
Terrorism and Muslim Minorities

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ABSTRACT:

This paper is associated with Muslim terrorism in the world. In present time Muslims are identified as a terrorist but the truth is something else. Muslims are not terrorists because terrorist does not have any religion or class. We try to study the causes of terrorist activities which are associated with Muslim. Focus has been given to understand that discrimination against minority groups precipitates terrorism in countries on the basis of terrorist activities.

The word "terrorism" is politically loaded and emotionally charged. The concept of terrorism may be controversial as it is often used by state authorities (and individuals with access to state support) to unacceptable political or other opponent, and potentially legitimize the state's own use of armed force against opponents (such use of force may be described as "terror" by opponents of the state). Terrorism has been practiced by a broad collection of political organizations to further their objectives. It has been practiced by right-wing and left-wing political parties, nationalistic groups, religious groups, revolutionaries, and ruling governments. The representation of terrorism can exploit human fear to help achieve these goals.

Unfortunately more and more often, Islam has been associated with terrorism and violence due to the actions of a few extreme individuals who have taken it upon themselves to do the most terrible crimes in the name of Islam. Tragic events such as the attack on the twin towers in New York, the bombings of Bali, Madrid and London are assumed to be justified by Islam in the minds of some people. This idea has been supported further by many media channels which defame Islam by portraying these bombers as 'Islamists' or 'Jihadists', as though they were sanctioned by Islam. The actions of a few fanatical individuals who happen to have Muslim names or assign themselves to the Muslim faith should not be a benchmark by which Islam is judged. For the same reason, that one would not do justice to Christianity if it were supposed as sanctioning the genocide of the Native Americans, the atrocities of world war II or the bombings of the IRA.

To understand Islam's stance on terrorism, one must refer to its original sources, the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, which are precise in their prohibition of any form of injustice including that of needless violence which seeks to impart fear, injury or death to civilians. The Quran turns our attention to the high value of human life, whether it is Muslim or Non-Muslim and makes it absolutely forbidden to take an innocent life unjustly. The gravity of such a crime is equated, in the Quran, with the killing of all humanity. The difficulty in defining "terrorism" is in agreeing on a basis for determining when the use of

violence (directed at whom, by whom, for what ends) is justifiable; therefore, the modern definition of terrorism is inherently controversial. The use of violence for the achievement of political ends is common to state and non-state groups. The majority of definitions in use have been written by agencies directly associated with government, and is systematically biased to exclude governments from the definition.

The contemporary label of "terrorist" is highly critical it denotes a lack of legitimacy and morality. As a practical matter, so-called acts of "terrorism" or terrorism are often an approach committed by the actors as part of a larger military or geo-political agenda. The UN General Assembly Resolution 49/60 (adopted on December 9, 1994), titled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," contains a provision describing terrorism: Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them. The UN Member States still have no agreed-upon definition of terrorism, and this fact has been a major obstacle to meaningful international countermeasures. Terminology consensus would be necessary for a single comprehensive convention on terrorism, which some countries favour in place of the present 12 piecemeal conventions and protocols. Pessimists have often commented that one state's "terrorist" is another state's "freedom fighter".

The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior and the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice in Cairo, Egypt in 1998. Terrorism was defined in the convention as: Any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or seeking to endanger national resources. International terrorism is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, the origin of the word 'terrorism' dates back to the French Revolution of 1789 as the label used by the establishment to describe the conduct of revolutionaries.

Terrorism has likewise been a subject of concern for the United Nations since the 1960s, following a series of aircraft hijackings. Some would argue that terrorism has entered a new phase at around the time of 11 September 2001: an age where transnational activity has intensified and become easier, and where technology and the media can be taken advantage of by terrorist entities to further the impact of terrorist conduct and the delivery of messages or fear-inducing images. Despite the long-lasting presence of terrorism in domestic and international life, however, there is currently no comprehensive, concise, and universally accepted legal definition of the term. With that in mind, this chapter first considers the nature of terrorism and the problems with achieving, as well as attempts made to achieve, an internationally agreed-upon definition of the term. It then examines a human rights based approach to defining terrorism, as advocated by the UN Special Reporter on counter-terrorism. In its popular understanding the term 'terrorism' tends to refer to an act that is wrong, evil, illegitimate, illegal, and a crime. The term has come to be used to describe a wide range of violent and sometimes not-so violent, conduct. Acts characterised as terrorist in nature can occur both in conflict and peace-time. They

may constitute crimes in domestic and international law, and they are motivated by a complex matrix of reasons and ideals. Their characterisation can also depend upon the person or institution using the label and may even change over time. To give two striking examples, the list of most wanted terrorists kept by the United States featured, at one time, Yassir Arafat and Nelson Mandela, both of whom were subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: evidence that this is a highly political and controversial issue. In the months prior to his death, Yassir Arafat was in again described as a terrorist by the United States Administration.

