	7.778	4	7.768	-0.299
Yemen	7.581	6	4.713	0.017
Egypt	6.419	14	6.042	-0.377
Libya	6.250	16	6.250	-0.523
Sudan	5.401	26	-1.164	-0.407
Palestinian Territories	5.077	31	-0.999	-0.103
Saudi Arabia	5.000	32	2.995	-0.314
Israel	4.522	40	-2.253	-0.023
Iran	4.157	46	1.863	-0.560
Tunisia	3.858	49	0.279	-0.104
Lebanon	3.661	51	0.443	-0.752
Jordan	3.149	57	1.132	-0.046
Algeria	2.696	65	-4.468	-0.705
Bahrain	2.402	71	2.402	-0.799
Kuwait	1.795	81	1.451	-0.692
Morocco	0.565	102	0.565	-0.650
Qatar	0.014	133	0.014	-0.015
United Arab Emirates	0.000	135	0.000	-0.048
Oman	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>1.600</b>	<b>-0.349</b>

The MENA region recorded a substantial improvement last year with 18 countries improving, while only Yemen recorded a deterioration in score. This is the fourth year in a row that the region has improved.

Fatalities in MENA have accounted for 40 per cent of the global total deaths from terrorism since 2002. However, since the defeat of ISIL the region's share of the global total has dropped substantially, and in 2019, it accounted for only 13 per cent of total deaths, behind South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

In MENA, the largest decline in fatalities last year was in Iraq,

which had 47 per cent fewer deaths from terrorism in 2019. Syria followed, with nearly a 44 per cent reduction. The principal driver of these improvements was the reduction in attacks perpetrated by ISIL, which fell by 49 per cent in Iraq from 2018 to 2019. Conversely, in Syria in 2019, attacks by ISIL increased by 31 per cent. However, deaths fell by 67 per cent, indicating a decline in lethality. ISIL attacks in Syria resulted in an average of 3.8 deaths per attack in 2019, compared to 15.1 in 2018.

ISIL have been the deadliest terror group in MENA, accounting for over 28,000 terrorism deaths since 2014. However, in recent years, coalition forces have made significant progress in reducing the capacity of ISIL to wage mass casualty attacks. In March 2019, the US-led international coalition, alongside local forces, succeeded in regaining the remaining territory held by ISIL in Syria. Later, in October 2019, the US conducted a military operation that resulted in the death of the then ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>3</sup> Following its decline, remnants of ISIL in Iraq and Syria have reverted to clandestine tactics – operating in covert networks with an insurgent presence in rural parts of Iraq and Syria.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond Iraq and Syria, ISIL affiliate groups and supporters across the MENA region remained active in 2019, including in Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Yemen. ISIL continued its terrorist campaign in Egypt through its Sinai Province. In 2019, the Sinai Province of the Islamic State was responsible for 58 per cent of attacks in Egypt, accounting for over half of terrorist deaths. Although Tunisia increased counter-terrorism efforts against ISIL-affiliated groups, it did record a slight increase in ISIL-related terrorist attacks in 2019.<sup>5</sup>

In Libya, the Fezzan Province of the Islamic State were responsible for the majority of terrorist attacks by known groups in 2019, accounting for 63 per cent of attacks and 92 per cent of deaths, resulting in 22 fatalities. Al Qaeda and its affiliates also remain active in the region. However, there has been a substantial reduction in activity in the last five years.

Bahrain, Lebanon, Algeria, Kuwait and Morocco had the largest improvements in score in the region. In 2019, Bahrain did not record a single terror attack for the first time since 2009. Bahrain has recorded a total of 165 terror attacks since 2002, resulting in 29 fatalities. However, the majority of attacks in Bahrain do not result in fatalities. Since 2002, only 15 per cent of attacks in Bahrain resulted in fatalities, and only three attacks caused more than one fatality.

Lebanon recorded four attacks in 2019, down from the peak of 132 in 2014. Of the four attacks, two were attributed to ISIL, while the remaining two were attributed to unknown perpetrators. Algeria, Kuwait and Morocco recorded no attacks in 2019. In Algeria, this marked the first year without terror attacks since the GTI recording period began.

Yemen was the only MENA country to deteriorate in 2019. Yemen recorded a surge in terrorist activity in 2019, with attacks and deaths increasing by 67 and 31 per cent, respectively. This was primarily driven by a 106 per cent increase in attacks attributed to Ansar Allah. This follows a trend of increased terrorist activity since the onset of the civil war in 2015 as terrorist groups continue to exploit the security vacuum created

by ongoing conflict between the Saudi-backed Yemeni government and Iran-backed Houthi rebels.<sup>6</sup>

Since 2002, Yemen has recorded approximately 4,000 terror attacks and 6,000 deaths from terrorism. The majority of these deaths were attributed to Houthi extremists, accounting for 47 per cent, followed by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) at 28 per cent. Though comparatively smaller, ISIL's Yemen branches have perpetrated 77 attacks since 2015, resulting in over 600 fatalities. ISIL-affiliates in Yemen have conducted attacks against AQAP as well as attacks against police and military targets and civilians.<sup>7</sup>

## North America

TABLE 3.6

### North America GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
United States of America	5.260	29	-2.911	0.067
Canada	3.171	56	2.031	-0.470
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>-0.440</b>	<b>-0.202</b>

The number of deaths from terrorism rose in North America, with 39 deaths recorded in 2019, up from 27 in 2018. However, the total number of incidents fell from 71 to 58, an 18 per cent decrease. The last six years have seen a sustained rise in terrorism in the region, with at least 30 attacks and 20 deaths recorded across the US and Canada for every year since 2014. By contrast, between 2002 and 2013 there was only one year with more than 20 deaths, and only one year with more than 30 recorded attacks.

The US experienced a deterioration in the impact of terrorism in 2019, with 53 recorded terrorist attacks, and 39 deaths from terrorism. Of those 39 deaths, 34 were attributed to far-right extremists, reflecting the growing prominence of politically motivated terrorism in the US, and far-right terrorism in particular. By contrast, religiously motivated terrorism continued to fall, with four deaths attributed to Islamic extremists in 2019, down from a peak of 53 in 2016.

Overall, since 2002 there have been 133 deaths in the US which IEP attributes to politically motivated groups and individuals, compared to 118 deaths attributed to religiously motivated groups. The shift from Islamist to far-right terrorism has also been mirrored by a shift away from terrorism affiliated with specific groups, towards lone actors who are driven by a specific ideology, but are not formally affiliated with a specific terrorist group. Of the 53 attacks recorded in 2019, just two were attributed to a specific terrorist group.

The impact of terrorism fell in Canada, with no deaths being recorded in 2019, down from 10 the previous year. This marks the first year since 2015 that Canada recorded no deaths from terrorism. Of the five recorded attacks in 2019, two were attributed to far-right extremists, while three had unknown perpetrators. Since 2002, Canada has recorded 57 total attacks,

and 24 deaths from terrorism. As with the US, these deaths have largely been attributed to jihadist groups or unaffiliated far-right individuals.

## Russia and Eurasia

TABLE 3.7

### Russia and Eurasia GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Ukraine	4.692	36	3.106	-0.768
Russia	4.542	39	-2.292	-0.356
Tajikistan	4.180	45	1.445	0.232
Kyrgyzstan	0.950	92	-0.857	-0.688
Kazakhstan	0.901	93	0.519	-0.665
Georgia	0.635	100	-2.198	-0.700
Armenia	0.530	104	-0.590	-0.643
Azerbaijan	0.296	112	-1.270	-0.402
Moldova	0.057	126	0.019	-0.058
Uzbekistan	0.010	134	-2.077	-0.009
Belarus	0.000	135	-0.229	0.000
Turkmenistan	0.000	135	-0.229	0.000
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>-0.388</b>	<b>-0.338</b>

The average impact of terrorism score improved in the Russia and Eurasia region, with nine countries recording improvements, two recording no change and only Tajikistan recording a deterioration. Overall the region recorded 33 terrorist attacks in 2019, down from 57 in 2018, with 52 deaths being recorded. The number of people killed in terrorist attacks in the region has fallen every year for the past five years, down from a peak of 710 deaths in 2014. Both Belarus and Turkmenistan received scores of zero, meaning that neither has registered a terrorist attack in the past five years.

Tajikistan was the only country in the region to register a deterioration on the GTI in 2019. In the past year there was only one recorded attack in the country, which resulted in 32 deaths. The attack took place in a prison where prisoners associated with ISIL instigated a riot, stabbing both guards and inmates before taking other inmates hostage. Of the 32 dead, 24 were suspected members of ISIL.

Although Russia had the second highest score in the region, the impact of terrorism continued to improve, with the number of attacks falling by 52 per cent, and deaths from terrorism falling by 30 per cent. Sixteen people were killed in terrorist attacks in Russia in 2019, the lowest of any year between 2002 and 2019. Attacks were also at a record low. Deaths attributed to the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State fell for the first time since the group became active in Russia. Just four deaths were attributed to the group in 2019, compared to 20 in 2018.

Ukraine remains the country in the region with the highest impact of terrorism, and the largest increase in terrorism from 2002 to 2019. However, the level of terrorism has fallen

significantly since its peak five years ago. In 2014, there were 407 attacks and 651 deaths from terrorism in Ukraine. By 2019, the level of terrorism had fallen to 22 attacks and just four deaths. Of those attacks, five were attributed to various militias, with the remainder having unknown perpetrators.

## South America

TABLE 3.8

### South America GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Colombia	6.100	19	-0.940	0.179
Chile	4.031	47	3.466	-0.127
Venezuela	3.658	52	2.084	-0.444
Bolivia	2.795	64	2.795	-0.593
Ecuador	2.606	67	0.865	-0.033
Brazil	2.443	68	1.696	-0.129
Paraguay	2.414	70	1.905	-0.705
Peru	2.141	75	-1.472	-0.707
Argentina	1.024	90	0.776	-0.656
Guyana	0.477	105	0.358	0.439
Uruguay	0.086	125	0.086	-0.086
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>1.056</b>	<b>-0.260</b>

There was an improvement in the impact of terrorism in South America over the past year, with nine countries improving their score, and just two recording a deterioration. Total deaths from terrorism fell by 22 per cent, from 150 in 2018 to 117 in 2019. However, the overall level of terrorism remains much higher than two decades ago, with nine countries increasing their levels of terrorism in 2019 compared to 2002. In total, there have been 1925 deaths from terrorism in South America since 2002, the third lowest total of any region.

Colombia has the highest impact of terrorism in the region, and also had the second biggest increase in score over the past year. Deaths from terrorism rose from 96 in 2018 to 112 in 2019, with the number of incidents also rising, from 166 to 194. Of the deaths attributed to known terrorist groups, over 96 per cent were attributed to either the National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN) or to dissident Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) members, who announced a rearmament in 2019.<sup>8</sup> There have also been reports of meetings and possible cooperation between the two groups.<sup>9</sup> Despite the increase in terrorism in Colombia, the number of people killed remains much lower than the 300 deaths recorded in 2002.

Peru recorded the largest improvement in the impact of terrorism in the region. There were no incidents or deaths from terrorism in Peru in 2019, down from four deaths and four incidents in 2018. All four deaths in 2018 were attributed to Shining Path, a revolutionary communist party and terrorist organisation that has been responsible for over 75 per cent of all deaths since 2002. Despite a resurgence in activity in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, activity from the group has declined

since 2010, with 14 deaths attributed to the group since then, compared to 61 deaths from 2002 to 2009.

Chile had the largest increase in score since 2002, although the impact of terrorism did fall in 2019. There were 140 attacks and five deaths from terrorism recorded over the past decade, compared to just 23 attacks and no deaths from 2002 to 2009. There were 27 terrorist attacks in the country in 2019, a third 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 34 attacks attributed to Mapuche extremists since 2016. The majority of these attacks have been directed against business and industry active in the region.

## South Asia

TABLE 3.9

### South Asia GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Afghanistan	9.592	1	4.046	-0.013
Pakistan	7.541	7	1.518	-0.361
India	7.353	8	0.009	-0.167
Sri Lanka	6.065	20	0.427	2.496
Nepal	5.340	27	-0.758	0.244
Bangladesh	4.909	33	-0.326	-0.299
Bhutan	0.000	135	0.000	-0.010
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>0.702</b>	<b>0.270</b>

South Asia has the highest average GTI score of any region, a position it has held since the inception of the GTI in 2002. The impact of terrorism increased in the region from 2018 to 2019, owing to deteriorations in score in Sri Lanka and Nepal. However, there were improvements elsewhere in the region, with Afghanistan registering an improvement in score and a reduction in total deaths in terrorism for the first time in the past five years. This reduction was driven by a decrease in terrorism deaths attributed to the Taliban and the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State following increased counter-terrorism operations by US and Afghan forces.

The region is home to three of the ten countries which are amongst the worst ten for the impact of terrorism: Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. 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.

The largest deterioration in the region occurred in Sri Lanka, which saw deaths from terrorism rise from one in 2018, to 266 in 2019. This was the first time in a decade that Sri Lanka recorded more than a hundred deaths from terrorism in a single year. All 266 deaths occurred during the series of attacks on Easter Sunday, in which eight suicide bombers attacked three churches and three hotels in Colombo. The attacks were carried out by National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a Sri Lankan jihadist group that has pledged allegiance to ISIL. Taken as a single

incident, this series of bombings was the deadliest terrorist attack of 2019, and a rare instance of Islamist violence in a country where over 85 per cent of attacks with a known perpetrator since 2002 were attributed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The biggest improvement in the impact of terrorism in South Asia occurred in Pakistan, with the number of incidents dropping from 369 in 2018 to 279 in 2019. Deaths from terrorism also fell to 300, down from 543 in the prior year. This was the lowest number of deaths from terrorism recorded in a single year in Pakistan since 2006, with total deaths having fallen 87 per cent since the peak of 2360 deaths in 2013. The fall in the impact of terrorism was largely the result of a fall in activity of both of Pakistan's most active terrorist groups, the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State, and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The Khorasan Chapter had the most notable decline, with deaths attributed to the group falling from 244 in 2018, to nine in 2019.

## Sub-Saharan Africa

The impact of terrorism improved overall in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019, with 22 countries recording an improvement, 12 recording a deterioration, and ten countries recording no terrorist activity whatsoever. However, while there was an average improvement, a number of countries experienced significant deteriorations.

Of the ten countries globally that had the largest deteriorations in deaths from terrorism, seven were in sub-Saharan Africa. Overall, deaths from terrorism in the region remained stable at 4,635, compared to 4,523 in 2018. Whilst this is still lower than the peak seen in 2014, it is a 200 per cent increase from a decade ago. In total, just under 50,000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks in the region since 2002.

Burkina Faso, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali had the largest deteriorations in the number of people killed in terrorist attacks.

Burkina Faso had the largest increase in deaths from terrorism, rising by almost 600 per cent from 2018 to 593 in 2019. Although the majority of deaths were attributed to either unknown groups or to unspecified Muslim extremists, it is suspected that a large number of these attacks were the work of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). There were 94 deaths attributed to this group in 2019. The increase in terrorist activity in Burkina Faso is part of a larger increase across the Sahel region, with similar surges seen in Mali and Niger over the past few years.

Mozambique had the second largest increase in deaths from terrorism, and had the largest increase in terrorist activity in sub-Saharan Africa outside of the Sahel. Total deaths from terrorism in the country rose from 133 in 2018 to 319 in 2019, a 140 per cent increase. Much of this increase can be attributed to the Central African Province of the Islamic State, which recorded nine attacks and was responsible for 83 deaths in 2019.

Nigeria is the country most impacted by terrorism in the region. However, it also recorded the biggest improvement, with deaths

TABLE 3.10

## Sub-Saharan Africa GTI score, rank and change in score, 2002–2019

Country	Overall Score	Overall Rank	Change 2002-2019	Change 2018-2019
Nigeria	8.314	3	4.805	-0.286
Somalia	7.645	5	4.572	-0.157
Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.178	9	3.121	0.138
Mali	7.049	11	7.049	0.371
Burkina Faso	6.755	12	6.755	1.336
Cameroon	6.627	13	6.579	-0.012
Mozambique	6.400	15	6.314	0.840
Central African Republic	6.241	17	6.241	-0.382
South Sudan	5.726	22	5.726	-0.613
Kenya	5.644	23	1.011	-0.100
Niger	5.617	24	5.350	0.020
Ethiopia	5.307	28	3.927	-0.039
Chad	4.829	34	3.821	0.067
Burundi	4.702	35	-0.796	-0.400
South Africa	4.358	41	1.272	-0.154
Rwanda	3.754	50	1.394	0.805
Angola	3.429	54	-2.927	-0.355
Uganda	3.278	55	-2.391	-0.704
Tanzania	3.112	58	-0.482	-0.160
Zimbabwe	2.443	68	-0.801	-0.392
Republic of the Congo	2.043	77	-1.628	-0.645
Côte d'Ivoire	1.945	80	-0.725	-0.653
Ghana	1.743	82	1.743	0.184
Malawi	1.635	84	1.635	0.972
Gabon	1.430	86	1.430	0.879
Madagascar	1.190	88	-0.273	-0.767
Benin	0.663	97	0.663	0.663
Guinea	0.410	109	-3.800	-0.561
Senegal	0.391	110	-3.281	-0.795
Sierra Leone	0.229	115	-3.632	-0.229
Liberia	0.191	118	-1.849	0.086
Zambia	0.153	121	-1.409	-0.152
Lesotho	0.048	129	0.048	-0.047
Djibouti	0.038	130	0.038	-0.282
Botswana	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Eritrea	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
The Gambia	0.000	135	-0.076	0.000
Guinea-Bissau	0.000	135	-0.076	0.000
Equatorial Guinea	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Mauritania	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Mauritius	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
Namibia	0.000	135	-2.746	0.000
Eswatini	0.000	135	-0.124	0.000
Togo	0.000	135	0.000	0.000
<b>Regional Average</b>			<b>1.056</b>	<b>-0.035</b>

falling from 2043 in 2018 to 1245 in 2019, a 39 per cent decrease. However, despite the improvement it is still ranked as having the third highest impact from terrorism in the world. The primary driver of the fall in terrorist activity in Nigeria was a large reduction in terrorist deaths attributed to Fulani extremists, which fell from 1159 to 325 deaths. While deaths attributed to Boko Haram rose from 589 to 737. This is still considerably lower than during the peak of the group's activity in 2014, when over six thousand deaths were attributed to them.

There was also an improvement in Somalia, the country with the second highest score in the region. Deaths from terrorism declined by 12 per cent, from 646 in 2018 to 569 in 2019, and are now at their lowest level since 2011. Part of the decrease in terrorist activity in the country can be attributed to counter-terrorism operations carried out by the Somali government against Al-Shabaab, backed by the US and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). However, despite airstrikes against the group, it is estimated that they still have territorial control over 20 per cent of the country.

# 4

# The Shifting Landscape of Terrorism

## OVERVIEW

Although the overall impact of terrorism has declined in the last few years, new threats continue to emerge. The epicentre of jihadist terrorism has shifted, from the MENA region to sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, while far-right terrorism and politically-related violence is a growing threat in the West. The threat of terrorism remains widespread, with over 90 countries experiencing at least one terrorist incident in 2019, and 89 terrorist groups carrying out an attack that led to at least one death.

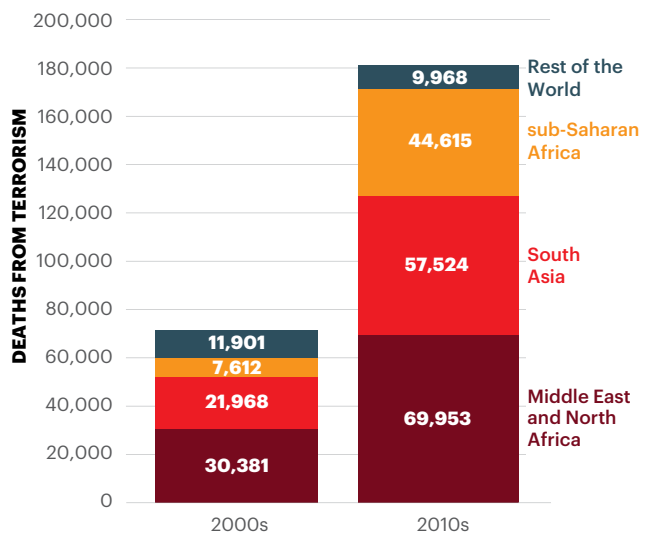
Figure 4.1 shows the trend in terror-related deaths over the past twenty years. The last decade was the deadliest period for terrorism on record, with over 182,000 terrorism deaths recorded between 2010 and 2019. Terrorist activity peaked in 2014, at the height of ISIL's territorial strength. However, deaths have fallen 59 per cent since their peak five years ago.

While ISIL has declined in Iraq and Syria, the group's influence continues to expand geographically. Through the spread of affiliates and provinces (*wilayats*) outside of the MENA region, ISIL has transformed from a territory-based group into a broader ideological movement with provinces emerging across sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Asia-Pacific and Russia and Eurasia.

In the West, there has been a recent increase in the frequency and intensity of far-right terrorism. In 2019, multiple mass casualty far-right attacks were recorded, including the Christchurch Mosque shootings in New Zealand, which killed 51 people.

FIGURE 4.1  
**Deaths from terrorism by decade, 2000–2019**

The last decade was the deadliest on record with over 182,000 terrorism deaths, compared to 72,000 in the 2000s.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

**"Ninety countries experienced at least one terrorist incident in 2019, and 89 terrorist groups carried out an attack that led to at least one death."**

## THE RISE, FALL AND SHIFT OF ISIL

BOX 4.1

### Classifying ISIL-related terrorism

This sub-section looks at ISIL-related terrorism over the last decade. IEP classifies data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) according to an individual or group's relationship with the core group of ISIL operating in Iraq and Syria.

Data for this section classifies ISIL-related terrorism into four categories:

1. Attacks conducted by ISIL core in Iraq and Syria
2. Attacks conducted by ISIL provinces (*wilayats*)
3. Attacks conducted by affiliate terror groups or cells that have pledged allegiance or support to ISIL
4. Attacks in the West that have either been directed by ISIL or carried out by perpetrator(s) who have pledged their allegiance or support.

IEP used two definitions to group organisations or individuals associated with ISIL: ISIL affiliates, and ISIL provinces.

**ISIL Provinces.** A number of terrorist organisations have financial and logistical ties to the core group in Iraq and Syria and have been accepted as formal provinces, while others maintain an informal relationship with ISIL. IEP uses classifications of ISIL provinces (*wilayats*) as listed in the GTD. In order to establish a province, jihadist groups in a given area must consolidate into a unified body and publicly declare their allegiance to ISIL's leader. Provinces must nominate a governor (Wali) and a religious leadership (Shura Council), formulate a military strategy to secure

territorial control and implement ISIL's version of Sharia Law.

**ISIL Affiliates.** In this section, affiliates refers to groups that have pledged allegiance or support to ISIL, or individuals with a confirmed link to ISIL. Affiliate attacks have either been directed by ISIL or linked indirectly to them through contact with the perpetrators. Some attacks have also been inspired by ISIL, but carried out by perpetrators who have had no direct contact with the organisation, but have pledged allegiance or support. Affiliate groups include existing jihadist groups, such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), that pledged allegiance to ISIL but were not considered official provinces.

For affiliate and ISIL-inspired individuals, IEP consulted the United Nations Security Council ISIL and Al Qa'ida sanctions list, as well as additional literature and news sources.

For provinces or affiliated groups that were active prior to the emergence of ISIL, attacks were included from the approximate date the group pledged allegiance or support to ISIL, or the date when ISIL confirmed the relationship. Due to the ambiguity surrounding the nature of relationships between ISIL and its self-proclaimed provinces, affiliate groups and ISIL-inspired individuals, the number of terrorism attacks and deaths in this sub-section are considered an approximate estimate.

## THE EMERGENCE AND EXPANSION OF ISIL

ISIL and its predecessors were responsible for at least 17 per cent of total deaths from terrorism over the past decade, or 31,516 deaths.

