

INTERNATIONAL
JOURNAL OF
GOVERNANCE &
DEVELOPMENT

Volume 9, May 2022

International Journal of Governance and Development, ISSN: 1597-1740

Volume 9, May 2022

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Published by:

Institute for Governance and Development,

Ambrose Alli University,

P. M. B. 14, Ekpoma, Edo State,

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Production By:



Sciengtex Publishing

30, Ehengbuda Street,

Benin City, Nigeria.

<https://www.sciengtexopen.org>

Email: info@sciengtexopen.org; editor@sciengtexopen.org

Tel: +234(0)7054972235

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A Critical Examination of Collective Security and International Terrorism: A Case Study of Syria

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Abstract. *The Syrian revolution has sustained the terrorist activities of Al-Qaeda all over the world. It is also accountable for the rise of other international terrorist groups in Syria and has greatly disturbed international peace and security. International terrorism, without a doubt, is responsible for the highest number of death and internally displaces persons in most countries of the world. Besides, Syria is now the only country most affected by terrorism where journalists are regularly targeted. The longer the fighting continues in Syria, the longer it gives terrorist groups (Al-Qaeda) the stronghold to continue their terrorist operations against the World. This study is thus an examination of how civil wars cause the emergence of international terrorists and sustains acts of terrorism, using Syria as a case study, with a special focus on how collective security can help curtail international terrorism. The study utilised a secondary data collection method, including textbooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, and internet materials. The study found that the Syrian revolution created terrorist groups and also increased the rate of international terrorism. The study, however, recommended that nation-states must wake up to the fight against terrorism; it must work to reduce terrorist organisations' operational capabilities through preventative and offensive action (and sometimes also defensive action) based on intelligence resources.*

Keywords: Crisis, International terrorism, Security, Terrorism, Terrorist attacks.

Introduction

After the attacks of 9/11, the threat of international/global terrorism immediately topped the international agenda, as terrorism has been on the increase in various countries of the World. International terrorism has increased dramatically, with even conservative estimates suggesting a fivefold surge since 2000 (GTI, 2014). While terrorism is concentrated in a few nations, the number of countries that have experienced a terrorist assault is growing. Terrorism affected more nations than ever before in 2014. There were attacks in 93 nations this year, up from 88 in 2013. It follows a drift that began in 2011, with more nations witnessing terrorism and deaths every year (GTI, 2015).

International terrorism, without a doubt, is responsible for the highest number of death and internally displaces persons in most countries of the world. Terrorist acts claimed the lives of more than 50 people in 24 countries in 2013, the highest amount in 14 years. Compared to 2012, it now includes nine different countries, Algeria, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, China, Mali, Sudan, and South Sudan (GTI, 2014). Furthermore, over 500 deaths increased by 120 per cent in 2014, from five countries in 2013 to eleven countries in 2014. Nigeria saw the largest year-on-year rise in fatalities, with 5,662 more persons dying, increasing almost 300 per cent (GTI, 2015).

Notwithstanding that 9/11 prompted a boom in academic study on the origins of terrorism, the primary takeaways from this research have remained elusive. There is little doubt that we have learnt a lot in recent years about terrorism's aggregate behaviour over time, its economic and political consequences, and microeconomic motivations. However, there is still much debate regarding its fundamental causes (Llusa & Tavares, 2008). Thus, this study examines how civil wars cause the emergence of international terrorists and sustains acts of terrorism, using Syria as a case study. Equally, it will focus on how collective security can help to curtail international terrorism.

Literature Review

Terrorism

When attempting to define terrorism, one is confronted with two opposing viewpoints. On the one hand, it appears that such a definition is impossible to come up with. There have been many definitions offered, but none of them is without controversy. In a study commissioned by the UN Secretary-General in 2004, UN experts noted that, after decades of debate in various workgroups, member nations could not agree on the description of terrorism (Begorre-Bret, 2004). Neither the United Nations nor the Euromed Summit established a description of terrorism in 2005. Despite the summits' closing declarations highlighting the

importance of such a definition, none included even the most basic definition of terrorism. Terrorism was roundly condemned during the summits, but no definition was given (Begoro-Bret, 2004).

