



Re-energizing Counter Terrorism Agenda

This editorial is based on “[Countering terror: On action against groups targeting civilians](#)” which was published in The Hindu on 17/12/2022. It talks about the Terrorism in India and measures that can be taken to eliminate it.

For Prelims: Terrorism, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, National Investigation Agency, National Security Guard (NSG), United Nations Security Council’s Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC), End-to-end encryption, Virtual private network (VPN), lone wolf attack, Bioterrorism, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

For Mains: Current Framework for Combating Terrorism in India, Challenges Related to Terrorism, Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

Terrorism in all its manifestations are **unacceptable and never be justified**. Today all States in every region are **vulnerable to terrorism and this menace has become a global concern**. India since its independence has been facing the problem of **insurgency and terrorism** in different parts of the country.

The terrorist groups have been resorting to varied terrorist activities **adopting improved and sophisticated technologies** which make their activities more gruesome. In the light of this, **India should evolve equally improved strategies to combat and counter frontier- terrorism** in consonance with global counter terrorism strategy.

What is the Current Framework for Combating Terrorism in India?

- India recently hosted a special meeting of the [United Nations Security Council’s Counter Terrorism Committee \(CTC\)](#), with theme of ‘**Countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes**’ and **No Money For Terror**.
- The [Unlawful Activities Prevention Act , 1967](#) was amended in **August 2019** to allow for the **designation of individuals as terrorists**.
- In **2016, India and the United States** signed an arrangement to **exchange terrorism screening information**, and continues to work on implementation.
- At the central government level, the [National Investigation Agency](#) is the **lead law enforcement investigative agency to combat terrorism**.
 - The Indian Parliament passed amendments to the [National Investigation Agency \(NIA\) Act of 2008](#) to give NIA the **ability to investigate terrorism cases overseas**.
 - The [National Security Guard \(NSG\)](#) retains the mandate for nationwide response as the sole **federal contingency force**.
- India’s state governments continue to be responsible for **law and order**. India’s state-level law enforcement agencies play a significant role in **detecting, deterring, and preventing acts of terrorism**.
 - **State antiterrorism squads** were created after **2008** for rapid first response.

What are the Challenges in Combating Terrorism?

- **Terror Financing:** According to the [International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) and World Bank, criminals are estimated to **launder up to four trillion dollars a year**. Fund movements by terrorists have also been **concealed through charities and alternative remittance methods**.
 - It taints the **international financial system** and erodes public trust in the integrity of the system.
 - **Several states are also accused of sponsoring terrorist organizations** and contributing to the global threat of terrorism.
 - Furthermore, the lack of **regulation of crypto currency** could make it a breeding ground for terrorists.
- **Politicisation of Countering Terrorism:** The members of the [United Nations Security Council \(P5\)](#) have exercised the **veto power to varying degrees** when it comes to identifying terrorists.
 - Also, **absence of universally accepted definitions for what constitutes terrorism** provides terrorists with an edge and **allows some countries to remain silent and veto any action at global institutions**.
- **Use of Emerging Technology by Terrorists:** Innovations in computing and telecommunications like widespread **internet access, end-to-end encryption, and virtual private network (VPN)** have made new types of operations possible for a higher number of **radicalized individuals across the globe, contributing to the threat**.
- **Social Networking of Terrorism:** [Social media](#) platforms have turned into **potent instruments in the "toolkit" of terror networks** and their **"ideological fellow-travellers"**.
 - Also, ["lone wolf" attackers](#) have significantly enhanced their capabilities by gaining access to new technologies.
- **Bio-Terrorism:** While [biotechnology](#) is beneficial to mankind, it can also pose a significant threat since **small amounts of biotic agents can be easily hidden, transported, and released into susceptible areas**.
 - **Tropical agricultural pathogens** or pests can also be used as anticrop agents to hamper food security worldwide.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Re-energizing Counter Terrorism Agenda:** It is necessary to **re-energize the global agenda of counter-terrorism** by emphasizing the need for unity, and **checking the veto power of P5** when it comes to identifying terrorists worldwide.
- **Adopting a Universal Definition of Terrorism:** A universal definition of terrorism is needed so that all members of the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) can **incorporate it into their own criminal laws**, banning terror groups, **prosecuting terrorists under special laws**, and making **cross-border terrorism an extraditable offense worldwide**.
 - In 1986, India proposed a draft document on [Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism \(CCIT\)](#) at the UN. However, **it is yet to be adopted by the UNGA**.
- **Preventing Youth From Terrorism:** Educational establishments play a significant role in promoting **nonviolence, peaceful coexistence, and tolerance**.
 - Also, **undertaking policies to tackle economic and social inequalities will help in deterring disgruntled youth** from being lured towards terrorism.
- **Enhancing Capacity of NIA:** The Indian military should be specially trained to combat **cross-border terrorism, ensuring co-ordination among intelligence and security agencies** to prevent infiltration.
 - Also in order to have speedy trials, India also needs to enhance its [National Criminal Justice system](#) and implement strict legal protocol against terrorism
- **Curbing Terror Funding:** There is a need for stronger laws that require banks to perform due diligence on clients and to **report suspicious transactions to prevent terrorism**.
 - Also, India can move **towards regulating cryptocurrency**.

Drishti Mains Question

Discuss the current framework for combating terrorism in India. Also, suggest how Comprehensive

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Hand-in-Hand 2007' a joint anti-terrorism military training was held by the officers of the Indian Army and officers of Army of which one of the following countries? (2008)

- (a) China
- (b) Japan
- (c) Russia
- (d) USA

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What solutions do you suggest to curb this growing menace? What are the major sources of terrorist funding? (2017)