ISIL first emerged in Iraq in the early 2000s from local militant outfits, its most immediate predecessor being the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). ISI was formed in 2010 by surviving members of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) and disaffected former members of the US-trained Sons of Iraq that supported US operations to dismantle AQI before the 2011 withdrawal. ISIL formally emerged in 2014 when emir Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared an Islamic Caliphate in parts of Iraq and Syria.<sup>1</sup>

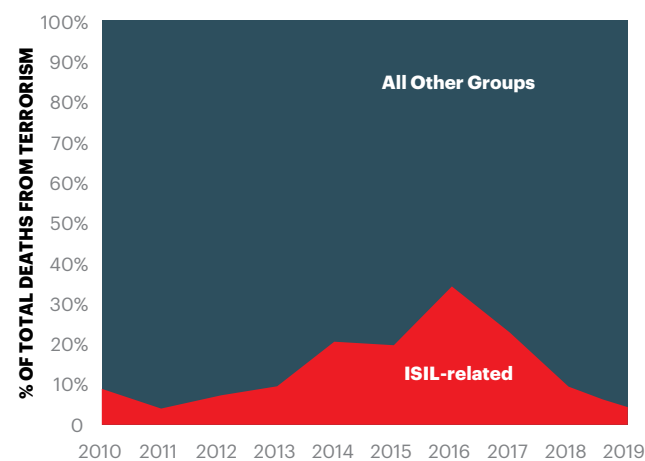
ISIL had significant territorial gains in 2014, capturing the cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria. At the height of its power in late 2014, ISIL held an estimated 100,000km<sup>2</sup> of territory, and imposed its rule over 11 million people across Iraq and Syria. ISIL was able to levy taxes and seize oil fields across Iraq and Syria to generate revenue and provide utilities for those living under its control, garnering support and legitimacy.

ISIL were the deadliest terrorist organisation in the world for four consecutive years from 2014 to 2017. Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of total deaths from terrorism attributed to ISIL and its predecessors between 2010 and 2019.

FIGURE 4.2

### ISIL deaths as a percentage of total deaths from terrorism, 2010–2019

In 2016, ISIL accounted for over 34 per cent of global deaths from terrorism. This fell to four per cent in 2019.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Of the ten deadliest terror attacks in the past decade, ISIL claimed responsibility for five, including the Sinjar massacre in August 2014, claiming 953 lives, when ISIL captured the city of Sinjar in northern Iraq and neighbouring towns, killing or abducting thousands of Yazidi men, women and children.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIL consolidated territory and influence through the use of brutal violence and exploiting sectarian conflict to co-opt local disaffected individuals and groups. ISIL frequently utilised mass casualty suicide bombings, targeting civilians, police and military targets. Over the last decade, ISIL

conducted around 1,000 suicide bombings across Iraq and Syria, resulting in over 12,500 deaths.

At the height of its power, ISIL saw unprecedented numbers of foreign affiliates travel to Iraq and Syria to fight or live under its rule, with an estimated 40,000 foreign affiliates joining ISIL from at least 80 countries.<sup>3</sup>

ISIL relied upon social media as a tool to bolster its international appeal, inspire attacks in other parts of the world and attract new recruits. Between 2014 and 2017, ISIL-inspired attacks occurred in 12 Western countries including Australia, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States. At the same time, ISIL began to establish provinces abroad, while other jihadist groups in MENA, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific also pledged their allegiance or support to the group.

## THE DECLINE OF ISIL

ISIL's rapid expansion across Iraq and Syria prompted an international response. Counter-terrorism operations began in August 2014 with a US-led coalition launching airstrikes against ISIL in Iraq, and later expanding the campaign to Syria.<sup>4</sup>

Despite its strong military capabilities, ISIL began to weaken from 2015. Coalition airstrikes targeted ISIL fighting positions and oil fields, which provided much of its core revenue, while local government forces and other non-state armed groups proved successful in regaining lost territory.<sup>5</sup>

In late 2016, coalition forces led major offensives to retake the cities of Mosul and Raqqah, ISIL's self-proclaimed capitals in Iraq and Syria. The battle for Mosul lasted for nine months, resulting in an ISIL defeat in July 2017. In Raqqah, Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) launched a two-phase offensive, initially isolating key routes into Raqqah, before launching an offensive to regain control of the city.<sup>6</sup> By October 2017, ISIL fighters had surrendered in Raqqah and the group only retained a small piece of territory in Abu Kamal District in north-eastern Syria.<sup>7</sup>

By 2019, ongoing counter-terrorism operations against ISIL in Iraq and Syria had significantly reduced the group's territorial reach and influence in the region. In March 2019, US and Syrian forces regained the last remnants of ISIL territory in eastern Syria.<sup>8</sup> Later in the same year, the US conducted a military operation that resulted in the death of the then ISIL leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 4.3 illustrates the decline in ISIL terrorism deaths in line with its territorial contraction across Iraq and Syria. Between 2013 and 2016, at the height of ISIL's territorial control, most terrorist deaths were recorded in Baghdad, Mosul, Sinjar and Ramadi.

ISIL attacks fell considerably between 2017 and 2019. The majority of these attacks were recorded in Mosul as ISIL fought to retain control of the city. ISIL-related terrorism deaths in Mosul peaked in 2016 at 1,869. However, by 2019, deaths in the city had dropped to just four.

The lethality of ISIL attacks more than halved from an average



of 6.4 deaths per attack between 2013 and 2016, to three in the period between 2017 and 2019. ISIL's capacity to launch sophisticated, large-scale attacks was significantly hampered as the group lost territory, revenue and fighters. In response, ISIL changed tactics with a shift towards arson attacks and small-scale bombings in rural areas.

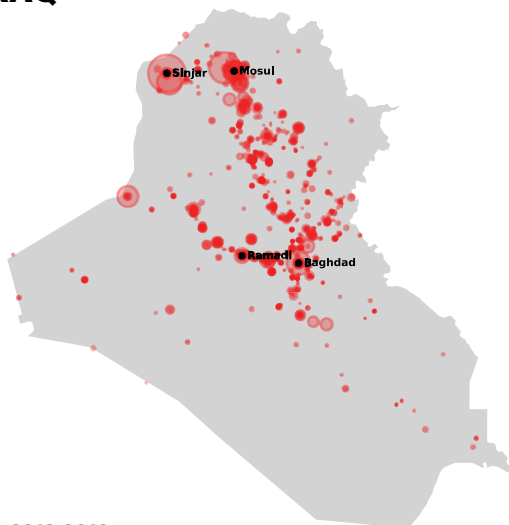
In Syria, ISIL activity was widespread between 2013 and 2016, with the majority of terrorism deaths recorded in Palmrya in

central Syria, Kobani in northern Syria and Hasakah in north-eastern Syria. However, in the last three years, ISIL activity in Syria was predominantly concentrated around Deir ez-Zor and Baghuz, as ISIL fought to retain its last territorial enclave. Despite the near-total loss of territory, around 10,000 ISIL fighters are estimated to remain in Iraq and Syria.<sup>10,11</sup>

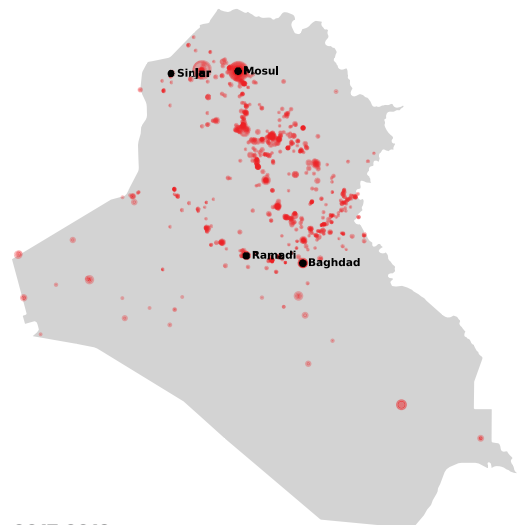
FIGURE 4.3

**Deaths from terrorism attributed to ISIL in Iraq and Syria, 2013–2019**

**IRAQ**

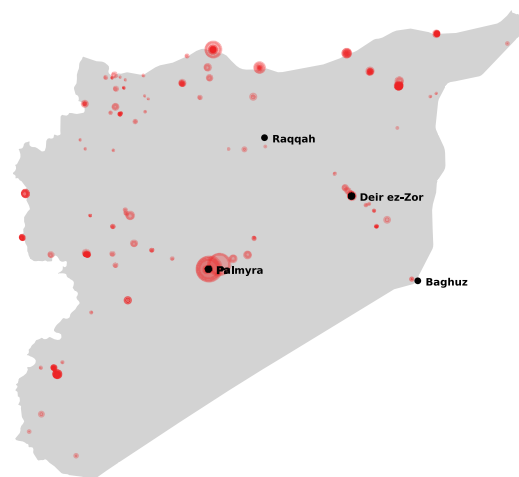


**2013-2016**  
Total deaths from terrorism: 19,673

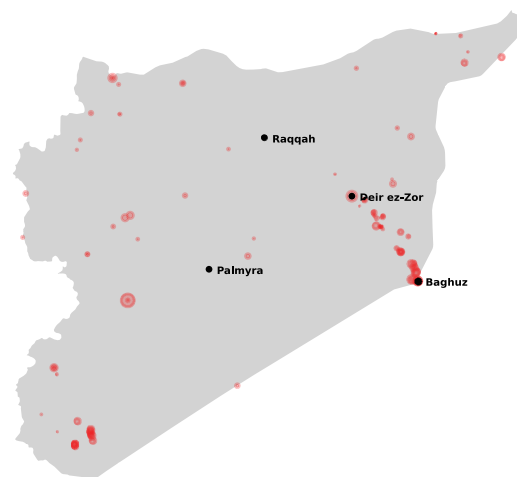


**2017-2019**  
Total deaths from terrorism: 4,815

**SYRIA**



**2013-2016**  
Total deaths from terrorism: 3,590



**2017-2019**  
Total deaths from terrorism: 1,624

Source: START GTD, IEP

## THE GLOBAL EXPANSION OF ISIL

While ISIL has been severely weakened, it has not been eliminated. Instead, ISIL's global provinces and affiliates have become increasingly deadly, indicating the strength of ISIL's brand of terrorism outside of Iraq and Syria.

Since their emergence in 2013, ISIL-related groups have recorded over 3,000 attacks in 48 countries other than Iraq and Syria, with 382 attacks in 27 countries conducted in 2019. ISIL's global reach has steadily expanded with provinces and affiliated groups conducting attacks across six regions: Asia-Pacific, Europe, MENA, Russia and Eurasia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Afghanistan, Egypt, Niger and Somalia have recorded the largest increases in ISIL-related terrorist activity since 2013.

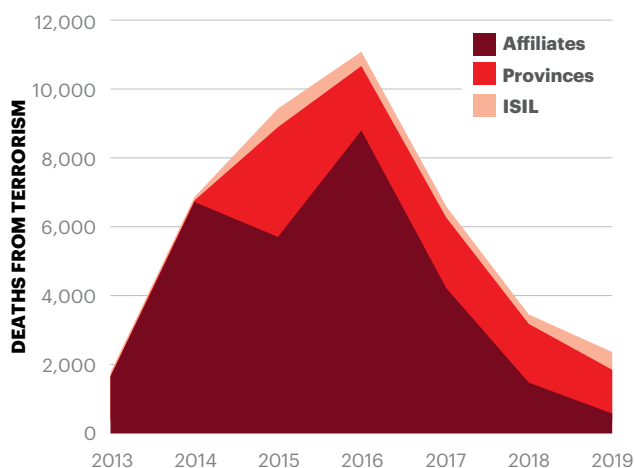
Figure 4.4 shows the trend in terrorism deaths by ISIL, provinces and affiliates since 2013. ISIL deaths peaked in 2016 with over 8,907 deaths recorded across Iraq and Syria. In the same year, ISIL provinces and affiliates were responsible for approximately 1,853 and 587 deaths, respectively.

Deaths caused by ISIL have fallen significantly since peaking in 2016, as a result of their territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria. However, ISIL provinces and affiliates have maintained a consistent level of terrorist activity and by 2018 they were deadlier than the core ISIL group. There were 2,395 ISIL-related terrorism deaths in 2019 with regional provinces and affiliates accounting for approximately 74 per cent of deaths.

Figure 4.5 shows the trend in the number of countries recording ISIL-related attacks over the past six years. In 2013, ISIL-related attacks were recorded outside of Iraq and Syria for the first time, with two attacks recorded in Turkey and one in Tunisia. Since then, the number of countries recording attacks by ISIL provinces and affiliates has increased substantially with the establishment of ISIL provinces in MENA, Russia and Eurasia,

FIGURE 4.4  
**Trend in ISIL-related terrorism deaths, 2013–2019**

Since 2013, ISIL and affiliated groups have caused over 40,000 terrorism deaths.



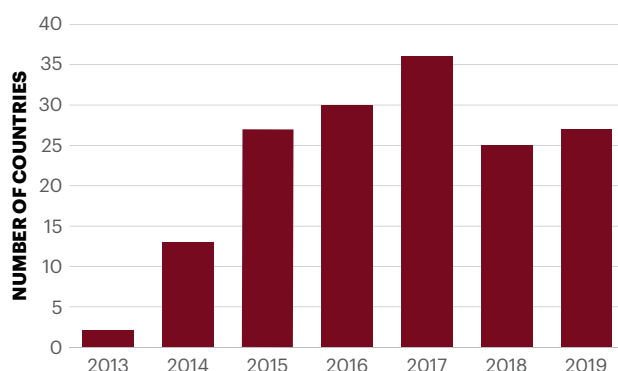
Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and pledges of allegiance and support from existing jihadist groups.

Thirteen countries recorded ISIL-related attacks in 2014 as ISIL established provinces, co-opted local jihadist groups and directed attacks across MENA. Existing terror groups in Asia Pacific and South Asia also pledged allegiance or support to ISIL, with the first ISIL-related attacks recorded in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Philippines. Meanwhile, Belgium and the United States, recorded the first ISIL-inspired attacks in the West, demonstrating the geographic scope of ISIL-related terrorism by 2014.

FIGURE 4.5  
**Number of countries recording ISIL-related attacks, 2013–2019**

The number of countries recording an ISIL-related attack peaked in 2017 at 36 countries, falling to 27 countries in 2019.

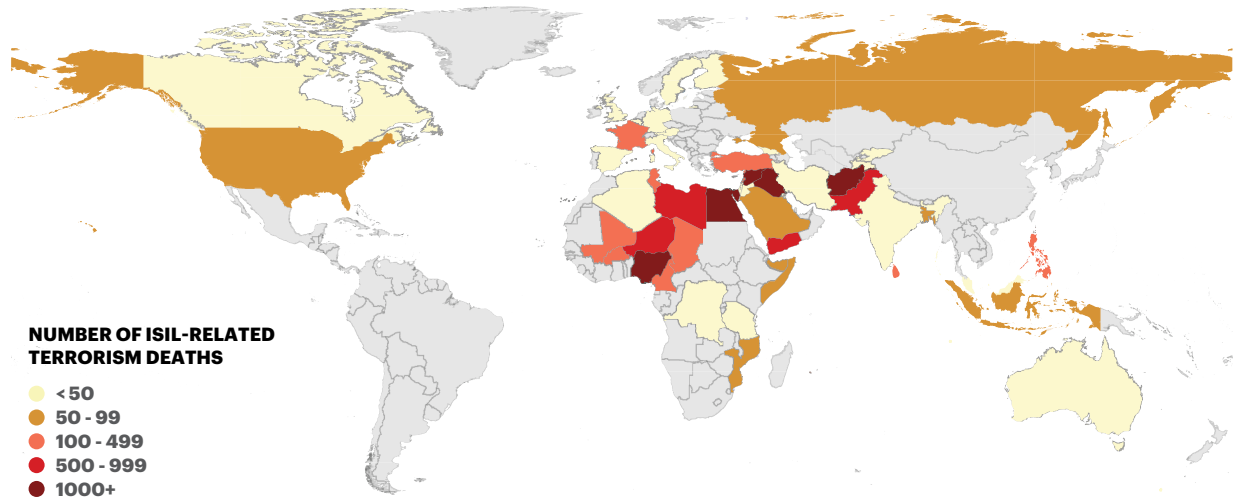


Source: START GTD, IEP calculations  
Note: excludes Iraq and Syria

In 2017, ISIL-related attacks occurred in seven regions, with the majority of attacks recorded in South Asia, followed by MENA and Asia-Pacific. ISIL-related groups and individuals continued to attack Western countries with Austria, Finland, Spain and Sweden recording attacks for the first time. In 2017, ISIL claimed responsibility for the deadliest terror attack in Spain of the last decade when an assailant drove a vehicle into a crowd of pedestrians along Las Ramblas in Barcelona. Fourteen civilians were killed in the attack and more than 100 were injured. ISIL-related terrorism also continued to spread into Russia and Eurasia and sub-Saharan Africa with Kyrgyzstan and Mali recording ISIL-related attacks for the first time.

**"Since their emergence in 2013, ISIL-related groups have recorded over 3,000 attacks in 48 countries, with 382 attacks in 27 countries conducted in 2019."**

**Global distribution of ISIL-related terrorism deaths, 2013–2019**



In 2019, 27 countries recorded ISIL-related terror attacks. Mozambique and Sri Lanka recorded attacks for the first time in 2019, bringing the total number of countries that have ever experienced ISIL-related attacks to 48, excluding Iraq and Syria. Map 4.1 shows the global distribution of ISIL-related attacks since 2013.

**ISIL-RELATED TERRORISM IN THE WEST**

Since 2014, at least 78 ISIL-related attacks occurred in 13 western countries causing 471 fatalities. Figure 4.6 shows the cumulative ISIL-related terrorism deaths in the West.

The first ISIL-related terrorism death in the West was recorded in May 2014 when assailants opened fire on visitors to the Jewish Museum in Brussels, Belgium. At least four people were killed in the attack. Mehdi Nemmouche, an ISIL affiliate who had recently returned from Syria, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Over half of ISIL-related terrorism deaths occurred in France, with 255 fatalities. ISIL claimed responsibility for the deadliest

terror attack in France’s history in November 2015 with eight coordinated attacks across Paris, including mass shootings and suicide bombings. The attacks resulted in 137 deaths and injured more than 400 people. Some of the perpetrators linked to the Paris Attacks, including the alleged leader Abdelhamid Abaaoud, had visited Syria and returned radicalised.<sup>13</sup>

In the United States, ISIL-related attacks caused 77 deaths between 2014 and 2019. All attacks were carried out by lone actors, and often involved firearms. The majority of these deaths occurred during a mass shooting in Orlando, Florida which resulted in 50 deaths. The assailant had pledged allegiance to ISIL and claimed the attacks were carried out in retaliation for US airstrikes in Iraq and Syria.

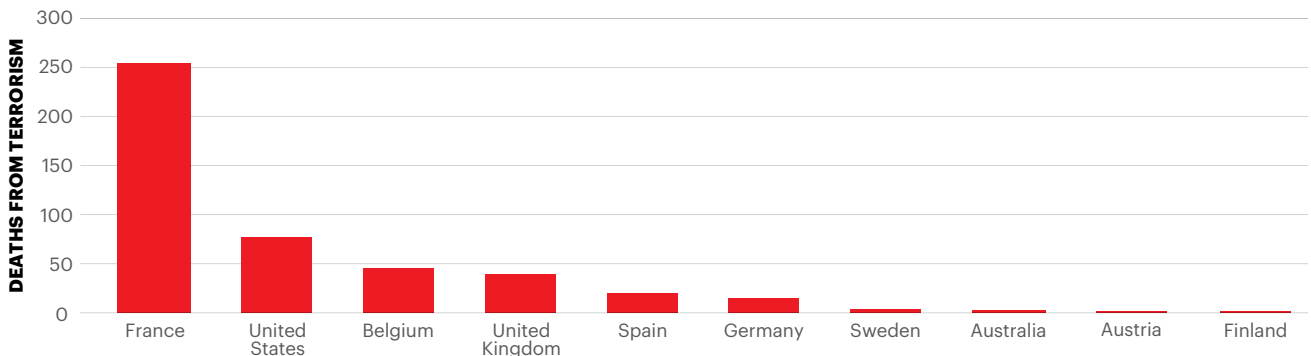
**DEADLIEST ISIL PROVINCES AND AFFILIATES**

Table 4.1 details the deadliest ISIL provinces and affiliates. The Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) has been the deadliest ISIL province since it emerged in 2015 and has been responsible for approximately 4,188 terrorism deaths. Formally

FIGURE 4.6

**ISIL-related deaths from terrorism in the West, 2014–2019**

France recorded over half of ISIL-related terrorism deaths in the West.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

TABLE 4.1

**Deadliest ISIL provinces and affiliates, 2013–2019**

Group	Year Formed	Location of Attacks	Estimated Group Size <sup>16</sup>	Deaths from Terrorism
Islamic State West Africa Province	2015	Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, Niger	3,500	4,188 <sup>17</sup>
Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State	2014	Afghanistan, India, Pakistan	2,200 <sup>18</sup>	3,134
Sinai Province of the Islamic State	2014	Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Territories	1,250	1,240
Tripoli Province, Barqa Province and Fezzan Province of the Islamic State	2014	Libya, Tunisia	500	725
Islamic State in the Greater Sahara	2016	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger	425	266

Source: START GTD, IEP, Warner and Hulme (2018)

a part of Boko Haram, the group pledged allegiance to ISIL and was accepted as a regional province in March 2015, when it subsequently renamed itself ISWAP. In 2016, a dispute over the leadership of ISWAP resulted in the emergence of two factions of the group, while one faction continued to operate as ISWAP, the other faction reverted to the use of Boko Haram's formal name Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad.<sup>15</sup>

Of the 4,188 terrorism deaths attributed to ISWAP, approximately 73 per cent occurred in Nigeria. Outside of Iraq and Syria, Nigeria has been the country most affected by ISIL-related terrorism. Terrorist violence by ISWAP has expanded into neighbouring countries with attacks in Niger, Chad and Cameroon accounting for 11, eight and seven per cent of ISWAP's total, respectively. With an estimated membership of approximately 3,500, ISWAP remains a major focus of ISIL's global propaganda and is considered the largest ISIL province outside of Iraq and Syria.<sup>19</sup>

The Khorasan Chapter was the second deadliest ISIL province or affiliate, responsible for 3,134 terrorism deaths in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Emerging in 2014, the Khorasan Chapter is comprised of local militants including members of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and estranged members of Lashkar-e Islam. After pledging allegiance to ISIL in January 2015, the Khorasan Chapter was predominantly focused in Afghanistan and has conducted over 350 attacks. Following territorial losses in Iraq and Syria, ISIL facilitated the relocation of militants to the Khorasan Chapter in Afghanistan.<sup>20</sup> The group also conducted attacks in Pakistan and India, accounting for 23 and three per cent of total attacks, respectively.

In Afghanistan, the Khorasan Chapter has mainly targeted civilians and police and military targets. The Khorasan Chapter were particularly deadly in Afghanistan given their use of suicide bombings, which accounted for around 25 per cent of attacks by the group but over 65 per cent of deaths. In 2019, the Khorasan Chapter faced increasing pressure by Afghan government forces, losing ground in its former strongholds of Nangarhar and Kunar in Afghanistan.<sup>21</sup> As a result, deaths and attacks by the group declined by 69 and 49 per cent, respectively. Despite its territorial losses, the group is still

capable of conducting large-scale attacks in urban areas such as Kabul. With an estimated fighting force of 2,200,<sup>22</sup> the group still poses a serious threat to the region.

Formally known as Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, the Sinai Province of the Islamic State was established in November 2014 after approaching ISIL operatives in Syria for financial support, weapons and tactical advice.<sup>23</sup> The Sinai Province was responsible for one of the deadliest ISIL-related attacks outside of Iraq and Syria in 2017 when the group claimed responsibility for the bombing of a Russian passenger plane. At least 311 people were killed and a further 127 were injured in the attack. Outside of Egypt, the Sinai Province also claimed responsibility for non-lethal attacks in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

ISIL announced its expansion into Libya in November 2014 with the establishment of three provinces: Barqa, Fezzan and Tripoli. Collectively, the three provinces have caused 725 terrorism deaths, with the Tripoli Province accounting for over half of these deaths. The provinces were among the first to be established by ISIL following the self-declaration of a caliphate in 2014.