Meanwhile, the word "terrorism" has a very strong negative connotation, and one can consider the notion of terrorism as intrinsically relative. The meaning of terrorism, on the other hand, appears to be not only required but also feasible. The meaning of terrorism helps classify a violent act as a terrorist or condemn (or defend) it. Although there are several definitions of terrorism, one might argue that the debates among academics and politicians over the nature of terrorism are mostly manufactured. Several characteristics are consistently and unequivocally associated with terrorism, making it appear plausible to derive strong definitions of terrorism from them. The study by Schmid and Jongman? cited by numerous authors (Hoffman, 2006; Richardson, 2006; White, 2012), looked at 109 definitions and discovered 22 often used "definitional components."

To Laqueur (1977), terrorism is the illegitimate usage of force to accomplish a political objective aimed at innocent individuals. Terrorism, according to Bjorgo cited in Bruce (2013), is a group of combat methods rather than a recognisable philosophy or crusade, and it entails the preplanned use of violence toward (chiefly) non-combatants to create a psychological effect of fear in people other than the immediate targets. For the sake of academic research, Fernando, quoted in Bruce (2013), specifies three qualities that characterise terrorism. To begin with, it is a form of violence that elicits broad, disproportionate emotional responses like dread and worry, which are likely to affect attitudes and behaviour. Second, the violence is systematic and unpredictably directed, with symbolic targets being the most common. Third, to communicate and achieve social dominance, violence sends out messages and threats. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) of the United States

Terrorism is explained by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as the use of unlawful force or fierceness against people or property to frighten or compel a government, the civilian population, or any section thereof to achieve a political or social goal (Chinwokwu, 2013). In this article, however, terrorism is defined as the purposeful usage of violence against arbitrary non-combatant targets to frighten or generate widespread fear to achieve political aims. It can also be thought of as a form of psychological warfare that uses fear or panic, intimidation, force, or threats of violence against individuals or the general public to compel a government, an institution, or an individual to act in ways that would otherwise go unnoticed to ensure the safety of lives and property, or justice, equity, and fairness. It also includes targeted assaults on civilians, police, military, and other security forces and widespread damage to government infrastructure and civil property such as oil

installations, police stations, jails, churches, mosques, and stores, among other things.

Some countries, such as the Russian and the People's Republic of China, believe that every act of violence committed against the state by irregular combatants must be labelled "terrorist." Other countries regard any act of violence against civilians or non-combatants, whether carried out by a state or an official institution, to be a terrorist act (Primoratz, 2004). There are several types of terrorism, including (a) government terrorism, which consists of terrorist acts against a state or government by a state or government; (b) government terrorism, which consists of terrorist acts against a state or government by a municipal or government; (c) nation terrorism, which entails terrorist acts against a municipal or government by a municipal or government Terrorists, are ideologically motivated groups, (d) Dissent terrorism, are terrorist groups that have rebelled against their government, (e) Religious terrorism, which are terrorist groups that are extremely religiously motivated, and (f) Criminal Terrorism, which are terrorist acts used to aid in crime and illicit profit.

International Terrorism

Terrorist activities involving people and regions of more than one nation are classified as international terrorism (Campos & Gassebner, 2009). Civil conflicts and guerrilla warfare have a long past of being linked to different forms of international terrorism (Freedom House, 2005). According to Campos and Gassebner (2009), democracy, poverty, country size, and conflict are the primary factors of international terrorism.

Collective Security

The notion of collective security can best be defined when the less complex term 'Security' is understood. Security, as a concept, is derived from the Latin word *Securus*, meaning to be safe, freedom from anxiety or fear to be emotionally secure, and affording grounds to be confident (Dania & Eboh, 2013). According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary quoted in Abdullahi (2009), security means the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger etc. A complete view of the idea of security was given by Milgrac Glob in a Disarmament campaign to mark the international year of peace. According to him: Security is defined as the absence of threats to any nation's fundamental values. It is the absence of fear and uncertainty in individuals and nations, the threat of aggression or dominance, as well as threats to sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and self-determination—the nonexistence of the threat of dominance through the direct or implied use of force. Hunger, sickness, ecological disasters, and foreign exploitation of human and natural resources are all examples of security. Security has a national,

international, and humanitarian dimension, all of which are encapsulated by freedom – freedom from fear of all types of enslavement prevalent in the world and covered daily by the media (Abdullahi, 2009:29).

