

Counter Terrorism Committee



Evaluating the efficiency
of current international
anti-terrorism
organizations

MUNOB 2025

I. Introduction	3
II. Definition of key terms	3
III. Background information	4
IV. Major countries and Organisations involved	6
V. Timeline of Events	10
VI. Relevant UN Resolutions	11
VII. Shortcomings of international counter-terrorism organisations	12
VIII. Possible solutions	14
IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY	15

I. Introduction

Ever since the start of the 21st century, the world has seen a rise in acts of terrorism. From probably the most well known one, the 9/11 incident to the rise of the Islamic Caliphate, terrorism comes in different shapes and forms. In order to counter this phenomenon, many organisations were either formed or expanded their operations to include counter-terrorism actions. As operations continued and expanded, these organisations started to raise eyebrows. Many started questioning if these organisations are actually effective, or are they just a strain on different budgets.

II. Definition of key terms

Counterterrorism

Techniques, tactics, practices or any other actions taken by an army, group and so on against terrorist cells or networks.

Terrorism

The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims

International Organisation

An organization that is established by a treaty or other type of instrument governed by international law

III. Background information

1. Quick history of international anti-terrorism efforts before the United Nations

The first truly international intergovernmental body ever formed was The League of Nations, formed on the 10th of January 1920, at the Paris Peace Conference. Through the Covenant of the League of Nations, it vowed to maintain peace and combat world issues. The counter-terrorism part came through the “Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism” signed on November 16th 1937, after a Bulgarian member of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) assassinated King Alexander the first of Yugoslavia. This convention however never came into effect, because member states argued about different articles of it, and also because the Second World War started 2 years later. The League of Nations was officially disbanded on the 18th of April 1946, with its assets and archives relocated to the newly founded United Nations.

2. History of terrorism in the 20th century

The history of terrorism in the 20th century can be classified by each part of it: early 20th century, mid 20th century and late 20th century.

In the early parts of the 20th century, the actions of the Irish Republican Army against the British forces in the 1910s represented some of the first modern terrorist acts. Meanwhile, in the Middle East, Zionist groups such as the Haganah, Irgun and Lehi committed acts of terrorism against the British Mandate of Palestine. Suffragette movements all across the United States of America and the United Kingdom committed acts of terrorism to make their point heard. These organisations mainly used tactics such as bombings or assassinations.

During the Second World War, partisan movements committed acts of terrorism against occupying forces. The most pronounced movements were the Yugoslav partisan movements led by Josip Broz Tito, the French resistance and the Italian Partisans.

Moving on to the mid 20th century, many groups which fought during WW2 continued their fight. The Viet Minh, who fought against Japanese forces occupying Indochina continued their fighting against the French colonists. In Africa, the National Liberation Front in French-controlled Algeria waged all out guerilla war against French colonists.

By the late 20th century, the Islamic pursuit of religious and political goals increased. The most well-known violent attacks were the World Trade Center bombing by Islamic terrorists on the 26th of February 1993, the Sarin gas attacks on the 20th of March 1995 and Oklahoma City Murrah Federal Building bombings in April 1995.

3. Terrorism in the 21st century

The most well known terrorist attack of the 21st century is the 9/11 attack on the Twin Towers. This attack kickstarted the War on Terror led by the United States in the Middle East. Some of the most notable events include the 2002 Moscow Theatre Siege, where Chechen militants occupied a theatre, demanding the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya. This culminated in the main siege, where Russian Spetsnaz acted carelessly, using gas and killing a numerous amount of hostages in the process. Another significant event is the 2003 Istanbul bombings, where four bomb trucks detonated across the city of Istanbul. This period also saw the rise and fall of different terrorist leaders, such as Osama Bin Laden, who was killed during a raid by American SEAL Team Six operatives.

This period also saw the rise of terrorist states like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS for short, an organisation which led the still ongoing ISIS insurgency.