The three provinces recorded a surge in violence in 2015, with 326 fatalities recorded. In the same year, the Tripoli Province also recorded one attack in Tataouine governorate, Tunisia, although no deaths were recorded. Violence by the three provinces continued into 2016. However, terrorist activity has since decreased by 93 per cent. The Fezzan and Tripoli provinces were still active in 2019 with the Fezzan Province recording 12 attacks and 22 terrorism deaths, while the Tripoli province claimed responsibility for one non-lethal attack targeting a non-governmental organisation in Sirte, Libya.

The Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is a newer affiliate, recording its first attacks in Burkina Faso and Niger in 2016. ISGS emerged as a splinter group from Al Mourabitoun, an organisation allied with Al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). ISIL recognised the group as a regional affiliate in October 2016 following a pledge of allegiance by Adnan Abu Walid al Sahrawi to the former ISIL-leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. However, the exact nature of its relationship with

ISIL remains unknown.<sup>25</sup>

ISGS has claimed responsibility for 43 attacks and 266 deaths, across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Almost half of their attacks were recorded in Mali, with over 127 deaths. The majority of deaths in Mali occurred in 2018, with a surge in armed assaults and hostage taking incidents by ISGS. The group has exploited intercommunal conflicts, recruiting members from a range of ethnic groups throughout the Sahel region, including Fulanis.<sup>26</sup> However, the group has struggled to maintain a dominant presence in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger facing pressure from counter-terrorism operations and the presence of Al Qa'ida affiliates in the region.<sup>27</sup> Although early reports indicated that ISGS and Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), an Al Qa'ida affiliate, were cooperating in the region, armed clashes between the two groups were recorded in the first half of 2020.<sup>28</sup>

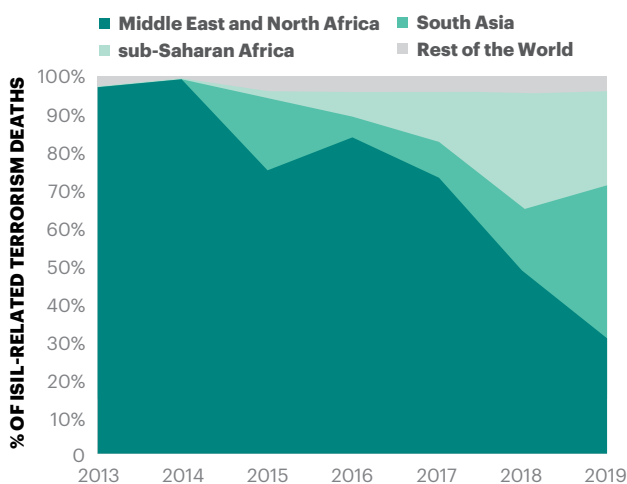
## THE REGIONAL SHIFT OF ISIL-RELATED TERRORISM

The emergence of new ISIL provinces and affiliates outside of Iraq and Syria has led to a regional shift, with ISIL-related terrorist activity now concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Figure 4.7 shows the regional distribution of ISIL-related terrorism deaths since 2013.

FIGURE 4.7

### Regional distribution of ISIL-related terrorism deaths, 2013–2019

By 2019, less than a third of ISIL-related terrorism deaths occurred in the MENA region.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

The majority of ISIL-related terrorism deaths occurred in the MENA region between 2013 and 2017. ISIL-related terrorism deaths steadily declined in MENA from 4,993 in 2017 to 718 in 2019, an 86 per cent decrease. This reduction in ISIL-related deaths follows the decline of ISIL in Iraq and Syria, but also the decline in terrorist activity by ISIL provinces and affiliates in the MENA region. Deaths attributed to the core ISIL group in MENA fell by 60 per cent in 2019. Provinces and affiliates in MENA also saw a continued downward trend in 2019. Of the seven provinces and affiliates that were still active in the region in 2019, only two groups recorded a marginal increase in terrorism deaths from the previous year: The Fezzan Province in Libya, and the Sinai Province in Egypt.

The first ISIL-related deaths in South Asia were recorded in 2014 and attributed to two jihadist groups operating in Pakistan: Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Tehrik-e-Khilafat. Collectively the groups recorded 22 terrorism deaths predominantly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces.

From 2015 onwards, the increasing trend of ISIL-related deaths in South Asia was driven by the Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State. The Khorasan Chapter was responsible for 3,134 terrorism deaths between 2015 and 2019, comprising 89 per cent of the region's ISIL-related deaths.

By 2019, ISIL-related deaths in South Asia accounted for 25 per cent of the global total, behind sub-Saharan Africa and MENA. There were 596 ISIL-related terrorism deaths in South Asia in 2019. Over half of ISIL-related deaths were attributed to the Khorasan Chapter in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. The remaining deaths were the result of the deadliest terror attack of the year when eight coordinated suicide bombings were conducted across Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. The bombings killed more than 266 people, and were one of ISIL's deadliest attacks outside of Iraq and Syria.

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen the largest increase in ISIL-related terrorism deaths of any region. Since the first emergence of ISIL provinces and affiliates in the region, the trend in ISIL-related terrorism deaths has mostly been driven by ISWAP. The group recorded over 1,800 terrorism deaths across Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria and Niger in 2015 accounting for 19 per cent of total ISIL-related deaths that year. However, terrorism deaths attributed to ISWAP have declined by 59 per cent since 2015.

By 2019, sub-Saharan Africa recorded the largest number of ISIL-related terrorism deaths at 982, or 41 per cent of the total. There were four ISIL-related groups active in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019. ISWAP accounted for 75 per cent of ISIL-related terrorism deaths, followed by ISGS, the Central Africa Province of the Islamic State and Jabha East Africa.

## TERRORISM AND ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa has increased alongside armed conflict and intensifying ecological threats, particularly in the Sahel region. The majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa face medium to high exposure to ecological threats as measured by IEP's Ecological Threat Register (ETR). The ETR identifies ecological hotspots that combine high levels of ecological threats with low and stagnant socio-economic resilience.

There are two ecological hotspots in sub-Saharan Africa: the Sahel-Horn of Africa belt from Mauritania to Somalia, and the southern African belt from Angola to Madagascar.

The region is also home to 14 countries who are projected to double their population by 2050, including Burkina Faso, Mali and Mozambique. The impacts of rapid population growth are compounded by high variability in climatic conditions with more than half of the countries in the region facing droughts. Many of these countries are already experiencing vicious cycles where competition for scarce resources creates conflict and conflict in turn leads to further resource depletion. Table 4.2 shows the countries in sub-Saharan Africa with the greatest increase in terrorism in 2019, along with a summary of the ecological and conflict-related threats they face. All of the countries with the greatest increase in terrorism are currently in conflict, face at least two serious ecological threats, and have over 90 per cent projected population growth to 2050.

TABLE 4.2

### Terrorism and ecological threats

The six countries with the greatest increase in terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa face medium to high exposure to ecological threats.

Country	GTI Increase in Terrorism Rank	In Conflict?	Number of Ecological Threats	Projected Population Growth to 2050
Burkina Faso	1	Yes	2	108%
Mozambique	3	Yes	5	109%
Congo, DRC	4	Yes	2	117%
Mali	5	Yes	3	115%
Niger	7	Yes	3	171%
Cameroon	8	Yes	2	91%

Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

While the relationship between ecological threats and terrorism is not linear, high exposure to ecological threats can lead to additional stresses on resources and institutions, leading to social instability and irregular migration. Around 50 million people in the Sahel region are dependent on livestock as a means of livelihood. Land scarcity, over-population, and the overuse of resources has degraded land in the Sahel region which groups such as the Fulani have historically used for grazing, driving many further south into states inhabited by farmers leading to land encroachment and conflict.<sup>31</sup>

Terrorist groups have exploited intercommunal conflict to intensify their campaigns across the region. JNIM has sought to embed itself into local communities by portraying itself as a defender of ethnic groups, such as the Fulani in Mali.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, ISGS has sought to take advantage of intercommunal conflicts between the Fulani and Tuaregs in the Mali-Niger border area.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

In the Lake Chad region, which comprises parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, conflict is believed to be complicated by several ecological threats including water scarcity, drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity.<sup>35</sup> Boko Haram has sought to exploit these fragilities, by taking control of large areas of territory and gaining access to Lake Chad. In this sense, the group has positioned itself as an alternative service provider and facilitated recruitment by offering employment to those whose livelihoods have been impacted by recurring ecological threats.

## FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

### OVERVIEW

The second emerging trend in terrorism following the decline of ISIL in the Middle East has been the rise of far-right terrorism in the West, amidst the rise of populism, civil unrest, and political violence more generally. This increase in far-right political terrorism has been the focus of intense political and media scrutiny, particularly after a number of high profile attacks in 2019. In March of last year in New Zealand, a lone gunman attacked two mosques in Christchurch, killing 51 people and injuring a further 49. Five months later in El Paso, Texas, another lone gunman shot and killed 23 people and injured 23. In total, 89 of the 108 deaths from terrorism in the West in 2019 were carried out by far-right extremists.

The rise in far-right attacks has led to intense debate on the nature and extent of this threat, with a particular focus on whether far-right terrorism is now a greater threat in the West than radical Jihadist terrorism. This section looks at the history of far-right terrorism in the context of political unrest over the past fifty years, how it compares to other types of terrorism, its characteristics, and whether the threat of far-right and other political terrorism is likely to increase over the next few years. Box 4.2 outlines the definitions used in this sub-section.

## Far-right terrorism and the West

This sub-section looks at far-right terrorism in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania, using the term the West as a shorthand for this group of regions. Both of the terms far-right and the West are contested and have strong political and emotional connotations, so it is important to make clear how each of these terms is defined in the 2020 GTI.

### Far-right

Far-right refers to a political ideology which is centred on one or more of the following elements: strident nationalism that is usually racial or exclusivist in some fashion, fascism, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration, chauvinism, nativism, and xenophobia. Far-right groups tend also to be strongly authoritarian, but often with populist elements, and have historically been anti-communist, although this characteristic has become less prominent since the end of the Cold War. Groups that are strongly anti-government are not necessarily far-right, although there is a subset of anti-government groups in the US that have been classified as far-right.

Not every group or organisation with any of these characteristics can be considered far-right, and not every far-right group is automatically violent or terroristic. However, terrorist groups with these characteristics and individuals sympathetic to these ideals have been classified as far-right terrorism in the 2020 GTI. In addition to specific terrorist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, the GTI classifies the following ideological groupings from the GTD as far-right:

Anti-feminist extremists	Anti-Muslim extremists	Neo-Fascists
Anti-immigrant extremists	Anti-Semitic extremists	Neo-Nazi extremists
Anti-Islam Extremist	Far-right Extremists	Right-wing extremists
Anti-LGBT extremists	Incel extremists	White nationalists/separatists
Anti-liberal extremists		

### The West

There is no one fixed definition of the West, so this section focuses on countries where the concept of far-right terrorism is the most politically applicable. IEP's definition of the West encompasses the following countries:

Andorra	Germany	Portugal
Australia	Iceland	Spain
Austria	Ireland	Sweden
Belgium	Italy	Switzerland
Canada	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
Denmark	Netherlands	United States of America
Finland	New Zealand	Vatican City
France	Norway	West Germany (1970-1990)

## TERRORISM IN THE WEST

Terrorism in the West makes up a small fraction of total terrorism in the world. Between 2002 and 2019 there were 236,422 deaths from terrorism globally. Of these, 1,215 occurred in the West, or just 0.51 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, over 95 per cent of all deaths from terrorism took place in countries involved in an ongoing conflict. In the West, just over 21 per cent of deaths occurred in a country involved in a conflict, and not a single death from terrorism occurred in a country involved in an internal conflict or civil war.

IEP groups terrorist organisations and ideologies into three broad categories: political, nationalist or separatist, and religiously motivated terrorism. Far-right terrorism is classified

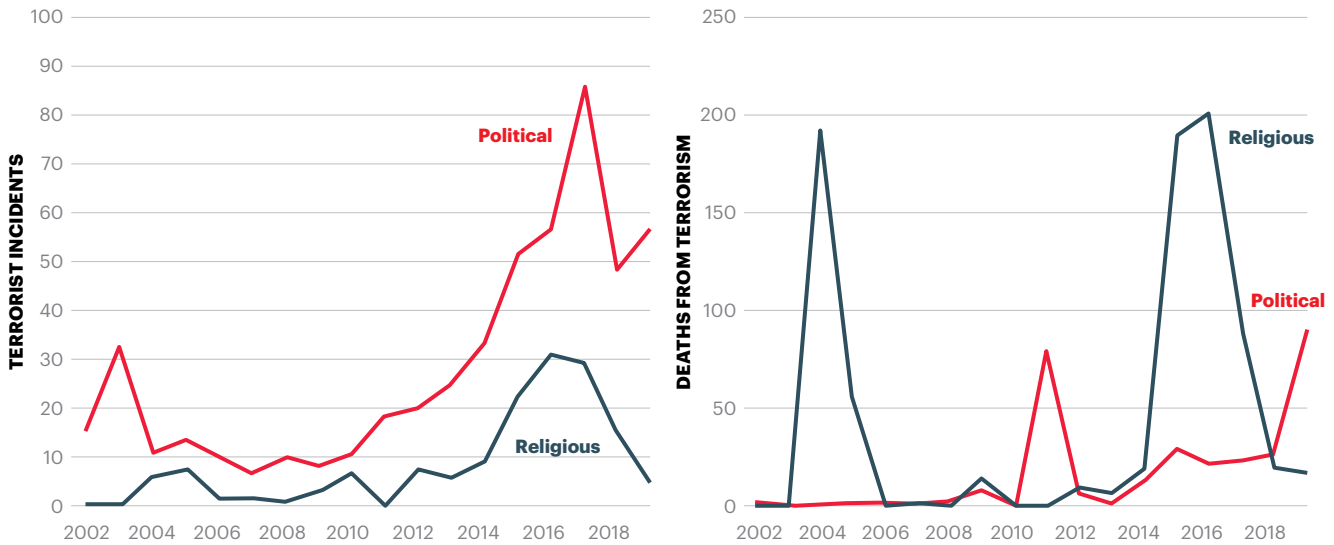
as a form of political terrorism. There are also a few organisations that fall outside of this categorisation system, such as environmental, and animal rights related terrorism. Although there can be an overlap between these categories, the vast majority of terrorist groups have a primary purpose and self-understanding that fits into at least one of these three groups.

The deadliest form of terrorism in the West over the past two decades 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 814 deaths from terrorism in the West since 2002. The most notable surge in Islamist terrorism in the West occurred between 2015 and 2017, with 99 attacks and 479 deaths occurring in this period across 16 countries.

FIGURE 4.8

### Religious and political terrorism in the West, 2002–2019

Although political terrorist incidents have increased in the last decade, the majority of deaths from terrorism in the West came from religious terrorism.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

However, although religiously motivated terrorism has been the deadliest form of terrorism in the West over the past two decades, it has not been the most common form, as shown in Figure 4.8. In almost every year since 2002, there have been more politically motivated than religiously motivated terrorist attacks. However, until 2011 these incidents were mostly small attacks with no fatalities. Between 2002 and 2011, there were 142 politically motivated terrorist attacks in the West, resulting in 18 deaths.

Over the past five years, the intensity of far-right and far-left motivated terrorism in the West has increased steadily. Between 2015 and 2019, there were 359 political terrorist incidents, resulting in 190 deaths. In 2018, the number of both deaths and incidents from this form of terrorism was higher than any other form for the first time since 2011. This trend continued in 2019, with 63 per cent of attacks and 90 per cent of deaths from terrorism in the West being attributed to far-right and far-left motivated groups and individuals. There were eighteen countries in the West that experienced at least one far-right or far-left motivated terrorist attack in 2019.

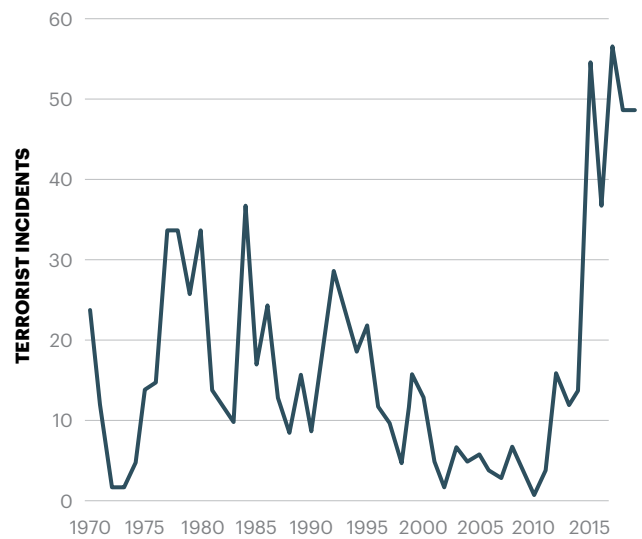
The majority of the increase in politically-motivated terrorism in the West since 2002 has been from an increase in far-right terrorism, particularly over the last decade. There was just one recorded far-right terrorist attack in 2010, compared to 49 in 2019, as shown in Figure 4.9. There have been at least 35 far-right terrorist attacks every year for the past five years.

Far-right terrorism has also been growing as a proportion of total terrorism in the West. Between 2002 and 2014, far-right incidents never accounted for more than 14 per cent of total attacks in the West. However, that number grew to 40 per cent in 2015, and had risen to 46 per cent by 2019. Similarly, the proportion of deaths attributed to far-right groups and individuals rose from 26 per cent in 2014, to 82 per cent in 2019.

FIGURE 4.9

### Far-right terrorist incidents in the West, 1970–2019

Far-right terrorist incidents have increased 250 per cent over the past five years.



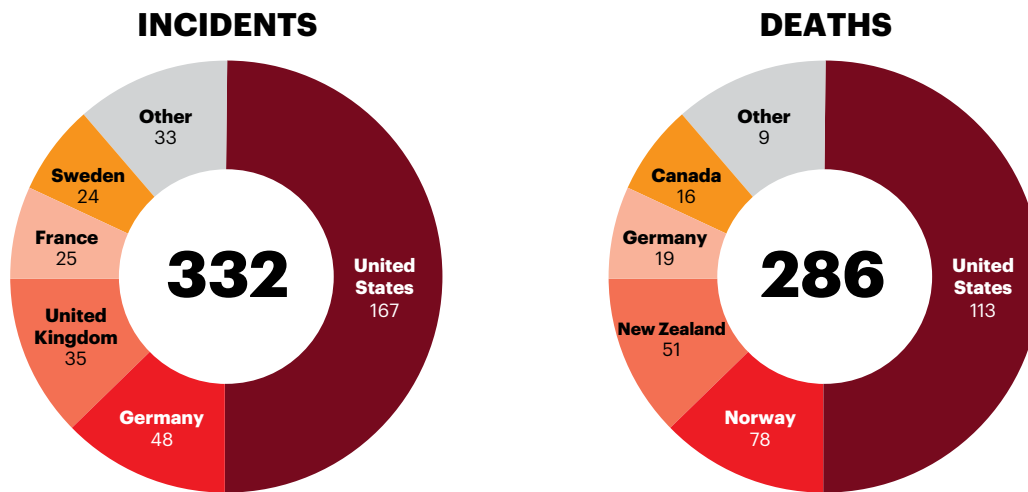
Source: START GTD, IEP calculations



FIGURE 4.10

### Distribution of far-right incidents and deaths from terrorism by country, 2002–2019

The US has recorded the largest number of far-right incidents and deaths in the West.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

There have been far-right terrorist attacks across fifteen countries in the West since 2002, with eight countries experiencing at least one death from far-right terrorism. Most of these attacks and deaths from far-right terrorism occurred in the US, as shown in Figure 4.10. There have been 332 far-right terrorist incidents in the West since 2002, with 167 occurring in the US. Germany had the second highest number of far-right attacks with 48, followed by the UK with 35.

The US also recorded the most deaths from far-right terrorism, with 113 deaths since 2002. Norway had the second highest number of deaths with 78, of which 77 occurred in a single day when Anders Behring Breivik carried out the 2011 Norway attacks. New Zealand had the third highest amount of deaths

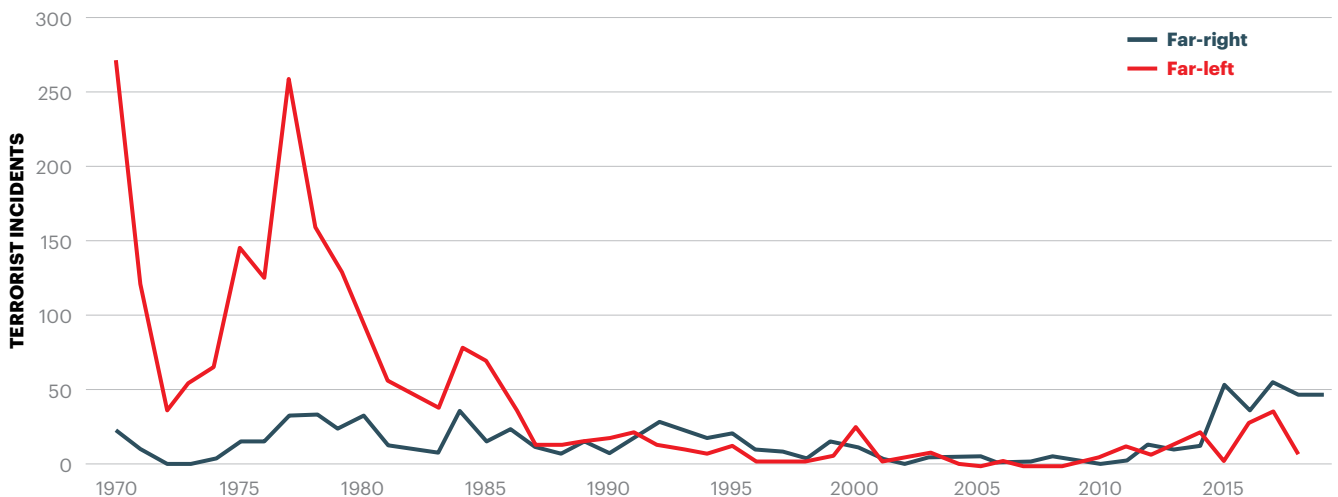
with 51, all of which occurred during the Christchurch Mosque shootings in 2019. The US is the only country in the West to have experienced multiple attacks that have killed more than 10 people, with three attacks occurring since 2002.

Although both the number of far-right attacks and deaths has increased considerably over the past few years, the total level of political terrorism in the West is still lower than its historical high during the 1970s, as shown in Figure 4.11. During the surge in far-right terrorism over the past decade, there have been 451 terrorist attacks. By contrast, between 1970 and 1980 there were 1,677 far-right and far-left terrorist incidents. There were 295 terrorist attacks in 1977 alone.

FIGURE 4.11

### Far-right and far-left terrorist incidents in the West, 1970–2019

Terrorism in the West peaked in the 1970s.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Historically, the majority of politically-motivated terrorism in the West has been carried out by far-left groups and individuals. Between 1970 and 1980, 93 per cent of attacks and 58 per cent of deaths were attributed to the far-left. Most of these attacks were carried out by small cells of revolutionary Marxist or anarchist terrorist groups. However, there was a significant decline in far-left terrorist activity in the mid-1980s, and although there has been a surge in far-left attacks over the past five years, the majority of politically-motivated terrorism in the West is now classified as far-right. Outside of the West, far-left terrorism remains much more prevalent, with 670 attacks and 311 deaths attributed to the far-left globally in 2019.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM

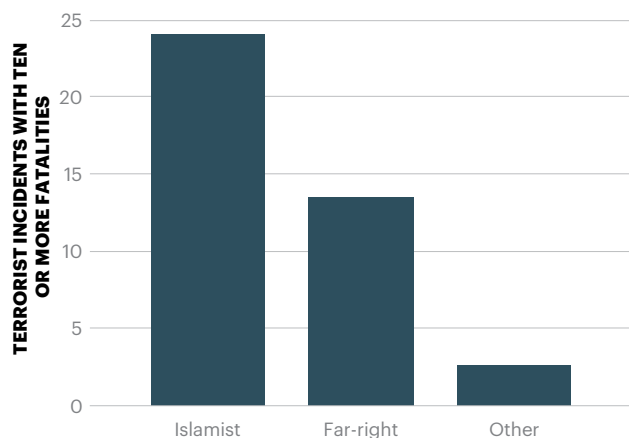
Far-right terrorism has been more lethal than far-left terrorism over the past two decades, but not as lethal as Islamist terrorism. Far-right attacks have caused an average of 0.86 deaths per incident, much higher than the 0.11 deaths per incident for far-left attacks, but also substantially lower than the 4.49 deaths per attack for radical Islamist terrorism in the West.

