

Scoring terrorism: report reflects a decreasing threat in Europe

Published on 24 Apr 2019



Terrorism is amongst the more unyielding security threats worldwide, but a report on global terrorism from the Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, Australia, provides reason for optimism, especially outside the world's terrorism hot spots such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

Europe is the region with the biggest improvement from the impact of terrorism and has recorded a marked fall in terrorist activity. The number of deaths in Western Europe fell from 168 in 2016 to 81 in 2017. Turkey, France, Belgium, and Germany recorded the most significant falls, with only the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Finland, and Austria registering increases.

As a whole, deaths from terrorism fell for a third consecutive year, after peaking in 2014. Bombings and armed assaults have been the most common form of terrorist attack every year for the past 20

years.

Ranking countries based on impact of terrorism



The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) was developed in consultation with the Global Peace Index Expert Panel

This article excerpts some of the insights from the Institute for Economics & Peace's report Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism. The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress.

The report ranks individual countries based on their impact from terrorism. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) was developed in consultation with the Global Peace Index Expert Panel. The GTI scores each country on a scale from 0 to 10; where 0 represents no impact from terrorism and 10 represents the highest measurable impact of terrorism. Countries are ranked in descending order with the worst scores listed higher in the index.

The United Kingdom scored 5.610 on the GTI scale, up seven spots in the ranking to No. 28. By comparison, the United States scored 6.066 (up 12 spots to rank No. 20), France scored 5.475 (ranked at No. 30) and China scored 5.108 (ranked at No. 36).

Fall in deaths but rise in terrorist incidents

Twenty-one countries in Europe recorded improvements on their GTI score in 2017, with 11 registering deteriorations in their scores. The impact of terrorism fell for the region on average. Europe recorded the largest percentage decrease in deaths from terrorism of any region in the world in 2017, with total deaths falling by 75 per cent.

In Western Europe, deaths from terrorism fell by 52 per cent, from 168 in 2016 to 81 in 2017. From January until October 2018, fewer than 10 deaths were recorded in the region.

Despite the fall in deaths, the number of terrorist incidents increased to 282 in Europe in 2017, up from 253 in the prior year. Furthermore, eight countries in Western Europe recorded at least one death from terrorism in 2017, the highest number in the past 20 years.

27% decrease in total number of deaths

At the top of the global ranking, No. 1 is Iraq (which scored 9.746 and accounted for 25 percent of the deaths from terrorism) and Afghanistan is No. 2 (with score of 9.391 and representing 23 percent of deaths). The rest of the Top 5 countries are Nigeria, Syria and Pakistan.



Iraq recorded over 5,000 fewer deaths from terrorism in 2017, while Syria recorded over 1,000 fewer deaths

The total number of deaths from terrorism fell by 27 per cent between 2016 and 2017, with the largest decreases occurring in Iraq and Syria. Iraq recorded over 5,000 fewer deaths from terrorism in 2017, while Syria recorded over 1,000 fewer deaths. The fall in deaths was reflected in scores on the GTI, with 94 countries improving, compared to 46 that deteriorated.

Extremism linked to ex-criminals

There is a growing body of evidence that indicates people in Western Europe with a criminal background may be especially susceptible to alignment with extremist beliefs, radicalisation, and possible recruitment by terrorist groups, according to the report. Extremists groups provide a 'redemption narrative' for alienated young people with a criminal background, while also allowing them to use their illicit skills and networks.

Most of the studies conducted in Western Europe find that more than 40 per cent of foreign fighters

and those arrested for terrorist activity have some form of criminal background. This pattern of recruitment is of particular concern for countries in Western Europe, with the number of returning foreign fighters expected to grow in the years ahead as ISIL continues to crumble in Iraq and Syria, say the researchers.

Increase in far-right political terrorism

Elsewhere, the threat of far-right political terrorism is on the rise. There were 66 deaths from terrorism caused by far-right groups and individuals from 113 attacks for the years from 2013 to 2017. Of those, 17 deaths and 47 attacks occurred in 2017 alone.



The majority of attacks were carried out by lone actors with far-right, white nationalist, or anti-Muslim beliefs

In Western Europe, there were 12 attacks in the United Kingdom, six in Sweden, and two each in Greece and France. In the United States, there were 30 attacks in 2017 which resulted in 16 deaths. The majority of attacks were carried out by lone actors with far-right, white nationalist, or

anti-Muslim beliefs.

The GTI is based on the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the most authoritative data source on terrorism today. The GTI produces a composite score so as to provide a ranking of countries on the impact of terrorism. The GTD consists of systematically and comprehensively coded data for 170,000 terrorist incidents.

Author Profile



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An experienced journalist and long-time presence in the US security industry, Larry is SourceSecurity.com's eyes and ears in the fast-changing security marketplace, attending industry and corporate events, interviewing security leaders and contributing original editorial content to the site. He leads SourceSecurity.com's team of dedicated editorial and content professionals, guiding the "editorial roadmap" to ensure the site provides the most relevant content for security professionals.

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