Forum: Disarmament and International Security - GA1

Issue: Measures to tackle the link between international terrorism and organised crime

Student Officer: Aspasia Gianniri

Position: Co-chair

Introduction

The nexus between international terrorism and organised crime poses a significant threat and alarm in modern-day global security. Terrorism is a commonly controversial definition because its popular usage has created a severe stigma. Nevertheless, terrorism involves the use of violence to threaten individuals and inflict fear upon a wide audience ("Terrorism, Jenkins"). Those causing this violence are terrorists who take advantage of transnational organised crimes by conducting a variety of illegal activities, such as the trafficking of arms, people, drugs, and more ("UNICRI").

International security and stability have been under threat due to the extensive consequences of this issue on international relations, international affairs, economic stability, and public safety. International terrorist groups engage in multiple illicit activities such as the trafficking of arms, humans, and drugs. As seen in Figure 1 there are high rates of organised crime while even though the global terrorism index is a prevalent issue in modern-day society, it is lower and that is due to the counter-terrorism measures taken. This research report examines how these two issues not only coexist but at times mutually benefit from each other.
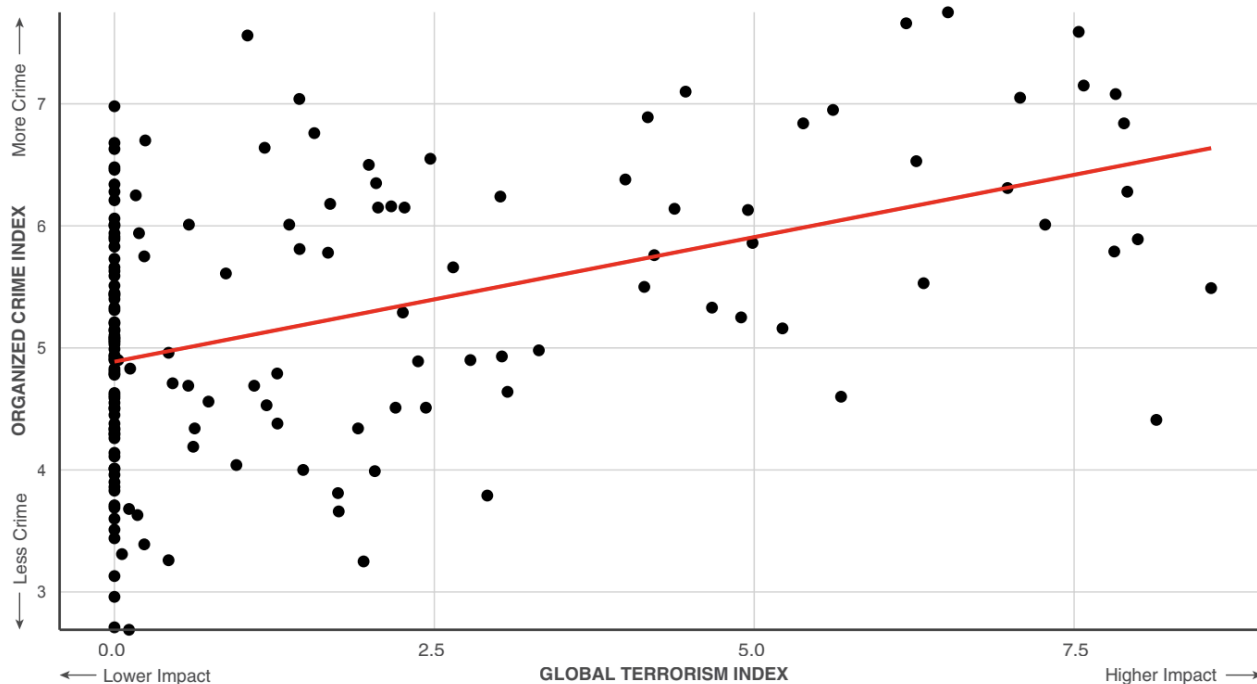
Figure 1 - Relationship between organised crime index and global terrorism index. (2024 Global)

Definition of Key Terms

International Terrorism

The "violent, criminal acts committed by individuals and/or groups who are inspired by, or associated with, designated foreign terrorist organizations or nations (state-sponsored)". (FBI)

Organised Crime

It is a "complex of highly centralized enterprises set up for the purpose of engaging in illegal activities." They "engage in offenses such as cargo theft, fraud, robbery, kidnapping for ransom, and the demanding of "protection" payments." The financing of these organisations "is the supply of goods and services that are illegal but for which there is continued public demand, such as drugs, prostitution, loan-sharking (i.e., usury), and gambling." (Terrorism, Jenkins)

