**Terrorism**

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*"Terrorist" redirects here. For other uses, see* [*Terrorist (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_%28disambiguation%29)*.*

Few words are as politically or emotionally charged as **terrorism**. One [1988](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988) study by the [US Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army) found that over 100 definitions of the word "terrorism" have been used. Acts of terrorism are not intended to merely victimize or eliminate those who are killed, injured or taken [hostage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostage) but rather to intimidate and influence the societies to which they belong.

Modern terrorism has come to be defined in part by the influential power of the [mass media](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_media) that terrorists co-opt in their efforts to amplify and broadcast feelings of intense fear and anger. As a type of [unconventional warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconventional_warfare), terrorism is designed to weaken or supplant existing political landscapes through capitulation or [acquiescence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acquiescence) as opposed to [subversion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subversion) or [direct military action](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conventional_warfare).

"Terrorist attacks" are usually characterized as "indiscriminate", "targeting of civilians" or executed "with disregard for human life". The term "terrorism" is often used to assert that the political violence of an enemy is immoral, wanton and unjustified. According to the most common [definition of terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definition_of_terrorism) typically used by states, academics, counter-terrorism experts and non-governmental organizations, "terrorists" are actors who don't belong to any recognized armed forces or who don't adhere to the [laws of war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laws_of_war) and who are, therefore, regarded as "rogue actors".

Those who are accused of being "terrorists" rarely identify themselves as such and, instead, typically use terms that refer to their ideological or ethnic struggle, such as: [separatist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separatist), [freedom fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_fighter), liberator, [revolutionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary), [vigilante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vigilante), [militant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant), [paramilitary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paramilitary), [guerrilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_warfare), [rebel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebel), [jihadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad) or [mujaheddin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujaheddin), or [fedayeen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fedayeen) or any one of similar-meaning words in a number of languages.

Terrorism has been used by a broad array of organizations to further their objectives. They including both right-wing and left-wing political parties, [nationalistic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalism) and religious groups, revolutionaries and ruling governments.

**Definition**

*Main article:* [*Definition of terrorism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definition_of_terrorism)

Few words are as politically or emotionally charged as ***terrorism***. One [1988](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988) study by the [US Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army) found that over 100 definitions of the word "terrorism" have been used. For this reason, many news sources avoid using this term, opting instead for less accusatory words like "bombers", "militants" and so on.

Terrorism is a crime in many countries and is defined by statute—see the Wikipedia article [*definition of terrorism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definition_of_terrorism) for particular definitions. Common principles among legal definitions of terrorism provide an emerging consensus as to meaning and also foster cooperation between law enforcement personnel in different countries. Among these definitions there are several that do not recognize the possibility of [legitimate use of violence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_resist_occupation) by civilians against an invader in an [occupied country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Occupied_territories) and would, thus, label all [resistance movements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resistance_movement) as terrorist groups. Others make a distinction between lawful and unlawful use of violence. For example, the actions of the United States in Iraq and other Middle East countries are acts of terrorism. Ultimately, the distinction is a [political](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics) judgment.

In November [2004](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004), a UN panel described terrorism as any act: "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."

**Pejorative use**

In his book "*Inside Terrorism*" Bruce Hoffman wrote in *Chapter One: Defining Terrorism* that

On one point, at least, everyone agrees: terrorism is a pejorative term. It is a word with intrinsically negative connotations that is generally applied to one's enemies and opponents, or to those with whom one disagrees and would otherwise prefer to ignore. `What is called terrorism', Brian Jenkins has written, `thus seems to depend on one's point of view. Use of the term implies a moral judgement; and if one party can successfully attach the label terrorist to its opponent, then it has indirectly persuaded others to adopt its moral viewpoint.' Hence the decision to call someone or label some organization `terrorist' becomes almost unavoidably subjective, depending largely on whether one sympathizes with or opposes the person/group/cause concerned. If one identifies with the victim of the violence, for example, then the act is terrorism. If, however, one identifies with the perpetrator, the violent act is regarded in a more sympathetic, if not positive (or, at the worst, an ambivalent) light; and it is not terrorism.

