THE OCTOPUS OF TERRORISM AND ITS IMPACT OF GLOBAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The thrust of this paper revolved around an in-depth examination of the etiology and teleological manifestations of the octopus of terrorism and its attendant implications for global security. It employed a qualitative content analysis approach, drawing from existing literature and secondary data to analyse how political repression, socio-economic disparities, ideological radicalization, and technological advancements contribute to the rise and persistence of terrorism. The research which was anchored on the Human Security Theory, extensively explored terrorism's transnational nature, revealing how it challenges international cooperation, fosters regional instability, and compels governments to adopt high security measures. The findings highlighted that terrorism is not only a form of violence but a complex socio-political phenomenon that undermines human security, economic development, and social structure. The study argued for a comprehensive response strategy that balances security with democratic values and inclusive development. The research concludes that effective counterterrorism must prioritize political inclusion, socio-economic empowerment, international collaboration, and respect for human rights to achieve lasting peace and global stability.

Keywords: Counterterrorism, Terrorism, Global Security, Political Repression, Socio-economic Disparities

1. Introduction:

Izu (2021) has extensively posited that terrorism is generally hydra-headed, manifesting like an octopus whose tentacles do not just reach most countries in the world but whose effects have wreaked havocs to many peoples. Terrorism arguably remains one of the most complex and persistent challenges facing the world in this 21st century. Among other definitions, it is defined as the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence by non-state actors to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives (Smith, 2020). Despite varying definitions, the common idea is the pervasive impact terrorism has. Brown & Ellis (2022) explained that the impact is reflective not only through loss of life and destruction of property but also through deeper societal, economic, and security ramifications. Therefore, the significance of studying terrorism lies in its multifaceted nature, encompassing diverse causes such as political oppression, socio-economic disparities, and ideological extremism, as well as its broad consequences affecting global peace and security (Khan, 2019). This paper seeks to explore the root causes and consequences of terrorism and assess its impact on global security. The discussion aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of terrorism's evolving threat on a global landscape.

2. Conceptualization:

Terrorism
The concept of terrorism has been defined to represent diverse ideologies, which is to say, there is no single standardized definition of terrorism. Literature points to a multitude of perspectives shaped by political, legal, and ideological contexts. Many scholars define terrorism as a premeditated use of threat of violence by non-state actors against civilians, usually for political or ideological purposes. Scholars like Yonah Alexander (1976) defined terrorism as the use of violence against random civilian targets in order to intimidate or create generalized pervasive fear for the purpose of achieving political goals.

Legally, the United States federal law contains numerous definitions complicating policy and prosecution. Deductive legal definitions require a politically oriented intent, while inductive approaches focus strictly on the violent acts themselves, regardless of political motivation (Numerous Legal Definition). Finally, the United Nations frames terrorism as, a method of coercion that utilizes or threatens to utilize violence in order to spread fear and thereby attain political or

ideological goals, highlighting not only direct victims but also the wider audience targeted to pressure governments or societies.

Furthermore, there are several classification scales on terrorism, each using different teleological framework, notably focusing on perpetrator identity and operation context:

State vs. Non-State Terrorism

State Terrorism: Involves violent actions by government authorities, either directed at their own citizens to instil fear or against foreign populations for strategic gain. Historical examples include the "Reign of Terror" in revolutionary France and authoritarian regimes employing violence as a tool of repression (Rheins, 2021). There are also instances in Nigeria where the government have employed the use of violent actions to repress public agitations and instil fear, i.e. During the regimes of General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha, Nigeria saw widespread abuses such as extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detention of political opponents, activists, and journalists (Ayobami and Oyetunji, 2024). In recent years, Nigerian security forces have also violently suppressed peaceful protests against police brutality and governance issues #ENDSARS. Most times, these actions were carried out with little to no accountability, which fits the classic models of authoritarian state terror (Uwazuruike, 2020).

Non-State Terrorism: Initiated by individuals or groups independent of governmental control. These includes nationalist, ideological, separatist, and religious factions. Modern terrorism since the late 19th century is predominantly non-state in origin. Nationalist Terrorist Groups such as the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) that sought to end British rule in Northern Ireland and unified it with the Republic of Ireland, the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) Basque separatist group fighting for independence from Spain, and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) that Sought to create an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka are examples of Nationalist Terrorist groups (Rheins, 2021).