With these few security definitions, we will examine the more complex term 'collective security'. According to Asogwa (1999), collective security is a world order in which a collective response meets each state's aggression. According to Chaturvedi (2006), collective security is an agreement reached by several countries to safeguard their vital interests, safety, or integrity against a potential threat or menace over some time by pooling their resources. Collective security, according to Onyemaechi (2007), quoted in (Ebegbulem 2011), is an idealistic concept based on the development of an overpowering military force by member nations to prevent violence or, by implication, to launch a revenge assault capable of defeating the refractory member. According to Rourke and Boyer (1998), collective security is characterised by four principles: first, all countries agree to refrain from using force unless it is in self-defence; second, all approve that peace is inseparable and that an attack on one is an attack on all; third, all pledge to unite to stop aggression and restore peace; and fourth, all agree to provide whatever material or personnel resources are required to foment peace. Articles 48 and 49 of the United Nations Charter state that "action essential to carry out the judgement of the Security Council for the defence of international peace and security shall be done by all member states of The United or by most of them, as the Security Council may verify; such decisions shall be carried out by all or some member states of The United, as the Security Council might ascertain; such decisions shall be carried out by all member states of The United or by most of them, as the Security Council may establish; such decisions shall be carried out.

Collective security necessitates the determination to impose sanctions as needed and even to go to war. It can never succeed unless all of the nations involved are ready to threaten sanctions and fight, if necessary, an aggressor at the same time. It must also be accessible to countries ready to embrace its responsibilities in good faith (Ebegbulem, 2011). A collective security system must be powerful enough to deal with hostility from any power or amalgamation of powers, according to Palmer and Perkins (2007), quoted in (Ebegbulem 2011), and it must be invoked if and when violence happens.

The Evolution of the Syrian Crisis

Syria is home to 23 million people and covers an area of 185 000 square kilometres. The present borders were established after World War I, when the Sykes-Picot Agreement allowed the French and British to dismantle the Ottoman Empire (1916). Syria, under French mandate until 1946, interspersed short periods of democracy with military coups d'état. The present

administration was formed in 1963 by the Baath party. Bachar's father, Hafez Al-Assad, took power through a coup in 1970 and created a brutal dictatorship. He was replaced by his son, much as he was in North Korea when he died in 2000. After a brief period of economic detente, Assad tightened the government, re-establishing an authoritarian system centred on a family and military dynasty that was corrupt and profiteering.

Following Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, and Yemen, Syria became the next victim of the infectious protests ignited through the "Arab Spring" in early 2011. Syrians hailed the fall of Ben Ali and Moubarak. Like other Arab peoples, they sought to show their desire for change, to recover "liberty, justice, and dignity," the Syrian revolution's original watchwords. Syrians are rising against a despotic and corrupt regime that has oppressed them for more than 40 years. Syrians grumbled that the economic progress spoke about - and highly overstated - had benefited the bourgeoisie of cities loyal to the dictatorship of Bachar Al-Assad (Afzaal, 2016) primarily. The ruling clan's extravagant lifestyle was openly displayed. Corruption was rampant, and a huge portion of the populace was in dire straits. Government regulation had decreased in the 1980s, but private economic activity and employment had not been favoured. The number of jobless and disadvantaged people has increased. Drought afflicted the inhabitants in the countryside as well. Many young individuals, including those with advanced degrees, believed they had no future. Individuals were stripped of their rights and any form of initiative under the suffocating and repressive dictatorship. All of the elements for an explosion were in place. The only thing that was lacking was the spark.