Groups called "terrorist" often prefer terms that reflect ideological or ethnic struggle. Examples include: [separatist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separatist), [freedom fighter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_fighter), liberator, [revolutionary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary), [vigilante](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vigilante), [militant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Militant), [paramilitary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paramilitary), [guerrilla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_warfare) ([Spanish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_language) for "small war"), [rebel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rebel), [jihadi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jihad) or [mujaheddin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujaheddin) ("one engaged in holy war"), or [fedayeen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fedayeen) ("prepared for martyrdom").

The difference between the words "terrorist" or "terrorism" and the terms above can be summed up by the [aphorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aphorism), "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." This is exemplified when a group that uses [irregular military](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irregular_military) methods is an ally of a [State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State) against a mutual enemy, but later falls out with the State and starts to use the same methods against its former ally. During World War II the [Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_People%E2%80%99s_Anti-Japanese_Army) was allied with the British, but during the [Malayan Emergency](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_Emergency), members of its successor, the [Malayan Races Liberation Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malayan_Races_Liberation_Army), were branded terrorists by the British. More recently, [President Reagan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_Reagan) and others in the American administration frequently called the [Afghan Mujahideen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mujaheddin#Afghan_Mujahideen) freedom fighters during [their war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Afghanistan) against the [Soviet Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_Union), yet twenty years later when a new generation of Afghan men are fighting against what they perceive to be a regime installed by foreign powers, their attacks are labelled terrorism by [President Bush](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Bush).

Some groups, when involved in a "liberation" struggle, have been called terrorist by the Western governments or media. Later, these same persons, as leaders of the liberated nations, are called statesmen by similar organizations. Two examples are [Nobel Peace Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nobel_Peace_Prize) laureates [Menachem Begin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Menachem_Begin) and [Nelson Mandela](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela).

Sometimes states that are close allies, for reasons of history, culture and politics, can disagree over whether members of a certain organization are terrorists. For example for many years some branches of the United States government refused to label members of the [Irish Republican Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provisional_Irish_Republican_Army) (IRA) as terrorists, while it was using methods against one of United States closest allies, that, that ally (Britain), branded as terrorist attacks. This was highlighted by the [Quinn v. Robinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Quinn_v._Robinson&action=edit) case

For these and other reasons, media outlets wishing to preserve a reputation for impartiality are extremely careful in their use of the term.

**Contrast with associated terms**

**Armed military conflict** is sometimes associated with terrorism when its objectives are to produce [shock and awe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shock_and_awe) for the purpose of forcing [capitulation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitulation_%28surrender%29). For the purpose of weakening or destroying the opponent's military force, however, armed military conflict is a form of [conventional warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conventional_warfare).

[**Guerrilla warfare**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_warfare) is sometimes associated with terrorism in that a relatively small force attempts to achieve large goals by using organized acts of directed violence. Against military targets, these acts can be a form of conventional warfare designed to negate the opponent's military ability. However, guerrilla tactics are more often associated with forms of [unconventional warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconventional_warfare) designed to be either [coercive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coercion) or [subversive](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subversion) to a political body. In its subversive context, a guerrilla unit provides clandestine support for one side of an existing conflict. In its coercive context, a guerrilla unit seeks to augment pronounced states of [fear](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fear) and overwhelming feelings of imminent danger.

**Hate Crimes** – An attack against an individual because of hatred toward their ethnic, national, or religious background does not qualify as terrorism because it lacks the complex political and psychological intent behind terrorist attacks. For example, the attack by a Muslim man of Israeli airline employees in [Los Angeles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles) in 2002 may seem terrorist because it fits into the larger milieu of Israeli/Islamic violence, but in reality, the attack was just a disgruntled supremacist lashing out violently. However, hatred toward a specific group of people may motivate violence intended to either suppress the political will of the group or to cause the group to leave a region, in which case the violence qualifies as terrorism.

**Mentally Ill Criminals** – Studies suggest that, compared with the general public, terrorists do not exhibit unusually high rates of clinical psychopathology, irrationality, or personality disorders. Because terrorist cells require secrecy, terror organizations frequently screen out unstable individuals who might compromise their security.

