



Research Report Global Mayors Forum

The question of securing safety in public
places during the threat of terrorist
attacks

*Student Officers:
Tim Levert
Giles Bangoyina*

Introduction

Over the past couple of years, an increasing amount of cities have had to deal with the threat of terrorist attacks. In some parts of the world, such as the Middle East, terrorist attacks have been a problem for a longer period of time. As well as causing casualties, terrorist attacks can temporarily disrupt daily life. Therefore, governments have come up with measures that are aimed at preventing terrorist attacks from happening. In Brussels, for instance, a so-called 'lockdown' was implemented in 2015 to prevent more terrorist attacks from happening, as there was a serious safety threat to the city. The city, following the multiple attacks on the city a few days prior to the lockdown. As a result of this lockdown, which was considered extreme by some, no more terrorist attacks were reported, which potentially saved many lives. Therefore, it is important for big cities to develop plans that ensure safety in areas before, during, and following a terrorist attack.

The Global Mayors Forum

The Global Mayors Forum (GMF) is one of the newest committees at MUNA. The committee is based on the Global Parliament of Mayors (GPM), which first met in Bristol and London in 2015. About 100 mayors from all over the world gathered to discuss global challenges that every global city faces and that can best be solved together. The GPM is an initiative of Professor Benjamin Barber, who is the author of the book 'If Mayors Ruled the World'. In his book, Barber states that mayors of the biggest cities of the world are better equipped to deal with the global problems of the 21st century than sovereign nation states themselves.

At MUNA, we put this idea to the test. Delegates in the GMF do not represent nations or states, which is the case in all the other committees, but mayors of the biggest cities in the world. Together, all the mayors will discuss and try to solve intricate, intricate and pressing urban issues of the 21st century.

In the GMF, delegates do not have to prepare resolutions beforehand, as the resolutions will be created during the debates. This is called an ad-hoc committee. Therefore, it is *crucial* to do thorough research on all the topics, for instance through writing policy statements. Furthermore, it is crucial that you possess good knowledge on the perspectives of your city with regard to the issues that are to be discussed. Good knowledge is essential as you will be representing the political perspective of your city during these debates. Due to the fact that the GMF is an ad-hoc committee, lobbying time before the debates will be shorter and there will be more time to focus on the resolutions themselves.

Keywords

Domestic terrorism

A form of terrorism in which the targeted victims are of the same citizenship as the perpetrator.

Religious terrorism

Terrorism based on motivations and goals that have a predominantly religious character.

Political terrorism

Terrorism based on motivations and goals that have a predominantly political character.

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Left-wing terrorism

Terrorism based on Marxist / Leninist, socialist, or anarchist ideologies, and meant to overthrow conservative or capitalist systems.

Right-wing terrorism

Terrorism aimed at replacing existing governments with nationalist or fascist orientated regimes, often being influenced by ideologies such as Islamophobia, anti-communism, neo-fascism and neo-Nazism.

Terrorist

A person who uses violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political or religious aims.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also known as Islamic State, ISIS, ISIL or Daesh)

Militant group that follows a fundamentalist, Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam.

September 11 attacks (9/11)

Day on which Islamic terrorist hijacked commercial planes in the United States and crashed two of them into the Twin Towers (World Trade Center), one into the Pentagon in Virginia, and a fourth one in a field in Pennsylvania.

Al-Qaeda

Militant, Sunni Islamist organization based in the Middle East.

Counterterrorist measures

Techniques and strategies that governments and intelligence agencies use to prevent or combat terrorism.

Specialized Unit

A police unit trained to handle terrorist attacks

Intelligence Agencies

Institutions that try to hunt down terrorists before they attack through, for example but not limiting to, tapping phones, looking at credit card data, hacking into laptops.

Lockdown

A lockdown is an emergency protocol to prevent people or information from escaping from an area, which usually can only be ordered by someone in command. Lockdowns are also used to protect people inside a facility or, for example, a computing system, from a dangerous external event.