IV. Major countries and Organisations involved

The United Nations Office of Counterterrorism

The United Nations Office of Counterterrorism was established on the 15th of June 2017 after the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 71/291. The substance of this organisation's mandate is the UN Global Counter-terrorism strategy and the review done biennially by the General Assembly. The main functions of the UNOCT are to lead counter-terrorism mandates dictated by the General Assembly, enhance cooperation between states in order to ensure that the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-terrorism strategy (measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, measures to prevent and combat terrorism, measures to build States' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard, measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism) are implemented, to strengthen the delivery of the United Nations counter-terrorism capacity building to states, to improve resource mobilisation for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts and to ensure that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system. The UNOCT maintains close cooperation with the Security Council subsidiary bodies to respond properly to terrorist attacks. More of the UNOCT's activities include: countering terrorist travel, promoting sports and sports culture to combat violent extremism, enhance border security and cybersecurity, counter usage of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials, engage the youth, counter financing of terrorist organisations, manage prisons, ensure that human rights are maintained, raise the voice of terrorism victims and so on. The UNOCT also has multiple running programs, such as the AROS Programme, which aims to aid Member States in countering terrorist use of autonomous and remotely operated systems including drones and STRIVE Asia which aims to mitigate the growing magnitude of the violent extremism threat posed by hate groups all over Central, South and South Eastern Asia, in collaboration with the EU. The STRIVE Asia wants to strengthen local authorities, legislative bodies and the private sector in order to combat violent extremism.

International Centre for Counter-Terrorism

The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism are an independent think-and-do tank aiming to come up with strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism, based on human rights and the rule of law. The ICCT was established in 2010 by the T.M.C. Asser Institute, Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs, and the Cilingendael Institute. The main contribution of the ICCT to the global counter-terrorism efforts is research, where they contribute to debates through their informed publications. The ICCT also offers policy-advice to policy-makers in the form of aiding in the development of policy frameworks, as well as tailored recommendations. Other contributions include training and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and encouraging public debates. The activities of the ICCT revolve around three main programmes: the rule of law, prevention and threat assessment.

INTERPOL

The INTERPOL is instrumental in combating terrorism in its member states by identifying terrorist suspects, preventing terrorist travel, tracing terrorist finances, conducting analysis on social media, defining crimes and conducting multiple projects. These projects include the G5 Sahel project, the Sharaka project and the ended Trace project. The G5 Sahel project aims to encourage the efficient use of INTERPOL policing capabilities in the Sahel, by promoting coordination between military personnel and law enforcement in the Sahel region, providing specialised assistance to the different Joint Task Forces and ensuring 24/7 access of field officers to the INTERPOL databases. The Sharaka project aims to tackle terrorism in the Middle East and Northern Africa, with direct funding from the European Union, bringing INTERPOL policing tools to nations such as Tunisia, Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya and Morocco. It aims to prevent terrorists from crossing borders and generate regional intelligence. The Trace project ended in February 2021. It aimed to aid the 10 nations of the ASEAN organisation (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.) in reinforcing counter-terrorism capacities. It consisted of three cycles, which included: One-week Basic Training on Countering the Use of Internet for Terrorism Purposes, One-week Advanced Training on Countering the Use of Internet for Terrorism Purposes, Software donation and specialized software training, Train-the-trainer session and Table-top exercise to provide participants with hands-on experience. During the COVID pandemic, the training still continued in online form, signifying the commitment of INTERPOL to the global fight against terrorism.

EUROPOL

While EUROPOL is not able to raid or detain suspects, it is still instrumental in intelligence sharing between member nations, assisting in forensic investigations and

countering terrorist financing. The main hub for counter-terrorism in EUROPOL is the ECTC which: facilitates rapid intelligence-sharing between EU law enforcement agencies, monitors online terrorist propaganda and radicalization, tracks terrorist movements across Schengen borders, and assists in major terrorist investigations. Some key ECTC units are the Internet Referral Unit, terrorist financing tracking programme and web investigations. The EUROPOL conducts operations against all things crime, also countering ISIS propaganda in Europe.