**"Lone Wolves"**– Some political groups do not allow for the possibility of a "lone wolf" being a terrorist. For instance, the [FBI](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FBI) asserts that for an act to be considered terrorist, it must be perpetrated by a like-minded group, and not a single individual acting alone. Donatella Della Porta writes that a single individual committing a violent act is not a terrorist because his/her attack is not against an enemy that is legitimized and sedimented in a larger social context. Eric Boehlert notes that social construction theory describes "lone wolves" as having different motivations, committing different types of attacks, and being prevented from carrying out attacks by different methods.

**Key criteria**

Official definitions determine counter-terrorism policy and are often developed to serve it. Most official definitions outline the following key criteria: target, objective, motive, perpetrator, and legitimacy or legality of the act. Terrorism is also often recognizable by a following statement from the perpetrators.

**Violence** – According to Walter Laqueur of the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Center_for_Strategic_and_International_Studies), "the only general characteristic [of terrorism] generally agreed upon is that terrorism involves violence and the threat of violence". However, the criterion of violence alone does not produce a useful definition, as it includes many acts not usually considered terrorism: [war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War), [riot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riot), [organized crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organized_crime), or even a simple [assault](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault). Property destruction, that does not endanger life, is not usually considered a [violent crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violent_crime), but some have described property destruction by the [Earth Liberation Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Liberation_Front) and [Animal Liberation Front](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_Liberation_Front) as terrorism.

**Psychological impact and fear** – The attack was carried out in such a way as to maximize the severity and length of the psychological impact. Each act of terrorism is a “performance,” a product of internal logic, devised to have an impact on many large audiences. Terrorists also attack national symbols to show their power and to shake the foundation of the country or society they are opposed to. This may negatively affect a government's legitimacy, while increasing the legitimacy of the given [terrorist organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_organization) and/or [ideology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology) behind a terrorist act. The [September 11th attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) on the [World Trade Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Center) and [Pentagon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentagon) are examples of this. Attacking the World Trade Center symbolizes that the terrorists can threaten the economic foundation of America and its capitalist ideals, and attacking the Pentagon symbolizes that America's great and prided military strength is yet vulnerable at its very core to the terrorists power.

**Perpetrated for a Political Goal** – Something all terrorist attacks have in common is their perpetration for a political purpose. This is often the key difference between an act of terrorism and a hate crime or lone-wolf "madman" attack. Terrorism is a political tactic, not unlike letter writing or protesting, that is used by activists when they believe no other means will affect the kind of change they desire. The change is desired so badly that failure is seen as a worse outcome than the deaths of civilians. This is often where the interrelationship between terrorism and religion occurs. When a political struggle is integrated into the framework of a religious or "cosmic" struggle, such as over the control of an ancestral homeland or holy site such as Palestine/Israel and Jerusalem, failing in the political goal (nationalism) becomes equated with spiritual failure, which, for the highly committed, is worse than their own death or the deaths of innocent civilians.

**Deliberate targeting of non-combatants** – It is commonly held that the distinctive nature of terrorism lies in its intentional and specific selection of [civilians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian) as direct targets. Much of the time, the victims of terrorism are targeted not because they are threats, but because they are specific "symbols, tools, animals or corrupt beings" that tie into a specific view of the world that the terrorist possess. Their suffering accomplishes the terrorists' goals of instilling fear, getting a message out to an audience, or otherwise accomplishing their political end.

**Democracy**

The relationship of terrorism and democracy is complex. Research shows that terrorism is most common in nations with intermediate political freedom and that the nations with the least terrorism are the most democratic nations. However, one study suggests that suicide terrorism may be an exception to this general rule. Evidence regarding this particular method of terrorism reveals that every modern suicide campaign has targeted a democracy- a state with a considerable degree of political freedom. The study suggests that concessions awarded to terrorists during the 80s and 90s for suicide attacks increased their frequency.

Some consider examples of "terrorism" in nondemocracies to include [ETA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ETA) under [Francisco Franco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francisco_Franco), the [Shining Path](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shining_Path) under [Alberto Fujimori](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Fujimori), and the [Kurdistan Workers Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurdistan_Workers_Party) when [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey) was ruled by military leaders.

