# History of Terrorism in Europe

## Introduction

The terrorism that occurred in Europe has a long history. In fact, oftentimes, the acts of terrorism are linked with the separatist and nationalist movements. On the contrary, many of the acts correspond to nothing but religious and political extremism. A trend can be witnessed where both the civil war and terrorism overlap each other. Apart from the civil wars, other forms of violent actions and conflicts have also taken place in the European history. In fact, their roots were also planted deep inside the political and religious subjects. The non-international European conflicts are significant in various ways. Most importantly, it opened the nation’s gate for the terrorists. Some of such prominent events include the Yogoslavia breakup, the independence Irish War, the Dagestan War, and Second Chechan Wars. In the beginning of this century itself, the European terrorism was considered to be related with anarchism. The perpetrators were supporters of the far-left or far-right environmental extremism, extremism, or anarchism. For instance, in France, during that time, the attacks were increased by the extremist Islamist groups. The activities of the separatist terrorists’ also have some religious perspectives in case of the terrorist attacks. One of such a Chechan separatist group dwells in Russia. In such a scenario, various nations’ governments took proactive steps to weaken the ideology of extremists, especially the Islamist extremism. I perceive that the research process can be successfully completed by following a methodical approach. For instance, it is best to opt for the secondary sources so as to collect the data for this study. Each source will contribute in a distinct manner. It is possible because there are several perspectives pertaining to this topic.

## Research Questions

The primary research questions for this paper are mentioned below:

1. What would be the suitable way for eradication of terrorism, prevailing in Europe?
2. What can be the possible consequences for eliminating the terrorism that occurs in Europe?

## Research objectives and aim

In this research paper, the primary element of focus will be nothing but the patterns of attacks that the terrorists implement within the European nations. On the other hand, it is also crucial to understand how the media as well as the government help in creating terrors amongst the common people. Alternatively, it is that scenario where the media must refrain from arousing hysteria in any country.

Therefore the primary objectives of this paper are listed below:

1. To dissect why it is difficult to eliminate terrorism from the Europe, as of now
2. To understand the degree of risk associated for eliminating the European terrorism
3. To elucidate why the rate of terrorism surged largely within the European nations
4. To highlight the factors which are making the Europe as the terrorist attacks’ centre-stage

## Methodology

The methodology section helps in reaching the research answer. As a result, choosing a suitable method of collecting data is substantial. Alternatively, the data collection is important for retrieving information regarding the topic. For this paper, the main data collection method that I will be using is secondary data collection and research. It will assist in understanding the perception that the scholars have in respect to the topic chosen. Hence, I will collect information from different scholarly journals. However, the most important part is the journals’ relevancy with the research’s core topic.

## Learning, analysis and discussions

### Reasons for facing several terror attacks by the European countries

Even though terrorism is primarily linked with nothing but the Islamic extremism yet it can be understood that post World War II period witnessed varying waves of terrorism. Hence, it can be said to be a myth that terrorism is simply because of Islamic extremism’s rise (Nesser 442). During the 1980s and 1970s, one of the biggest threats related to the terrorists was the Marxist secular groups. Some of such groups include the Red Army Faction of Germany, Italy’s Red Brigades, Irish Republican Army of Ireland, and Spain’s ETA.

Since the terrorist attack of 9/11, in U.S., Europe has become extremely vulnerable to the radical Islam’s terrorist threats. The western parts of the Europe mostly comprise of almost 5-10 percent of Muslims. In fact, the European Muslims’ third and second generations had to suffer much more than their grandparents or parents so as to assimilate. It is primarily because of xenophobia and the unemployment rate. Hence, the poor integration had led to the creation of a big pool comprising of young vulnerable people. They remain quite sensitive to the extremist violence and radicalization (Cesari 437). However, only a handful of them choose to become terrorists.

The geography is another root cause for terrorism. In fact, Europe’s geography played an integral part in the same. For example, the jihadis, who flew from the battlefields of Syria or Iraq quickly, entered the European zone largely. On the other hand, the U.S. is far from their nations. Even other corner-most nations such as Australia and Canada are also not easily accessible. Almost 5000 Europeans actually left Syria and Iraq’s wage jihad. The proportion is definitely more than that of other terrorist groups and IS.

On the contrary, the Schengen Agreement is once more contributing in these types of activities as well. It helps the terrorists to dismantle the European Union’s internal border control thereby letting them to slip-out as well as slip-in, whenever they want to. However, a judicious and politically matured country such as U.K. has not participated in the agreement itself. It is still not the worst period of European terrorism history (Jordan 392). The year 1972 is often remembered like a nightmare, by the residents of Europe, as the same is considered to be the bloodiest year pertaining to the terrorist attacks and Northern Ireland’s troubles. During that time, the terrorists attacked and slaughtered almost 400 people dwelling in the Western Europe. It also accounted for the world’s 70 percent terrorist attacks.

### The nation is also a soft target

The terrorists’ tactics are changing largely. As a result, the lethality and the number of attacks have increase to a large extent. On one hand, Al-Qaida had chosen a well-planned and complex assault such as the World Trade Center’s destruction; on the other hand, IS prefers the indiscriminate violence. Many of the senior IS strategists order their subordinates to kill the Europeans as much as possible, via any means. For instance, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani said to his fellow Muslims that the filthy and spiteful French must be slaughtered by various means such as knocking down by a car, smashing head in a rock, and many other ways (Berntzen, and Sandberg 761). It is either a sheer good luck or incompetence of the terrorists that the handmade bomb failed to detonate properly. However, the cities of Europe are trying to raise few barriers for the terrorists by installing various security services. On the other hand, complete elimination is not possible in this manner because sources of such terrors are difficult to find out.