In March 2011, several transgressive young students painted on the walls of the city of Deraa in the country's south the phrase that they had heard people screaming in all Arab streets: "The people want the regime to collapse." Security officers apprehended and tortured the teenagers. Demonstrations erupted around the country in the aftermath of this heinous incident. Hundreds of thousands of nonviolent protestors demanded the end of corruption and the restoration of democracy (BBC News, 2011). The regime's soldiers retaliated by shooting the masses, killing and injuring many people. By mid-May, around 850 Syrians had been murdered, increasing the death toll (UN, 2011). Simultaneously, several young activists and other citizens were detained. Every day, the repression became more brutal, sparking new protests. For months, the protest/repression cycle continued. The UN has already declared 5000 victims by the end of 2011. The death toll increased from 5,000 to almost 60,000 people between February and November of 2012 (United Nations, 2013).

Certain troops simply refused to fire on their fellow people at first. Some were put to death by their commanders, while others were forced to desert. A group of commanders who had deserted and fled to Turkey declared the formation of the Free Syrian Army on July 31, 2011, and invited more troops to join them. They had carried light weapons with them and had no intention of doing anything other than defending the demonstrators. At the same time, citizens began to pick up guns to defend their districts and villages against army and security forces' actions. The Syrian army then switched to canons in place of firearms. The rise of brutal repression prompted military escalation, which began cautiously at the end of 2011 with the Free Syrian Army's recognition of the first acts of resistance. Arms began to come from outside the country later, first through the Lebanese border and subsequently through Turkey. The militants' military backing began to increase in 2012, primarily through individual Syrian or Arab money. As the number of violent conflicts grew, so did the amount of money available, mostly from Gulf fundamentalist organisations. To maintain getting money from these sponsors and continue their violent fight, Syrian insurgents began to embrace fundamentalist attitudes and terminology, even those who were not convinced.

As the uprising expanded across the country and troops deserted, the regime's forces were no longer adequate to keep control everywhere. Its main focus was to put an end to the protests and avoid insurgency in the major cities. It is mostly in rural and semi-rural areas that small groups of armed rebels escape its authority. In 2012, the Free Syrian Army's battalions gained control of most of Aleppo's working-class areas, making it the country's second-biggest city and economic capital. Under the strain of the rebel onslaught, the regular army surrendered and retreated from vast areas in the northwest, including Aleppo and Idlib. The Free Syrian Army's capture of several posts along the Turkish border changed the situation by allowing the rebels easier access to men and arms and the arrival of the first foreign troops. The local populace "liberated" the zones from the regime's rule by forming "Civil councils" to oversee day-to-day issues. Army aircraft attacked these areas regularly, causing massive devastation and, above all, the exodus of tens of thousands of refugees.

Syrian Crisis and International Terrorism

The Syrian revolution began peacefully but quickly devolved into a violent insurgency, resulting in an unstable environment that has become a "magnet" for extremists and terrorists from all over the world. The Syrian crisis, without doubt, has led to the emergence of new international terrorist groups like the Mukhtar Army, a Shia Iraqi militia group established in early

2013, El Nusra Front (*Jabhat El Nusra*) and ISIS. It has also sustained the terrorist activities of Al-Qaeda all over the world. Research has shown that ISIS exists for a purpose unrelated to the struggle against the Assad regime and does not even have Syria-specific objectives (even its origins and its leadership come from Iraq rather than Syria (Chlov, 2014). Rather, ISIS's aims, as it formally declared in June 2014, are to establish and maintain a caliphate that will rule over Muslim lands (Laub, 2015). This vision has no regard for state boundaries, and hence, ISIS poses a threat to modern international security and legal order.

