

Terrorism: the EU's response

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[ISIL/Da'esh and 'non-conventional' weapons of terror](#)

Briefing by Beatrix Immenkamp, December 2015

The European Union and its Member States must prepare for the possibility of a chemical or biological attack on their territory by the self-styled 'Islamic State' in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh). The group has threatened further attacks in European cities and has vowed that future strikes will be more lethal and even more shocking. This has prompted experts to warn that the group may be planning to try to use internationally banned weapons of mass destruction in future attacks. European governments and EU institutions need to be on alert, and should consider publicly addressing the possibility of a terrorist attack using chemical, biological, radiological or even nuclear materials (CBRN). **The EU institutions have devoted considerable efforts to preventing a CBRN attack on European soil and preparing worst-case scenarios. However, some gaps remain**, in particular with regard to information-sharing among Member States.



[Preventing radicalisation in the EU](#)

Plenary at a Glance by Orav, Anita, November 2015

The tragic attacks of 13 November in Paris painfully demonstrated the immediate security threat deriving from radicalisation, recruitment of EU citizens by terrorist organisations and 'foreign fighters'. The competence for national security lies with the Member States, but **the cross border nature of these complex threats requires a coordinated response at EU level.**



[Global terrorism: trends in 2014/2015](#)

Briefing by Patryk Pawlak, November 2015

Terrorist threat has evolved significantly over the past 15 years and continues to present one of the main challenges to international stability. The attacks in France, Nigeria, Thailand or Indonesia show clearly that no country is immune to the threat posed by global jihadi networks. The data presented in this briefing shows that the number of terrorist attacks has almost doubled compared to 2004 - an increase primarily linked to the growing number of countries affected by terrorism. Although Al-Qaeda and its offshoots maintain a strong position internationally, and continue to pose a serious threat, their standing has been increasingly challenged by the emergence of the ISIL/Da'esh. The creation of a terrorist enclave on Syrian and Iraqi territory provided an appealing narrative that has fuelled a continued influx of foreign fighters to join the ranks of ISIL/Da'esh. **The struggles for publicity, financing and manpower between these two terrorist 'mega-networks' will result in more frequent attacks but also new methods of recruitment and funding.** Political instability and weak governance in many countries have provided fertile ground for radicalism and growth in terrorist activities, in particular in Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.



[Understanding definitions of terrorism](#)

At a glance by Patryk Pawlak, November 2015

Following a series of terrorist attacks in France, Tunisia, Egypt or Turkey, the international community has increased its cooperation to counter the threat of terrorism. However, **one of the key impediments to this cooperation – visible also in the case of the peace process in Syria – is the persisting division over a universally acceptable definition of terrorism.** Despite broad consensus that the threat of terrorism needs to be addressed urgently, the positions adopted by individual countries, regional and international organisations have resulted in a patchwork of approaches. This is primarily due to diverging views on what constitutes terrorism, as opposed to exercising peoples' right to self-determination, as enshrined in the UN Charter.



[Counter-terrorism funding in the EU budget](#)

Briefing by Gianluca Sgueo, June 2015

Counter-terrorism (CT) spending by Western countries has increased over the past 15 years. Since 2001, United States (US) federal expenditure on homeland security has grown on average by \$360 billion annually. While it is not possible to calculate total EU and Member State spending on CT with any precision, EU spending is estimated to have increased from €5.7 million in 2002 to €93.5 million in 2009. The 'Security and Citizenship' heading in the EU budget was slightly reduced, from €2 172 million in 2014 to €2 146.73 million in 2015. However, spending on CT, including EU funds and operational expenses for the functioning of the institutional framework, has increased. **Greater investment in CT may provide a response to the upsurge in terrorist threats. Increased spending, however, is not always followed by a reduced incidence of terrorism.** The EU's increased efforts to develop a strategy to tackle terrorism and to improve the institutional framework must be seen alongside concerns that its approach to CT may amount to a 'paper tiger'. This is due to the lack of an overall framework for new measures to tackle terrorism and to poor coordination of the institutional framework. A number of proposals are under discussion at EU level to further implement and strengthen EU strategy on CT. These include new rules on money-laundering, increased cooperation between the EU and its Member States, and a review of the existing tools for fighting terrorism.