While a nation espousing democratic ideology may claim a sense of legitimacy or higher moral ground than regimes that promote terrorism, any act of terrorism within the former creates a dilemma for the democratic state. On one hand, a state that prides itself in its tolerance of peaceful demonstration may choose to approach the problem of terrorism in ways outlined by its constitution; this may render that state ineffective in dealing with the problem, which could reflect upon its citizens a sense of impotency in a time of crisis. On the other hand, should that same terrorized state go above its constitution to deal with the problem, the very notion of democracy itself pales in meaning. This, some social theorists would conclude, may very well play into the initial plans of the acting terrorist(s); namely, to delegitimize democracy.

**Perpetrators**

Acts of terrorism can be carried out by individuals, groups, or states. According to some definitions, clandestine or semi-clandestine state actors may also carry out terrorist acts outside the framework of a state of war. The most common image of terrorism is that it is carried out by small and secretive [cells](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covert_cell), highly motivated to serve a particular cause. However, many of the most successful operations in recent time, such as [9/11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/9/11), the [London underground bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7_July_2005_London_bombings), and the [2002 Bali bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Bali_bombing) were planned and carried out by a close clique, comprised of close friends, family members and other strong social networks. These groups benefited from the free flow of information, and were able overcome the obstacles they encountered where others failed due to lack of information and communication. Over the years, many people have attempted to come up with a [terrorist profile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_profile) to attempt to explain these individuals' actions through their psychology and social circumstances. Others, like Roderick Hindery, have sought to discern profiles in the propaganda tactics used by terrorists.

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**Terrorist groups**

*Main article:* [*Terrorist groups*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_groups)

**State sponsors**

*Main article:* [*State terrorism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_terrorism)

*See also:* [*False flag*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_flag)

A state can sponsor terrorism by funding a terrorist organization, harboring terrorism, and also using state resources, such as the military, to directly perform acts of terrorism. State-sponsored terrorism is widely denounced by the international community. When states do provide funding for groups considered by some to be terrorist, they rarely acknowledge them as such. For example, [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) has been linked to a number of organizations, but maintains that where funds have been transferred, these have been legitimate.

**Tactics**

**Methods of attack**

Terrorists seek to demoralize and paralyze their enemy with fear, and also to pressure governments into conceding to the terrorist's agenda.

While they act according to different motivations and goals, all terrorist groups have one tactic in common: to achieve maximum publicity in order to intimidate and generate a message as a means to attain its objectives. Terrorism uses violence on one part of society to instill fear in the larger part of society to make a change. Terrorism employs propaganda as a tactic to ensure the attention of the public through the attention from the media. The term [Propaganda of the Deed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda_of_the_deed), coined by [Malatesta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Errico_Malatesta), Cafiero, and Covelli, states that the message is most strongly conveyed through violence.

Often damage is done with an [improvised explosive device](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Improvised_explosive_device), sometimes by chemical or biological weapons. A source of concern is also a possible use of a [nuclear weapon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_weapon). In the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks), planes were used as [guided](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guided_missile) [incendiary devices](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incendiary_device).

Terrorist groups may arrange for secondary devices to detonate at a slightly later time in order to kill emergency-response personnel attempting to attend to the dead and wounded. Repeated or suspected use of secondary devices can also delay emergency response out of concern that such devices may exist. Examples include a (failed) device that was meant to release cyanide-gas during the [February 26](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_26), [1993](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993) [World Trade Center bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Center_bombing); and a second car bomb that detonated 20 minutes after the [December 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_1), [2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001) [Ben Yehuda Street Bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Yehuda_Street_Bombing) by [Hamas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas) in [Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem).

**Training**

There are and have been training camps for terrorists. For the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks), the pilots also took flying courses. The range of training depends greatly on the level of support the terrorist organization receives from various organizations and states. In nearly every case the training incorporates the philosophy and agenda of the groups leadership as justification for the training as well as the potential acts of terrorism which may be committed. State sanctioned training is by far the most extensive and thorough, often employing professional soldiers and covert operatives of the supporting state. The training generally includes physical fitness, combat or martial arts, firearms, explosives, intelligence/counterintelligence, and field craft. More specialized training may include mission specific subjects such as, language, cultural familiarization, communications, and surveillance techniques. In every instance the quality of training is extremely high and well organized.