Ideological Terrorist Groups use terrorism to advance specific ideological beliefs, often rooted in struggles for equality, struggles to maintain certain traditional values, or anarchist principles. Groups such as the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso)**,** Maoist insurgent group in Peru pursuing a communist revolution, Red Brigades**,** a Left-wing terrorist group in Italy during the 1970s and 1980s, and the National Socialist Order (NSO),

a Neo-Nazi group advocating that white supremacy are examples of ideological terrorist groups.

Separatist Terrorist factions also conduct violent acts to force separation from an existing state, often clashing with nationalist motivations. Several of such groups have been documented in history, some of which include the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) that fought for Quebec's independence from Canada, the chechen insurgent groups which include various groups in Russia's Chechnya region engaging in terrorism to achieve independence, Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) that fought for an independent Muslim state in the southern Philippines, the ASG is also recognized by the U.S as a foreign terrorist organization (Pinkoski 2007).

Finally, Religious Terrorist Groups are perpetrated in the name of or inspired by interpretations of religious belief, i.e., The Al-Qaeda, **a** global Islamist jihadist organization responsible for numerous transnational terror attacks, the Talibans, though having territorial control, they originated as a non-state Islamist movement and have conducted terror acts, especially prior to re-establishing governmental authority (Borum & Gelles, 2005). Another very popular one is the Islamic State (IS/ISIS/ISIL), they emerged as a non-state group engaging in global jihadism (Kuntic, 2018). Finally, the Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), domicile in Nigeria, attacking civilians, especially targeting places of worship and minority communities (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2025).

Domestic vs. International Terrorism

Domestic Terrorism: This refers to acts committed primarily within a single country's borders, often motivated by internal socio-political, racial, or religious causes. Perpetrators and victims typically share national identity. Examples include the Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995, within the United States territory. Also in Norway, in 2011, Anders Behring Breivik, a Norwegian nationalist, carried out two consecutive attacks in Norway. The Boko Harram terrorist attacks in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

International Terrorism: These are acts involving perpetrators, victims, or interests spanning more than one country. These operations occurs beyond the borders of a single state, either by geography, actors, or effects. Some popular examples include the Al-qaeda and the ISIS.

Finally, several literatures recognize terrorism as a dynamic, historically shaped concept, whose forms, methods, and meanings have changed over time. These changes explain the constant need for continuous study to improve understanding of the phenomenon within broader social, political, and historical contexts.

3. Global Security

On the other hand, Global security is also a multifaceted concept, referring to the collective measures and collaborative efforts undertaken by nations and international organizations to ensure worldwide peace, safety, and stability in the face of diverse and interconnected threats. Unlike traditional national security, which focuses primarily on the defence and interests of individual states, global security recognizes that many contemporary challenges such as terrorism, cyberattacks, climate change, and pandemics goes beyond national borders and require cooperations (United Nations, n.d.). Global security encompasses various dimensions, including military, economic security, environmental security, cybersecurity, and human security, the protection of individuals from poverty, violence, and human rights abuses (Richaad, 2024). The evolving nature of global security can be seen in the interplay of political, economic, and social factors on the international stage, involving a range of actors such as states, international organizations, civil society, and private entities (Oxford Global Security Programme, 2023). This therefore, situates terrorism as a threat within global security frameworks, which requires the need for comprehensive, and cooperative approaches to mitigate risks and safeguard global stability.

Some further studies show that several scholars have done some previous studies on the notion of terrorism. Gaibulloev and Sandler's study (2019) is a comprehensive review that critically discusses post-9/11 empirical research on terrorism, its focus was on its evolving nature, terrorist group organization, counterterrorism policy effectiveness, root causes, and economic consequences of terrorism. Utilizing large datasets such as ITERATE and GTD, combined with game theoretic models, their work reveals the rise of religious fundamentalist terrorism and its greater lethality compared to prior leftist groups. Their findings highlight that terrorists adapt strategically to countermeasures, while counterterrorism policies often suffer from unintended effects like attack transference and backlash. The study challenges notions linking poverty directly to terrorism, instead, it shows a nonlinear relationship between income levels and terrorist activity. Economically, they argue that terrorism's macro impact is generally modest for large economies but significant for smaller or weaker states, particularly through brief disruptions in tourism and foreign investment. They emphasized the need for a detailed, cooperative international security responses and innovation. This article creates a background for this current research, giving theoretical and empirical background on the multifaceted dimensions of terrorism and global security.

