

# OCMUNC X:

**Topic B:**

**COMBATING ETHNO-  
NATIONAL TERRORISM**

**-Security Council-**



## **Introduction**

Ethno-national terrorism can be defined as deliberate violence committed by a group of people who share a common cultural identity, either by means of nationality or ethnicity. Ethno-national groups who commit terrorist acts usually do so for the purpose of making a political statement. Some common examples of motives behind the terrorist acts are desires to create a separate state from the existing state, or to gain superiority and dominance over the majority.

Ethno-national terrorist groups usually direct attacks against targets of symbolic meaning. A prime example of this was seen during the attack made by Al-Qaeda on The Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. Osama bin Laden stated numerous times that the reason for the attacks were to make a statement opposing United States foreign policies, such as the support of Israel. The Twin Towers were located in New York City, which is a central point of the United States known for its representation of the freedom that the country stands for. Therefore, this made the assault on September 11, 2011 a symbolic attack on the freedom of the United States.

## **History**

Ethno-national terrorists seek to form self-determination for their group, which is the right to form an individual government independent from the primary government. One common goal is to form a new sovereign state based on the group's ideologies. The search for liberation often stems from the feeling of oppression by the current ruling institution.<sup>1</sup> There are numerous examples of currently active ethno-national terrorist groups, but four prominent ones include: Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, Provisional Irish Republican Army, and Esukadi ta Askatasuna (ETA).

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<sup>1</sup> [drtomoconnor.com/3400/3400lect03.htm](http://drtomoconnor.com/3400/3400lect03.htm)

Hezbollah, “The Party of God”, is a political, military, and social ethno-national terrorist group, led by Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, and is located in Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> This group consists of mostly extremist Shiite Muslim members who founded the group based on the goal of driving out Israeli military troops from southern Lebanon. A long term platform for the group is to create an Islamic state in the place of Israel, and rid the holy land of the Jewish population. Hezbollah is known for their method of attack, which is most prominently suicide bombings. Other methods include the use of rocket attacks and the kidnapping of civilians and military targets.



Trademark Symbol of Hezbollah

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps. (IRGC), Iran’s most elite military force, is one of Hezbollah’s major financial sponsors. They have contributed approximately \$100-200 million dollars every year since the 1980s. The IRGC has also helped militarily train Hezbollah members to better their tactics. In addition, Hezbollah receives support from the Syrian government through the supplementation of a quarter of the group’s arsenal and long and mid-range missiles.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4314423.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4314423.stm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.adl.org/terrorism/symbols/hezbollah.asp#7>

Al-Qaeda, “The Base” was founded by Osama bin Laden and is a terrorist organization of

Islamic extremists. The concentration of Al-Qaeda members are

from or live in Afghanistan.<sup>4</sup> The group was originally

established to combat the Soviet Union, after being attacked in

1979 by Soviet forces. Once the fighting dissolved, Osama bin

Laden continued gaining financial support in order to fight a

“holy war” anywhere in the world that would result in a true

Islamist government.<sup>5</sup>



Al-Qaeda Members in Rebellion of Democracy

Al-Qaeda utilizes many methods of attack, such as hijacking, kidnapping, car bombing, assassinations, and suicide bombings. Suicide bombings are the group’s method of choice. The most influential example of this is the attack on The Twin Towers of New York City on September 11, 2001. The attack was executed by 19 hijackers who, in total, took the lives of over 3,000 people.<sup>6</sup>

While there are no official documented contributors to Al-Qaeda, the organization has been fueled by contributions from several donors and financial facilitators. Also, Al-Qaeda possesses strong ties with the Iranian government and it is believed that a network between the two has been established.<sup>7</sup> Through this network, Al-Qaeda is able to move money, operatives, and facilitators throughout the Middle Eastern region. Moreover, the group has shown close