This pattern holds over the past fifty years, with far-right terrorism since 1970 tending to be episodic, with sporadic high intensity attacks. There have been four far-right attacks that have killed more than 50 people since 1970: the bombing of the Bologna railway station in 1980, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, the Norwegian attacks in 2011, and the Christchurch attack in 2019.

Despite the higher lethality of far-right attacks compared to far-left attacks, the majority of terrorist attacks across all ideologies in the West result in no casualties. Of the 2944 terrorist attacks recorded in the West since 2002, over 92 per cent resulted in no casualties. When looking at just the 332 far-right terrorist incidents, this number drops slightly to just over 84 per cent.

FIGURE 4.12  
**High intensity attacks in the West by ideology, 1970–2019**

There have been 13 far-right terrorist attacks that killed more than ten people.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Figure 4.12 shows the number of high intensity terrorist attacks (ten deaths or more) by ideology in the West over the past 50 years. There have been 24 Islamist attacks, 13 far-right terrorist attacks, and three attacks inspired by other ideologies that have resulted in ten deaths or more.

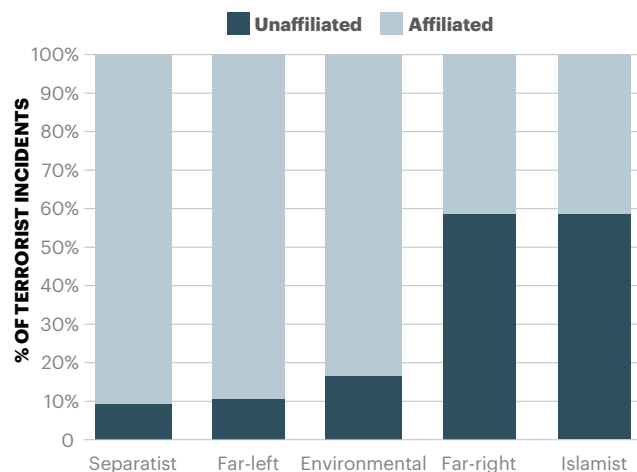
The frequency of these high intensity terrorist attacks has increased significantly over the past two decades. Of the 40 high intensity attacks in the West, 27 occurred since 2002. This increasing intensity is especially noticeable for far-right attacks, with six of the 13 high intensity far-right attacks occurring in the past five years.

Much of the focus on far-right terrorism and extremism more generally has focused on the threat that far-right groups pose to civil society. However, the majority of far-right terrorist attacks are carried out by lone-wolf actors who are not affiliated with a specific terrorist group or far-right organisation, even though they may have had contact with other far-right individuals, or been inspired by other far-right attacks. This shift from affiliated to unaffiliated terrorism and online rather than in person radicalisation has also been seen across most other forms of ideological terrorism in the West.

Figure 4.13 shows the percentage of terrorist incidents over the past 50 years that were either attributed to a specific terrorist group, or to an individual unaffiliated with a specific group, but motivated by a specific ideology. Terrorist attacks in the GTD can be attributed to specific groups, for example, ISIL, or they can be attributed to broader identity groups or ideologies, such as white nationalist extremists, anti-Muslim extremists, and so on. Attacks attributed to the far-right were more likely than any other ideology to be carried out by unaffiliated individuals, with over 60 per cent of far-right attacks not attributed to a specific group. Radical Islamist terrorism also had a very similar percentage of affiliated vs unaffiliated attacks.

FIGURE 4.13  
**Proportion of affiliated and unaffiliated attacks by ideology**

Around 60 per cent of both far-right and Islamist attacks are unaffiliated.



Source: START GTD, IEP calculations

Historically, attacks carried out by separatists, nationalists, and the far-left have been much more likely to be affiliated with a specific terrorist group or organisation, with 90 per cent of far-left terrorism over the past 50 years being attributed to a specific group. However, organised terrorism from the far-left is now much less likely to be affiliated than in previous decades. Just under half of far-left attacks since 2010 were attributed to a specific group.

The prevalence of unaffiliated far-right terrorism is even higher when looking at terrorist attacks that result in at least one death. From 2002 to 2019, there were 52 far-right attacks that resulted in at least one fatality. Of these, just seven were attributed to a specific group, with all of the attacks occurring in the last decade being classified as unaffiliated.

This does not mean that far-right terrorists have no contact with extremist organisations, or that the radicalisation of far-right individuals occurs entirely in isolation. Contact with likeminded individuals can be a significant factor in the radicalisation process, and has traditionally been a strong predictor of whether an individual will engage in violence. However, that contact increasingly occurs online in a sporadic fashion, and that plans to commit violence are often never shared with other individuals prior to the attack. IEP’s analysis of 31 fatal far-right attacks between 2011 and 2018 found that less than a quarter of the perpetrators had definite in-person contact with other far-right individuals or groups, and over a third appear to have been primarily radicalised online.

Far-right attacks are more likely to be armed assaults than any other type of terrorist tactic, such as bombings or explosive attacks more generally. As a result, an increasing number of mass shootings have been classified as terrorism, as opposed to random spree killing events with no particular group as a target.

IEP used the Mother Jones mass shooting database<sup>36</sup> as its source to compare mass shootings to terrorism. This database only includes “indiscriminate rampages in public places resulting in four or more victims killed by the attacker”. This definition excludes a lot of drug and gang-related criminal activity that is not generally considered to be a mass shooting or spree killing.

Figure 4.14 shows the percentage of mass shootings classified as terrorist attacks, and how that figure has changed over time. Just over 22 per cent of mass shootings since 1982 are classified as terrorist events by the GTD. However, the vast majority of terrorist mass shootings have occurred in the last decade. From 1982 to 2008, there were 47 mass shootings, only two of which were classified as terrorist attacks. There were 67 mass shootings from 2009 to 2019. During that period the percentage of mass shootings classified as terrorism rose from 4.2 per cent, to over 30 per cent.

## TERRORISM, CIVIL UNREST, AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

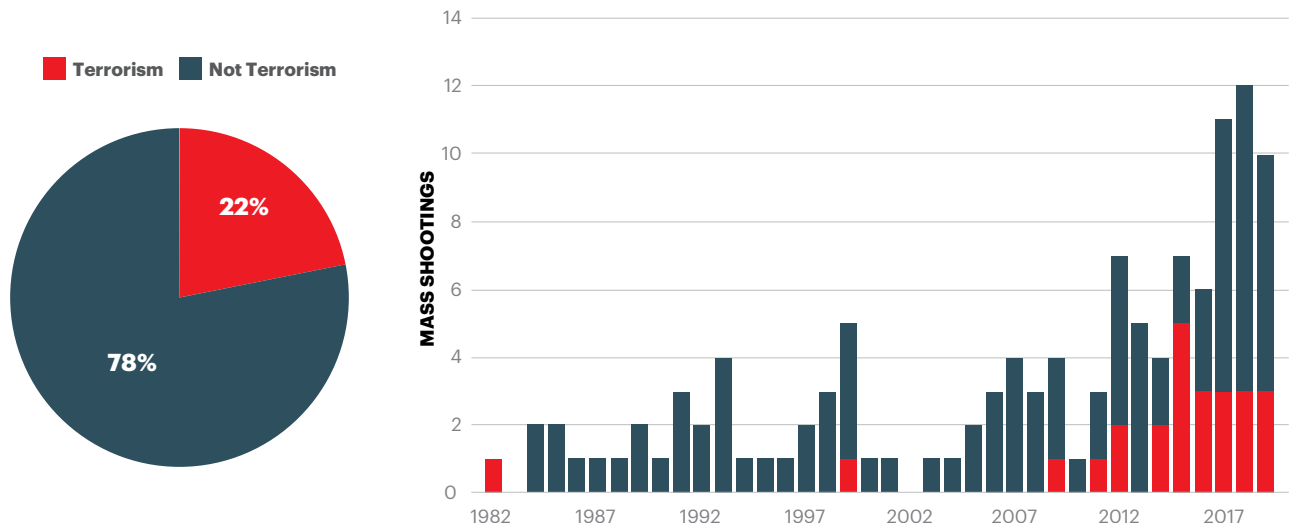
Most separatist and religiously-motivated terrorism over the past two decades has taken place within the context of an ongoing conflict, whether that be a low intensity armed conflict, a civil war, or terrorism in response to a civil war that has spilled over from one country into its neighbours.

Far-right terrorism in the West has increased in tandem with rising political unrest, polarisation, and the increase in popularity of new political movements and populist political parties. Thus, this type of terrorism is an example of political instability, along with riots, violent demonstrations, and political assassinations. These events do not take place in the context of a violent conflict, but represent a different type of violence than homicide and violent crime. Events related to political instability are symptomatic of broader unrest that

FIGURE 4.14

### Mass shootings and terrorism in the US, 1982–2019

The number of mass shootings that can be classified as terrorism has risen over the past decade.

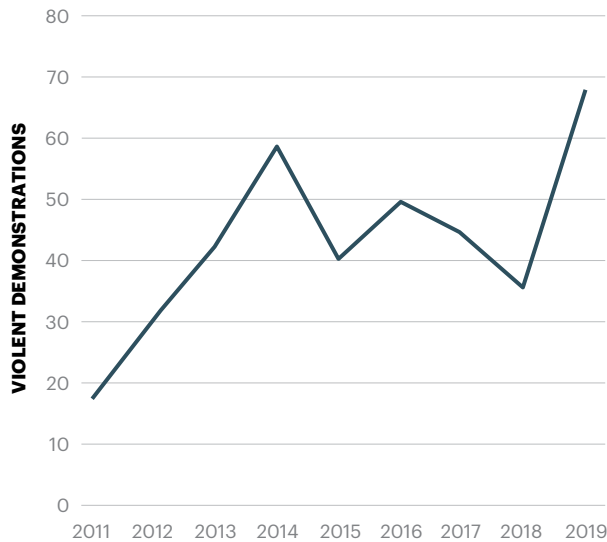


Source: Mother Jones, START GTD, IEP calculations

could potentially lead to more serious forms of conflict emerging. They have been increasing over the last decade in the West, as shown in Figure 4.15.

**FIGURE 4.15**  
**Riots and violent demonstrations in the West, 2011–2019**

There has been a 278 per cent increase in violent demonstrations and riots in the West since 2011.



Source: CNTS, IEP calculations

Data taken from the US Political Violence Dataset<sup>37</sup>, along with IEP estimates for political violence from 2010 to 2020, indicate that political violence in the US is now at a 50-year high. There were an estimated 671 riots from May to October 2020 in the US alone, with 17 of these riots resulting in a least one fatality. However, it should be noted that these riots occurred in the context of a much broader protest movement that was predominantly peaceful, with nearly 13,000 peaceful demonstrations recorded over the same period.

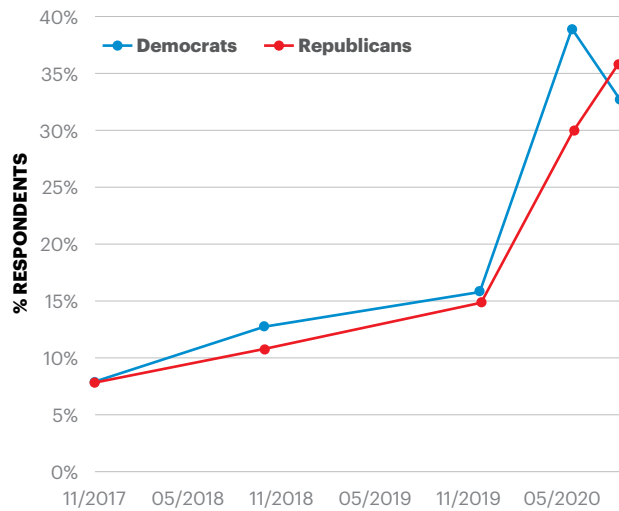
The increase in political violence in the US over the past five years has been accompanied by increasing public support for using violence to achieve political ends. The polling data in Figure 4.16 shows a large jump in support from both Democrats and Republicans in the US who feel that violence for political ends is at least partially justified. In November 2017, just eight per cent of respondents from both parties felt that violence for political ends could be justified in at least some situations. This number had increased to around 15 per cent by the end of 2019, before jumping significantly over the past year. In September 2020, 33 per cent of Democrat and 36 per cent of Republican poll respondents felt that political violence could be at least somewhat justified.

The increase in the acceptance of violence as a political tactic has been reflected in increased use of hostile, threatening, and openly violent rhetoric on social media.<sup>38</sup> The use of such rhetoric has been particularly amplified in response to both coronavirus related lockdowns, and protests against police violence across the US.

While shifts in the political climate may be responsible for an increase in the likelihood of violence, long-term socio-political,

**FIGURE 4.16**  
**People who feel that violence is justified in advancing political goals, United States, 2017–2020**

Both Democrats and Republicans are now much more likely to feel that violence for political ends is at least partially justified.



Source: YouGov, Voter Study Group, Nationscape

economic, and cultural trends create the background conditions for these shifts. These long-term factors that are most closely correlated with changes in levels of violence are known as Positive Peace, or the *attitudes, institutions, and structures* that help build and maintain peaceful societies.

A fall in Positive Peace greatly increases the risk of instability and violence. IEP's Positive Peace Index identifies those factors that are most strongly correlated with an absence of violence, and is measured by 24 indicators across eight domains.

Over the past decade, there has been a noticeable reduction across many Positive Peace indicators in the West, particularly in the US. The Positive Peace Index score for the US declined by 6.7 per cent from 2009 to 2018, the tenth largest fall globally. The most noticeable deteriorations occurred on the *Low Levels of Corruption, Free Flow of Information, Acceptance of the Rights of Others, and Equitable Distribution of Resources* Pillars.

The West, on average, experienced deteriorations on *Low Levels of Corruption, Well-Functioning Government, Acceptance of the Rights of Others, and Equitable Distribution of Resources* Pillars. The most noticeable deteriorations on specific indicators related to the fractionalisation of elites, the existence of *group grievances*, and *hostility towards foreigners*.

Over the past few years in the West, far-right terrorism and political violence more generally has been largely disorganised, unaffiliated with specific terrorist groups, and broadly indicative of a mood of political alienation and discontent. However, there is no guarantee that this violence will remain unorganised, and there has been a worrying increase in semi-organised political violence over the past six months, particularly in the US. If the deterioration in Positive Peace in the West continues unchecked over the coming years, the likelihood of an intensification in organised political violence will increase significantly.

# 5

# Terrorism and Systems Theory

## SYSTEMS THINKING

Societies organise themselves and operate in complex ways. Interactions between individuals, groups or institutions are multifaceted, dynamic and difficult to represent with traditional statistical models.

An effective approach to study social complexity is offered by Systems Theory – a body of knowledge originally developed for biological and engineering applications. It recognises that

understanding the workings of individual components is insufficient to describe how the system operates as a whole. It also bypasses the traditional notion of causality – whereby causes can be uniquely and distinctly identified and isolated from effects. This notion very rarely applies in real-life socio-economic systems, where events and trends continuously influence one another. The properties of systems are discussed in Box 5.1.

### BOX 5.1

#### Key properties of systems

These are some of the key properties of complex systems:

- **The system is a whole.** It cannot be reduced to its component parts. The simple aggregation or combination of behaviour patterns of individual parts is insufficient to describe the operation of the whole. This is known as *systemic complexity*.
- **It is difficult or impossible to ascertain causality.** Given this systemic complexity, the notion of causality—so commonly used in traditional socio-economic analysis—loses meaning in systems thinking. Rather, systems' components are thought of as mutually determining one another.
- **The evolution of a system is path-dependent.** Systems have memory, in that they retain information about the path taken to reach a given state. For example, consider two countries 'A' and 'B' now experiencing exactly the same degree of peacefulness and social order. If 'A' has just emerged from a long period of internal conflict, while 'B' has always been peaceful, 'A' will more easily be nudged into unrest and turmoil by a negative shock, as old rivalries and resentments flare up again.
- **The social system has intent.** The intent of a system is its willing pursuit of desired outputs or states. For example, the intent of a school system is to provide pupils with the best possible education through the most efficient use of resources.
- **The social system has norms.** Norms are patterns of conduct that members should or usually follow. Norms can change over time or in response to a disruptive shock. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic changed social norms about how individuals greet one another, congregate and work. Norms can also be expressed through the legal frameworks.
- **The system is self-regulating.** It aims to maintain a steady state by stabilising itself through feedback loops. The system adjusts to create balance between inputs, outputs and internally coded requirements. Feedback loops may lead to *virtuous* or *vicious* cycles, depending on whether the self-regulation mechanism places the system in states of greater or lesser peacefulness.
- **The system is self-modifying.** When there is a persistent mismatch between inputs and desired outputs, the system searches for a new pattern of operation. For example, a corporation that is consistently not achieving its profit goals, will modify itself by reducing or re-training the workforce, redesigning production processes or changing the product it manufactures.
- **The system does not operate in isolation.** Social systems interact with one another, for example as two nations interact through trade, economic investment, migration, exchange of knowledge and other means. Systems interact with other systems of higher or lower hierarchy, as for example, a city interacts with both the national 'super-system' and the household 'sub-system', as well as the household interacting with the state.
- **The system operates non-linearly.** Systems usually display *tipping points*, which are systemic state thresholds beyond which the internal relationships change very quickly. For example, corruption and per capita income exhibit tipping points. For low levels of peacefulness, decreases or increases in peace do not have a lot of effect until a certain point is reached. Beyond this threshold, small changes in peace have a substantial impact on corruption or per capita income.

## CORRELATES OF TERRORISM

There are many socio-economic and political factors associated with higher levels of terrorism. However, unlike many forms of peace and conflict, the relationship between development and violence is not as straightforward. Factors such as GDP per capita and economic growth, which are closely associated with other types of violence, are not as closely correlated with terrorist activity.

This section looks at the relationship between 13 socio-economic indicators and terrorism. These indicators were selected using structural equations modelling and correlation analysis, and are outlined fully in Appendix E. Some of these indicators, such as group grievance or internal conflict are conceptually linked with the idea of social strife and unrest. Others, such as corruption and prosperity, are more indicative of the underlying institutional and economic conditions.

As it is a characteristic of systems analysis, the notion of causality is not always clear. For some indicators such as prosperity, it could be argued that these structural factors would be apparent determinants of terrorism activity. Conversely, greater levels of military expenditure or a worsening in factionalised elites could be responses to or consequences of terrorist activity. In general, all indicators can be seen as both causing and being caused by terrorist activity.

The set of indicators shown in Table 5.1 is linked to terrorism in more and less economically developed countries in different

ways. For example, group grievance and religious or ethnic tensions appear to be more prominently associated with terrorism outside the group of nations with advanced economies, that is the group classified as advanced economies by the International Monetary Fund.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, physical violence and the share of youth not in education, employment or training (NEET) rate are more strongly associated with terrorism in advanced nations.

The internal conflict indicator has the highest overall correlation with terrorism, for both advanced and non-advanced economies. This indicator measures politically motivated violence and its impact on governance. As such, it is not surprising that it should be closely associated with terrorism, given that influencing the political status quo and the policy agenda are key objectives of many terrorist groups. The strength of the relationship with the GTI is similar for developed and developing nations. This suggests that although internal conflict has different characteristics and levels of intensity in countries with advanced and non-advanced economies, the overall impact of this indicator on terrorism is similar in both sets of countries. Over the past two decades, conflict has been one of the strongest predictors of the impact of terrorism, with just under 95 per cent of deaths from terrorism occurring in countries involved in conflict.

Deficient protection of human rights is associated with terrorism in nations of all stages of development. However, this

TABLE 5.1

### Correlations between socio-economic factors and the GTI, 2002–2019

Absolute values of correlation coefficients between the indicator and the GTI, values above 0.4 are highlighted.

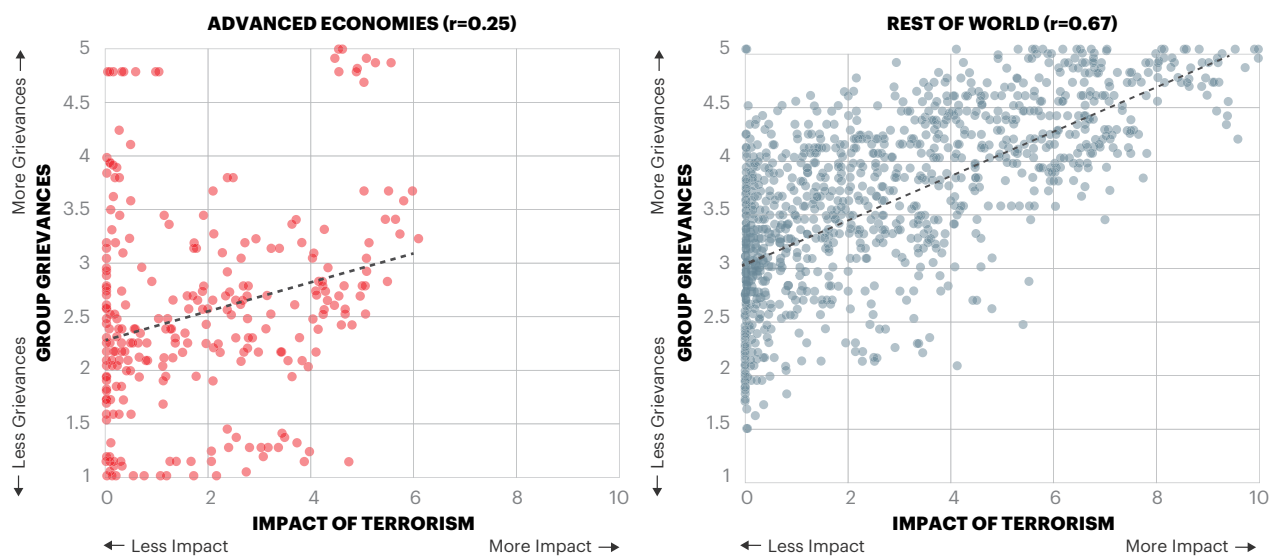
Indicator	Advanced Economies	Rest of World
<b>More strongly correlated in less advanced economies</b>		
Group Grievances	0.25	0.67
Factionalised Elites	0.12	0.48
Prosperity	0.04	0.38
Corruption	0.02	0.33
Religious and Ethnic Tensions	0.32	0.58
Rule of Law	0.05	0.29
Human Rights Protection	0.42	0.63
Equality and Liberty	0.2	0.34
Military Expenditure	0.17	0.28
Internal Conflict	0.62	0.69
Organized Crimes	0.33	0.34
<b>More strongly correlated in advanced economies</b>		
Physical Violence	0.47	0.42
NEET (%)	0.26	0.15

Source: IEP

FIGURE 5.1

### Group grievances and terrorism, 2002–2019

Group grievances are more closely related to terrorism in developing countries than in advanced economies.



Source: Fragile States Index, START GTD, IEP

factor is more prominent outside the block of highly advanced economies.

Group grievances are also strongly associated with terrorism, although the influence of this factor on terrorism in countries with advanced economies is considerably smaller, as shown in Figure 5.1. Irreconcilable ruptures between different groups in society can lead to terrorist activity, as these non-state groups within a country seek to address perceived injustices through violent means.

The prevalence of violence will be greater where groups feel unable to seek peaceful resolution and remediation because the political or judicial systems are perceived as ineffective or biased. On average, developing countries tend to have less capacity for the peaceful resolution of grievances — as assessed by the *Acceptance of the Rights of Others* and the *Low Levels of Corruption* Pillars of Positive Peace — than developed nations.

The correlation between the factionalised elites indicator and terrorism also reflects this dynamic. The fragmentation of ruling elites is closely associated with the social schism and ineffective governance. Where such divisions impact the political system, the socio-economic administration and the delivery of justice, disenfranchised groups are more likely to resort to violence as a way to gain visibility.

Although religious belief is not a primary driver of terrorist activity, tensions between different religious groups is associated with a higher impact of terrorism. As religious divisions often fall along ethnic lines, ethnic tensions are usually also correlated with terrorist activity, particularly in developing countries. Religious extremism has been a motivator of terrorist attacks in Pakistan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and elsewhere.<sup>2,3</sup> Although radical Jihadist terrorism has been the most common form of religious terrorism over the past two decades, terrorist attacks have also been carried out by radical Christian groups, fundamentalist Jewish messianic movements, radical Sikh factions and Hindu extremists.<sup>4</sup> Many religious terrorist groups are also motivated by ethno-nationalist objectives, and it is often difficult in principle to separate the two motivations.