The Al-Nusra Front (*Jabhat al-Nusra*) is a branch of Al-Qaeda in Syria under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri. At the same time, the jihadist organisation called the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS) is a branch of Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Seth, 2013). As of December 2013, the two establishments have a combined membership of an estimated 9,000 fighters in Syria. These terrorist groups are responsible for about 175 terrorist attacks in Syria in 2012, with 889 deaths (Jenkins, 2013). Between 2012-early and 2014, Lebanon suffered from several terrorist attacks. One of them was directed at two Sunni mosques in Tripoli when two vehicles exploded in front of two mosques on Friday, killing 45 people and injuring over 400 others. The others were suicide terrorist bombs in Shiite-dominated regions of Beirut and Bekaa in 2013 and early 2014, which killed 75 people and injured over 500. Also, Sunni extremists claimed responsibility for most of the suicide bombings against the Shiite dominated areas and the Iranian Embassy in Beirut (Clapper, 2014). It is important to note that the casualties of these terror crimes were Lebanese civilians from different religions. In one of these deadly crimes, two suicide bombers blew up their cars outside an orphanage as they tried to knock out an Iranian cultural centre, killing at least four people and wounding more than a hundred, all of whom were orphaned children (Leila, 2014).

Rashid Wahhab, alias Rashid Muhammad, was a suicide bomber who was murdered while fighting in the Al-Nusra Front, according to a video on the Internet. Wahhab, who is married and has a kid, immigrated to Syria from Spain's North Africa. He celebrates martyrdom in the name of Allah in the video and urges his mother to be proud of his deeds. He gets into a car, which he afterwards exploded at the Al-Nayrab military camp in northern Syria, killing at least 130 people. Three Spaniards have been killed in suicide bomber strikes in Syria, according to Spanish officials (philly.com, 2013).

ISIL was responsible for 77% of attacks for which a group claimed responsibility. There were 232 suicide attacks, accounting for 27% of the total number of fatalities. ISIL claimed responsibility for the bulk of suicide bombs, with each assault resulting in an average

of roughly ten dead and 18 injuries (Global Terrorism Index, 2014). The Al-Nusra Front, a Sunni group, connected to al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for 40% of terrorist killings in 2013. Suicide bombing is used by this group regularly, accounting for roughly a third of their strikes. They are also one of the deadliest, with roughly 19 people killed on average for each assault. Bombings or explosives are the most prevalent type of terrorist assault, accounting for 70% of attacks typically directed against ordinary individuals. Kidnappings account for 18% of all reported crimes. The majority of the kidnappings are journalists, although there have also been kidnappings of NGO employees and UN peacekeepers in 2013. Syria is the only nation midst those most affected by terrorism where journalists are regularly targeted. Syrian residents made up over 70% of all journalists murdered in Syria last year. At least 16 European journalists were abducted in 2013, including journalists from Denmark, France, Italy, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. James Foley and Steven Sotloff, two American journalists kidnapped in Syria, were killed by ISIL in late 2014 (Global Terrorism Index, 2014).

Al Qaeda's best opportunity of demonstrating its continued relevance and establishing a new foothold in the Middle East right now is in Syria. The elongated the battle goes on, the greater the worry in neighbouring countries and the West that al Qaeda-inspired groups would be able to cement their position, providing them with a new stronghold from which to undertake terrorist activities against the West and the rest of the world (Jenkins, 2013). According to current data, Boko Haram has a close relationship with al Qaeda.

Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State both pose a danger to global security. Some of them are likely to continue their terrorist and subversive operations when they return to their home countries, having obtained military training and abilities and Islamic jihadization and radicalisation. Some of them may join existing terrorist organisations, posing a larger threat to the world community. Furthermore, after the war in Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda just has to build a network of competent people to carry out terrorist strikes.

Collective Security: The Panacea for International Terrorism Erupting from the Syrian Crisis

New terrorist groups emerged as a result of the Syrian crisis. It is also obvious that al Qaeda took advantage of the Syrian crisis to further their terrorist activities in various countries of the World, and this has greatly disturbed international peace and security. Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria are all part of the Levant area, which ISIL wants to conquer. It opposes both the Alawite Assad administration and Haider al-Shia Abadi's Iraqi government. ISIL also claims to be conducting a holy war in Iraq and Syria against Shia Muslims, Christians, and Yazidis, an

ethnoreligious community (Global Terrorism Index, 2015). To achieve this requires more acts of terror and other dastardly activities that will hinder international peace and security. It, therefore, calls for collective security whereby states come together to ally themselves to support any member in cases of internal or external threats. It does not necessarily mean interfering in Syria's internal affairs. However, because the situation poses great danger, international peace and security collective security measures through the United Nations should be adopted. The UN should ensure humanitarian aid work by establishing clear guidelines for collecting and distributing philanthropic aid in Syria. They should advocate for the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 2165 and 2191, which allow humanitarian aid to be distributed across borders and conflict lines without the regime's permission.

