Transformations of Terrorism in the Euro-Mediterranean Region
2022-2021
Introduction

Terrorism is considered one of the most widespread violent phenomena in the world, and it is gradually evolving to penetrate all countries, causing many human and material disasters.

The phenomenon is now more dangerous than ever; states and governments could no longer control it, as it is no longer confined to indiscriminate acts of violence, murder, and vandalism. Terrorism has become an organized structure that have arms, huge military, and financial capabilities that may sometimes exceeds the capabilities possessed by states, especially with the invisible support of some States using terrorism as a tool to achieve personal interests and maintain existing balances.

Despite the varied definitions of terrorism, whether in international law or at the local levels, according to the perspective and experience of each country, we coined a definition having common characteristics. Terrorism is “The use or threat of force for political change, the deliberate and systematic use of or threats to civilians to create an atmosphere of terror and humiliation for innocent persons to political gain, the illegal use of violence against persons and property to compel civilians or their government to comply with political aims, or briefly, the illegal and unjustifiable use of force against innocent civilians to achieve political goals.”

Accordingly, terrorism play a prominent role in the Mediterranean region, which brings together the countries of three continents, and is considered one of the most important geostrategic regions in the world, which was a place of competition during the Cold War, as well as representing the vital sphere of Western European countries and falling within the scope of interest of the United States of America, namely NATO, a case

1 الأرهاب الدولي، أسبابه وطرق مكافحته في القانون الدولي والألفة الإسلامي، مجلة كلية الشرعية، القانون بطنطا، ص 1106
2 الإرهاب الدولي في محاولات تعريفه، الدفاع الوطني اللبناني، 2008
3 البحر الأبيض المتوسط، الجيش الوطني اللبناني، 2010

https://rb.gy/yh15
https://rb.gy/ow8w
https://rb.gy/da76
in which maritime terrorism played a significant role, which is terrorism that is based on “the systematic use or threat of violence against international shipping and transport services by an individual or group to spread panic and intimidate civilians to achieve political ambitions or goals.”

Given the critical importance of the region, international and regional efforts have been concerted to minimize, if not to eradicate, the phenomenon in the region. There are, indeed, ongoing anti-terrorism attempts as the phenomenon continues to evolve in the region.

**Axis I: Hotbeds of Terrorism in the Mediterranean Basin**

Terrorism thrives in the Mediterranean region, especially in the countries of Asia and North Africa. Asia has the highest annual rates of terrorism, followed by the countries of Africa, and then the countries of the European continent come last. Syria ranked fifth according to the 2022 Global Terrorism Index, and although Egypt rose to the sixteenth rank, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco came in the last ranks, followed by France and Spain.

**First: Terrorism in the Asian Mediterranean countries**

Terrorism is attacking the Asian countries located in the Mediterranean region. Despite variable and different terrorist entities, all of them pursue the same policy of violence, murder, sabotage, and pressure on governments to achieve certain goals specific to each entity in each State. In Turkey, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) attacks against the Turkish security forces are active, which recorded 1414 killings of security personnel and 611 killings of civilians from 2015 to 2022. Syria is witnessing terrorist...
attacks from several sides, the most important of which is ISIL and the attacks of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), formerly known as Al-Nusra\(^8\). In Lebanon, terrorism plays on several sides, represented by Hezbollah, ISIS, Hamas, and the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, the Iranian-supported Hezbollah ranks highest in terms of effectiveness\(^9\). Israel faces threats from the north and along the northeastern border from Hezbollah and other Iranian-supported groups, and from the south from Islamic Jihad in Palestine and ISIS in Sinai\(^10\).

**Second: Terrorism in the African Mediterranean countries**

Northern African countries have a lower prevalence of terrorism than Asian countries within the Mediterranean. The terrorist organization ISIS is active in Sinai Governorate, Egypt, which led to 1,004 civilian deaths and 2,800 other injuries during the period from 2015 to 2020\(^11\). The Islamic State “ISIS” also threatens security in Libya, although it doesn’t control any land\(^12\). While the rates of terrorist operations are declining in Islamic Morocco, the presence of Al Qaeda and ISIS has not completely disappeared, and they still witness some attacks occasionally\(^13\).