Meierrieks (2025) also investigated the relationship between terrorism and economic inequality across 163 countries from 1980 to 2018, with a detailed focus on how this relationship differs between democracies and non-democracies. The study utilized fixed-effects and instrumental variable regressions, drawing on large-scale datasets such as the Global Terrorism Database and the Standardized World Income Inequality Database. Meierrieks finds that higher levels of terrorist activity led to increased income and wealth inequality, but this relationship is especially pronounced within democracies, where governments are more likely to reduce redistribution in response to terrorism, prioritizing security expenditures over transfers and tax-based equality. His analysis found weak evidence for macroeconomic contraction as a channel; instead, the core mechanism is a political response in which democratic policymakers, motivated by electoral pressures, cut redistributive policies in the face of terrorism. This response undermines the "equality advantage" typically observed in democracies, ultimately aligning their inequality outcomes with non-democracies as terrorist threats grow. The paper further related these results to wealth inequality, showing similarly that democracies lose their relative advantage during periods of heightened terrorism. Meierrieks' work provides the current research with deep conceptual and theoretical frame work to view the global impact of terrorism, especially economically.

Ajala and Murphy (2025) provide a detailed examination of vigilantism within the context of counterterrorism in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, focusing on how non-state actors occupy critical security loopholes where formal state authority is weak or absent. They utilized an extensive qualitative data, including 21 in-depth interviews with security officials, community leaders, and vigilante members, as well as 131 survey questionnaires. The article explores perceptions, effectiveness, and challenges of embedding vigilante groups like the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) into official security architecture. They also highlight that a significant majority of local citizens and security operatives view vigilantes as indispensable for intelligence

gathering, local policing, and post-liberation governance in areas reclaimed from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and ISWAP. However, their study does not overlook the risks: concerns about human rights abuses, the recruitment of double agents, poor training, and the potential for vigilantes to act with impunity or personal vengeance are thoroughly discussed. Overall, the article advances existing study by systematically analysing the double-edged nature of vigilantism, its necessity in face of state incapacity and the problems of unchecked authority. Ajala and Murphy conclude that with careful integration, vetting, and solid-state oversight, vigilantes can be an effective complement to state security efforts in Nigeria and the wider Lake Chad Basin.

The United Nations OHCHR Fact Sheet (2008) also offers a thorough examination of the complex and reciprocal relationship between human rights, terrorism, and counter-terrorism measures. Relying on data from international human rights and humanitarian law, the report details how terrorism directly undermines the enjoyment of fundamental human rights such as the rights to life, liberty, and security, while also destabilizing governance and impeding socio-economic development. It further asserts that state responses to terrorism, such as emergency powers, surveillance, arbitrary detention, and restrictions on freedoms, often threaten civil liberties and the rule of law if not properly regulated. The report noted that counter-terrorism measures and human rights protection are mutual, rather than conflicting obligations, advocating for state compliance with legal safeguards, due process, and non-discrimination even in times of emergency. This work is directly relevant to our study as it highlights both the destructive consequences of terrorism on individual rights and society, and the global security risks posed by overreaching governmental responses.

Gbenga (2024) "Terrorism and its Implication on Global Security in the 21st Century" provides a focused examination of how terrorism has shaped international peace and security, particularly from 2000 to 2015. The study adopts a qualitative political research approach, drawing on reports from embassies, ministries, NGOs, and international organizations, but openly acknowledges challenges of information access and potential bias, which may impact data reliability. The traces the origins and recent resurgence of terrorism, it identifies major terrorist groups active in the 21st century and analyzes their diverse tactics for destabilizing international peace and security. The work further discusses the climate of fear fostered among populations, citing definitions that emphasize terrorism's aim to influence larger audiences beyond immediate victims. The article

contributes to understanding the threats terrorism poses, not only through direct violence and loss of life but also by impeding diplomatic processes, fostering mistrust among states, and complicating the promotion of global human rights. This analysis is highly relevant to our study, as it underscores terrorism's persistent threat to global order.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Human Security Theory, which emerged from the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, emphasizing a shift from traditional state centric security to the protection of individuals. The theory posits that true security entails "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want," recognizing threats like terrorism, poverty, disease, and repression as central concerns. It argues that global peace and security cannot be sustained without safeguarding individual well-being, dignity, and rights. In the context of terrorism, the theory provides a background to analyse how acts of terror disrupt livelihoods, destabilize communities, and erode human rights, while also guiding responses that prioritize inclusive and preventive strategies. This framework aligns with the study's aim of examining the multifaceted consequences of terrorism on global security.

5. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach, relying on secondary data from academic publications, international organization reports, and policy documents available for public consumption. This method enables the critical examination and synthesis of existing knowledge on terrorism and global security. therefore, promotes peculiar attention to thematic patterns, ideological perspectives, and documented socio-political impacts.