Overview (Body Paragraph 1)

There is no universal definition for the term terrorism. However, generally, terrorism is described as indiscriminate violence that is ideologically motivated and aimed at creating terror among masses of people. It is often also linked to one's religious or political aim or perspective. During the past couple of years, Islamic terrorism has been highlighted in western parts of the world, as a result of attacks performed by supporters of the terrorist group Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL, Daesh). There are, however, many types of terrorism, such as left-wing terrorism and right-wing terrorism. A terrorist attack that is surrounded by great infamy is 9/11, committed by Al-Qaeda. It is often seen as an important event in relation to the international coalition against (Islamic) terrorism.

Recently, terrorist attacks have also occurred in the Middle East and parts of Asia, Africa, Europe and Middle America. The countries in which most terrorist attacks have taken place since 2001 are:

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1. Iraq
2. India
3. Afghanistan
4. Pakistan
5. Thailand
6. Phillipines
7. Russia
8. Colombia
9. Israel
10. Nepal

There are many methods that terrorists use to perform the attacks, but some of the characteristics include:

- *Crowded places*
Areas with a high population or places with many visitors, such as stadiums, shopping centres, sport and music events, and tourist attractions are often the site of terrorist attacks. For large groups of people, it is difficult to quickly move from one place to another, which makes these places attractive for terrorists. This is the reason why big cities are often the setting of terrorist attacks.
- *Vulnerable target*
People are often not able to defend themselves properly when they are in public places. They do, namely, not have weapons or they do not know the place well enough to be able to leave in time. This makes them vulnerable targets for terrorists. Children, elderly and disabled people are most vulnerable.
- *Use of weapons*
Terrorists tend to use weapons to maximize casualties during terrorist attacks. These weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives, cars, trucks, busses and knives.

Important to note: attacks that do not match (all of) these characteristics can still be considered terrorist attacks.

Many measures have been introduced that are aimed at reducing damages and casualties during terrorist attacks. Those 'counterterrorist measures' vary greatly in nature. Examples are putting up blockades to prevent vehicles from driving into groups of people or increasing the number of cameras to be able to respond quicker. However, both of these measures bring about new problems. As the blockades can also disrupt daily life by obstructing traffic. This will both have an economical as well as a personal influence on the city. Likewise, the additional cameras cause the privacy of the citizens to become in jeopardy and will also cost major changes in the infrastructure as new cables need to be placed to connect all the cameras. Additionally, many of the counterterrorist measures that can be taken can also give the citizens a feeling of unrest as it would imply that they are not safe. Terrorist attacks clearly frighten and scare people. To give people the sense of safety, measures are taken to promote this feeling, which ironically may have an opposite effect. According to a paper from several Danish Security and Intelligence Service agents, such measures tend to increase fear amongst citizens, which in turn may hinder their sense of safety and disrupt their daily life.

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Important to note, however, is that not only cities try to fight terrorism, but countries as well as specialised units, such as Intelligence Agencies, try to bring down casualties as result of (terrorist) attacks. Additionally, countries Collaborate in combating possible threats by actively preventing its occurrence. Unfortunately, cities still do not have access to classified information to combat this on their own strength. Therefore, it is important to take into account that cities do not have to set up complicated and expensive institutions that are already in place as this will not further help solve the issue. Cities should try to solve this issue in their own way, while not doing the exact same as their governments are already doing.

Moreover, not only is it the objective to prevent terrorist attacks but also to deal with them as soon as possible when they happen. During a shooting for example, the citizens need to be rescued and taken to a safe place and the terrorist(s) need(s) to be neutralized as soon as possible. As it is nearly impossible to be there to help the citizens as soon as the shooting starts another way must be found to ensure the citizens can get to a safe place without or with little help. This can be done by, for example, informing them on what to do beforehand or having safety routes or secure places throughout the city. To neutralize the terrorist action needs to be taken quickly. As police or a specialized team cannot simply run into the situation a plan needs to be made first. Therefore, it is important to have made plans for many possible situation beforehand and have well trained personnel for this.