Transnational Crime

It is associations of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary and commercial gains, through mostly illicit means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and violence, or "while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms" (National Security)

Nexus

It's a connection between things, specifically one that is a part of a chain of causation. The issue of this research report is centered around the nexus between international terrorism and organised crime. ("Definition of NEXUS")

Terrorism Financing

Terrorism financing is the provision of financial support to terrorists or terrorist organisations to enable them to carry out terrorist acts or to benefit terrorist organisations. This is done through illicit activities such as trafficking of small arms and humans. ("What Is")

Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF)

It is the measures that are taken by governments and international organisations to prevent the flow of financing to terrorist groups; this is crucial as it prohibits terrorists from inflicting harm.

Illicit Trade

"Means any practice or conduct prohibited by law which relates to production, shipment, receipt, possession, distribution, sale, or purchase of tobacco products including any practice or conduct intended to facilitate such activity." ("Definition: Illicit")

Sanctions

"An official order, such as the stopping of trade, that is taken against a country in order to make it obey international law." Sanctions prevent regional terrorism groups from expanding and developing into international terrorism from illicit trade. ("SANCTION | Meaning")

Capacity-building

"The process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world". (United Nations. "Capacity-Building.")

Globalisation

"The increase of trade around the world, especially by large companies producing and trading goods in many different countries." ("Kolb, Melina")

Radicalisation

It is the process in which a person supports or becomes involved in extremist ideologies and is apparent when individuals, such as terrorists, support activities (e.g. illicit trade) that social norms do not accept.

Background Information

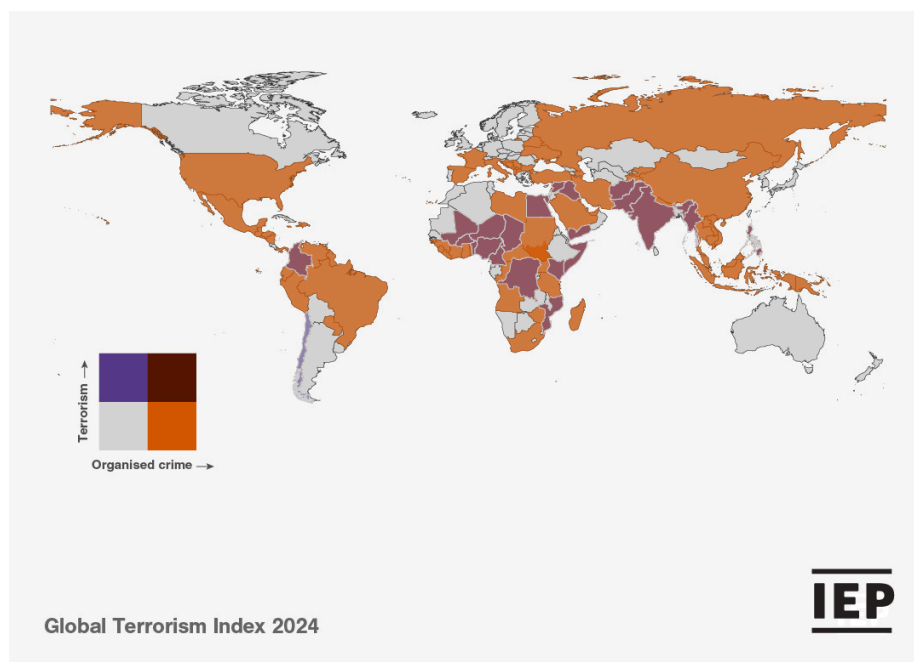### Link between international terrorism and organised crime

Figure 2 - Terrorism and organised crime across the world. (2024 Global)

The clear nexus and relationship between international terrorism and organised crime were evident in Figure 1 in the topic introduction. Organised crime, such as the trafficking of people, drugs, illicit goods and weapons, armed robbery, counterfeiting, and money laundering is extremely common and it heavily correlates with international trafficking (the Global Terrorism Index present in Figure 1). Nevertheless, terrorism is a rare occurrence compared to organised crime which is heavily widespread. Multiple countries which have significantly high rates of organised crime have little to no terrorist acts or groups. Oppositely, in countries with high terrorism rates there will always be high organised crime rates. Figure 2 shows that nations shaded orange have higher than average levels of organised crime, whereas those shaded dark red have a larger-than-average impact on both terrorism and organised crime. Criminal organisations are taken over, commonly by extremists for the advantage of power and money as the revenue that they earn from conducting these illicit activities can facilitate and aid them in gaining control over areas and individuals. The tension that arises due to the ideology of fighting for

power may provoke conflict.