Financial Action Task Force

The Financial Action Task Force is an intergovernmental organisation founded during the G7 summit in Paris initially to combat money laundering, however after the 2001 attacks it started countering terrorism financing. The FATF makes global standards related to terrorism financing. The FATF has an established strategy which collaborates with the United Nations and other FATF style regional organisations.

The United States of America

Ever since the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers the United States began the Global War on Terror. The US Military participated and led Operation Enduring Freedom from 2001 to 2014, with the objective of dismantling Al Qaeda and removing the terrorists from power in Afghanistan. This operation later transitioned into Operation Freedom Sentinel. After, the US launched Operation Iraqi freedom, from 2003 to 2011, which removed Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, and then aimed to stabilise the nation through military presence. The last major operation which is still ongoing today is Operation Inherent Resolve, from 2014 to the present, through which the US aims to end ISIS presence in Syria, and to further train Kurdish and Syrian forces. The US is also involved in countering other terrorism related issues, such as countering terrorism financing through the Financial Action Task Force, as well as partnering with social media companies to ensure that radical ideas are not spread around on social media. The Central Intelligence Agency has also played an instrumental part in intelligence sharing with American allies. The US also continues to provide air support to allies and drone intelligence, enhancing the counter terrorism capabilities of allied nations. The US also cooperates with organisation such as EUROPOL through the operational agreement signed in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. The agreement defines strategic information including the sharing of information between the USA and EUROPOL, as well as shared training between the organisations

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan controlled Afghanistan until 2021, when NATO decided to withdraw forces from Afghanistan, facilitating a Taliban counter-offensive which led to the fall of Afghanistan as a whole. The war in Afghanistan has been one of the longest counter-terrorist operations ever conducted. The Islamic Republic was established in 2004 after the transitional and interim periods. After the 9/11 attacks, an United States led coalition intervened in Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban regime controlling most of the nation since 1996. NATO however was unable to stabilise Afghanistan, which led to a reorganisation of Taliban forces and a continued insurgency until the major counter-offensive in 2021. Afghanistan stands as a military failure for the western world, signifying that current organisations are not perfect, and could not stabilise a mountainous region like Afghanistan. However, Afghanistan remains as an example of what letting terrorists lead a nation results in. The current islamic emirate controlled by the Taliban imposes harsh laws on women and upholds Sharia law strictly.



V. Timeline of Events

- November 16th 1937 - The League of Nations signs the “Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism”
- 24 October 1945 - The United Nations is officially founded
- 14-16 July 1989 - The 1989 G7 Paris summit where the Financial Action Task Force was founded
- 11 September 2001 - The 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers
- 7 October 2001 - The US and NATO invade Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom
- 26 November 2001 - The United Nations establishes the Counter Terrorism Committee as a subsidiary body of the United Nations Security Council
- 2001 - The INTERPOL became a 24/7 available organization after the 9/11 attacks
- 2003 - INTERPOL establishes the Command and Coordination center (CCC) to provide a point of contact for any member nation facing a crisis
- 8 September 2006 - The United Nations Global Counter - Terrorism defense strategy is ratified through A/RES/60/288
- 2 May 2011 - Osama Bin Laden is killed by a team of US Special Forces Operators
- 29 June 2014 - ISIS declares a caliphate after capturing the cities of Mosul and Raqqa
- 15 June 2017 - The United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism is established under UN General Assembly resolution 71/291
- 10 July 2017 - Iraq recaptures the city of Mosul
- 23 March 2019 - The ISIS self-proclaimed caliphate collapses after Syrian Democratic Forces recapture the town of Baghouz with the aid of the international coalition
- 15 August 2021 - Taliban retake Afghanistan after NATO forces withdraw, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapses

VI. Relevant UN Resolutions

- **A/RES/59/191 2004**
- **S/RES/1566 2004**
- **S/RES/1535 2004**
- **A/RES/58/81 2003**
- **S/RES/1456 2003**
- **A/RES/57/219 2003**
- **A/RES/56/160 2002**
- **A/RES/56/88 2002**
- **S/RES/1377 2001**
- **S/RES/1373 2001**
- **S/RES/1189 1998**
- **A/RES/64/297 2010**
- **A/RES/60/288 2006**
- **S/RES/2129 2013**
- **S/RES/2395 2017**
- **A/RES/71/291 2017**

VII. Shortcomings of international counter-terrorism organisations

1. Difficulties related to political and jurisdictional issues

Since terrorist cells operate on the territories of multiple nations, legal systems and criminal definitions differ. For example, a nation could consider a terrorist act something that another nation doesn't. Disagreements arising on this topic can hinder counter-terrorism efforts.