Arguments (Body Paragraph 2)

In order to solve this issue it is necessary to focus on three main aspects:

- The prevention of damage and human casualties caused by terrorist attacks
- Neutralizing the danger of a terrorist attack as quickly as possible
- The feeling of safety as well as fear of the citizens

The first and third aspect are very much intertwined as trying to solve one, through conventional methods, often causes the other aspect to become worse. Therefore, a city must come up with new methods to solve both aspects at once. Although it may seem hard it is not impossible.

Moreover, the privacy of the citizens is also part of the third aspect. If their privacy is taken away citizens might not feel safe or disagree with the city's approach.

Lastly, the second aspect brings about the question how far we are willing to go to keep our city safe. Some might argue that we should do anything to neutralize terrorist, such as but not limiting to, killing, torturing, and killing citizens and terrorists in the process. Others might believe that we are not to kill terrorists so they can get a fair trial as is their human right. Also the safety of citizens and their well-being can be very important to a city as having their citizens traumatized by their own actions can question the authority of city council.

Timeline of Events

In this timeline several of the biggest and most significant terrorist attacks are mentioned that happened since 1920:

- 16 September 1920: Wall Street Bombing, New York City, U.S.A.

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- 38 people were killed and 300 were wounded
- Linked to the Red Scare. Which is the fear of the spread communism during the Cold War.
- 31 May 1921: Tulsa Race, Tulsa, U.S.A.
 - 39 to 300 people were killed and more than 800 people were wounded
 - Linked to racism
- 16 April 1925: St Nedelya Church Assault, Sofia, Bulgaria
 - 150 people were killed and approximately 500 were wounded
 - Linked to political ideologies
- 1940 to 1956: Mad Bomber, New York City, U.S.A.
 - George Metesky places over 30 bombs throughout public places in the city and sent many threatening letters.
- 22 July 1946: King David Hotel Bombing, Jerusalem, Mandatory Palestine
 - 91 people were killed and 46 were wounded
 - Linked to politics and religion
- 26 June 1965: Saigon bombing, Saigon, South Vietnam
 - 42 people were killed and 80 were wounded
 - Linked to politics
- 19 April 1995: Oklahoma City bombing, Oklahoma City, U.S.A.
 - 170 people were killed and 680 were wounded
 - Linked to politics
- 11 September 2001: September 11 attacks, U.S.A.
 - 2977 people were killed and more than 6000 people were wounded
 - Linked to religion and politics
- 18 September 2001: Anthrax attacks, U.S.A.
 - 5 people were killed and 15 were wounded
 - A very complicated case as the terrorists sent letters containing spores of anthrax, a biological weapon.
- 26 November 2008: Mumbai attacks, Mumbai, India
 - 100 people were killed
 - Linked to religion
- 24 November 2017: Sinai mosque attack
 - 305 people were killed and more than 120 people were injured
 - No group has claimed this attack

Resolution

During the debate, you should construct resolutions that represent the view of your city. Despite the fact that you should always keep the needs in mind of your own city, it is possible to make concessions when merging resolutions with other cities. Please note that proper/thorough research should be done to allow appropriate implementation of arguments, clauses and ultimately resolutions during the debate. It is your job to implement the opinions of your city on the aspects mentioned above in the resolution.

Links and sources

The following links can be helpful during your preparations:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels_lockdown

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<https://storymaps.esri.com/stories/terrorist-attacks/>

<https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5198759/>

<https://ourworldindata.org/terrorism>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2014.930027>

<https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/03/taking-the-terror-out-of-terrorism-requires-outsmarting.html>

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/Mayors-front-line-against-terrorism.aspx>

<http://ilymun.org/protecting-cities-the-battle-against-terrorism/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/20/what-can-be-done-to-prevent-berlin-style-attacks-in-modern-cities>