**Third: Terrorism in the European Mediterranean countries**

Threats from Salafi-jihadi groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, and far-right movements are rising in Europe\(^14\). The Salafi-jihadi extremist movement and its places of worship are widespread in France\(^15\). In addition to far-right groups hostile to migration, asylum, and foreigners\(^16\). Radicals are very active in Spain, and some of them

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\(^8\) Syria, GOV.UK. [https://rb.gy/0qjm](https://rb.gy/0qjm)


\(^16\) اليمين المتطرف في فرنسا .. مخاطر تهدد المجتمع الفرنسي, المركز الأوروبي لدراسات مكافحة الإرهاب وال苎خبارات, ديسمبر 2022. [https://rb.gy/k8jbnv](https://rb.gy/k8jbnv)
belong to the terrorist organization ISIS\textsuperscript{17}. While extreme right wing elements appear occasionally in Italy\textsuperscript{18}.

**Axis II: International efforts to combat terrorism in the Mediterranean basin**

Given the seriousness of terrorism in the Mediterranean, it affects not only States within its scope, but also other Western States, and given the phenomenon of terrorism, in general, is incompatible with all international instruments for the protection of human rights and the right of the State to sovereignty over its territory, international efforts have come to eliminate this phenomenon in the region or limit its spread, the most important of which are:


The Albanian Presidency of the Organization online organized the Conference in Vienna on September 14 and 15 under the theme “Effective Partnerships against Terrorism, Violent Extremism, and Radicalization that Leads to Terrorism” with the participation of 500 representatives of OSCE participating countries, experts, policymakers and parliamentarians representatives of civil society and the private sector. The Conference sessions focused on\textsuperscript{19}:

- International cooperation
- Building community networks against violent extremism.
- Addressing the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes
- Partnerships between the public and private sectors to reduce terrorist activity

\textsuperscript{17} ومعضة “الجهاديين” والتطرف في أقاليم برشلونة الإسباني، المركز الأوروبي لدراسات مكافحة الإرهاب والاستخبارات، يناير 2018.
\textsuperscript{18} عملية لمكافحة الإرهاب في إيطاليا تكشف ترسانة أسلحة بحوزة اليمين المتطرف*، عين أوروبية على التطرف، يوليو 2019.
\textsuperscript{19} مؤتمر مكافحة الإرهاب بين الجمعية البرلمانية البحر الأبيض المتوسط ومنظمة الأمن والتعاون في أوروبا، برلمان البحر الأبيض المتوسط، سبتمبر 2020.

https://rb.gy/1ol7
https://rb.gy/37n6
https://rb.gy/qtsh
- Promote approaches to the prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration of foreign fighters and their families, including children.

2- **UN Resolution No. 52/43 of the General Assembly on the promotion of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, dated December 1996.**

Reaffirming that the security of the Mediterranean region is linked to European security as well as to international peace and security; the importance of the role of the countries of the Mediterranean region in consolidating and strengthening peace, security, and cooperation, and that by strengthening cooperation, economic and social development will be achieved that will contribute to achieving stability, peace, and security in the region, and that positive developments in all parts of the world, especially in Europe, in the Maghreb and the Middle East, can enhance the prospects for closer cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean region in all fields.

With an emphasis on the responsibility of all states to contribute to the stability of the region, and the need to respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law relating to friendly relations and cooperation between states under the Charter of the United Nations.

With regard to the peace negotiations in the Middle East, it emphasized the need for them to be inclusive and to represent an appropriate framework for the peaceful settlement of disputed issues in the region, and called on all countries in the Mediterranean region that had not yet acceded to all legal instruments concluded through multilateral negotiation in the disarmament arms and non-proliferation to do so in order to create the necessary conditions for the consolidation of peace and cooperation in the region; It urged all states of the region to promote confidence-building measures and genuine openness and transparency in all military matters, to
participate in the United Nations standardized system for reporting military expenditures, and to provide accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and encouraged the countries of the region to further strengthen their cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and addressing the problems and threats facing the region, such as terrorism, international crime and illegal arms transfers²⁰.