2. Terrorist financing

One main setback of counter-terrorism operations is how terrorist organisations are financed. International organisations are unable to fully stop both state and non state actors from financing terrorist organisations, and with the rise of the crypto market, crypto coins are able to be used to finance terrorist organisations. It becomes extremely hard to track from where the transactions originate since crypto can be traded anonymously, thus hindering operations.

3. Failure to keep up with the rapid development of ways to radicalize people

With the rapid advancement in social media technologies terrorists are finding new ways each day to radicalise people through them. Global counter-terrorism agencies are currently struggling to deal with this rapid development of the situation. With websites like Telegram or other anonymous encrypted messaging apps providing a safe space for terrorists to spread their ideals to unknowing people, the efforts of counter-terrorism agencies are in vain.

4. Resource issues

Intergovernmental counter-terrorism agencies suffer from a lack of funding and overstretched personnel, thus resulting in lower efficiency when conducting operations.

5. Regional differences

With different regions having different needs, a “one-for-all” approach is not suitable. This was exemplified by the Afghan situation where NATO and other international bodies failed to stabilise the region and allowed the Taliban to reorganise a sizeable resistance. These failures raise questions about how efficient are counter-terrorism organisations at their job.

6. Rapid development of terrorist tactics

Terrorists are constantly adapting and figuring out new ways to wage war against their enemies. The inability of international organisations to adapt to these shifts and to counter them results in another example of inefficiency.

7. Mistrust

Global counter-terrorism efforts are hindered by mistrust between states as well, especially in regions such as Africa or the Middle East where states have tense relations with each other. Due to the fact that states don't trust each other, they can not be expected to share intelligence or other aspects such as military and economic ones.



VIII. Possible solutions

1. The formation of an action plan designed for each type of region.

The situation in Afghanistan has shown that there is a significant difference between countering terrorism in steppes and in mountain regions. A solution to fix this is to work with regional specialists to create a specialised plan of action for each type of region (urban-rural, mountain-plains-hills and so on). By doing this, anti-terrorism organisations could better tend to the specific needs of states, and ensure that a situation like Afghanistan is not repeated.

2. Stronger economic laws

In order to resolve the issue of terrorism financing, states must work together to impose stronger regulations on crypto trading and financial transactions, in order to better track the source which finances the terrorists.

3. Transparency and trust building between states

Another solution to the issue at hand is to start trust building between states, by encouraging friendship talks and public campaigns to promote friendly relations between hostile states in order to foster intelligence sharing and military collaboration.

4. Close monitoring

By closely monitoring the tactical shifts of terrorist cells, strategists can better understand how the tactics have developed and come up with plans to counter them.

5. Signing of regional accords related to legal and jurisdictional issues

In order to resolve the issue of differences between jurisdictions and legality, we could encourage the signing of accords between states which set clear commonly agreed upon definitions for crimes, as well as expanding the accords to include common jurisdiction on zones affected by terrorism.

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

<https://www.thegctf.org>

[Counter-Terrorism Module 1 Key Issues: Brief History of Terrorism](#)

[UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact | Office of Counter-Terrorism](#)

[Funding | Office of Counter-Terrorism](#)

[Terrorist Financing](#)

[Terrorism](#)

[Operations | Europol](#)

[G5 Sahel](#)

<https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/Project-Shara>

ka

<https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Terrorism/Counter-terrorism-projects/Project-Trace2>
[Office of Counter-Terrorism |](#)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621898/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)621898_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/621898/EPRS_BRI(2018)621898_EN.pdf)

<https://www.state.gov/policy-issues/countering-terrorism/>

<https://icct.nl/about>