The presence of high levels of organised criminal activity is correlated with the impact of terrorism, in both developed and developing nations. Many criminal organisations also engage in terrorist tactics to intimidate authorities and rival groups.<sup>5</sup> In addition, terrorist and organised crime groups operate in similar ways, drawing recruits from the same social pool, taking advantage of socio-economic disenfranchisement, and confronting authorities and rival organisations.<sup>6</sup> Traditional organised crime activities such as extortion, money laundering, human trafficking, currency counterfeiting, drug and arms trafficking have been found to be sources of funding for terrorist organisations.<sup>7</sup>

Militarisation is associated with terrorist activity among developing nations, but less so in economically advanced nations, as shown in Figure 5.2.

Deficient rule of law and equality before the law can promote terrorist activity among developing nations. This is because marginalised groups cannot address their grievances and demands through the courts or political systems in a peaceful manner.

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 show that the indicators for corruption and prosperity are more strongly correlated with terrorism in

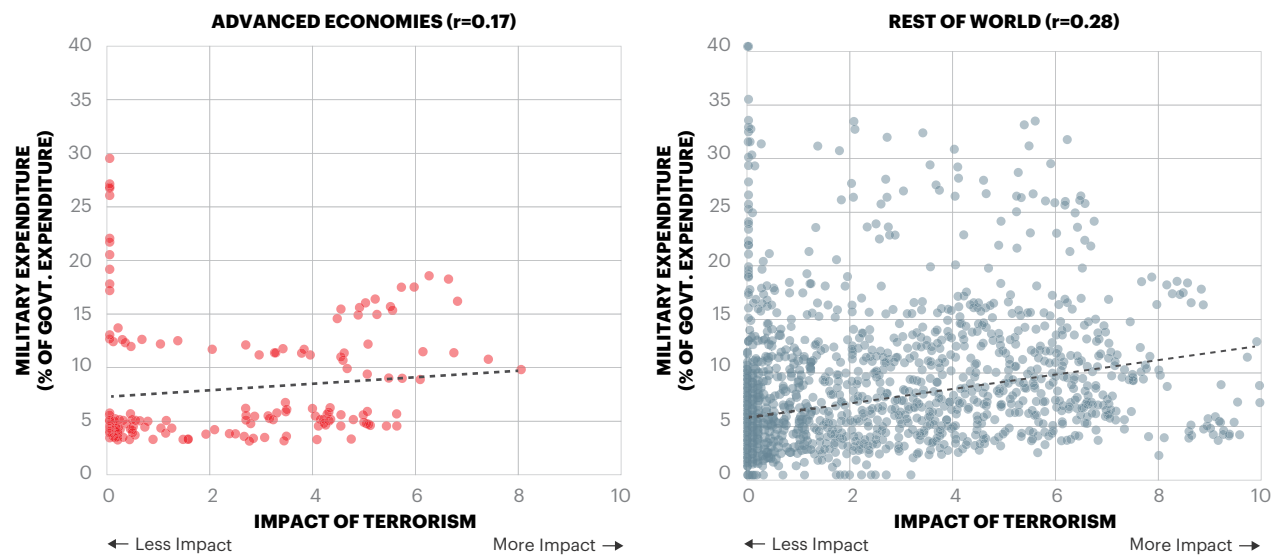
developing nations. The prevalence of corruption is associated with poor governance.

The socio-economic factors most prominently linked with terrorism in the advanced nations reflect social disenfranchisement and inequality. Youth unemployment represents economic deprivation and disenfranchisement, which in some cases are factors supporting the creation and maintenance of terrorist groups.<sup>8</sup>

FIGURE 5.2

### Military expenditure and terrorism, 2002–2019

Military expenditure is not strongly associated with terrorism in advanced economies.

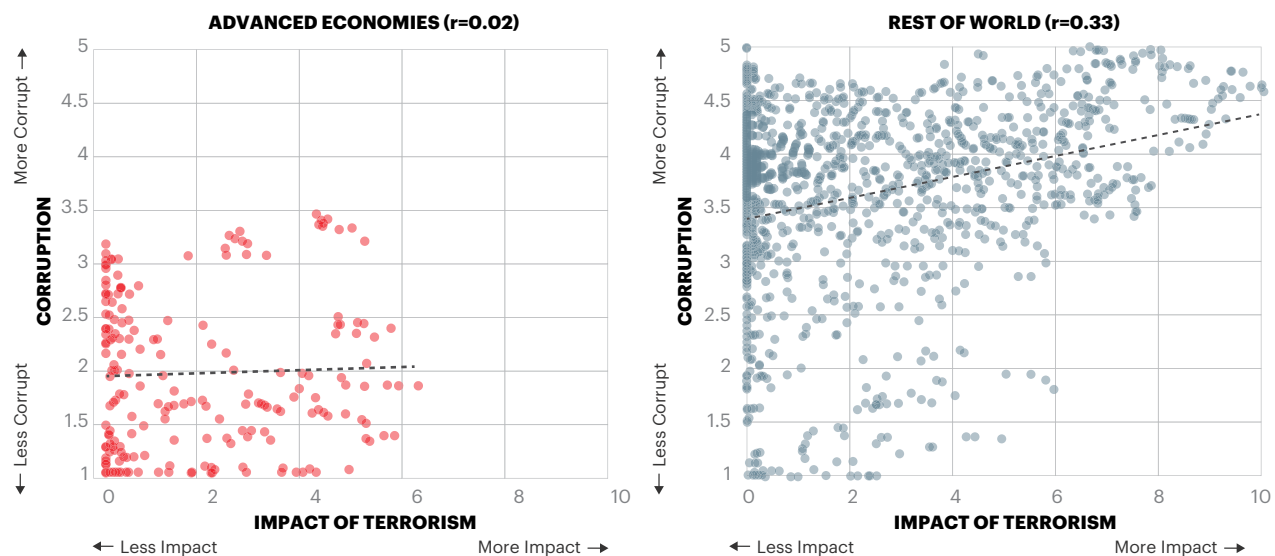


Source: World Bank, START GTD, IEP

FIGURE 5.3

### Corruption and terrorism, 2002–2019

In developing economies, corruption is more closely associated with terrorism than in advanced economies.



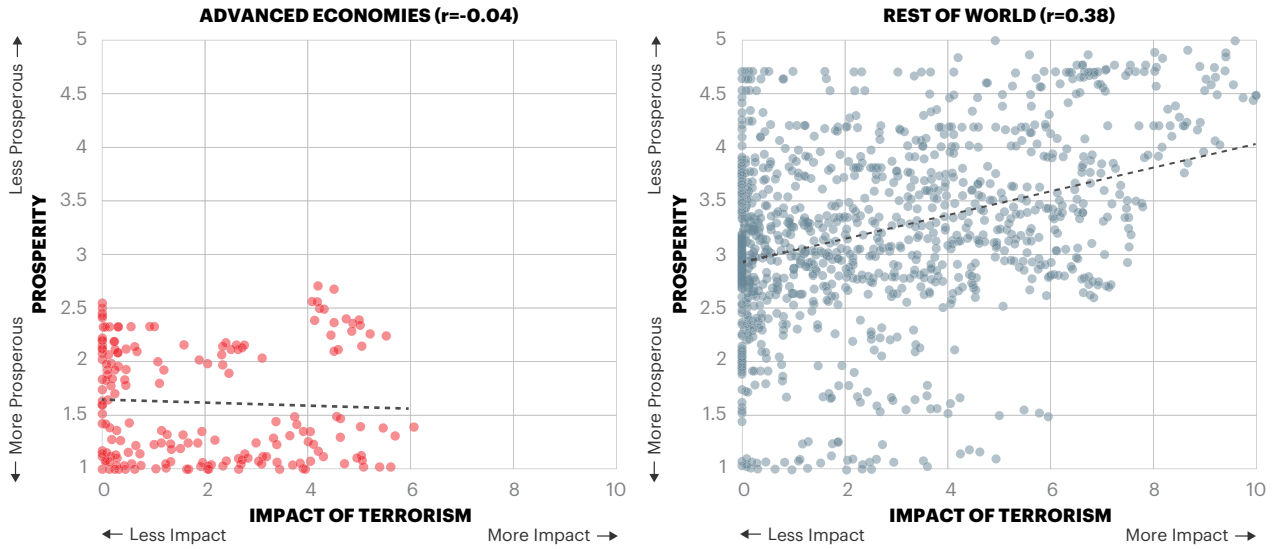
Source: World Bank, START GTD, IEP



FIGURE 5.4

**Prosperity and terrorism, 2002–2019**

Prosperity is not correlated with terrorism in advanced economies.



Source: The Heritage Foundation, START GTD, IEP

**THE IMPACT OF 9/11 ON THE US SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM**

**SHOCKS AND RESILIENCE**

A shock is an abrupt change in the inputs received by the system. A social system’s resilience is its capacity to cope with the initial effects of this shock, minimising damage or losses to citizens, groups or sub-systems.

Resilience also includes the capacity to recover from a shock, with the system reconstituting its internal structure in order to

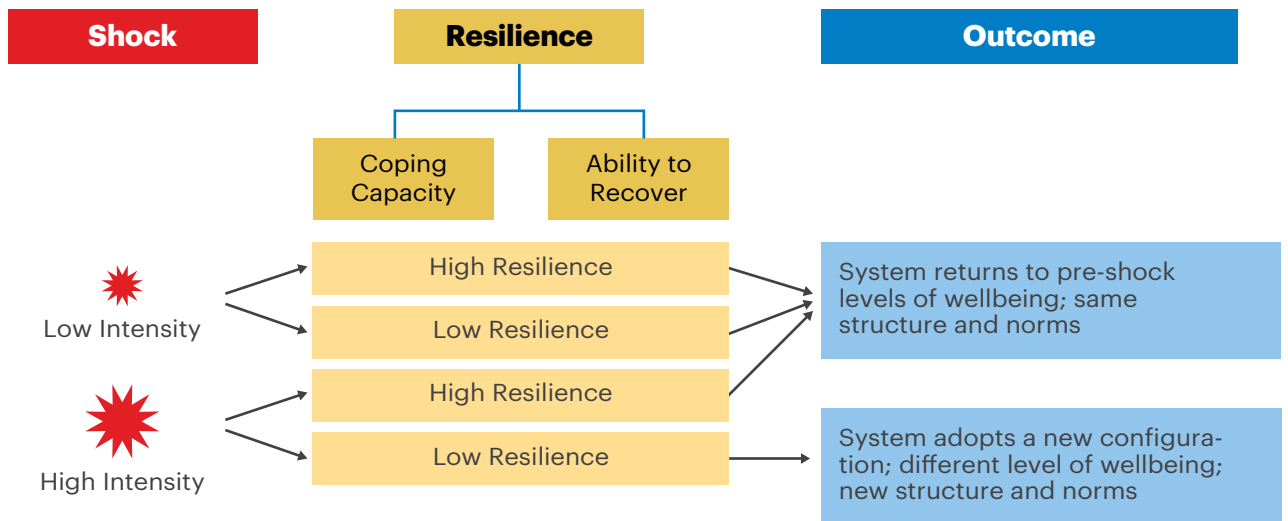
re-establish itself, if possible, to pre-shock levels.

The disruption caused by severe shocks may cause the system to reconfigure its internal structure, including social norms. If the shock is severe enough, this process of self-modification and self-regulation may take a long time to flow through, and in some cases the system may not return to pre-shock operational standards and levels of wellbeing, as shown in Figure 5.5.

FIGURE 5.5

**Shocks and resilience**

High-intensity shocks may nudge a low-resilience system into a new internal configuration.



Source: IEP

## SYSTEMIC CHANGE AFTER 9/11

There is perhaps no better example of a severe social shock than the terrorist attacks that occurred in the US on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001. The attacks caused over ten times more fatalities than any other single terrorist attack on American soil, and had the highest number of deaths of any attack recorded in the Global Terrorism Database. The institutional and psychological repercussions of the attacks were deep and long-lasting. They caused drastic changes in American social and governance norms and nudged the country's social system into a process of self-modification.

This section looks at the political and social impact of the 9/11 attacks in the US and how various norms and structures changed, compared to the change in other highly developed countries.

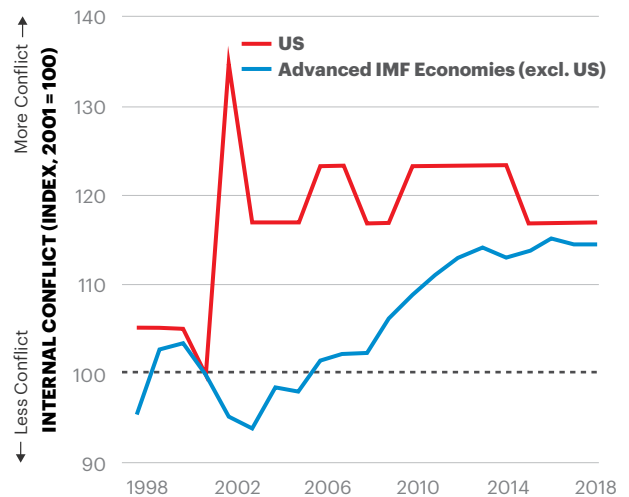
The attacks resulted in a sharp deterioration in the indicator internal conflict for the US, as shown in Figure 5.6. This indicator measures political violence in a country and its actual or potential impact on governance. Internal conflict in the US deteriorated by almost 40 per cent as a consequence of 9/11. Importantly, it never recovered fully, hovering around 20 per cent above its pre-9/11 levels for the two following decades. Somewhat worryingly, internal conflict in other developed countries has now deteriorated almost to the same extent as in the US.

Following the attacks and heightened perceived terrorism threats, US authorities responded with a suite of new policies, programs and agencies, which gave the security apparatus greater powers against future threats. A summary of these reforms is given in Table 5.2.

FIGURE 5.6

### Internal conflict, 1998–2018

Internal conflict deteriorated sharply in the US following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.



Source: Global State of Democracy, IEP

TABLE 5.2

### US POLICY RESPONSES TO 9/11 ATTACKS

Following the attacks, the US public saw a spate of new policies enacted to improve security.

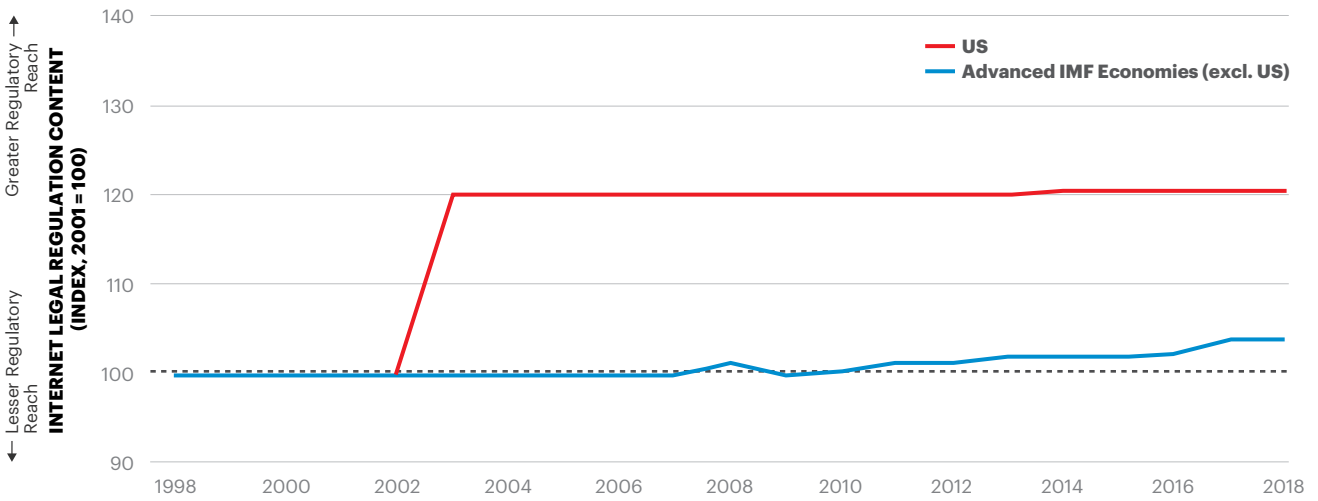
Enacted Legislation	Year	Effect
USA Patriot Act	2001	Implemented measures that facilitated investigating, tracking, prosecuting and arresting individuals suspected of involvement with terrorist activities. Introduced extensive powers of surveillance of private individuals by law enforcement authorities, including tracking communications through the Internet and other media.
The Aviation and Transportation Security Act	2001	Instituted the federalisation of airport security. Created tighter examinations of passengers, more comprehensive baggage screening and other measures. A new agency – the Transportation Security Administration – was created to oversee the security standards applying to civil aviation, rail, highway and water transportation.
Homeland Security Act	2002	Created the Homeland Security Department with the objective to prevent terrorist acts in the US and also rearranged a number of government agencies to facilitate terrorism suppression and preparedness.
Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act	2002	Enacted to improve the preparedness of the public health system to deal with major bioterrorism attacks. Created tighter security surrounding food transportation and water treatment.
Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act	2002	Tightened security around the immigration system, especially regarding border controls, the visa system and travel documentation.
The Maritime Transportation Security Act	2002	Expanded and formalised the counter-terrorism role of the US Coast Guard and the US Customs Service.
Project BioShield Act	2004	An amendment to the Public Health Service Act to provide added protection and countermeasures against terrorist attacks using chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear devices.
Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act	2004	Implemented a reorganisation of the counter-terrorism apparatus in the US. Created an agency to integrate foreign and domestic intelligence on terrorism.

Source: Harlow (2006)<sup>9</sup>

FIGURE 5.7

**Internet content regulation, 1998–2018**

After the attacks, a greater range of topics became amenable to regulatory action in the US.



Source: Varieties of Democracy, IEP

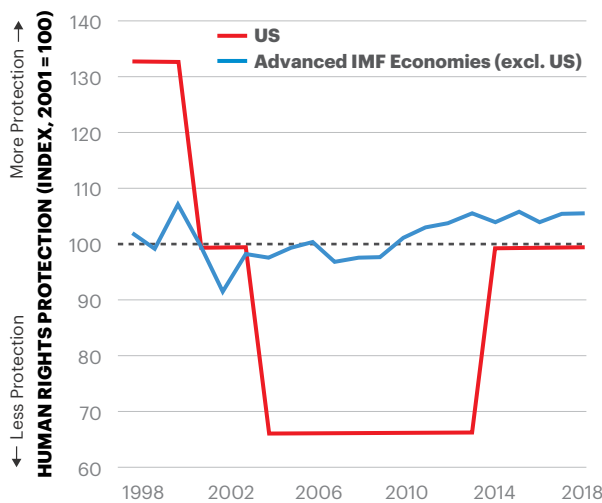
These new initiatives had a negative side-effect of impinging on civil liberties.<sup>10</sup> The US population had to live under heightened surveillance, increased security checks and greater monitoring and regulation of communications. The use of the Internet by many terrorist groups as a propaganda and recruitment tool contributed to greater surveillance of the medium.<sup>11</sup> Figure 5.7 shows how the scope of Internet monitoring and regulation increased in the US in the aftermath of the 9/11 acts, and never returned to pre-attack levels.

US security forces responded to the perceived heightened threat with greater surveillance and more frequent arrests of suspected terrorists. Some reports and images regarding the torture of suspected terrorists reached the wider public, which raised concerns about the protection of human rights in the country. Figures 5.8 and 5.9 show a deterioration in US indicators of protection of human rights and freedom from torture after 9/11. Unlike other measures illustrated previously, both of these indicators have returned to pre-9/11 levels.

FIGURE 5.8

**Human rights protection, 1998–2018**

Human rights protection deteriorated in the US following the terrorist attacks, before it eventually returned to the level seen at the time of the 9/11 attack.

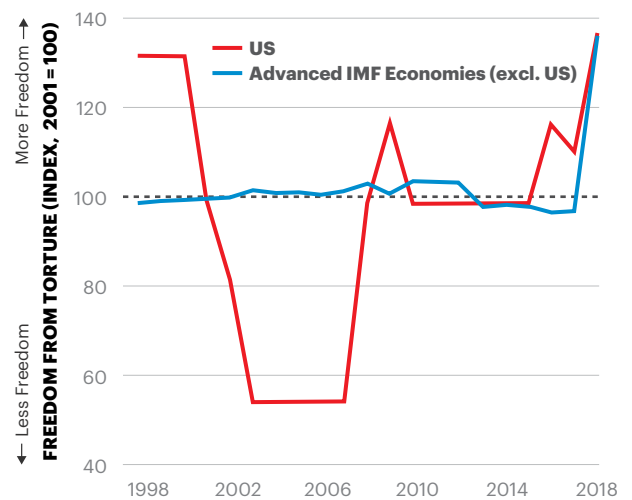


Source: Global State of Democracy, IEP

FIGURE 5.9

**Freedom from torture, 1998–2018**

Perceived freedom from torture deteriorated in the US relative to other advanced economies.



Source: Global State of Democracy, IEP

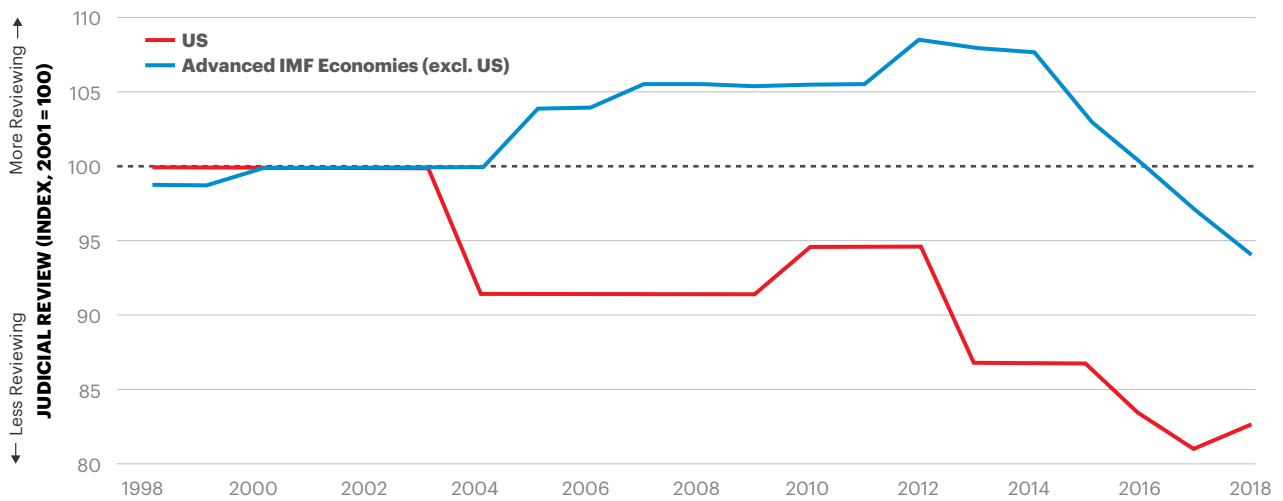
A number of policies enacted after the 9-11 attacks gave greater power and agility to the executive and security forces to mitigate the terrorist threat. This meant that there was somewhat less scope for the judiciary to review executive decisions, as illustrated in Figure 5.10. This reduced the US court system's ability to challenge or invalidate governmental policies and decisions on the grounds that they violate a constitutional principle. This represented a change in the US social norms and in the inner workings of the American governance system.

There was also a concurrent deterioration in the law and order indicator, which captures the extent to which the legal system is strong, effective and impartial, as shown in Figure 5.11. It also measures the extent to which citizens abide by the law. There has been no recorded recovery in this indicator in the US since 9/11, whereas there has only been a very slight deterioration elsewhere among other developed nations.

FIGURE 5.10

**Judicial review, 1998–2018**

There was a deterioration in the US court system's ability to review and challenge executive decisions.