Types of operational patterns

The relationship between terrorist organisations and illegal criminal activities is also known as the 'Crime- Terror' nexus. There are 3 different types of operational patterns for organised crime and terrorist groups: coexistence, cooperation, and convergence. Coexistence refers to the state of residing in the same geographic area at the same time without benefiting from each other; cooperation refers to working together to benefit each other whilst still belonging to different organisations; and convergence refers to either group beginning to work under the elements of the other and at times beginning to merge. It is less common for cooperation between organised groups and international terrorist groups to occur rather than convergence.

Historical Background

Terrorism is not a new terminology or issue - it dates back to the period of the French Revolution from 5 September 1793 to 27 July 1794 where the term was first used to describe the 'Reign of Terror' since the Revolutionary Government directed citizens to be subjected to violent and harsh measures if suspected of being enemies. To be able to understand the evolution of terrorism you need to imagine it as the consequence of evolutionary violence: "One wave is the late nineteenth century/early twentieth century "anarchist wave", another is the "anti-colonial wave" (starting with the post-World War I political principle of self-determination, and its violent evolution into a legal right after World War II, examples being the Algerian Civil War and the Vietnam War)". This ideology highlights the fact that terrorism is clearly impacted by the region's social and political cultures.

19th Century

During the development of "anarchist groups", influential figures such as Karl Max inspired groups across Europe to adopt violent strategies to promote and raise awareness for political change and to dismantle state structures. A prime example of the first use of violence was when German revolutionary Karl Heinzen expressed the use of violence to effect political change through his 1853 pamphlet, Mord und Freiheit. Nonetheless, because the employment of pamphlets failed to start a widespread social revolution among the working class, they turned to violence in the intention of forcing political reform and destroying the state. As a result, "propaganda by the deed" became crucial to European anarchism's political approach. They believed that terrorist assassination was more human than civil war due to the lower casualty rates. ("UNODC. Introduction")

Post World War I

The 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty between Germany and the Allied Powers that concluded World War I motivated the next step in the evolution of modern-day terrorism. The treaty caused the redistribution of territories causing new geopolitical conflict creating new nationalist movements. Even though the League of Nations attempted to solve this tension, it mostly dismissed minority rights, leading to further unrest and tension. Additionally, veterans which returned from WWI adopted military strategies in their operations as they trained tactically to utilize force . ("UNODC. Introduction")

Cold War

At the end of the Cold War there was a rise in weak and failed states, allowing terrorists to thrive and the nexus between terrorism and crime organisations to become large-scale. States had "ideal geographical situation, lack of effective authority, ineffective rule of law, corruptions of officers" and there was a lack of border control. These together with the development of technology, communication and transportation were the ideal conditions for organised crimes and international terrorism to converge. However, after the Cold War, state sponsorship of terrorist groups declined. How would they be able to gain the financial resources? To be able to create new revenue they had to switch to funding sources through illicit activities such as drug and arms trafficking. ("2024 GLOBAL")

9/11 and Its Aftermath

The 9th of September 2011 attack alarmed states all over the world for the immediate need for a coordinated international response to both terrorism and organised crime. After 9/11 there was an increase in international cooperation to mitigate the issue and the UNSC adopted an anti-terrorism resolution (S/RES/1373) which "notes with concern the close connection between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, money-laundering, illegal arms-trafficking and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other potentially deadly materials."("2024 GLOBAL") Thus, the SC addressed the threat between the two issues creating new policies to combat the issues collectively.

Factors Affecting the Issue

Globalisation and technology

Globalisation can be described as the "growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information." Globalisation creates interdependence which allows nations who engage in global trade to have a smaller chance of resorting to armed conflict as it could harm their economy. Nevertheless, globalisation comes with the risk of terrorist groups taking advantage of its creation of fast communication, easier cross-border movement, and technologies; it has led to transnational threats from weapons proliferation and cyber attacks. These advancements in technology have allowed the increase in propaganda; have created an easier pathway for finance and commerce for

terrorists and crime organisations; and allowed for easier access to communication supporting the convergence of terrorism with organised crime.

Political Instability

The presence of a weak state, which consists of political instability, fosters an environment that lacks law enforcement, legislation, and supports corruption - all these are factors that enable the convergence of international terrorism with organised crime. Regions that experience conflict see an increase in the rates of organised crime and terrorism as they increase illicit activities due to the lack of state control, law enforcement, and border controls.