### To what extent Europe can stay away from these attacks?

The law enforcement and security services are definitely getting better to some extent in Europe. Even they are improving their tactics for tracking, identifying, and arresting those types of terrorists. Almost 13 attacks from the terrorists’ end have been foiled since the 2013’s June, in U.K. Even the Spanish authorities have shown a splendid performance in regards to the Islamic terrorist attacks so as to stop them as much as possible (Zhirkov, Verkuyten and Weesie 500). Alternatively, it is not possible to eliminate the terrorism from its core, at this point of time, especially when they are largely committed to slaughter as many citizens as possible by use of household items or materials such as acetone, hydrogen peroxide, kitchen knives, cars and bombs. The democratic systems of Europe are facing difficult choices in regards to the societies and politics even though it is crucial to eliminate the lethality and frequency of the upcoming future terrorist attacks. Several Britons have already accepted that jihadist-inspired terrorism is usual nowadays and thus, they anticipate one after another attack.

### Choosing the wrong path for ending terrorism

The political leaders are largely responsible for the continuation of terrorism in various nations including the U.K. and others. In fact, an excessive concentration can be witnessed for the security system failings in the nations. However, other aspects are often not provided focus to a large extent. Moreover, the petty criminals are often not emphasized and later they turn out to be the most threatening ones (Avdan 446). Most importantly, the atrocities like these become unstoppable because of the continuous wars taking place in Iraq and Syria. However, hardly any nation is taking proactive steps to end them. At times, the policemen concentrate on the criminals who are actually not as such important and get misled in this manner. In fact, they tend to end up witnessing various terrorist attacks in the places, where it is least expected. None of the security officials and politicians is articulating the truth to the people. They never say that it is next to impossible to prevent the terrorists from engaging in such heinous crimes. In fact, they are basically unstoppable. On the contrary, the critics easily blame none but the people who were in charge of such security systems. The people who are actually innocent also get accused for the terrorist attacks. For instance, the Muslims, immigrants, and asylum seekers are often blamed to a large extent, for these acts (Koehler 84). Even the media is also at its worst self-righteousness while establishing the truth. It leads to portraying of horrible scenarios and hysteria as well. Most of the times, it is considered to be true. However, the media oftentimes, misrepresent the same thereby losing all its senses, out of proportion. It is one of the best ways how the terrorists make the media and government work in their favor. Thus, they want to create a panic and the media writes up all the stories of fear and terror. The collaborative works of the government and terrorists create a national upheaval thereby manifesting the objectives of IS.

## Conclusion

It can be inferred from this paper that the European countries have not been able to eliminate terrorism until now. In fact, the people are dwelling over there, in utmost fear of getting killed. Even it can be observed that the terrorists have changed their tactics in the recent eras. The same is even more lethal unlike the techniques of terrors used by Al-Qaida. For example, no more the IS members use such a planned and equally complex attack framework rather they implement severe abrupt techniques. On the other hand, I can understand from the paper if the media refrains from reporting the lethal attacks then definitely the terrorists will learn a lesson. However, in such a scenario, European population will end up in even more vulnerable positions of being attacked in future. Moreover, the core factors of terrorism must be eliminated instead of focusing on the misleading ones. The geographical problem must be addressed as soon as possible. For example, the war zone areas’ terrorists escape and take shelters in the European nations instead of other countries. Apart from all these things, the political maturity is hardly demonstrated. For instance, the agreements and policies for entering the Europe should be even stronger to avoid such heinous attacks. Another thing which is quite noticeable is the 70s and 80s’ terrorist attacks. They occurred frequently but the radical Islamism was not as such prominent, during that time.

## **Works Cited**

Avdan, Nazli. "Do asylum recognition rates in Europe respond to transnational terrorism? The migration-security nexus revisited." *European Union Politics*, vol. 15, no.4, 2014, pp. 445-471.

Berntzen, Lars Erik, and Sveinung Sandberg. "The collective nature of lone wolf terrorism: Anders Behring Breivik and the anti-Islamic social movement." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 26, no.5, 2014, pp. 759-779.

Cesari, Jocelyne. "Securitization of Islam in Europe." *Die Welt des Islams*, vol.52, no.3, 2012, pp. 430-449.

Jordan, Javier. "Analysis of Jihadi terrorism incidents in Western Europe, 2001–2010." *Studies in Conflict & Terroris,* vol. 35, no. 5, 2012, pp. 382-404.

Koehler, Daniel. "Right-wing extremism and terrorism in Europe: current developments and issues for the future." *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2016, pp. 84-88.

Nesser, Petter. "Toward an increasingly heterogeneous threat: a chronology of jihadist terrorism in Europe 2008–2013." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* vol. 37, no.5, 2014, pp. 440-456.

Zhirkov, Kirill, Maykel Verkuyten, and Jeroen Weesie. "Perceptions of world politics and support for terrorism among Muslims: Evidence from Muslim countries and Western Europe." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, vol. 31, no.5, 2014, pp. 481-501.