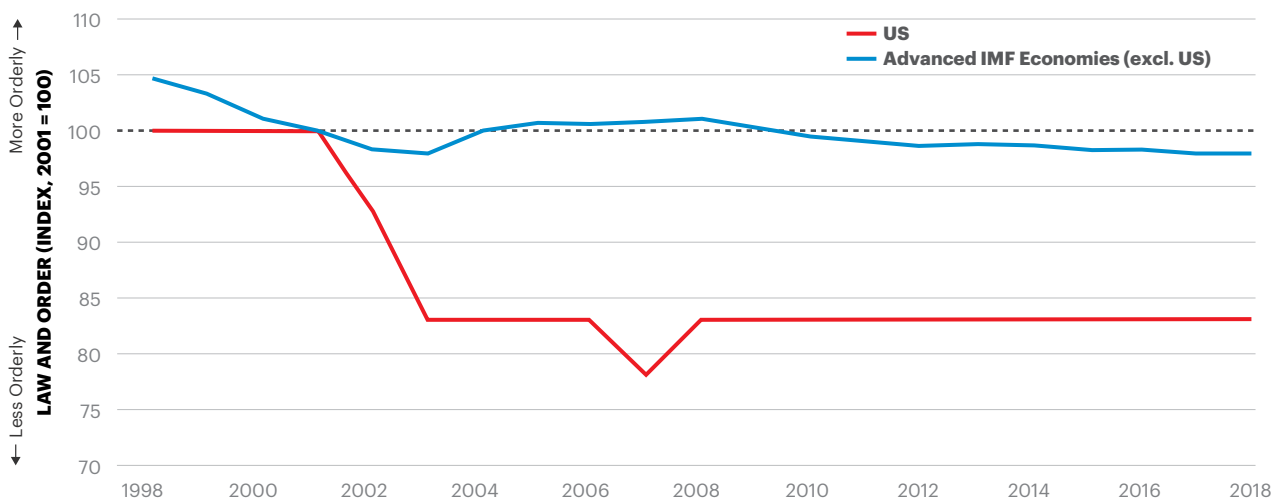


Source: Varieties of Democracy, IEP

FIGURE 5.11

**Law and order, 1998–2018**

The deterioration in law and order in the US after the 9/11 attacks has not been reportedly reversed.



Source: Global State of Democracy, IEP

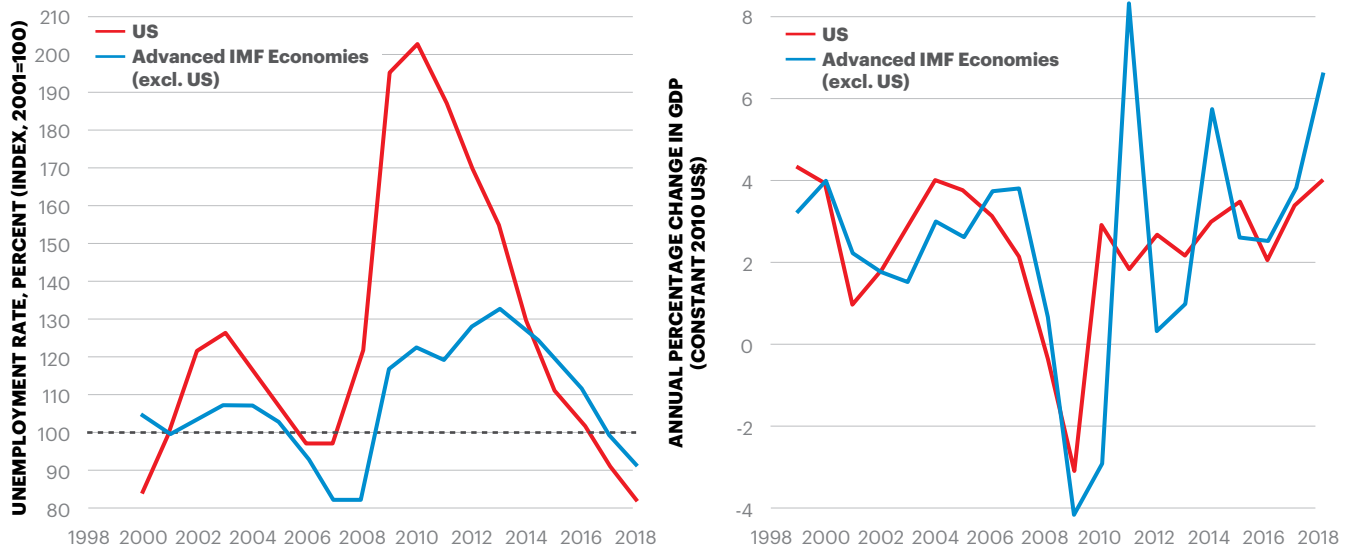
Although the economic impact of the 9/11 attacks was significant, they had little influence on US economic performance in the long term. The economic contraction of the early 2000s was relatively mild, with GDP growth remaining positive throughout the period and the US unemployment rate seeing only a two percentage point increase over a period of three years. Figure 5.12 shows the economic contraction of the early 2000s compared to that following the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09 (GFC). The deteriorations in GDP and unemployment were relatively muted, contrasting to those observed after the GFC.

**"The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 triggered profound changes in the US social and governance systems that have persevered for almost two decades."**

FIGURE 5.12

**GDP and unemployment, 1998–2018**

In 2001, US GDP and unemployment did not deteriorate as severely as during the subsequent 2008–09 crisis.



Source: World Bank, IEP

# DISRUPTING TERRORIST GROUPS AND NETWORKS

In order to best combat terrorism, it is essential to understand the motivations of existing and prospective members of terrorist groups, as well as the recruitment and funding mechanisms these groups use.

The factors underpinning the workings of a terrorist group can be represented as nodes in a network, and the linkages between them form feedback loops that allow the terrorist group to operate and thrive, as shown in Figure 5.13.<sup>12</sup> Sufficiently disrupting the group can cause its end.

Most terrorist groups cease to exist within a year of forming, as shown in Figure 5.14. There were 104 active terrorist groups with recorded attacks in the 2002 GTD. Of those, just 47 were active a year later, and by 2019 just 19 were active. There is a similar pattern if 2010 is used as the base year, with 154 active groups diminishing to 69 in 2011, and down to 34 by 2019.

The terrorist groups that do survive for multiple years tend to have better entrenched support networks with regards to recruitment and funding. The key objective of most entrenched terrorist groups is to attain greater social and political influence, with which the group hopes to implement its desired policies and social changes. The impact of each attack feeds this political influence as groups use their notoriety to disseminate propaganda. The attacks are perpetrated by recruited agents who are dissatisfied with their status in society and hold a negative perception of the society or country they wish to attack. This feedback loop is represented in green Figure 5.13. Media coverage of the attacks also helps increase the political and social influence of the network, as represented by the red

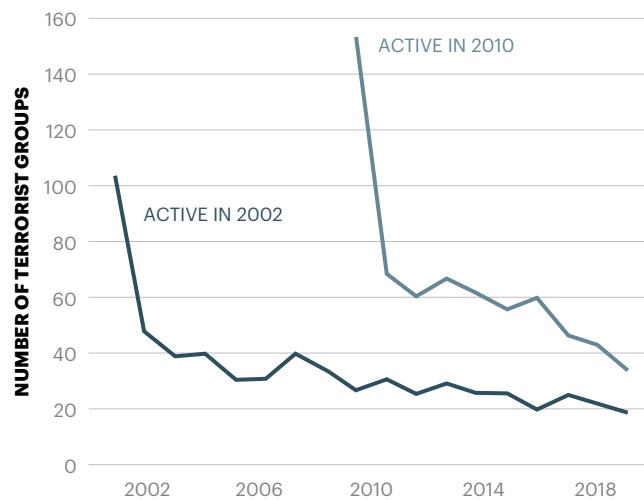
feedback loop in the picture. Funding and support from sympathisers allow the operations to continue, as per the yellow feedback loop. The groups' recruitment loop is represented in blue.

Political and social influence is both an objective of the network and one of the cogs in the mechanism that keeps the network

FIGURE 5.14

## Terrorist group survival, 2002–2019

Most terrorist groups disband, merge with other groups, or are destroyed within a year of being formed.

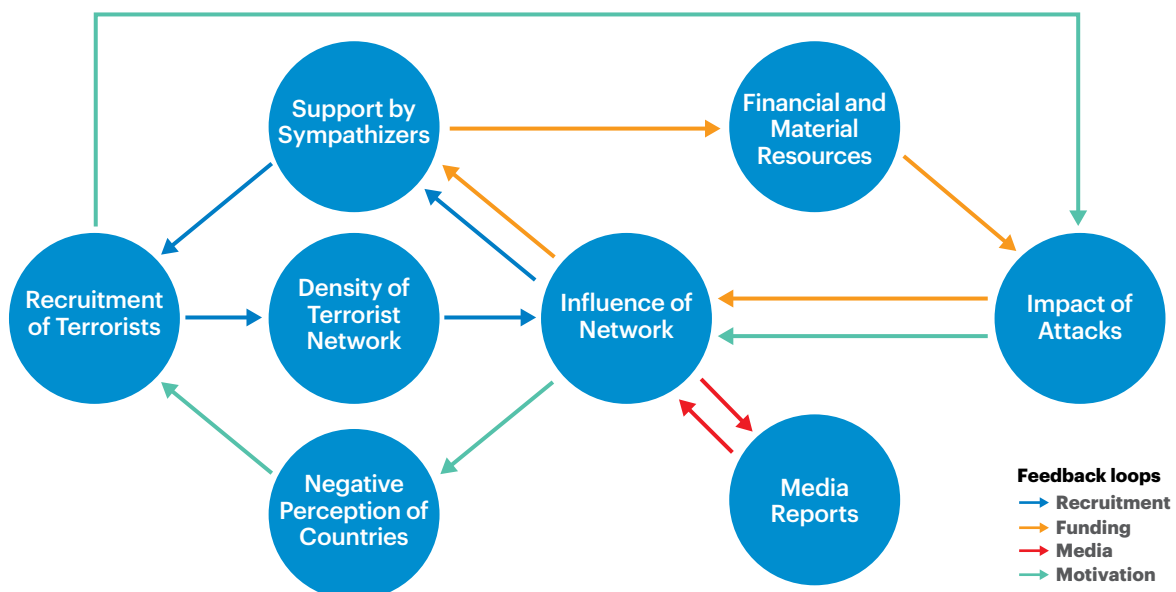


Source: START GTD, IEP

FIGURE 5.13

## 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

operating. This is the only node that is part of all four feedback loops, it is critical for the running of a terrorist group. Removing or reducing the effectiveness of this node will disrupt the network in a way that no other node would. This is consistent with the fact that most entrenched terrorist groups end by becoming involved in the political process. Whether or not a terrorist group will end in this manner is dependent on their overall goals and the size of the group.

Two other factors are also highly important: recruitment of terrorists and the impact of attacks. The recruitment of terrorists is defined as the willingness of individuals to engage in terrorist activity. The impact of an attack refers to the social and economic damage as well as the number of people killed or wounded in an attack.

## RECRUITMENT

The ways in which terrorist groups seek to recruit individuals are considerably varied. But there are also many ways to disrupt the recruitment of terrorist groups. Two broad strategies involve disrupting either the methods and mediums used for recruitment, the “how”, and by understanding the motivations for why people seek to join terrorist groups, the “why”, as shown in Figure 5.15.

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 ISIL members report being influenced by either immediate or extended family, or close friends that were members. Interestingly, much in the same way families can be a source of radicalisation, they can also guide members away from this path, turn them in to the authorities or limit the time spent in terrorist groups.

Terrorist groups routinely utilise social media to promote their political agendas and seduce individuals to their cause. Nearly 50 per cent of current or former members of ISIL indicate they had been radicalised solely by passively consuming the material on social media.<sup>13</sup> Similar phenomena can be observed with far-right terrorism. The perpetrator of the Christchurch massacre in 2019 circulated a manifesto via email and livestreamed the attack.

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.<sup>14</sup> Social Network Analysis has proven to be useful in identifying the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks as well as the Australian neojihadist network among many others.<sup>15</sup>

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 their own encoded norms and patterns of behaviour that allow a group to quickly determine who belongs and who do not. In extreme circumstances, an individual’s identity may become totally fused with their group, leading them to carry out extreme self-sacrificing behaviour such as suicide bombings.<sup>16</sup>

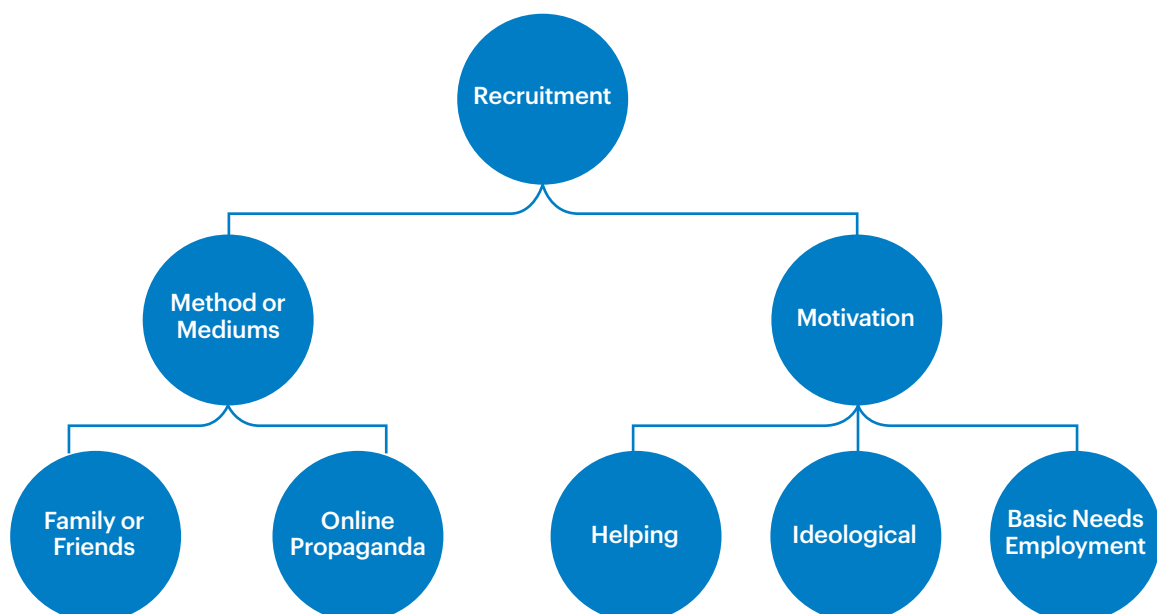
## IMPACT OF ATTACKS

Terrorist groups that commit attacks with a higher impact receive more coverage, which in turn can become a recruiting tool for a group. The higher the degree of notoriety a group has, the more likely it will become a magnet for potential recruits, or a source of inspiration for other would-be-terrorists.

FIGURE 5.15

### Main factors influencing terrorist group recruitment

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



Source: IEP

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 ISIL 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 in the form of hypocrisy. Interestingly, these issues are not unique to ISIL. Similar factors have been cited by individuals leaving right-wing extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>17</sup> In both cases, highlighting the stark difference between expectations and reality is a useful counter-narrative for 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.

**"Nearly 50 per cent of current or former members of ISIL indicate they had been radicalised solely by passively consuming the material on social media."**

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# EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS

# The hybridisation of security challenges in contemporary Africa

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## INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa has been facing multiple and multifaceted security challenges since the early 2000s. If the post-bipolar period was especially marked in the region by a resurgence of civil wars during the 1990s, the last two decades have seen the emergence of asymmetric and hybrid threats such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and off the Red Sea, the Ebola epidemic in West and Central Africa, the proliferation of transnational criminal networks, or the growth of terrorism and violent extremism.<sup>1</sup> These security challenges highlight the preeminent role that non-state actors now play, increasingly challenging the monopoly of legitimate violence, a priori the exclusive attribute of the modern African state. It should be remembered that the modern African states are the product of a particular history. Indeed, the colonial experience in Africa led to the emergence of artificial political entities, after the endogenous political systems of the pre-colonial era had been destroyed.

The challenge of this legitimacy by armed groups of all kinds, including terrorist movements, suggests in any case a transformation of the African security landscape<sup>2</sup> in an international context of increased globalisation where technological advances are conducive to the circulation of ideas, but also the proliferation of transnational terrorist networks. One can easily pinpoint the resurgence of modern terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa, with the simultaneous attacks which devastated the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. Since then, it is in West Africa that terrorism has greatly increased these recent years, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. If Boko Haram has become the archetype of terrorism in the region following the spectacular kidnapping of high school girls in Chibok in April 2014, it is the Support Group for Islam and Muslims (Jamā'at nu-rat al-islām wal-muslimin, JNIM) who recently monopolised worldwide media attention on October 8, 2020 in Mali, by releasing Sophie Pétronin, the last French hostage detained in the world. How does terrorism

manifest itself in Africa south of the Sahara today? What are the root causes and vectors? Are there specific characteristics of terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel?

## THE ORIGINS OF TERRORISM IN POST-BIPOLAR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

It is not easy to grasp the phenomenon of terrorism in the context of sub-Saharan Africa where asymmetric and hybrid security threats coexist and overlap. Indeed, an armed group qualified as terrorist can be considered by the local populations as a torchbearer working for more social justice. According to Pascal Boniface, terrorism can generally be defined as a form of asymmetric conflictuality that groups resort to in order to bypass the military power of their adversaries<sup>3</sup>. Its purpose is often to compel a government or an international organisation through threats or terror to do or refrain from an act. In sub-Saharan Africa, the spread of this religious-based mode of violence follows the rise of Islam in the region during the 1970s<sup>4</sup> and the globalisation of Muslim fundamentalism. The doctrinal anchoring of radical Islam in sub-Saharan Africa can be analysed as a result of the encounter between postcolonial struggles and the expansion of Islamic revolutions. The extreme discourse against a background of anti-Westernism carried by Muslim religious leaders such as Abdullah Yusuf Hazzam, founder of Al-Qaida in 1987, will find an echo in the distant lands of Maiduguri and Borno in Nigeria, of Hargeisa and Mogadishu in Somalia, from Mopti and Tombouctou in Mali, or from Tillabéry and Arlit in Niger. In addition, religious fundamentalism experienced a real boom in the region during Osama bin Laden's stay in Sudan from 1992 to 1995<sup>5</sup>.

Thanks to globalisation, networks of Islamist groups will gradually be set up with a sort of celestial Muslim identity as a cornerstone of their organisations<sup>6</sup>. This transnational social identity will be very conducive to the dissemination of a discourse in favor of Jihad in sub-Saharan Africa, with as a corollary the proliferation of terrorist movements.

Thus, several organisations will be born in the region, i.e. Boko Haram in 2002 in the North-East of Nigeria, Al Shebab in 2006 in Somalia, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2007, Ansar Dine in 2011 in Mali, the Movement for the unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) in 2013, then the Support Group for Islam and Muslims (JNIM)<sup>7</sup> in 2017. All these fundamentalist groups fight in principle against socio-economic injustices and institutional dysfunctions such as corruption or neo-patrimonial practices which would be supported by the Western powers. Terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa is therefore part of a double discursive posture of combating social inequalities and crusading against globalisation, an avatar of the West.

What are the factors that favour the progression of terrorism in the region, and how can we distinguish root causes from vectors? Are there areas of congruence between transnational organised crime and terrorism?

## **POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND TERRORISM IN CONTEMPORARY SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

To gain a detailed understanding of terrorism in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa, it is necessary to distinguish its root causes from its vectors, after determining the factors conducive to its progression. Likewise, it is important to characterise as such local conflicts and criminal acts that constitute security threats that may interlock or overlap with terrorist acts.

### **Root Causes**

The concepts of horizontal inequalities and structural violence provide interesting analytical frameworks to identify the root causes of terrorism in the region. The notion of **structural violence** refers to the negative impact produced by social structures in a context of deep disparities and lack of basic human needs<sup>8</sup>. Horizontal inequalities (HI) are defined as the degree of disproportionality between the size of groups and their respective share of certain resources or assets such as political power, wealth and education” (Stewart and al.)<sup>9</sup>. They are termed Horizontal to distinguish them from inequalities among individuals, which are **Vertical Inequalities**. There are four types of Horizontal Inequalities (HI):

- Economic Horizontal Inequalities (Income, access to land, job opportunities)
- Social Horizontal Inequalities (human capital, access to health or housing)
- Political Horizontal Inequalities (Top level political positions)
- Cultural Horizontal Inequalities (exclusion of specific cultural traditions by the state)

In multiethnic societies, as is the case in all states of sub-Saharan Africa, horizontal inequalities, coupled with structural violence produced by extreme poverty, are the root causes of terrorism. In Nigeria for example, if the official discourse developed by Boko Haram is of a religious type and resonates as a rejection of Western culture<sup>10</sup>, the success of this terrorist group can be explained in particular by the horizontal inequalities that the populations of the North-West of the country have long suffered, abandoned to their sad fate of growing pauperisation. Likewise, in the geographic areas where terrorist groups are rampant in Mali, the populations often live in poverty and their cultural specificities are not recognised by the state. The Tuaregs of Niger, for example, have always denounced their exclusion from the *civitas*.

### **Enabling Factors**

In sub-Saharan Africa, horizontal inequalities and extreme poverty fuel terrorist surges even more when they occur in a context of state weakness. Indeed, the inability of the state to assume its sovereign functions provides an environment favorable to the spread of terrorism. This is particularly the case in the Lake Chad basin with Boko Haram operating in the area straddling Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. In addition, the existence of neo-patrimonial practices, corruption and bad governance amplifies the impact of horizontal inequalities and extreme poverty on the spread of terrorism. Another contributing factor is the polarisation by certain elites of identity differences for political purposes<sup>11</sup>. In their propaganda, terrorist groups clearly associate religious motivations with their commitment to filling socio-economic gaps and restoring fairer and better governed African states. From this point of view, they are therefore not only violent identity actors and can also offer a politico-ideological label. The *Jamā at nu rat al-islām wal-muslimin* (JNIM) now carries a project of a political nature in the Sahel. Another important aspect to underline and which can be analysed both as an enabling factor and a vector, is that these terrorist movements progress in the region by following the “corridors of vulnerabilities”<sup>12</sup>.

### **Vectors**

Finally, the main vector of terrorism in the region is the ease with which ideas circulate, particularly along take the axes of vulnerability. Taking advantage of the porosity of borders and the extent of the geographical space, groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (IS-GS), JNIM and Boko Haram and achieve exponential progress in the Sahelian zone and around of the Lake Chad basin. In addition, in a context of democratisation of new technologies in favor of increased globalisation, these terrorist movements can more easily circulate their ideologies and aggressively disseminate their propaganda. Ironically, they never miss an opportunity to tackle the

phenomenon of globalisation itself, which they present as the avatar of the West.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study of terrorism in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa presents a double challenge: one of avoiding the pitfall of an exclusively state-centered approach analysing the dynamics at work from the angle of the decay or even bankruptcy of African states, and one of a postmodern perspective where non-state actors would henceforth be the main units of analysis for understanding the security dynamics at work. The activities of terrorist movements should also not be superimposed on or reduced to those of transnational criminal groups, although it is common for some of them to pragmatically have it both ways. Likewise, local community-type conflicts do not always have a dimension of violent extremism. Quite often, they deal with resource sharing issues.

Also, it is not uncommon for certain terrorist groups to compensate for the absence of the State in the areas where they are established by organising access to healthcare for local populations, and at the same time levying something similar to a tax.

The complexity of terrorism in the region clearly questions the relevance of the Westphalian state model on the African field and commits us to pay more attention to the communities of intertwined destiny that live there and shape this Africa south of the Sahara.

**"It is not easy to grasp the phenomenon of terrorism in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, where asymmetric and hybrid security threats coexist and overlap."**

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## Terrorism and security impact bonds

**RT. HON THE LORD BROWNE OF LADYTON**  
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On the fourth of August 2020, in Beirut, a 2,750-tonne stockpile of ammonium nitrate, a highly explosive chemical often used as fertiliser, which Prime Minister Hassan Diab said had been stored in a depot for six years exploded, causing hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries, a reported \$10 to 15 billion in property damage and leaving some 300,000 people homeless.