**Preparation**

Preparation of a major attack such as the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) may take years, whereas a simpler attack, depending on the availability of arms, may be almost spontaneous.

**Cover**

Where terrorism occurs in the context of open warfare or insurgency, its perpetrators may shelter behind a section of the local population. Examples include the [Intifada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intifada) on Israeli-occupied territory, and insurgency in [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq). This population, which may be ethnically distinct from the counter-terrorist forces, is either sympathetic to their cause, indifferent, or acts under duress.

Terrorists preparing for the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) changed their appearance to avoid looking radical.

**Funding**

*Main article:* [*Terrorist Financing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_Financing)

Terrorist organizations do not usually have only one means of funding, but many. Funding can be raised in both legal and illegal ways. Some of the most common ways to raise funds are through charities, well-funded organizations, or a nonviolent organization with similar ideologies. In the absence of state funding, terrorists may rely on [organized crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organized_crime) to fund their activities. This has included [kidnapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnapping), [drug trafficking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drug_trafficking), or [robbery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robbery). Additionally, terrorists have also found many more sources of revenue. [Osama bin Laden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden), for example, invested millions in terrorism that his family made in the construction industry building luxury mansions for Saudi Arabia's [oil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petroleum)-millionaires.

**Communication**

The revolution in communication technology over the past 10-15 years has dramatically changed how terrorist organizations communicate. E-mails, fax transmissions, websites, cell phones, and satellite telephones have made it possible for organizations to contemplate a global strategy. However, too great a reliance on this new technology leaves organizations vulnerable to sophisticated monitoring of communication and triangulation of its source. When the media published the information that the U.S. government was tracking Osama bin Laden by monitoring his phone calls, he ceased using this method to communicate.

**Responses to terrorism**

*Main article:* [*Responses to terrorism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responses_to_terrorism)

Responses to terrorism are broad in scope. They can include re-alignments of the [political spectrum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_spectrum) and reassessments of [fundamental values](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_system). The term **counter-terrorism** has a narrower connotation, implying that it is directed at terrorist actors.

Specific types of responses include:

* Targeted laws, criminal procedures, deportations, and enhanced police powers
* Target hardening, such as locking doors or adding traffic barriers
* Pre-emptive or reactive military action
* Increased intelligence and surveillance activities
* Pre-emptive humanitarian activities
* More permissive interrogation and detention policies

**History**

*Main article:* [*History of terrorism*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_terrorism)

Terrorist tactics were used in the [1st century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_century) by [Zealots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zealot) in a fierce and unrelenting terror campaign against the [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) in the eastern [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean). In the [11th century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11th_century), the radical [Islamic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) sect known as the [Hashshashin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hashshashin) employed systematic murder for a cause they believed to be righteous. The modern English term "terrorism" dates back to 1795 when it was used to describe the actions of the [Jacobin Club](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobin_Club) in their rule of post-Revolutionary France, the so-called "[Reign of Terror](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reign_of_Terror)".

[19th century](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/19th_century) terrorist groups included the [anarchists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchists) in Europe and the United States (including [Narodniks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narodniks) in [Tsarist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsarist) [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia)), the [Irish Republican Brotherhood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Republican_Brotherhood), and groups seeking independence for [Armenia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenia) and [Macedonia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonia_%28region%29).

Modern technology has increased the destructive power of small, determined groups. Annuals deaths from terrorism had a minor peak in the 1980s, a spike as a result of the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) which took approximately 3,000 lives. Many of the subsequent deaths have resulted from [suicide bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_bombings) in [Chechnya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chechnya), [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), [India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel), and [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia).