6. Etiology of Terrorism

The causes of terrorism are multifaceted in nature, and this has encouraged a wide debate among researchers, causes of terrorism are reflected in political, socio-economic, ideological, and technological dimensions.

Political Related Causes:

Historically, terrorism frequently emerges in contexts of authoritarianism, political exclusion, and in failed or weak states that cannot effectively govern or provide justice. Authoritarian regimes which are known to crush dissent and shut people

out of politics result to grievances that grow and can drive some toward radicalization and violence (UNODC, 2023). For example, the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution was a state led campaign by Robespierre's Jacobins to suppress political enemies through mass executions, illustrating how state terror can feed into cycles of violence and fear. Similarly, the 19th-century assassinations by groups like the Russian Narodnaya Volya targeting Tsarist officials highlighted political violence against oppressive rulers (Burbank, 2017). In modern Nigeria, prolonged military regimes under Generals Babangida and Abacha employed extrajudicial killings, torture, and suppression of opposition, exemplifying state terrorism driven by authoritarianism and political repression (U.S. State Department, 1997). In contrast, weak governments such as Somalia and parts of Syria provide safe havens for terrorist groups by lacking effective control, creating fertile ground for recruitment and violence (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2019).

Socio-Economic Causes:

Economic deprivation, inequality, and unemployment promotes terrorism by creating grievances and social dislocation. though Gaibulloev & Sandler (2019) explained that the relationship is not straightforward. They posited that, poverty alone does not predict terrorism reliably, as terrorist leaders often come from diverse economic backgrounds. However, socio-economic marginalization combined with political exclusion and lack of opportunities has repeatedly been linked to radicalization. Historical examples include the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland, where economic hardships intertwined with political and sectarian division motivated long standing violence against British rule (Barboza, 2020). In Nigeria's northern regions for example, poverty and resource competition contribute to conflicts involving Boko Haram and bandit militias, underlining how socio-economic struggles exacerbate local terrorism (Ajala & Murphy, 2025).

Ideological and Religious Causes:

Available literature also establishes that terrorism is also driven by ideological and religious extremist beliefs that fuel radicalization and violence. After the 9/11 incident, religious fundamentalism, especially Islamism, continually gained prominence as a driving factor behind groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS, who engage in global jihadism to establish ideological states (Gaibulloev & Sandler, 2019). Lone-wolf actors, also driven by radical beliefs are now more common, making

them harder to detect and stop. Historically, ideological terrorism encompasses groups like the Italian Red Brigades and the Shining Path in Peru, which pursued communist revolutionary goals. Similarly, nationalist separatist groups such as the Basque ETA or Tamil Tigers have used ideological frameworks rooted in ethnic identity to justify violent struggles for independence (USIP, n.d.).

Technological Enablers:

Technology has made terrorism easier by helping groups communicate, spread propaganda, recruit members, and plan attacks globally. United Nations Office on Counterterrorism explained that the rise of the internet, social media platforms, and encrypted communications facilitates radicalization and command control functions, especially among decentralized or lone actors. History also shows that the availability of explosives such as dynamite during the 19th century allowed anarchist terrorists to execute more lethal and symbolic attacks, reshaping tactics of violence. In much recent times, concerns over terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction remain critical for global security efforts to prevent catastrophic attacks.

7.   Consequences of Terrorism

The consequences of terrorism are numerous, cut across humans, economies, societies, and political systems worldwide.

Human Cost

Terrorism causes serious harm in terms of loss of life, injuries, and long-term psychological trauma. Globally, an average of over 8,000 people die and nearly 11,000 are injured annually due to terrorist attacks, reflecting just the open physical consequence (University of Texas, 2018). Major incidents such as the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States caused nearly 3,000 deaths and thousands of injuries, with survivors and first responders continuing to suffer from chronic health problems and mental disorders like PTSD years later. Similarly, Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria has reportedly caused thousands of deaths and widespread displacement.

Children have been particularly affected in conflict zones; for example, the UN reported that since 2009, about 8,000 children have been recruited by Boko Haram in Nigeria, often forced into fighting or suicide attacks. This also makes the consequence on human more serious and troubling (UNODC, 2023). Beyond fatalities and injuries, terrorism instils continuous fear and insecurity, disrupting

social life and leaving communities vulnerable to psychological stress and trauma.