In April 1995, less than one thousandth of that amount was used by the US terrorist Timothy McVeigh in Oklahoma City to kill at least 168 people, including many children, injure more than 680 others, destroy or burn 86 cars and cause an estimated \$652 million worth of damage. Ammonium nitrate has been used in several IRA attacks, the World Trade Centre bombing in 1993 and the Bali bombing in 2002. In March 2004, the massive bomb found outside the US Embassy in Karachi, Pakistan, also contained the chemical, according to some reports.

As the pages devoted to the Nuclear Threat Initiative's radiological programme record, sites in more than one hundred countries, house radiological sources. Usually these are sealed sources of radiation used to power batteries, industrial gauges or blood irradiation equipment. But consequently, the ingredients for a 'radiological dirty bomb', the very same isotopes that can make life-saving blood transfusions and cancer treatments possible, are located at hundreds of facilities in more than one hundred countries. Many of these facilities have only basic security, leaving the material all too vulnerable to theft. The vulnerability of these radiological sources, particularly the caesium-137 used in blood and research irradiators, has caused concern for years and the risk is growing.

Radical terrorist organisations have said that they are looking to acquire and use radioactive material for a dirty bomb.

In July 2014 in a letter of appeal for international help,

Iraq's envoy to the UN warned that Sunni militants had seized nearly 40kg of uranium compounds used for scientific research at a university in the city of Mosul. "These nuclear materials, despite the limited amounts mentioned, can enable terrorist groups, with the ability of the required expertise, to use it separately or in combination with other materials in its terrorist acts", he added.

In October 2015, an investigation found that in Moldova smuggling gangs with suspected Russian links had tried to sell nuclear material to Islamic extremists from ISIS. According to the investigation a named smuggler offered the supply of caesium to a person whom he thought was an ISIS representative in exchange for 2.5 million euros. The representative was in fact an informant.

In 2016, Belgian investigators discovered terrorists monitoring an employee at a highly enriched uranium reactor that produces medical isotopes for a large part of Europe.

In April 1992, the Provisional IRA bombed the Baltic Exchange in the City of London with an ammonium nitrate bomb, killing three people, wounding 91 and damaging a heritage building beyond repair. Had that bomb included a small amount of caesium-137, stolen, for example, from a hospital's blood irradiation machine, it would have polluted several City blocks with potentially lethal radiation for a generation, closing a significant portion of the City of London to business while a clean up and reconstruction operation costing billions replaced radioactive facades over a number of years.

After the conflicts of 1991-95, an estimated 6.8 million small arms and light weapons are stockpiled in the countries of the Western Balkans. These stockpiles have suffered from periodic accidental explosions and, as organised crime gathers in the region and returning terrorist fighters flow through, it is reasonable to worry

that weapons could be seized from these stockpiles to equip more than one small terrorist army.

It is unsurprising that every country puts the terrorist use of dangerous explosives, materials and weaponry in the top tier of their risk registers.

Most governments claim that they can handle this risk by themselves. But the evidence strongly suggests that many of them then do not take steps to act. Ammonium nitrate is stored in vast quantities in lightly protected warehouses in many other locations besides Beirut. But it has taken the Beirut explosion to send some governments to review their own positions and by no means all will follow through. It is the EU rather than the countries of the Western Balkans that is doing most to address small arms and light weapons. And caesium-137 and cobalt-60 sources are still prevalent in the health sectors and oil industries of most countries.

It doesn't take much imagination to see that it is not just governments that have huge stakes in reducing these risks. In respect of national security, as in many other aspects of modern life, the world is growing ever more complex and uncertain. This sense of complexity blurs what traditionally were important distinctions between national and international spheres, among policy areas and between the public and private spaces. Increasingly there is a recognition that security is but one of the challenges which governments alone cannot resolve. Businesses have massive, hard, bottom line reasons for wanting to control materials that could be abused by terrorists. Insurance costs and payouts. Business disruption and continuity. Property devaluation and loss of profit and income. Protection of vital employees. Costs of reconstruction.

It's why Pool Re (the Pool Reinsurance Company Ltd) was set up in 1993, following the Baltic Exchange bombing by the insurance industry in cooperation with the UK government. And it's why the Pool Re model has since been copied in a number of countries that can afford to do so.

But not all governments or industries are able or willing to act in this way. And yet, where governments do not have the will or the resources to act, it would be in the interests of business to step up to the plate.

In fact, businesses have an interest not only in reinsuring against these risks but in taking steps to reduce or eliminate them. Whether the risk comes from unsecured fertiliser, inadequately protected weapons or radioactive sources, or a terrorist cyberattack reducing or removing these sources of risk can enable business to reduce insurance premiums and reduce their risk exposure.

To date, addressing these sources of risk has been the

preserve of government. However, a powerful financial tool exists which could enable the private sector to drive actions that remove and control their risk exposure in the security sphere. Impact investing has never yet been used to achieve security outcomes. But it is being increasingly and successfully used in the development and social spheres. There are already over 100 development or social impact bonds globally and more every year. There is no inherent reason why impact bonds could not be used to reduce security risks as much as to boost girls' education or youth employment.

With a security impact bond, private sector investors can enable projects in areas where government is either unable or unwilling to take responsibility for initiating and driving projects to address specific security risks. By providing initial capital and assuming delivery risk, the private sector can empower experts from civil society to take the steps needed to secure or remove the sources of threat. In return, government or philanthropic sources would agree to provide a return to investors once the project had been completed. In cases where government lacks the capacity to directly manage contracts; is unwilling to take on the political risks associated with delivery failures; or is simply unable to prioritise work to address threats - whether this is removing or securing the ingredients of a dirty bombs from hospitals and universities across Europe, removing landmines to enable communities to prosper, or building the resilience of children to disinformation - an impact bond makes sense to get the job done.

It is not just that a security impact bond can bring new resources to the task. In the face of otherwise intractable policy problems it can create carefully structured and rigorously monitored incentives for entities in different fields to work together for a common outcome. Using a financial vehicle gives everyone clear metrics that help to bridge the cultural and regulatory divides that so often obstruct cross-sector collaborations. This can enable delivery partners to adopt innovative approaches which are beyond the risk appetite for public-sector contracts and introduce new ways of working by creating shared objectives across organisational and cultural boundaries. They bring a wider range of talent to bear on the security problem, help governments to build buy-in, and spread political risk. An impact bond gives the private sector the returns, delivery partners the means, and governments the results that make collaboration mutually beneficial and reduces terrorist risk for everyone.


This model is already driving change in the development and social sectors. But it is completely innovative for security risks. And its time has come.

Take the example of the removal of civil sector radiological sources. The risk is easily understood. There are

precedents for action (Norway, France, UK, USA). The approach can be piloted in one country on a manageable scale. Expertise to draw on is available through the Nuclear Threat Initiative partners and the US National Nuclear Security Agency among others. The project would safely dispose of these sources and replace them with safer, more efficient, commercially available non-radioactive machines. The bond would remove risk and cost from governments lacking capacity to replace radiological sources and would lower premiums for insurance companies.

The European Leadership Network (ELN) and partners are developing pilot projects to provide proof of concept for security impact bonds. A successful trial of the model will allow us to scale up and extend the approach to other areas of security risk. We are open to business partners.

**"It is not just that a security impact bond can bring new resources to the task. In the face of otherwise intractable policy problems it can create carefully structured and rigorously monitored incentives for entities in different fields to work together for a common outcome."**



## How have terrorist organisations responded to COVID-19?

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In less than a year, the COVID-19 crisis has fundamentally altered the global geopolitical, socio-economic and conflict landscape. Accordingly, the pandemic has had a profound impact on trends in international terrorism, whose long-term effects are only slowly becoming evident.

The 2020 Global Terrorism Index does not cover the 'COVID-19 era', however provisional data suggests that while the pandemic has reduced overall terrorist activity, in many countries there has been little specific impact. In contexts where terrorism is largely an urban phenomenon there has been a notable reduction in violence to coincide with global lockdown. However, in settings where terrorism is occurring in the context of a broader conflict – including in disputed or border regions – COVID-19 seems to have had relatively little impact on the trajectory of violence.

But across a range of phenomena, from access to healthcare to economic inequality, COVID-19 has not just disrupted the status quo but has served as a catalyst, hyper-charging existing trends. Based on initial data, this also appears to have been the case with global terrorism.

COVID-19 appears to have exacerbated the negative trajectory of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa, which was on a concerning path towards becoming an increasingly central locus of global terrorism in the wake of the decline of ISIS' territorial 'Caliphate' in the Levant. The 2020 Global Terrorism Index points to 7 of the 10 countries with the largest increase in terrorism being in this region, with particular concerns raised about the Sahel. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this increase in terrorist violence has continued, most notably in areas affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin and the proliferation of ISIS-affiliated groups in Mozambique.<sup>1</sup> Concerningly, COVID-19 also risks catalysing the trend of political violence pointed to in the latest recent Global Terrorism Index, which shows that as Islamist terrorism has decreased, there has been a major growth in far right terrorism in Western countries (including Europe, North America and Oceania).

### COVID-19 AS CRISIS

Beyond these high-level global trends, analysing the narratives and tactics of terrorist groups can also reveal the long-term implications of how violent extremists are seeking to exploit the pandemic. Extremist groups thrive off crisis narratives, and ISD's digital analysis shows in sharp relief the ways that extremist organisations have sought to co-opt the pandemic for extremist ends.

According to a social identity theory of extremism, extremist ideologies are at heart rooted in a crisis-solution construct – a crisis narrative presents an imminent threat to one's identity, requiring decisive action. For extremists, this necessitates radical, supremacist and often violent solutions to protect against an existential crisis facing the 'in-group'.<sup>2</sup> The EU's counter-terrorism coordinator Gilles de Kerchove warns that history shows "terrorists and violent extremists, aiming to change societies and governmental systems through violence, seek to exploit major crises to achieve their objectives".<sup>3</sup>

It should be no surprise therefore to see extremists of all stripes, including far-right and jihadist groups, opportunistically using the ongoing pandemic to advance their movements and ideologies. A range of malign actors have been using COVID-19 as a 'wedge issue' to promote conspiracy theories, target minority communities and outsider groups, contest government legitimacy and call for extreme violence. In particular, disaster scenarios like the COVID-19 pandemic play into an "accelerationist" tendency among violent extremists, which posits that the current order has failed and that one must accelerate its demise by stoking social division and violence.<sup>4</sup>

### ISLAMIST EXTREMIST RESPONSES

ISD's digital analysis unit's monitoring of the online discourse of a range of Islamist extremist actors shows how the pandemic has been weaponised to spread narratives about the revolutionary establishment of an Islamic state, based on the strict implementation of Islamic law, and the religious duty of jihadist violence against



unbelievers. This has taken a range of forms. The Syrian jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) has presented COVID-19 as an apocalyptic harbinger, bringing about 'political and economic collapse' and presenting a geopolitical opportunity for their cause. ISIS's al-Naba magazine has presented the virus as a 'Soldier of Allah', while the Taliban has claimed COVID-19 was sent by God in response to the "disobedience" and "sins of mankind". We have also seen the proliferation of conspiratorial accounts of COVID-19's origins, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the US in 2019, claiming the virus was the result of a "Zionist biological terror attack", whilst al-Shabaab claimed that the virus had been deliberately spread in Somalia "by crusader forces".<sup>5</sup>

But beyond just violent extremist narratives, Salafi-jihadi propaganda has also strived to highlight the perceived shortcomings of democratic states in responding to COVID-19, instead emphasising the efficacy of an 'Islamic response' to the virus. A number of Salafi-jihadi groups including ISIS, al-Qaeda and HTS have used official propaganda channels to emphasise their governance and state-building credentials, and to present the effectiveness of their respective 'Ministries of Health' within their pseudo-states. The UN's Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) has pointed to the potential for terrorist groups to present themselves as alternative service providers, particularly in areas with weak governance, which can be "exploited to promote anti-State violence and accelerationist narratives".<sup>6</sup>

CTED have also warned UN member states that one of the short-term impacts of COVID-19 is the very real potential for terrorist groups accessing an increasingly captive audience, particularly in the online space. As the global lockdown has forced more operations by terrorist groups onto digital platforms, ISD analysts have traced a number of tactical innovations that have been spurred on by the virus, and the opportunities it presents for mobilisation.

Recent analysis of a pro-ISIS network on Facebook – aimed at widely disseminating terrorist propaganda – provides a case study of the resilient network dynamics, technological loopholes, and cross-platform activity that allowed a web of several hundred accounts to 'remain and expand' for a three-month period during the height of the pandemic. New evasion tactics being employed by ISIS supporters, seemingly geared towards stymieing either automated or manual detection and moderation of terrorist content and accounts, allowed these networks to survive, sidestep, and continue to seed terrorist content across the platform, with tactics employed including content masking, coordinated 'raids', and hashtag hijacking.<sup>7</sup> ISD research has also revealed how networks of hijacked, hacked and repurposed accounts have been co-opting COVID-19 topics on Facebook and Twitter to

spread pro-ISIS messaging. Pandemic-related ISIS content tracked by ISD researchers generated over half a million views, and we have even seen the strategic use of paid ads to spread ISIS content and attempt to drown out other COVID-19 related posts.<sup>8</sup>

## FAR-RIGHT ACCELERATIONISM

In parallel, we have witnessed an emboldening of the broad ecosystem of far-right extremism, from white supremacist "accelerationist" groups using the COVID-19 crisis to claim democracy is a failure and call for insurrectional violence, to wider extremist constituencies opportunistically using the ongoing pandemic to spread conspiratorial hate speech.

Across a range of digital platforms – including unregulated imageboard sites such as 8chan and 4chan, censorship-free discussion platforms like Voat, ultra-libertarian social media sites like Parler, and encrypted messaging channels such as Telegram – extremist content and coordinated campaigns have proliferated during the pandemic. In the US context, such content has sought to 'gamify' violent extremism, detailing how 'players' can achieve 'points' by carrying out attacks on law enforcement, liberals, Muslims, Jews, Black Americans and other groups deemed 'enemies'.<sup>9</sup>

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Within one network of 225 white supremacist channels on Telegram containing over a million posts, researchers found repeated posts glorifying terrorism, calling for violent attacks, spreading violent extremist ideological material and demonising minority groups. Telegram channels associated with white supremacy and racism grew exponentially during the pandemic. One white supremacist channel grew by more than 6,000 users over the month of March, whilst another specifically focused on messaging related to COVID-19 grew its user base from

just 300 users to 2,700 in that month alone — a growth of 800%.<sup>10</sup> The platform was also being used to call for ‘Boogaloo’ supporters and violent accelerationist groups to join forces in armed conflict. The Boogaloo phenomenon, a broad-based anti-government movement with considerable white supremacist elements has seen its membership and prominence vastly accelerated by crisis narratives around the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests in the wake of the killing of George Floyd.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, threats coming from an increasingly wide range of actors tangential to the extreme right show the diversification of this security challenge. The burgeoning QAnon conspiracy community and online subculture, described as a domestic terrorism threat by the FBI in 2019, has surged during the lockdown. ISD researchers recorded a doubling of users engaging in discussion of QAnon across Facebook and Twitter in March 2020, with membership of QAnon groups on Facebook increasing by 120% during this month, with much of this online community geared towards conspiratorial discussion and mobilisation around COVID-19.<sup>12</sup> This chimes with the broader proliferation of extremist conspiracy theories relating to the virus across the internet, including

anti-Semitic conspiracies being adapted to incorporate the ongoing pandemic. Research across a range of far right pages and channels has shown a dramatic increase in attention on the topic of ‘elites’ in light of the COVID-19 crisis. Figures such as Bill Gates, George Soros, the Rothschilds and Jeff Bezos have been framed as part of a ‘Jewish plot’ to use the virus as a tool of social control, a purposeful plot to kill off certain populations, or as a route for these individuals or their related institutions to make money off the release of a virus, all of which are unfounded claims without verifiable evidence.

## **POST-ORGANISATIONAL PARADIGMS**

Much of this mobilisation and narrative weaponisation of the global pandemic, particularly by far right extremists, points to a broader shift occurring towards an increasingly post-organisational paradigm, whereby online connection to extremist culture and ideology might be as important to inspiring violence as connections to traditional “on the ground” group structures. The increasingly decentralised nature of both the global Islamist and far-right movements is in large part enabled through burgeoning online extremist ecosystems.

The opportunities for mobilisation represented by COVID-19 has helped catalyse these increasingly disparate and diverse violent extremism challenges, which terrorism scholars Bruce Hoffman and Colin Clarke have represented in the United States context as constituting a shift from a “monochromatic threat from Salafi-jihadist groups like

al-Qaeda and the Islamic State’ towards ‘a kaleidoscope [of] new threats from “boogaloo bois,” white supremacists, neo-Nazis, shadowy anarchist elements, and the extreme fringe of violent incels’.<sup>13</sup>

In this context, analysing the challenge of violent extremism solely in terms of ‘terrorist organisations’ is becoming too narrow a frame. Rather, the trends indicated by the Global Terrorism Index, and confirmed by extremist mobilisation during COVID-19, show the need to understand the rapidly changing manifestations and organising principles of violent extremism. This means looking not just at formal terrorist groupings, but also the wider ecosystems, ideological formations and online subcultures from which these threats are increasingly emanating.

History warns us that economic calamity, societal polarisation and geopolitical uncertainty provide rich opportunities for violent extremists to pose supremacist solutions, with profound implications for public safety and social cohesion. It is within this increasingly fragmented global extremist landscape in which we will see the long term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic play out.

## Terrorism and peace in Afghanistan

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In February 2010, at the peak of US military engagement in Afghanistan, Pakistani security forces captured Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in an intelligence-led operation in Karachi. Mullah Baradar was, at the time, the head of the Taliban military and therefore the general commander of the guerrillas and suicide bombers fighting against the Afghan government and the US. He was also deputy to the Taliban movement's supreme leader, Mullah Omar. The US provided the intelligence which was vital to Baradar's capture and detention. Almost exactly a decade later, on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020, with much diplomatic fanfare, Mullah Baradar sat next to US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, in Doha, to sign an agreement on behalf of the United States and the Taliban's political entity, the Islamic Emirate. The man who had orchestrated the fight against the US signed off on a deal intended to lay the foundations of peace in Afghanistan. Through this deal, Mullah Baradar promised that the Taliban would prevent Afghan territory being used to threaten other countries (and implied counter-terror commitment), and suspend Taliban attacks against US forces and against major Afghan cities. In return, the US announced a troop withdrawal timetable and promised to orchestrate the release of five thousand prisoners from Afghan jails.

The US-Taliban deal represented a remarkable gambit for the US. Less than two decades after launching the GWOT, the US dealt diplomatically with a man it had earlier hunted as a key target in that war. On one level, the US-Taliban deal can be interpreted as a response to US frustration with interminable counter-terrorism operations, which were long used to rationalise the presence in Afghanistan. Ostensibly, the deal was a bold effort to integrate political and security actions to achieve a counter-terrorism effect. Enthusiasts for the deal hoped it might prove a healthy alternative to the main thrust of counter-terror strategy in Afghanistan, which had long relied on hunting down targeted terrorist operatives but had not mastered the environment which enabled them to operate. Afghan experience in the wake of the deal highlights the complex inter-play of terrorism and peace and offers lessons on the potential and pitfalls of integrating political and security actions in counter-terror.

Afghanistan provides a classic case of the political dilemmas inherent in specifying which sections of the

endemic and multi-actor political violence should be labelled as terrorism. The Taliban Movement is still the perpetrator of most anti-state violence. It uses the full range of asymmetric warfare tactics, from skirmishing against army units to target killings of civilian officials and mass casualty suicide bombings. However, the US approach to terrorist listing of Afghan actors has focused on elite sections of the Taliban military with the most advanced suicide bombing capability (the "Haqqani Network") and those associated with Al Qaeda. In addition to the Afghan actors, who are primarily focused on the Afghan theatre, Afghanistan continues to play host to a range of regional and global jihadi organisations engaged in terrorism. Core Al Qaeda retains its foothold in the country, amid much debate on its remaining strength, capability and strategic intent. While the original rationale for the US-led intervention was global terrorists' use of Afghanistan as a rear-base for attacks on the west, Pakistan-origin groups such as Lashkar Tayyaba and Jaesh Mohammad have long exploited Afghanistan as a theatre for their jihad. Afghanistan also continues to host multiple militants from Xinjiang, the Central Asian states and the Caucasus. They have since 2014 been split between Daesh and Al Qaeda. They have both used Afghanistan as a sanctuary and have acquired a track record of providing expertise in advanced terror tactics to the Taliban. From the Afghan perspective, the country suffers from imported terrorism – attacks conducted against its forces or citizens perpetrated by foreign militants or those operating from bases in Pakistan. But, insofar as Afghanistan still functions as an "exporter" of terrorism, the main target is Pakistan. Since 2014, the various off-shoots of the Pakistan Taliban Movement have based themselves in insurgency-affected Afghan border provinces and conducted operations against Pakistan.

The Taliban undertaking, within the 29 February agreement, to control the actions of other groups within territory they hold, was helpful in rendering the deal politically palatable within the US, given that counter-terrorism had been a key rationale for the long US presence. Because of the architecture adopted by Special Envoy Khalilzad for his dealings with the Taliban, their counter-terrorism undertaking was part of the sequence, progressing towards negotiations between the Afghan parties. The Taliban undertaking allowed the US to adopt a

conditional timetable for their troop withdrawal, which in turn incentivised the Taliban to commit to join intra-Afghan negotiations, which in turn created an opportunity for a political settlement of the armed conflict between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

Mullah Baradar's signing of the 29 February agreement and the implied counter-terror undertaking were clearly a milestone in the evolution of the Afghan conflict. But, the implementation record proved patchy as, in the months following, the Taliban position on terrorism remained ambivalent and progress towards a negotiated peace was elusive. In the first place, while negotiating the agreement, the Taliban successfully resisted attempts to make any explicit comment to desist, or restrain other groups, from terrorism. The commitment in the text is to ensure there are no threats to other countries. The Taliban position was driven by their imperative to avoid a conflation of terrorism and jihad. They were intent on continuing to assert that their armed struggle against the US and fellow Afghans alike had always been legitimate (a jihad). They also successfully resisted pressure for them to denounce Al Qaeda and were reluctant even to sign off on referring to any of the international militants as terrorists.

In terms of mechanisms, the Doha Agreement built on US-Taliban channels which had been developed in the preceding year and a half of negotiations. US military officials deployed in Doha were able to maintain regular liaison with a Taliban delegation, which connected to the movement's leadership and, as required, the top theatre commander, General Scott Miller, was also able to engage with Mullah Baradar and other senior Taliban. The terrorist activity which proved most responsive to the agreement was the elite domestic terrorism. Taliban paused mass casualty suicide attacks on Kabul and major cities. Most Taliban violence in Afghanistan's provinces is highly decentralised, initiated by local field commanders, without reference to a command chain. The suicide attacks on Kabul, usually attributed to the Haqqani Network, are far more tightly controlled by the Taliban military leadership than regular skirmishes in the provinces, as they rely on centralised planning and budgeting and the deployment of specialist, trained personnel. The agreement thus became the framework through which the US, in concert with the Pakistani authorities, was successfully able to persuade the Taliban leadership to suspend the Kabul suicide bomb campaign.

The agreement seemed to be far less useful in transforming the relationship between the Taliban and Al Qaeda or the other Afghanistan-based militant groups. But, on this issue, the Taliban negotiators were helped by the rather unambitious nature of the commitment which the US had secured from them. In the wake of the deal, the Taliban intelligence commission took responsibility for managing the movement's dealings with the foreign militants and the various Pakistani factions operating in Taliban territory. In effect, the instructions from Taliban intelligence to foreign and Pakistani militants were that they should keep a low profile and shift location as directed by the Taliban, and that they must participate in

the Taliban's jihad against the Afghan government. Thus, post-agreement, foreign militants, such as Uygur fighters from Xinjiang and men from Uzbekistan, continued to provide specialist training to Taliban fighters and to facilitate the conduct of suicide bombings against Afghan government officials. Assessing whether Taliban intelligence handlers, while encouraging their foreign and Pakistani militant counterparts to focus their energies on the "Afghan jihad", restrained them from international or cross-border terrorism is challenging. Only those Al Qaeda operatives have survived the intense counter-terror campaign in Afghanistan, who have the strongest operational security. Because of the threat of disruption, militants operating in Afghanistan protect the details of activities connected to international attacks as the most sensitive secrets.