Economic Factors

Terrorist groups are constantly in need of financial support. Thus, at times of financial-need such as when the state-sponsorships had diminished after the Cold War, many terrorist groups turned to organised crime as a way of financing their operations. Economic downturns can cause terrorist groups to shift their engagement to drug, arms, and human trafficking. On the other hand, terrorist groups also see organised crime as a means to gain large amounts of profit- this incentivises cooperation between international terrorists and organised crime .

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, 15 November 2000. " Specifically, the "the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition was adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/255 of 31 May 2001." This protocol attempted to break the link between transnational terrorism and organised crime through preventing terrorists from financing through the trafficking of firearms. ("United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime").
- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, September 28 2001 (S/RES/1373). It enforces the importance of stopping the financing of terrorist groups, in turn allowing the mitigation of the trafficking of small arms across borders. ("United Nations Security Council")
- United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 8 September 2006 (A/RES/60/288). Some of the measures it recommends are "strengthening Member States' capacity to counter terrorist threats to better coordinate the United Nations System's counter-terrorism architecture and activities". ("UN Global")
- Security Council resolution on preventing and combating terrorism, including terrorism

benefitting from transnational organized crime, 19 December 2014 (S/RES/2195).

- Threats to international peace and security,19 July 2019 (S/RES/2482). The resolution calls for member states to strengthen regional and international cooperation, to identify terrorist groups benefiting from organised groups and to promote capacity building and the raising of awareness in those areas. ("Security Council Unanimously")

Russian Federation:

The Russian Federation has been greatly affected by domestic terrorism, nevertheless, over these past few years, its terrorism index decreased to 3.02 points in 2023 from 3.80 points in 2022. Russia is also a prime advocate for the collective response to terrorism and organised crime; this is evident through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which was established by China and Russia in 2001. It has established a regional anti-terrorist structure (RATS) which enables intelligence sharing and joint operations among member states enhancing their ability to terrorism and organised crime.

USA

The USA has considered the destruction of the nexus between international terrorism and organised crime of paramount importance due to the threats it imposes on their national security. To tackle this issue they have implemented measures to disrupt the financing of terrorist organisations. Increasing transparency and addressing illicit financial activities allow the USA to impose sanctions to freeze those illicit assets, and, thus, prevent the financial support of those organisations. Additionally, the USA submitted resolution S/RES/1373 on September 28 2001 following the September 11 terrorist attack; the resolution calls for member states to prevent the financing of terrorism and puts emphasis on the need for international cooperation regarding intelligence and law enforcement.

Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)

The GCTF is a multilateral counterterrorism platform, which was founded by the European Union (EU) and 29 countries including China, Columbia, Japan, Qatar , South Africa, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the United States of America (USA), and was launched on September 22, 2011. This platform serves as a mechanism for assisting the implementation of the aforementioned, universally-agreed UN-Global terrorism strategy. It identifies and addresses trends and aims at addressing the nexus between international terrorism and organised crime. It fosters open discussions among stakeholders bringing together policymakers and experts to identify CT, tackle their violent ideologies through mobilising resources, and educate civilians for dealing with terrorism threats.

African Union (AU)

The AU is an intergovernmental organisation, which was established in 2002, to promote international cooperation, promote solidarity of African States, and to increase economic development. Through agenda 2603, specifically goals 37 and 38, the AU expresses provisions that "Africa shall be free from armed conflict, terrorism, extremism, intolerance, and gender-based violence, which are major threats to human security, peace, and development. The continent will be drugs-free, with no human trafficking, where organized crime and other forms of criminal networks, such as the arms trade and piracy, are ended."

China

China recognises the threats posed by international terrorism and organised crime on its national security. China's Belt and Road Initiative will allow for the economic development of regions, which foster terrorism prone conditions, through the investment of infrastructure across Europe, Asia, and Africa. The Chinese government China has deployed "re-education" programmes which aim to integrate minority groups from high terrorism rate regions into modern-day society. Although this response allows the government to monitor local populations, it has caused a variety of ethical concerns.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan has been directly affected by the link between international terrorism and organised crime due to its prolonged conflict, weak governance, and geographical location. A significant problem is the fact that Afghanistan is one of the world's largest producers of opium which allows for the funding and support of large terrorist groups. Additionally, the country's geographical location and its weak border control allow for the facilitation of the movement of terrorists, weapons, and illicit goods across national regions. Also, due to the fact that it is a less economically developed country, it lacks the financial and technological resources to implement effective border control measures.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
15th November, 2000	UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15h November 200. The convention is complemented by three different protocols: the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air; and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. It emphasises the important role of

international cooperation to tackle this issue.