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<sup>4</sup> [http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/al\\_qaeda/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/a/al_qaeda/index.html)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/07272007/alqaeda.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/11/september-11-al-qaeda\\_n\\_1865754.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/09/11/september-11-al-qaeda_n_1865754.html)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/29/world/29terror.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/29/world/29terror.html?_r=0)

cooperation with other ethno-national terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah for logistics and training to better their tactics.<sup>8</sup>



**Mobilized Troops from the Provisional Irish Republican Army**

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) is an extremist group that was formed in 1969 for the purpose of assisting Sinn Fein, one of the oldest political parties in Ireland. The objective of Sinn Fein was to attain self-determination and the right for an independent government for the Irish people. The Provisional Irish Republican Army aimed at achieving this goal by removing British forces from Northern Ireland and uniting the country through methods such as kidnappings, bombings, targeting of prominent leaders, and robberies. However, a massive split within the organization occurred in 1997 after leadership of the Sinn Fein political party went to Gerry Adams from 1994-1998. The group then accepted a ceasefire on July 19, 1997 which halted many of their militaristic actions.

The Provisional Irish Republican Army has also continued its actions to establish unity through means such as assassination and robbery. On December 2004, the organization was found to be linked to a robbery of the Northern Bank in Ireland. They were also accused of the murder of a Robert McCartney, a local Belfast man. The group has been support by numerous sympathizers who provide financial and artillery aid from those who can relate to their motives.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-qaida.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/ira.htm>

The Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) or “Basque Homeland & Liberty Group” is an ethno-national organization native to the Basque region of Spain. It, like a number of other groups, arose from the need for self-determination and independence from a population of people sharing these views. One of their fundamental goals is to fight to return Spain to Islamic law. Such views led to their first terrorist-like attack, the bombing of the Spanish cities in Bilbao, Vitoria, and Santander in 1959. These actions resulted in swift response by the Spanish government which included arrests, house searches, and use of drastic means of torture. Nevertheless, the group still continued their radical actions like derailing trains, and targeting key political figures. Since early 2000, their actions have become more dormant and they have lost popularity among the Basque people.



Trademark Image of the  
ETA

It is believed that the ETA has been reduced to less than 100 supporters. While inactive, several events still have been claimed to be associated with the organization, such as the Madrid train bombings in 2004. Funding for the group continues through extortion, drug trafficking, robberies, and ransoms.<sup>10</sup>

### **International Actions Taken Against Terrorism**

The motives behind ethno-national terrorism and the unification it brings along its members within a group make it one of the most dangerous forms of terrorism. Policymakers and authorities often have difficulty apprehending individuals who share these viewpoints since they do not always associate imprisonment with defeat. In addition, because the group’s actions are typically unpredictable, government strategies to handle ethno-national terrorism generally backfire.

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/weapons\\_eta.html](http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/weapons_eta.html)

To further combat the issue of terrorism, namely ethno-national terrorism, nations of the United Nations have ratified the United Nations Security Council Global Counter-terrorism Strategy on September 2006. The document highlights over fifty measures to address the spread of terrorism and properly prevent, combat, and protect countries from it. These steps in combating terrorism have been agreed upon by all members of the United Nations.<sup>11</sup>

Several countries like the United States have recently begun to counterattack such terrorism through monitoring terrorist activity and sharing this information with others. With the use of increased security protocol and investigations, terrorism has become one of the biggest concerns of the Foreign Service staff. While many countries have taken immediate defensive strategies against ethno-national terrorism, it still remains a prominent threat against many others because of its severity and unpredictability.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/CT\\_Background\\_March\\_2009\\_terrorism2.pdf](http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/CT_Background_March_2009_terrorism2.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/terrorism/>

### **Questions to Consider**

- 1) Has ethno-national terrorism ever been an issue for your nation? If so, what has your nation done to combat the issue?
- 2) Has your nation ratified any treaties or agreements in regards to ethno-national terrorism? Have they been effective?
- 3) Many individuals view ethno-national terrorism as a means of emphasizing their request for self-determination. Could preventive measures be taken to stop the formation of these extremist groups?
- 4) Could any government bodies be made or called upon to monitor the status of ethno-national terrorism?