Even if the Taliban were inclined to abide by the spirit of the agreement, of all foreign militant activities in Afghanistan, Taliban have least leverage over preparation of international attacks. However, the real test of the 29<sup>th</sup> February deal in addressing terrorist threats emanating from Afghanistan lay not in whether it disrupted specific plots or groups. Rather, the key issue was how it impacted on the operating environment experienced by the externally-oriented militant groups operating in Afghanistan. The Taliban's insistence on militant groups participating in the movement's "Afghan jihad" has provided a cover for all the groups hosted by the Taliban to sustain their military activities and thus build their personnel, skills and weaponry. In contrast to original hopes that the Taliban-US deal might prompt the Taliban to cut links with Al Qaeda, it seems to have emboldened the Taliban to protect the capabilities of militant groups with a history of participation in the international jihad.

US officials have repeatedly asserted that their plan to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, under the 29 February deal, was conditional, with the implication that the US could slow down troop withdrawal if it judged that the Taliban had failed to live up to commitments. However, another even more fundamental way in which the 29 February deal linked terrorism and peace concerned the issue of the continuity of the state. Proponents of the US-Taliban deal hoped that the government-Taliban talks which it made possible would result in a political agreement which provided for continuity of the state, with its security institutions and with the Taliban on board, appropriately integrated. Such an arrangement – an actual peace deal - would have allowed security institutions to retain their counter-terror function, including regional and international cooperation. Critically, in terms of recent experience of terrorism in Afghanistan, a peace deal to end the government-Taliban conflict promised to reintegrate national territory and extend government authority. Even once the start of government-Taliban negotiations was announced, agreement proved elusive and Taliban chose to escalate violence, contrary to US, international and Afghan government demands to reduce violence or go on ceasefire.

Counter-terrorism practice has long been a factor helping

to shape the evolution of the conflict and prospects for peace in Afghanistan. The first attempt at a peace agreement, the December 2001 Bonn Accord, explicitly provided for a US-led counter-terrorism force distinct from the peace-keeping oriented International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). However, it is widely understood that abuses conducted in counter-terrorism operations of the early years helped to alienate potentially reconcilable Taliban figures and thus drive the post-Bonn conflict. After 2009 and the US decision under President Obama to respond to increased Taliban violence with a troop surge, the US and allies invested heavily in a “decapitation approach”. The counter-terror campaign came, to a remarkable extent, to be dominated by intelligence-driven targeting of specific terrorist operators, culminating of course in the successful operation against Osama bin Laden. But the long term durability of any gains achieved in the decapitation campaign ultimately depended upon the effectiveness of the Afghan state and its ability to sustain itself, control the territory and manage its security forces.

A key factor driving the US decision to undertake its unconventional diplomacy with the Taliban during 2018-20 was the desire to wind down its long military intervention and do so responsibly. Policy makers have struggled to pursue the linked goals of a peaceful Afghanistan, an end to the costly intervention and a prevention of the re-emergence of the terrorist threat which originally precipitated the war. The Taliban’s reluctance or inability to abide by their implied counter-terror commitments are not the sole obstacle to achievement of the ambitious objectives. A far more profound obstacle is the lack of a credible strategy for the sustainment of the Afghan

state. Indeed, the process through which the US single-mindedly pursued its deal with the Taliban helped to boost the Taliban’s claims to legitimacy and undermine the government’s position. This made it even less likely that the Taliban would embrace any power-sharing deal preserving state structures and counter terrorism capability. The latest stage of the Afghan peace process commenced with the gambit of bringing a former commander of terrorist operations to the table. But the success of that gambit is likely to rest on the performance of the Afghan state as US troops depart, rather than on whether Mullah Baradar sticks to his implied counter-terror commitments.

**"Counter-terrorism practice has long been a factor helping to shape the evolution of the conflict and prospects for peace in Afghanistan."**

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# GTI Ranks & Scores, 2020

GTI Rank	Country	2020 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2019-2020)
1	Afghanistan	9.592	-0.013
2	Iraq	8.682	-0.57
3	Nigeria	8.314	-0.286
4	Syria	7.778	-0.299
5	Somalia	7.645	-0.157
6	Yemen	7.581	0.017
7	Pakistan	7.541	-0.361
8	India	7.353	-0.167
9	Congo - Kinshasa	7.178	0.138
10	Philippines	7.099	-0.041
11	Mali	7.049	0.371
12	Burkina Faso	6.755	1.336
13	Cameroon	6.627	-0.012
14	Egypt	6.419	-0.377
15	Mozambique	6.4	0.84
16	Libya	6.25	-0.523
17	Central African Republic	6.241	-0.382
18	Turkey	6.11	-0.425
19	Colombia	6.1	0.179
20	Sri Lanka	6.065	2.496
21	Thailand	5.783	-0.246
22	South Sudan	5.726	-0.613
23	Kenya	5.644	-0.1
24	Niger	5.617	0.02
25	Myanmar	5.543	0.025
26	Sudan	5.401	-0.407
27	Nepal	5.34	0.244
28	Ethiopia	5.307	-0.039
29	United States	5.26	0.067
30	United Kingdom	5.161	-0.269
31	Palestinian Territories	5.077	-0.103
32	Saudi Arabia	5	-0.314
33	Bangladesh	4.909	-0.299
34	Chad	4.829	0.067
35	Burundi	4.702	-0.4
36	Ukraine	4.692	-0.768

GTI Rank	Country	2020 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2019-2020)
37	Indonesia	4.629	-0.441
38	France	4.614	-0.398
39	Russia	4.542	-0.356
40	Israel	4.522	-0.023
41	South Africa	4.358	-0.154
42	New Zealand	4.337	4.194
43	Mexico	4.316	0.235
44	Greece	4.182	0.025
45	Tajikistan	4.18	0.232
46	Iran	4.157	-0.56
47	Chile	4.031	-0.127
48	Germany	3.965	-0.295
49	Tunisia	3.858	-0.104
50	Rwanda	3.754	0.805
51	Lebanon	3.661	-0.752
52	Venezuela	3.658	-0.444
53	China	3.587	-0.879
54	Angola	3.429	-0.355
55	Uganda	3.278	-0.704
56	Canada	3.171	-0.47
57	Jordan	3.149	-0.046
58	Tanzania	3.112	-0.16
59	Belgium	3.043	-0.593
60	Italy	3.043	-0.133
61	Sweden	2.892	-0.619
62	Ireland	2.845	0.125
63	Spain	2.81	-0.545
64	Bolivia	2.795	-0.593
65	Algeria	2.696	-0.705
66	Netherlands	2.689	0.372
67	Ecuador	2.606	-0.033
68	Brazil	2.443	-0.129
69	Zimbabwe	2.443	-0.392
70	Paraguay	2.414	-0.705
71	Bahrain	2.402	-0.799
72	Haiti	2.355	0.175

GTI Rank	Country	2020 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2019–2020)
73	Nicaragua	2.355	-0.597
74	Australia	2.148	-0.504
75	Peru	2.141	-0.707
76	Malaysia	2.09	-0.587
77	Congo - Brazzaville	2.043	-0.645
78	Honduras	2.023	1.031
79	Japan	2.014	-0.277
80	Côte d'Ivoire	1.945	-0.653
81	Kuwait	1.795	-0.692
82	Ghana	1.743	0.184
83	Finland	1.721	-0.305
84	Malawi	1.635	0.972
85	Denmark	1.484	0.527
86	Gabon	1.43	0.879
87	Norway	1.297	1.221
88	Madagascar	1.19	-0.767
89	Costa Rica	1.066	1.066
90	Argentina	1.024	-0.656
91	Austria	1.016	-0.639
92	Kyrgyzstan	0.95	-0.688
93	Kazakhstan	0.901	-0.665
94	Papua New Guinea	0.691	-0.673
95	Albania	0.677	0.257
96	Bosnia & Herzegovina	0.677	-0.711
97	Benin	0.663	0.663
98	Guatemala	0.663	-0.668
99	South Korea	0.656	0.36
100	Georgia	0.635	-0.7
101	Taiwan	0.607	-0.401
102	Morocco	0.565	-0.65
103	Hungary	0.551	0.37
104	Armenia	0.53	-0.643
105	Guyana	0.477	0.439
106	Laos	0.439	-0.594
107	Montenegro	0.42	-0.579
108	Vietnam	0.42	-0.579
109	Guinea	0.41	-0.561
110	Senegal	0.391	-0.795
111	Czechia	0.315	-0.551
112	Azerbaijan	0.296	-0.402
113	Switzerland	0.286	0.019
114	Poland	0.239	-0.238
115	Jamaica	0.229	-0.243
116	Lithuania	0.229	-0.229
117	Sierra Leone	0.229	-0.229
118	Liberia	0.191	0.086

GTI Rank	Country	2020 GTI score (out of 10)	Change in score (2019–2020)
119	Bulgaria	0.172	-0.2
120	Trinidad & Tobago	0.162	0.143
121	Zambia	0.153	-0.152
122	Cyprus	0.115	-0.171
123	Latvia	0.115	-0.114
123	North Macedonia	0.105	-0.196
123	Uruguay	0.086	-0.086
126	Estonia	0.057	-0.058
127	Moldova	0.057	-0.058
128	Serbia	0.057	-0.058
129	Lesotho	0.048	-0.047
130	Djibouti	0.038	-0.282
131	Slovakia	0.029	-0.028
131	Panama	0.019	-0.019
133	Qatar	0.014	-0.015
133	Uzbekistan	0.01	-0.009
135	Belarus	0	0
135	Bhutan	0	-0.01
137	Botswana	0	0
138	Cambodia	0	0
138	Croatia	0	0
138	Cuba	0	0
138	Dominican Republic	0	-0.177
138	El Salvador	0	0
138	Equatorial Guinea	0	0
138	Eritrea	0	0
138	Eswatini	0	0
138	Gambia	0	0
138	Guinea-Bissau	0	0
138	Iceland	0	-0.029
138	Kosovo	0	0
138	Mauritania	0	0
138	Mauritius	0	0
138	Mongolia	0	0
138	Namibia	0	0
138	North Korea	0	0
138	Oman	0	0
138	Portugal	0	0
138	Romania	0	0
138	Singapore	0	0
138	Slovenia	0	0
138	Timor-Leste	0	0
138	Togo	0	0
138	Turkmenistan	0	0
138	United Arab Emirates	0	-0.048

# B

## 50 Worst Terrorist Attacks in 2019

Rank	Country	Date	City	Organisation	Fatalities	Attack type
1	Sri Lanka	21/4/19	Colombo, Negomno, Batticaloa, Dehiwala	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	266	Bombing/Explosion
2	Mali	23/3/19	Ogossogou, Welingara	Dan Na Ambassagou	157	Armed Assault
3	Afghanistan	21/1/19	Maydan Shahr district	Taliban	129	Bombing/Explosion
4	Cameroon	9/6/19	Darak	Boko Haram	101	Armed Assault
5	Afghanistan	17/8/19	Kabul	Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State	93	Bombing/Explosion
6	Somalia	28/12/19	Mogadishu	Al-Shabaab	84	Bombing/Explosion
7	Afghanistan	18/10/19	Jawdara	Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State	74	Bombing/Explosion
8	Nigeria	27/7/19	Badu	Boko Haram	70	Armed Assault
9	Afghanistan	23/3/19	Shakar Shili, Majid Chawk	Taliban	65	Unknown
10	Nigeria	28/1/19	Rann	Boko Haram	60	Armed Assault
11	Burkina Faso	24/12/19	Arbinda	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)	57	Armed Assault
12	Mali	30/9/19	Boulikessi, Mondoro	Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)	53	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
13	New Zealand	15/3/19	Christchurch	Anti-Muslim extremists	51	Armed Assault
14	Afghanistan	30/5/19	Chora district	Taliban	51	Bombing/Explosion
15	Syria	24/1/19	Baghuz	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	50	Bombing/Explosion
16	Cameroon	22/12/19	Daba Lamy	Boko Haram	50	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
17	India	14/2/19	Lethpora	Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)	41	Bombing/Explosion
18	Afghanistan	13/4/19	Kunduz	Taliban	41	Armed Assault
19	Afghanistan	30/6/19	Maruf district	Taliban	40	Bombing/Explosion
20	Yemen	1/8/19	Aden	Houthi extremists (Ansar Allah)	40	Bombing/Explosion



Rank	Country	Date	City	Organisation	Fatalities	Attack type
21	Afghanistan	19/9/19	Qalat	Taliban	40	Bombing/Explosion
22	Afghanistan	1/7/19	Andkhoy district	Taliban	39	Unknown
23	Afghanistan	5/7/19	Maruf district	Taliban	38	Armed Assault
24	Mali	1/1/19	Koulogo	Dozo militia	37	Armed Assault
25	Afghanistan	17/3/19	Harkilik	Taliban	37	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
26	Ethiopia	24/6/19	Metekel district	Unknown	37	Armed Assault
27	Burkina Faso	6/11/19	Tapoa district	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)	37	Bombing/Explosion
28	Congo - Kinshasa	18/6/19	Unknown	Mayi Mayi	36	Armed Assault
29	Afghanistan	30/6/19	Qush Tapa district	Taliban	36	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
30	Mali	9/6/19	Sobane Da	Fulani extremists	35	Armed Assault
31	Afghanistan	31/7/19	Ab Khorma	Taliban	35	Bombing/Explosion
32	Nigeria	16/6/19	Mandarari	Boko Haram	34	Bombing/Explosion
33	Afghanistan	10/1/19	Qalay-i-Zal district	Taliban	33	Unknown
34	Tajikistan	19/5/19	Kirpichny	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)	32	Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)
35	Afghanistan	31/8/19	Atghar district	Taliban	32	Unknown
36	Afghanistan	21/10/19	Gizab district	Taliban	32	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
37	Nigeria	29/4/19	Kuda	Boko Haram	30	Armed Assault
38	Somalia	12/7/19	Kismayo	Al-Shabaab	30	Bombing/Explosion
39	Afghanistan	31/7/19	Naw Bahar district	Taliban	30	Unknown
40	Afghanistan	27/9/19	Khwaja Ghar district	Taliban	30	Unknown
41	Burkina Faso	8/10/19	Oulfare	Muslim extremists	30	Armed Assault
42	Afghanistan	12/4/19	Shirzad district	Taliban	29	Bombing/Explosion
43	Afghanistan	28/2/19	Argahandab district	Taliban	28	Unknown
44	Afghanistan	5/5/19	Puli Khumri	Taliban	28	Bombing/Explosion
45	Afghanistan	30/8/19	Chah Aab	Taliban	28	Facility/Infrastructure Attack
46	Afghanistan	17/9/19	Charikar	Taliban	27	Bombing/Explosion
47	Mali	30/9/19	Boulikessi	Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)	27	Hostage Taking (Kidnapping)
48	Afghanistan	29/12/19	Lalah Gozar	Taliban	27	Unknown
49	Afghanistan	5/2/19	Talowkah	Taliban	26	Unknown
50	Afghanistan	5/2/19	Khwaja Pak	Taliban	26	Unknown



# GTI Methodology

The GTI ranks 163 countries based on four indicators weighted over five years.<sup>1</sup> 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**
- ▶ **a measure of the total property damage from terrorist incidents 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.

The property damage measure is further disaggregated into four bands depending on the measured scope of the property damage inflicted by one incident. These bandings are shown in table C.2; incidents causing less than US\$1 million are accorded a weighting of 1, between \$1 million and \$1 billion a 2, and more than \$1 billion a 3 weighting. It should be noted a great majority of incidents are coded in the GTD as ‘unknown’ thus scoring nil with ‘catastrophic’ events being extremely rare.

## 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.3 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
Sum of property damages measure	Between 0 and 3 depending on severity

TABLE C.2

### Property damage levels as defined in the GTD and weights used in the Global Terrorism Index

Code/ Weight	Damage Level
0	Unknown
1	Minor (likely < \$1 million)
2	Major (likely between \$1 million and \$1 billion)
3	Catastrophic (likely > \$1 billion)

TABLE C.3

### 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
Sum of property damages measure	2	20	40
<b>Total raw score</b>			<b>195.5</b>

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

$$(1 \times 21) + (3 \times 36) + (0.5 \times 53) + (2 \times 20) = 195.5.$$

### 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.4 highlights the weights used for each year.

TABLE C.4

### 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 very small amounts, if not no terrorism. Hence, the GTI uses a base 10 logarithmic banding system between 0 and 10 at 0.5 intervals.

As shown in table C.5 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.  $\text{root} = 2 \times (\text{Highest GTI Banded Score} - \text{Lowest GTI Banded Score}) = 20 \times (10 - 0) = 20$
  - b.  $\text{Range} = 2 \times (\text{Highest Recorded GTI Raw Score} - \text{Lowest Recorded GTI Raw Score})$
  - c.  $r = \sqrt[\text{root}]{\text{range}}$
4. The mapped band cut-off value for bin n is calculated by  $rn$ .

Following this method produces mapping of GTI scores to the set bands as defined in table C.5.

TABLE C.5

### 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	328.44
2	0.5	1.69	13	6	556.2
3	1	2.87	14	6.5	941.88
4	1.5	4.86	15	7	1595.02
5	2	8.22	16	7.5	2701.06
6	2.5	13.93	17	8	4574.08
7	3	23.58	18	8.5	7745.91
8	3.5	39.94	19	9	13117.21
9	4	67.63	20	9.5	22213.17
10	4.5	114.53	21	10	37616.6
11	5	193.95			



# A note on pastoral violence in the Sahel

Herders have been driving their cattle across the Sahel region of Africa for centuries and the Fulani reportedly make up 90 per cent of these herders.<sup>i</sup> The Fulani are an ethnic group numbering in the order of 20 million and are found in several West and Central African countries, especially Nigeria. Many of them are nomadic or semi-nomadic herders.

Traditionally, the relationship between nomadic herders and sedentary farmers throughout the region has been relatively violence free, if at times contentious. Herders migrate seasonally to graze their livestock, and in return for grazing rights, fertilise farmland. However more recently, tensions and violence have increasingly flared between herders and farmers with some estimates suggesting that in Nigeria alone up to 60,000 people have been killed in clashes since 2001.<sup>ii</sup> In Nigeria, this conflict is driven by the increases in population that have contributed to resource scarcity and desertification. Ambiguous land laws and a weak rule of law, especially in rural areas, have also played a part.

Tensions between the Fulani, the majority of whom are Muslim, and farmers, of whom the majority in Nigeria for example are Christian, is largely driven by economic causes and low levels of Positive Peace. However, extremist Islamic groups such as the

Front de Libération du Macina (FLM) in Mali have, and may continue to, build from these underlying grievances and recruit susceptible members of the Fulani ethnic group through the use of ethno-religious narratives. The FLM, which formed in 2015, has similar stated goals and methods to al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).<sup>iii</sup> The FLM was responsible for approximately 12 per cent of terror attacks in Mali in 2015 and 2016. These attacks were responsible for ten per cent of deaths from terrorism in Mali during these two years.

Of particular concern is the increasing terror threat from radicalised Fulani in Nigeria, where there is already an ongoing violent conflict between herders and farmers. The ongoing conflict over land use in Nigeria has been exacerbated by worsening droughts, erratic rainfall and land degradation. This has contributed to thousands of deaths in recent years,<sup>iv</sup> resulting in a strong government response.

Events in the GTD attributed to 'Fulani Extremists' reflect the use of terrorism as a tactic in the conflict between pastoralists and farmers, rather than the existence of an organized terrorist group.

# Socio-economic Correlates of Terrorism

TABLE E.1

## Indicators associated with terrorism

The analysis suggests 15 statistical indicators are closely associated with terrorism, as measured by the GTI.

Indicators	Original Variable Name	Source	Comments
Corruption*	Control of Corruption	World Bank	Captures the extend to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption.
Equality Before the Law*	Equality before the law and individual liberty index	Varieties of Democracy	Measures the degree to which individuals are equal before a state's law.
Extreme Poverty	Extremely poor (<US\$1.90, PPP) as % of total employment	International Labour Organisation	Number of extremely poor persons as a proportion of the workforce
Factionalized Elites	Factionalized Elites	Fragile States Index	Measures the fragmentation of ruling elites and state institutions along ethnic, class, clan, racial or religions lines.
Group Grievance	Group Grievance	Fragile States Index	Focuses on divisions and schisms between different groups in society – particularly divisions based on social or political characteristics – and their role in access to services or resources, and inclusion in the political process.
Human Rights Protection*	Human rights protection scores	Global State of Democracy	What is the level of political violence and terror? PTS scores based on information contained in the annual human rights reports produced by the US Department of State.
Illiteracy	Adult illiterate population, 15+ years, both sexes (number)	UNESCO	Total number of adults over age 15 who cannot both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on their everyday life.
Internal Conflict*	Internal conflict	Global State of Democracy	An assessment of political violence in the country and its actual or potential impact on governance.
Military Expenditure	Military expenditure (% of general government expenditure)	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)	Military expenditures data from SIPRI are derived from the NATO definition, which includes all current and capital expenditures on the armed forces, including peacekeeping forces; defense ministries and other government agencies engaged in defense projects; paramilitary forces, if these are judged to be trained and equipped for military operations; and military space activities.
Organised Crime*	GCI 4.0: Organized crime	World Economic Forum	Part of the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), this indicator measures the extent to which organized crime (mafia-oriented racketeering, extortion) imposes costs on businesses?
Physical Violence	Physical violence index	Varieties of Democracy	Physical integrity is understood as freedom from political killings and torture by the government. Among the set of civil liberties, these liberal rights are the most relevant for political competition and accountability. The index is based on indicators that reflect violence committed by government agents and that are not directly referring to elections.

Prosperity*	Prosperity Index Score	Heritage Foundation	Assesses countries in regards to economic development, business environment, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedoms, social capital and natural environment.
Religious/Ethnic Tensions*	Religious Tensions / Ethnic Tensions	Global State of Democracy	This indicator captures the degree of tension within a country attributable to religious divisions, domination, or suppression? Ethnic Tensions: What is the degree of tension within a country attributable to racial, nationality, or language divisions?
Rule of Law*	Rule of Law	World Bank	Captures perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence.
Share of Youth NEET	Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (%)	International Labour Organization	Proportion of people between 15 and 24 years of age that are not engaged with studying, work or training. Greater values for this indicator represent larger proportions of idle youth.

\* For some qualitative or survey-based factors, the directionality of the original indicators was inverted. This was done to harmonise the direction of all indicators just so greater numerical values represent less social development.



# Estimating terrorist activity by the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

Boko Haram, led by Abubakar Shekau, pledged allegiance to ISIL in March 2015 and was formally integrated as the *Islamic State West Africa Province* (ISWAP).<sup>1</sup> However, in 2016, ISIL leadership nominated Abu Musab al-Barnawi as the leader of ISWAP following internal dissatisfaction with Shekau's leadership.<sup>2</sup> Shekau disputed this decision and rejected al-Barnawi as the new leader, resulting in the establishment of two factions.<sup>3</sup> The Shekau faction reverted to using the group name *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad* while the Barnawi faction continued as ISWAP.

Section 4 of this report analyses the global expansion of ISIL beyond Iraq and Syria, and includes data on ISIL provinces and affiliates, including estimates for terrorist activity attributed to ISWAP. Currently, the relationship between Shekau's faction and ISIL is uncertain and therefore only ISWAP is included in estimates provided.<sup>4</sup>

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) provides data for attacks under the group name "Boko Haram" and few observations distinguish which faction was responsible. In order to estimate terrorist activity by each faction, IEP consulted the UCDP battle-related death dataset which includes "Islamic State" or

"Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad" as opposition organizations (coded as "SideB") in conflicts against the governments of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and the United States. The breakdown of battle-related deaths linked to "Islamic State" and "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad" is used as a proxy for terrorist activity by each faction. The proportion of battle-related deaths for each faction was calculated for each year between 2015 and 2019, as well as each country in which the group operates, and applied to GTD totals for "Boko Haram".

Of the total battle-related deaths linked to the two factions between 2015 and 2019, approximately 63 per cent were linked to conflicts involving ISWAP, compared to a third for conflicts involving *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*. This was cross-referenced with news sources and journal articles that confirm ISWAP to be the largest and most active faction. The Latest estimates put the membership of the Barnawi faction (ISWAP) to be at 3,500 and the Shekau faction (*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad*) at approximately 1,500 fighters.<sup>5</sup>

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### SECTION 4: THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

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