The Syrian National Coalition (SNC) and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) should be strengthened to facilitate a seamless transition to a post-conflict Syria and actively support establishing a united and democratic Syria free of Assad that complies with international human rights norms. There should be a collective effort through the UN to strengthen (politically, financially, and militarily) both the SNC and the FSA. It should include efforts to consolidate individual states' support for these groups (for example, the UK, US, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey). Currently, each state is backing different elements of the opposition⁶³. It should also include the weakening of ISIS and other terrorist groups in Syria (Oweis, 2014).

Equally, there should be comprehensive support for Syrian refugees, allowing them to live a dignified and productive life in the various countries they are now as refugees. There should be more effective integration schemes for Syrian refugees in the various country they are housed. Many of them are professionals and are eager to commence work in these countries in line with their professions. Countries with Syrian refugees should instate effective integration schemes that allow them to take up professions and careers in line with their skills, thus allowing them to contribute more to wider society.

Banks (most notably HSBC) have been denying service to and inhibiting and closing the accounts of Syrian nationals, companies, and charities under the pretence of complying with sanctions regulations (Bachelor, 2014). Not only has this caused inconvenience to Syrians on an individual scale, but it has also severely hindered the operational abilities of many Syria-related UK-registered companies and charities (Purkis, 2015). The profiling of Syrian individuals and entities on behalf of the banks constitutes a discriminatory policy against an already-vulnerable people and must be stopped.

Conclusion and Recommendation

With the development of modern terrorism and its continuing international reach, the physical and moral damage incurred by terrorist acts has increased to such an extent that it arguably threatens the proper functioning of open society, the world economy, and the maintenance of humanitarian and liberal values, making counter-terrorism efforts all the more crucial. So far, we have seen that the Syrian crisis led to the emergence of more terrorist groups and has also sustained the activities of al Qaeda across the globe. The Syrian crisis increased the rate of international terrorism. Most fighters who participated in the crisis acquired military skills and influence, which they have been employing and could employ in future terror activities. Equally, these terrorist groups are now rendering their assistance to other terrorist groups in developing countries. They must be stopped if the World must enjoy sustainable peace and security. Thus, to curtail the activities of terrorism emanating from the Syrian crisis, the following recommendations are pertinent:

1. Nation states must wake up to the fight against terrorism. It is because it is a state's responsibility and duty to protect its citizens, and so it must work to reduce terrorist organisations' operational capabilities through preventative and offensive action (and sometimes also defensive action) based on intelligence resources
2. There should be rehabilitation and education (rather than prosecuting) for foreign fighters and people with violent, fanatical views who have not been involved in any crimes.
3. UN should provide an effective escape for those foreign fighters who regret their decision to indulge in the Syrian crisis.
4. Banks should be required to provide adequate notice to their customers before Closing their accounts. Customers should also be able to access their accounts within this notice period. Failure to do this might aggravate the situation.
5. UN should provide a safe avenue for countries to help Syria. The Excessive or undue restrictions placed upon safe methods of helping Syria may drive more people to pursue alternative routes, such as sending cash through individuals or they are even travelling there to fight.
6. UN should take the criminalisation of foreign fighters (terrorists) as seriously will help to sufficiently deter individuals from travelling to Syria to fight, an avenue which enables them to get involved in terrorist activities.
7. The national government should establish a strong voice to prevent the radicalisation of the citizens by terrorists and jihadists.
8. UN should make provision for the rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorists, who have seen the

realities on the ground in Syria. They can serve as powerful voices to prevent the indoctrination of other individuals into the group.

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