Economic Consequences

The economic costs of terrorism are massive and wide, encompassing direct damages, disruption to trade and investment, and increased government security expenditures. Globally, terrorism related economic losses were estimated at $33 billion in 2018 alone, while cumulative global losses from 2000 to 2018 reached approximately $855 billion (PEPS, 2021). Fragile or war-torn countries are especially badly affected, especially in states where terror acts cripple tourism, deter foreign direct investment, and destroy public resources. For example, Nigeria endured economic costs of terrorism estimated at $97 billion between 2007 and 2016, the highest among African nations, largely due to Boko Haram attacks disrupting oil production, agriculture, and commerce (IEP report, 2017). Similarly, Turkey's economy has faced repeated setbacks from terrorist violence, with key sectors like tourism and foreign investment suffering declines following attacks (Estrada et al., 2018).

Further more, governments often shift money away from social programs like education, healthcare, and welfare to focus more on security. This is done to protect important places, support the police, and strengthen intelligence services. While this helps fight terrorism, it does slow down overall development. Basic services may suffer, especially in poor or unstable countries. This can lead to increased poverty and inequality over time. It also reduces public trust in government when people feel their needs are being ignored.

Social Consequence

Terrorism adversely damages unity in society by spreading fear, creating mistrust, and dividing people. The targeted use of violence against civilians not only causes direct trauma but also destroys the bonds that hold society together, often turning communities against one another along ethnic, religious, or ideological lines. This breakdown in society weakens trust between groups and makes communities less strong and united.

One example of pervasive consequence is the rise of xenophobia and discrimination, particularly against minority groups associated, whether directly or not, with terrorist actors. For example, following the 9/11 attacks in the United States and Europe, Muslim and Middle Eastern communities increasingly experienced backlash, prejudice, and

harassment (Human Rights Watch, 2002). In the UK, reports from the Equality and Human Rights Commission documented increase in hate crimes, public suspicion, and state surveillance targeting Muslims, which disregarded social integration and made people feel left out (Equality and Human Rights Commission, UK). Such social exclusion can lead to more radical views, as it makes them feel unfairly treated and pushed aside.

Terrorism also instils a culture of fear that alters daily behaviours and social dynamics. For instance, in Nigeria, people avoid public spaces, restrict social interactions, or alter travel plans due to perceived threats, which limits freedoms and community life. The long-term psychological impacts of terrorism extend beyond direct victims to entire populations, increasingly, anxiety and mistrust becomes normalized. Furthermore, terrorism can worsen divisions in society by increasing religious conflict, ethnic hatred, or political tensions, as witnessed in countries like Iraq and Syria, where terrorist violence intensified Sunni-Shia divides and intercommunal hostility (Jenkins, 2014).

Political Consequence

Politically, terrorism presents a significant challenge to governance, rights, and international relations. States often respond to terrorist threats by implementing strict security measures such as expanding surveillance, emergency powers, and counterterrorism measures that can intrude civil liberties. While intending to protect national security, these measures risk violation of human rights through practices like forced detention, torture, suppression of free speech, and restrictions on assembly and association (United Nations 2008).

Those sorts of state responses may disregard democratic norms and the rule of law by concentrating power in executive branches, limiting judicial control and opposition. For example, in the aftermath of terrorist attacks, countries like Egypt and Pakistan have been criticized for excessive counterterrorism campaigns that include mass arrests and enforced disappearances, weakening political freedoms and accountability (Amnesty International, 2020). This sort of contradiction where states weaken their own institutions under the guise of security, can unexpectedly result in grievances that radical groups exploit.

Furthermore, terrorism also destabilizes governments and political order, particularly in weak states or conflict zones. Ongoing insurgencies and terrorist violence disrupt governance functions,

delays service delivery, and distract leadership from development priorities. In Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region for example, insecurity from Boko Haram and ISWAP has severely limited government capacity to maintain control, enforce law, and engage in regional cooperation (Ajala & Murphy, 2025). This persistent threat weakens efforts at security sector reform and political stabilization, fostering ongoing issues of violence and governance failure.

Moreso, terrorism also complicates international diplomatic relations. States may accuse others of harbouring terrorists or failing to control borders, destroying ties and regional alliances. For instance, cross-border terrorism in South Asia, between India and Pakistan, has long Increased conflicts and made peace efforts more difficult. Similarly, state-sponsored terrorism allegations can trigger sanctions or military interventions, further destabilizing regional security designs (Jones & Libicki, 2008)

Therefore, it is clear that terrorism's consequences is felt far beyond immediate violence, it creates continued human suffering, exacting severe economic costs, and undermining social structure and political stability. Examples include the 9/11 in the US and Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria, to the repeated attacks in Turkey which illustrates how broad and interconnected the consequences of terrorism imposes.