3- The Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct for Combating Terrorism.

The blog condemns the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and their determination to eliminate it, fight its sponsors, disrupt their plans and networks, and bring them to justice through strengthening international cooperation. It emphasized ten points within the scope of its plan to achieve this goal, as follows²¹:

- Determination to fully implement all Security Council resolutions dealing with the issue of terrorism to ensure respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law, and international humanitarian law.
- Endeavor to achieve the ratification and implementation of all thirteen United Nations conventions to combat terrorism.
- Welcoming the work on developing the strategy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in combating terrorism and cooperating with the United Nations counter-terrorism bodies.
- Promote the full implementation of the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force.

• Sharing information voluntarily about terrorists and their support networks under international and national law
• Work bilaterally and under national legislation to develop effective and practical cooperation to disrupt networks and bring individuals involved in terrorist acts to justice.
• Refuse to grant asylum to terrorists and deny them a haven under international law.
• Exchange of experiences and best practices on combating terrorism voluntarily, including technical assistance.
• Ensuring respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism under international law.
• Consider convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate an international response to terrorism in all its aspects and manifestations after agreeing on a comprehensive agreement on international terrorism.

4- The meeting of the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean on "Challenges of the post-ISIS context."

The meeting was organized virtually on February 15, 2021, with the participation of more than 100 representatives, including parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Assembly, representatives of the United Nations, prominent counter-terrorism experts, and key partners, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the US Department of Justice, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in the Assembly, European Parliament (OSCE PA). The meeting culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation between the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, which provides a framework for the

5- NATO Operation Active Endeavour (2001-2016)

It is the first operation launched under Article 5 of NATO with the principle of collective defense; it aims to monitor shipping in the Mediterranean Sea to help deter, disrupt, and protect against terrorist activity²³. Task Force Endeavor consisted of a balanced combination of surface units, submarines, and maritime patrol aircraft. NATO forces welcomed more than 128 thousand commercial ships and boarded about 172 suspicious ships. It contributed to achieving security and stability in the Mediterranean Sea and positively impacted trade and economic activity. NATO's growing presence in the Mediterranean also strengthened the alliance's security cooperation program with seven countries in the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia²⁴.

6- Conference on Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the Southern Mediterranean Region

The Conference was organized on June 22, 2022, in the capital of Tunis, within the framework of the joint program between the European Union and the Council of Europe to enhance regional cooperation in the field of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy, in partnership with the National Committee for Combating Terrorism, the Independent High Authority for Audiovisual Media and the non-governmental


organization "No Peace Without Justice"; the main points discussed at the conference were:

- The importance of "support the regional training in confronting hate speech, violence, and extremism foundations, to develop common policies to combat all forms of terrorism and extremism, in partnership and cooperation with government agencies and institutions and components of civil society."

- The importance of concerted efforts of the two basins of the Mediterranean to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime and to take the necessary measures.

- The importance of the distance-training program that the Council of Europe has begun to implement with judges, lawyers and activists in the field of human rights in Tunisia to crystallize perceptions and programs within the framework of the anti-terrorism policy.

- The necessity of coordination between the various ministries and structures.

- The importance of examining issues of psychological and physical rehabilitation of child victims of terrorism, integration and awareness mechanisms, and developing new and effective strategies for their implementation.

7- A panel discussion entitled "The New Wave of Terrorism and Countering Extremism in the Mediterranean Region"

The Discussion was held by the Institute of International Political Studies on February 16 within the framework of Rome Med – Mediterranean Dialogue 2022, in the presence of researchers and officials specialized in combating terrorism and extremism. The discussion focused on the following:

https://rb.gy/pbmt

25 تونس: انطلاق مؤتمر مكافحة الإرهاب والتطرف العنيف في منطقة جنوب المتوسط، دراسات في حقوق الإنسان، يونيو 2022.


https://rb.gy/4w8k
The concept of "jihadi climate" jihadism of atmosphere (that began in the void and jihadism that emerged after the collapse of Da’esh as a "state" in 2019.