**Examples of major incidents**

*For more details on this topic, see* [*List of terrorist incidents*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents)*.*

"International Terrorist Incidents, 2001" by the US [Department of State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_State)

The [U.S. State Department](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State) describes the following incidents as domestic and international terrorism: the [Munich Massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Massacre) of Israeli Olympic athletes in [1972](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972); the October 1984 [bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brighton_hotel_bombing) in [Brighton, England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brighton%2C_England), by the [PIRA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PIRA) in an unsuccessful but lethal attempt to kill then-Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Thatcher); the June 1985 bombing of [Air India Flight 182](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_India_Flight_182) originating from Canada; the destruction of [Pan Am Flight 103](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Am_Flight_103) over [Lockerbie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lockerbie), [Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) on [December 21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_21), [1988](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1988); the [1993 Mumbai bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_Mumbai_bombings); the [Oklahoma City bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oklahoma_City_bombing) by [Timothy McVeigh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_McVeigh) on [April 19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_19), [1995](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1995); the [Centennial Olympic Park bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centennial_Olympic_Park_bombing) in 1996; the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania on [August 7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_7), [1998](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1998); the [Omagh bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omagh_bombing) in [Northern Ireland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland) ([August 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_15), [1998](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1998)); the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) in [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York), and [Washington D.C.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_D.C.); the [2001 Indian Parliament attack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001_Indian_Parliament_attack) on [December 13](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/December_13), [2001](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001); the [Passover Massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passover_Massacre) on [March 27](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_27), [2002](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002) in [Netanya, Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netanya%2C_Israel); the [Moscow theatre siege](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow_theater_hostage_crisis) and the [Beslan school siege](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beslan_school_siege) in [Russia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russia); the [Bali bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Bali_terrorist_bombing) in October 2002; the [March 11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March_11), [2004](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004) [attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11_March_2004_Madrid_train_bombings) in [Madrid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madrid); the [July 7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_7), [2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005) [bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/7_July_2005_London_bombings) in [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London); the [second Bali bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005_Bali_bombings) on [October 1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/October_1), [2005](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2005); and the [Mumbai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai) [train bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/11_July_2006_Mumbai_train_bombings) on [11 July](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_11) [2006](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006).

According to [definitions of terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definitions_of_terrorism) which focus on the killing of innocents and the intention of affecting morale, there could be examples of [state terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_terrorism) such as the bombings of [London](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) by the [Luftwaffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftwaffe), of [Berlin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin) and [the bombing of Dresden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombing_of_Dresden_in_World_War_II) by the [Royal Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Air_Force), or the [Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiroshima_and_Nagasaki_atomic_bombings) by the [United States Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) (the main difference being that under the [Laws of Armed Conflict](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laws_of_Armed_Conflict), a formal [declaration of war](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_war) had been made for each of the WWII incidents).

The deadliest events described as terrorism and not known to have been sponsored by a state were the [September 11, 2001 attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_attacks) on the [World Trade Center](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Trade_Center) in [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York), [the Pentagon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pentagon) in [Arlington County, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlington_County%2C_Virginia), and [Somerset County, Pennsylvania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somerset_County%2C_Pennsylvania) with a death toll of around 3000.

Some terrorist attacks or plots were designed to kill thousands of people, but either failed or fell short. Such plans include the [1993 World Trade Center bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1993_World_Trade_Center_bombing), [Operation Bojinka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Bojinka), and possibly the [2006 transatlantic aircraft plot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2006_transatlantic_aircraft_plot).

**See also**

* [*Agent provocateur*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agent_provocateur)
* [False flags](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_flag) Operations
* [Indoctrination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indoctrination)
* [Propaganda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Propaganda)
* [Hate group](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hate_group)
* [Hate crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hate_crime)
* [Strategy of tension](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strategy_of_tension)
* [Unconventional warfare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconventional_warfare)
* [Religious terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_terrorism)
* [State-sponsored terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State-sponsored_terrorism)
* [State Terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_Terrorism)

**Further reading**

[Wikiquote](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikiquote) has a collection of quotations related to:

[***Terrorism***](http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Special%3ASearch/Terrorism)

**UN conventions**

* United Nations: [Conventions on Terrorism](http://untreaty.un.org/English/Terrorism.asp)
* [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Office_on_Drugs_and_Crime): [Conventions against terrorism](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/terrorism_conventions.html) "There are 12 major multilateral conventions and protocols related to states' responsibilities for combating terrorism. But many states are not yet party to these legal instruments, or are not yet implementing them."