[Understanding hybrid threats](#)

At a glance by Patryk Pawlak, June 2015

'Hybrid threats' are often invoked in reference to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the ISIL/Da'esh campaign in Iraq. As policy-makers struggle to grasp what hybrid threats mean for national security, this document discusses the origins, the meaning, and legal challenges associated with this concept. It also introduces the **distinction between hybrid threat, hybrid conflict and hybrid war.**



[Understanding jihad and jihadism](#)

At a glance by Sebastian Kusserow and Patryk Pawlak, May 2015

Since the rise of al Qaeda and, most recently, ISIL/Da'esh, the term jihad has become a ubiquitous part of public discourse on terrorism and radical Islam. Although jihad does not constitute one of the 'Five Pillars' of Muslim faith, many consider it to be a duty of the Muslim community as a whole. This document discusses **the origins of the term as well as its religious and political evolution: from jihad** (different kinds of religiously inspired efforts) **to jihadism** (a modern ideology).



[Cybersecurity: Jihadism and the internet](#)

At a glance by Patryk Pawlak, May 2015

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria in March 2011, the numbers of European citizens supporting or joining the ranks of ISIL/Da'esh have been growing steadily, and may now be as high as 4 000 individuals. The proliferation of global jihadi messaging online and their reliance on social networks suggest that the **internet is increasingly a tool for promoting jihadist ideology, collecting funds and mobilising their ranks.**



Religious fundamentalism and radicalisation

Briefing by Anita Orav, March 2015

The recent terrorist attacks in Europe and the increasing number of European terrorist 'foreign fighters' highlight the need not only to reinforce the policy measures against radicalisation and religious fundamentalism but also to understand the processes of these two phenomena in the European context. Radicalisation is a complex matter that has not been defined uniformly in the social sciences. It can be seen as a phenomenon of people embracing views which could lead to terrorism, and is closely connected to the notion of extremism. Religious fundamentalism, a belief in an absolute religious ideology with no tolerance for differing interpretations, is a contributing factor to the development of radical opinions. Radicalisation is a dynamic process cutting across social and demographic strata. Recent studies seeking to understand it suggest of the need to profile the processes of recruitment, be it online or in places such as schools, mosques and prisons. **The causes of radicalisation are complex, drawing from the continuing conflicts in the Middle East, the disconnectedness of large Muslim communities living in Western societies and their search for identity.** The process of recruitment occurs by way of extremist propaganda spread by terrorist organisations with roots abroad, but operating in Europe. Radicalisation is a serious threat to internal security in EU Member States, who retain the main competence in this matter. The measures taken at EU level contribute to the fight against radicalisation by offering common strategies, EU-wide cooperation networks and coordination of Member States' efforts.



'Foreign fighters' - Member States' responses and EU action in an international context

Briefing by Piotr Bakowski and Laura Puccio, February 2015

As the hostilities in Syria and Iraq continue and terrorism activities worldwide seem to be on the rise, EU Member States are increasingly confronted with the problem of aspiring and returning 'foreign fighters'. Whereas the phenomenon is not new, its scale certainly is, which explains the wide perception of these individuals as a serious threat to the security of both individual Member States and the EU as a whole. The problem has been addressed within international fora including the United Nations, which in 2014 adopted a binding resolution specifically addressing the issue of foreign fighters. The EU is actively engaged in relevant international initiatives. Within the EU, security in general and counter-terrorism in particular have traditionally remained in the Member States' remit. **The EU has however coordinated Member States' activities regarding the prevention of radicalisation, the detection of suspicious travel, criminal justice response and cooperation with third countries.** The EU is seeking to strengthen its role given the widely shared feeling of insecurity in the wake of recent terrorist attacks. Existing and new paths for EU action are being explored, including the revived EU passenger name records (PNR) proposal. Individual Member States have stepped up their efforts to address the problem using various kinds of tools including criminal law, administrative measures and 'soft tools', such as counter-radicalisation campaigns. The Member States most affected have also cooperated with each other outside the EU framework. The United States has a particularly developed counter-terrorism framework now being used to deal with foreign fighters. Since 9/11, the EU and the US have cooperated on counter-terrorism despite different philosophies on issues such as data protection.