- The individual path of extremism, extremists represent a very heterogeneous group, although they have important common elements.

- The failure of the regimes to address the root causes of extremism and basic grievances, and to rely only on the policy of reaction, security and punitive aspects.

- The impact of Taliban propaganda on other Islamist groups after their takeover of Afghanistan.

Axis III: Transformations of terrorism in the Mediterranean basin

Against the background of the different policies pursued by each country in the framework of approach to combating terrorism, terrorism has witnessed remarkable transformations over the past two years in separate regions of the Mediterranean basin, while terrorism was active in an unprecedented way in certain countries, it declined and completely disappeared in other countries in conjunction with several criteria, whether it was the international efforts to combat that are directed towards specific goals or the state's inability to control the attacks and the increasing capabilities of the terrorist organizations.

First: Transformations in the Northern Basin of the Mediterranean

The general feature of terrorist activity in the European countries located within the middle region seems to be gradually declining since 2021 till 2022. In addition to the general stability witnessed by most West Bank countries, France did not witness any extremist terrorist attacks during 2022, in a significant development after recording two assassinations of a French policewoman and an asylum center official.²⁷

²⁷ Terrorism Index File in Europe - 2021, European Center for Counterterrorism and Intelligence Studies, https://rb.gy/sdiu
Spain also witnessed a year of stability during 2022, after threats of attacks to restore Andalusia continued, which raised its concerns throughout 2021\textsuperscript{28}, where 2023 documented an exceptional incident that brought Spain out of the circle of stability and relative calm witnessed during the previous year, with an attack that targeted two neighboring churches in Algeciras in southern Spain in January 25\textsuperscript{th}, 2023.\textsuperscript{29}

**Second: Transformations in the Southern Mediterranean**

In contrast to the relative calm witnessed by the European region within the Mediterranean basin during the past two years, the effects of terrorism have affected all corners of the countries located on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, although the extent and size of the impact differed from Asian countries to North African countries. While in Syria in 2022, the number of deaths caused by terrorism decreased by 10% compared to 2021, and terrorist attacks witnessed their lowest level in three years, terrorism continues to destroy and kill the Syrian people, as 447 deaths due to terrorism were recorded during the year\textsuperscript{30}. In addition, the deadliest attack by Da’esh for 2022 occurred in Syria and lasted for ten days, with 200-armed men storming the Syrian Industrial Prison\textsuperscript{31}, Syria still ranks fifth in the world among the countries most affected by terrorism since 2021.\textsuperscript{32}

While Europe recorded 27 deaths in 2022 due to terrorism, 17 of them occurred inside Turkey.\textsuperscript{33} The terrorist organization Da’esh reappeared again on the Lebanese border in 2022, with the Lebanese army announcing a series of security operations that resulted in the arrest of linked cells\textsuperscript{34}, the Information Division of the Internal Security Forces was able to carry out preemptive qualitative operations from July to November 2022, which resulted about monitoring, identifying and arresting eight terrorist cells in

\textsuperscript{28} “Lone wolves” and “prisons” are of greatest concern to Spain in 2021.., The Seventh Day, January 2021. \url{https://rb.gy/pd6r}
\textsuperscript{29} A machete attack on a church in Spain.. a person was killed and the perpetrator arrested, Al-Arabiya, January 2023. \url{https://rb.gy/l12c}
\textsuperscript{30} Global Terrorism Index 2023, relief web, p27 \url{https://rb.gy/ye5z}
A reading of the Global Terrorism Index 2023 (1)..< The outcome of terrorist attacks and the deadliest groups, Al-Marsad Al-Masry, March 2023. \url{https://rb.gy/3i4d}

\textsuperscript{31} Global Terrorism Index 2023.. Morocco is among the safe countries in the Middle East and North Africa, News Express, \url{https://rb.gy/7bg3}
\textsuperscript{32} A reading of the Global Terrorism Index 2023 (1)..< the outcome of terrorist attacks and the deadliest groups, reference previously mentioned
\textsuperscript{33} ISIS in Lebanon again...and the army intervenes quickly, Al-Hurra, November 2022. \url{https://rb.gy/exon}
11
various Lebanese regions (Bekaa - Beirut - North - South - Mount Lebanon) whose members belong to Da’esh.\(^\text{35}\)