1st September 2001	On the 1st of September 2001, four civilian airplanes were hijacked; two of them crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York causing the devastating number of 2606 people to die inside; the third plane struck the western face of the pentagon; and the fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania since the passengers attempted to fight back (Jackson, Patrick").
28th September 2001	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 28 September 2001 (S/RES/1373). As aforementioned, the following resolution was submitted following the 9/11 terrorist attack; the resolution calls for member states the need to prevent the financing of terrorim and puts emphasis on the need for international cooperation regarding intelligence and law enforcement.
8 September 2006	United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 8 September 2006 (A/RES/60/288)
19 December 2014	Security Council resolution on preventing and combating terrorism, including terrorism benefitting from transnational organized crime, 19 December 2014 (S/RES/2195)
19th - 20th June 2023	The Third United Nations High-Level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States took place in New York. Its primary objectives were the strengthening of global cooperation, sharing best practices, and addressing emerging threats.
19 July 2019	Threats to international peace and security,19 July 2019 (S/RES/2482) was unanimously adopted. This resolution reflects the Council's concern that terrorists may benefit from organised crime as a source of financing or logistical support on a domestic or international scale, and it recognises that organised crime can take many forms, including trafficking in arms, drugs, artifacts, cultural property, and people, as well as the illegal trade in natural resources, crowdfunding, and proceeds of criminal activity.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Recommendations

The FATF Standards provide a comprehensive and consistent framework of measures that nations should put in place to address money laundering, terrorist funding, and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They acknowledge each country works under different frameworks and systems and thus they advise that countries should adapt to their specific circumstances. To aid countries through this process, they create guidance papers, make them reflect on their experience and regularly update their Recommendations so countries have up-to-date tools to tackle this issue. Even though these recommendations have been widely adopted they have yet to be consistently implemented across countries; this could be due to limited resources, corruption, lack of awareness, political will, or geopolitical factors.

Capacity Building Programs

Capacity building programs are initiatives aimed at enhancing the ability of countries, specifically less economically developed ones with fewer resources, to combat the nexus between international terrorism and organized crime through strengthening frameworks, improving law enforcement capabilities, and fostering international cooperation.

European Cybercrime Centre 3 (EC3)

Europol established the EC3 in 2013 with the goal of improving the EU's law enforcement response to cybercrime and thus helping the protection of European governments, companies, and citizens from online crime. Organised crime groups often use cybercriminals to facilitate drug, arms and human trafficking through the use of the internet. EC3 addresses this issue by contributing to the development and implementation of standardised prevention and awareness campaigns and activities in cybercrime-mandated areas. In addition, it provides training and capacity-building for law-enforcement and member states to be able to tackle cybercrime efficiently.

Project Sharaka

Project Sharaka's aim is to tackle terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa; it is funded by the EU and it "brings INTERPOL policing tools and expertise to frontline officers in eight countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia". Its main goal is to aid these countries in being able to detect and seize terrorists through technology, capacity building, and police operations; this is particularly focused on establishing strong border security as it is the first line of defense in stopping terrorist travel.

Possible Solutions

Solution regarding the financing of terrorism

Countries should aim to strengthen their Anti-Money Laundering Frameworks through adopting a risk-based approach which focuses on identifying and mitigating vulnerabilities in the financial system. This can be done through the use of artificial intelligence and the creation of a Financial AI Operating System that can analyze and act on data related to terrorism financing, nations and can disrupt funding sources before they reach terrorist organisations. However, this would not be easily accessible to less economically developed countries which don't have access to advanced technology.

Solution regarding the country borders

Enhancing border security through the use of technology could be a solution to this issue. For example, implementing advanced technologies such as biometric identification systems, drones, and surveillance cameras could significantly improve border security and decrease organised crime acts. These technologies can help monitor and track individuals crossing borders, making it more difficult for terrorists and organised criminals to move freely despite the existence of globalisation, corruption and/or political instability. Additionally, fostering international cooperation among border authorities can facilitate information sharing about suspicious activity and individuals.

Preventing radicalisation

The prevention of radicalisation could be accomplished if governments invested in community engagement initiatives that promote social unity and inclusion. These programs could target at-risk young individuals by providing educational opportunities and vocational training in school curricula, which offer positive alternatives to extremist ideologies. In countries where there is a lack of education it would be extremely difficult to implement it in school curriculums. Nevertheless, to cover these gaps, global training programs could be provided once a year to countries which have high rates of organised crime and terrorism by the UN. This could bring educators, law enforcement and policy-makers from around the world to educate those who are at risk of radicalisation and educate them on how to identify it and prevent it. ("How to")

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Appendix or Appendices

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