**News monitoring websites specializing on articles on terrorism**

* [A reliable and daily updated Open Sources Center that includes a "Terrorism" section.](http://osint.isria.com) by ISRIA.
* [Diplomacy Monitor - Terrorism](http://diplomacymonitor.com/stu/dm.nsf/issued?openform&cat=Terrorism)
* [Jihad Monitor](http://www.jihadmonitor.org/)

**Papers and articles on global terrorism**

* [MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base](http://www.tkb.org/)
* [Terrorism Research Center](http://www.terrorism.com) - Terrorism research site started in 1996.
* [Terrorism Research](http://www.terrorism-research.com/) - International Terrorism and Security Research
* [Scale invariance in global terrorism](http://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0502014/)
* [Security NewsLine: Global Terrorism and Counterterrorism www.debriefed.org](http://www.debriefed.org/indexen.html)
* [The Evolution of Terrorism in 2005. A statistical assessment](http://statbel.fgov.be/studies/thesis_nl.asp?n=424) An article by Rik Coolsaet and Teun Van de Voorde, University of Ghent

**Papers and articles on terrorism and the United States (War on Terror and Homeland Security)**

* [The Terrorism Index](http://web1.foreignpolicy.com/issue_julyaug_2006/TI-index/index.html) - Terrorism "scorecard" from *Foreign Policy Magazine* and the Center for American Progress
* [Noam Chomsky: The New War on Terror](http://www.counterpunch.org/chomskyterror.html)
* [RAND Terrorism Experts Guide](http://www.rand.org/media/experts/policy_areas/homeland_security_and_terrorism/index.html)
* [Most Wanted Terrorists](http://www.rewardsforjustice.net)- Rewards for Justice
* [Strategic Foresight Group](http://www.strategicforesight.com)- a think tank known for its roundtables on deconstructing terror
* [Law, Terrorism and Homeland Security](http://www.lawandterrorism.com). A collection of articles compiled by Greg McNeal, Fellow in Terrorism and Homeland Security at the Institute for Global Security Law and Policy.
* ["The Security Constitution," UCLA Law Review, Vol. 53, No. 29, 2005](http://ssrn.com/abstract%3D880076)
* [SourceWatch article on the War on Terror](http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=War_on_terrorism)

**Papers and articles on terrorism and Israel**

* [Israeli Counter Terror at isayeret.com](http://www.isayeret.com)
* [Israel Global Terror desk](http://www.ynetnews.com/home/0%2C7340%2CL-4176%2C00.html)

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| **TerrorismGeneral** |
| [Definitions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definition_of_terrorism) |
| [History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_terrorism) |
| [Conventions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_conventions_on_terrorism) |
| [Counterterrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counter-terrorism) |
| [War on Terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_on_Terrorism) |
| **Lists** |
| [Organizations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_organisations) |
| [Incidents](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents) |
| **Types** |
| [Nationalist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nationalist_terrorism) |
| [Religious](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_terrorism) |
| [State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_terrorism) |
| [State-sponsored](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State-sponsored_terrorism) |
| [Racist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_violence) |
| [Narcoterrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcoterrorism) |
| [Anarchist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchist_terrorism) |
| [Political](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_terrorism) |
| [Eco-terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eco-terrorism) |
| [Agro-terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agro-terrorism) |
| **Tactics** |
| [Hijacking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aircraft_hijacking) |
| [Assassination](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assassination) |
| [IED (bomb)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Improvised_explosive_device) |
| [Car bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Car_bomb) |
| [Suicide bombing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suicide_attack) |
| [Kidnapping](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kidnapping) |
| [Bioterrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bioterrorism) |
| [Nuclear terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_terrorism) |
| [Cyber-terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyber-terrorism) |
| **Configurations** |
| [Fronts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terrorist_front_organization) |
| [Lone-wolf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lone-wolf_terrorism) |
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