In contrast to this escalation, North African countries located in the Mediterranean are witnessing a relative decrease in terrorist attacks, and they did not enter the range of countries most affected by terrorism according to the Global Terrorism Index for 2021 and 2022, respectively. While Morocco had no terrorist operations during 2021 and witnessed only one terrorist operation during 2022, terrorism permeated the lands of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria more than once in slight and different proportions during the two years as follows\(^\text{36}\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of terrorism operations 2021</th>
<th>No. of terrorism operations 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4(^\text{37})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11(^\text{38})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3(^\text{39})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7(^\text{40})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^{38}\) been referred to,

3 Egyptian policemen killed in an attack in Ismailia, BBC, December 31, 2022, [https://bbc.in/3WSGZAo](https://bbc.in/3WSGZAo)

Two people were killed in an armed attack on the headquarters of the Security Directorate in southern Libya, 24, October 7, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3WZX2fX](https://bit.ly/3WZX2fX)


A terrorist attack targets the Libyan army in the south, and “ISIS” claims responsibility, Al-Ain Al-Akhbariya, January 25, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3nOnQVc](https://bit.ly/3nOnQVc)


\(^{39}\) been referred to,

Conclusions & Recommendations

Terrorism in the Mediterranean basin region is decreasing compared to previous years, with the exception of the Syrian case, which, despite achieving a somewhat low level of terrorist activities in 2022, still constitutes a high rate that threatens Syrian national security and severely violates the rights of its people.

In the context of the low percentage of terrorist attacks taking place in the Mediterranean region, countries cannot accept this result and stand idly by. Rather, these countries must continue efforts until the roots of terrorism are completely eliminated from their lands. Therefore, Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights makes the following recommendations:

- Continue to strengthen efforts to combat terrorism at all levels, not only at the security and military levels, but rather seeks to coordinate between the parties concerned with developing social and economic levels that help in the framework of eliminating the roots of terrorism through prevention and not only immediate treatment.

- The countries of the Mediterranean basin commit to implementing the UN resolutions aimed at combating international terrorism in general, such as Security

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A military contractor was killed in an ongoing combing operation for the Algerian army, Africa News Portal, July 6, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3soUMkU](https://bit.ly/3soUMkU)

39 been referred to,
A military contractor was killed in an ongoing combing operation for the Algerian army, Africa News Portal, July 6, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3soUMkU](https://bit.ly/3soUMkU)

40 been referred to,
The “mysterious” death of a Tunisian officer, a witness to the terrorism of Al-Nahda.
A policeman was stabbed by an extremist in Tunisia, Ittihad, July 22, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3eXori5](https://bit.ly/3eXori5)
Tunisian army engages terrorists in a border province with Algeria, independent arabia, August 12, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3MZny5g](https://bit.ly/3MZny5g)

3 militants were killed in a clash with the Tunisian army in Kasserine, independent arabia, September 2, 2022, [https://bit.ly/3eZNL7c](https://bit.ly/3eZNL7c)
Council Resolution No. 1373 issued in 2001 and Security Council Resolution No. 1624 issued in 2005, or resolutions aimed at combating terrorism in the Mediterranean basin region in particular, such as General Assembly Resolution No. 52/43 1996 concerning the promotion of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region.

- Within the framework of strengthening cooperation between the Mediterranean countries to combat terrorism, we recommend the establishment of a Mediterranean umbrella that meets periodically annually to discuss the most important developments in the region and the consequences resulting from terrorism and the challenges facing the region, in order to exchange ideas and visions for treatment.

- Focusing on achieving economic cooperation and partnerships among the countries of the region, which in turn will contribute to achieving economic development in many countries that are witnessing a sharp economic decline that contributed to fueling terrorist attacks there.

- Showing priority and concern for intellectual efforts to combat terrorism, and developing joint cooperative policies among the countries of the Mediterranean basin to develop the roles of civil society, raise its capabilities, and involve it in all measures related to combating terrorism at the state level.