CBRN terrorism: threats and the EU response

Briefing by Piotr Bakowski, January 2015

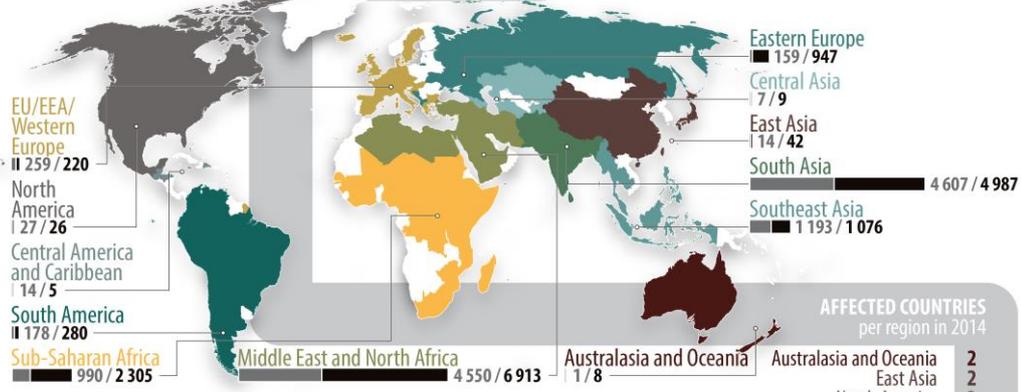
Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorism is a form of terrorism involving the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Following 11th September 2001, the international community came to believe there was a high probability that terrorists would make use of such weapons. The growing number of people familiar with CBRN warfare techniques and the spread of scientific knowledge, coupled with poor security of relevant facilities, could facilitate terrorists in getting hold of CBRN weapons. Terrorist groups have already shown interest in acquiring them. However, so far, there have been very few successful CBRN attacks and the number of casualties remains relatively low. This is partly due to the fact that obtaining or creating WMD is challenging, while conventional weapons can be more easily acquired. The international community has reacted to CBRN threats through a series of instruments, most of them under the aegis of the UN. The EU has also been gradually building its counter-terrorism capacity. The 2010 CBRN Action Plan – the core element of the Commission's new policy package – has been extensively commented on by the European Parliament.



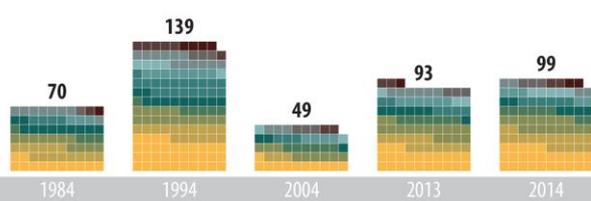
GLOBAL SHIFTS. REGIONAL TRENDS IN 2013/2014



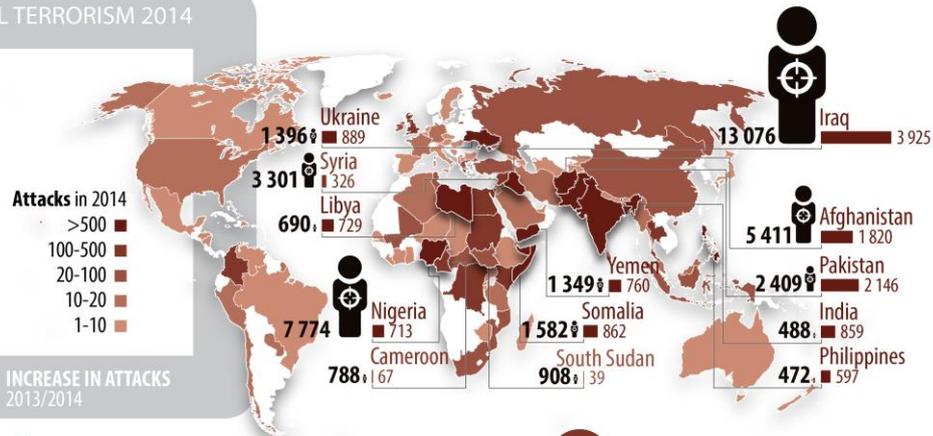
REGIONAL BREAKDOWN
number of attacks 2013 & 2014



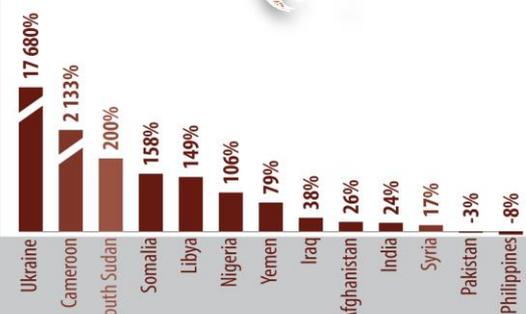
AFFECTED COUNTRIES
per region in 2014



GLOBAL TERRORISM 2014



INCREASE IN ATTACKS
2013/2014



73% of all deaths caused by terrorist attacks in 2014 occurred in **5 countries**: Iraq, Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan

80% of deaths related to terrorist attacks occurred in the **ten countries** hit by the most terrorist attacks.

Source: START, 2015; Graphics: EPRS.

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