8.   Impact of Terrorism on Global Security

Transnational Impact

Terrorism today, crosses country borders, therefore has become a global threat, making it harder to keep the world safe. Groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS are proper examples of these impacts, recruiting foreign fighters from diverse countries and spreading their violent ideologies internationally. The phenomenon of foreign fighters, referring to individuals who travel abroad to join terrorist conflicts, has increased, with conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, creating networks that operate across continents (UN Security Council, 2020). According to the United Nations Security Council, tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters have joined conflicts in the Middle East over the past decade, spreading instability far beyond their countries of origin (UN Security Council, 2020).

Global jihadism has also expanded the reach and impact of terrorism by inspiring attacks worldwide, including the lone-wolf actors influenced remotely via online propaganda and social media. This interconnectedness poses problems for national security agencies, which must monitor and counter threats that are decentralized, and often invisible until attacks occur. Therefore, because modern terrorism has no borders, it becomes easier to fund, organize, and recruit people through illegal networks around the world.

Impact on International Institutions and Cooperation

Threats that cut across boarders, challenge international institutions, governments, and regional bodies to develop coordinated responses. While organizations like the United Nations, INTERPOL, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) play vital roles in fostering cooperation, there are differences in national priorities. The differences in legal frameworks, and capacities slows down unified action. For example, some states prioritize sovereignty and counterterrorism under strict security paradigms, sometimes at the expense of human rights, while others emphasize developmental and preventive approaches. These differences complicate information sharing, and joint operations. Additionally, and as seen in the case of India and Pakistan where political conflicts and mistrust between the states stalls joint efforts which further strains cooperation between both countries regarding cross-border terrorism.

9.   Major Findings and Conclusion

This research has identified terrorism as a multifaceted phenomenon, driven by a number of root causes, including political repression, socio-economic disparities, ideological radicalization, and technological facilitation. The study finds that authoritarian regimes and failed states create environments ripe for violence, while socio-economic exclusion fuels grievances that terrorist actors exploit. It also finds that religious and ideological extremism, further compounded by evolving digital technologies eases the recruitment and coordination of modern terrorism.

The study's findings also reveal that the consequences of terrorism extend far beyond immediate violence, producing devastating human costs through loss of life, psychological trauma, and community disruption. Economically, terrorism undermines development by disrupting investment, trade, and government spending priorities, particularly in weaker regions like Nigeria and conflict-affected states. Social structures suffer due to fear, and increased discrimination, while politically, terrorism pressures governments to adopt strict counterterrorism measures that risk

undermining human rights and democratic principles, as documented in the UN OHCHR Fact Sheet (2008) and evidenced by the challenges seen in the Lake Chad Basin (Ajala & Murphy, 2025).

At the global level, terrorism functions as a transnational security threat that challenges international cooperation, diplomatic relations, and governance frameworks. The rise of foreign fighters, global jihadism, cyberterrorism, and evolving tactics demands adaptive, multidisciplinary responses that balance security needs with human rights safeguards. This study utilized the Human Security Theory effectively, contextualizing terrorism's impact on both individual well-being and societal stability, explaining the importance of inclusive approaches.

In conclusion, terrorism has remained a persistent, evolving global threat characterized by shifting forms, motivations, and impacts. Its complexity demands continues study and intelligent policymaking that integrates security, human rights, and socio-economic resilience to foster sustainable peace and global stability.

Recommendations

To effectively mitigate the root causes of terrorism, the study recommends that policy efforts must prioritize the promotion of democratic governance that ensures political inclusion, accountability, and respect for human rights. Strengthening socio-economic development through poverty alleviation, education, and employment opportunities is essential to address grievances that fuel radicalization.

The study also recommends that the enhancement of international cooperation is critical to counter the transnational nature of terrorism. This includes improving intelligence sharing, harmonizing legal frameworks, and fostering joint operations among states and international bodies while respecting sovereignty and human rights standards. Strengthened legal and regulatory regimes are necessary to address emerging threats like cyberterrorism, foreign fighters, and terrorist financing effectively.

The study also recommends that research on terrorism must be multidisciplinary, integrating political science, economics, psychology, technology, and human rights perspectives to generate an encompassing insight that inform evidence-based policies. Finally, a careful balance between ensuring well grounded security measures and protecting fundamental human rights must be maintained to uphold democratic values, prevent abuses, and avoid fuelling further radicalization.

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