MUSLIM AND TERRORISM

Terrorism is an act comprises by any group or individual person to fulfill their demand or need, but it is identified as Muslims. Islam is simply used by terrorists as a way to recruit support. They then engage in terrorism to bring attention to their grievances or to achieve their political agenda, just as other terror groups have done in the past. Islam is always favouring in universal brotherhood and never support to any anti-humanity activities but therefore people associated with Islam to terrorism. People who comprise all the terrorist activities have no religion, no class, no sympathy and they are anti- religious, anti-social and anti- humanity. People who do not understand the message of any religion, comprises terrorist activities whether they are Hindu, Muslim or related to any other religion. Terrorism among the Muslims in India is of post-Babri masjid origins. The first recorded act of Muslim terrorist violence in India (leaving the violence in Kashmir out not because Kashmir is not India but together with north-east it has a history of specificities which puts it apart) took place on the December 6, 1993, to the day a year after the demolition of the Babri masjid.⁷ And it took place with crude bombs placed in some trains leaving from Hyderabad; some exploded and most did not because this was the job of young men who hurriedly learnt to make bombs to observe the 'barsi' (yearly celebration of the death of the near ones). It is with this that the trans-border terrorists came to know that there is a potential constituency which can be tapped into. Since then it has grown extensively and by now comprises many modules in the country with clear trans-border links. Before this there is no evidence that any Indian Muslim could be recruited by any of these international networks. Nonetheless, now it is a threat both to the Muslims and the country at large, irrespective of its origins, though not unimportant as such because the origins give you the first causal links.

Muslims are arrested in false cases without any proof and harassed, threatened, or bribed into turning hostile on the witness stand or simply not showing up when the case goes to trial. In exchange for being allowed to return to their homes by their neighbours, Muslims are being forced to withdraw their cases. Local officials have actively participated in facilitating such “peace” negotiations. Many who have filed complaints, or who themselves were injured by police firing of guns, have had false charges filed against them. Attackers wander with impunity, threatening more violence if anyone speaks out against them. The justice machinery has done little to investigate or indict cases of sexual violence. Problems include a lack of medical examinations for victims, refusal to register rape cases in FIRs or include them in charge sheets, deficiencies in Indian rape laws, and the silencing of rape victims by members of their own community due to the stigma that often accompanies such crimes. The widespread burning of victims’ bodies also destroyed evidence of many rapes.

The past three decades have produced a considerable increase in scientific and journalistic publications about Islam, the Muslim World, and the position of Muslims in the world. There are no greater terrorists in the entire country save the police. It is they who implicate tribals, Dalits and Muslims in false cases. They claim that they killed suspected Naxals and arrest Muslims in terror cases, and the entire country believes it.

THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

In March 2002, the state government charged those arrested in relation to the attack on the Godhra train under the controversial and draconian Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO, now the Prevention of Terrorism Act, POTA), but filed ordinary criminal charges against those accused of attacks on Muslims. Bowing to criticism from political leaders and civil society across the country, the chief minister dropped the POTO charges but stated that the terms of POTO might be applied at a later date. Eleven months later, on February 19, 2003, POTA was invoked ex post facto against 123 people accused in the Godhra massacre. The state contended that new facts had emerged in the investigations that satisfied POTA requirements. On February 6, 2003, police arrested Maulana Hasan Umarji, a Muslim cleric whom officials say masterminded the attack. The prosecution's theory on Godhra has changed track numerous times. Umarji is the third such "mastermind" to be identified. The first theory involved a conspiracy linked to Pakistan's ISI, the second to the underworld and drug smugglers, and the third linked to Umarji. Officials claim that during his interrogation, he confessed to receiving financial assistance from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Dubai.

The People's Union for Democratic Rights, Indian human rights NGO, has charged that the arrest is politically motivated. Umarji had publicly campaigned against the BJP during the December 2002 elections, and was heavily involved in organizing relief assistance after the violence. He was arrested based on the alleged confession of one of the other arrestees, yet in the eleven months preceding Umarji's arrest, not one of the seventy-odd people arrested had identified Umarji as a participant. Following Umarji's arrest on February 6, Muslim-owned shops in the town of Godhra closed down in protest. Some Hindus in Godhra also closed their shops fearing violence.

The application of POTA against Muslims accused in Godhra furthers existing discriminatory views that equate Islam with terrorism. Following the Godhra massacre, the state and central government moved quickly to qualify the attack as a "pre-meditated," "terrorist" attack against Hindus. The recent revival of the Ram temple campaign and heightened fears of terrorism since September 11 were also exploited by local Hindu nationalist groups and the local press that printed reports of a "deadly conspiracy" against Hindus by Muslims in the state. On February 28, one local language paper headline read: "Avenge blood for blood." Muslim survivors of the attacks repeatedly told Human Rights Watch that they were told to "go back to Pakistan. Those who torture Muslims so much should be punished a bit.

Sachar Committee also says that Lack of a sense of security and a discriminatory attitude towards Muslims is felt widely. However, there is considerable variation in the gravity, intensity and magnitude of such a feeling across various states. Communal tension or any untoward

incident in any part of the country is enough to make Muslims fear for their safety and security. The apathetic attitude of the government and the political mileage sought whenever communal riots occur has been very painful for the Community. The governmental inaction in bringing to book the perpetrators of communal violence has been a sore point. On the other hand, the police, along with the media, overplay the involvement of Muslims in violent activities and underestimate the involvement of other groups or organizations.

There is an underlying feeling of injustice in the context of compensation to riot victims. It was also suggested that the amount of compensation fixed by the government post riots has been discriminatory against the Muslims. Besides, there is also delay in giving compensation to the victims, especially when they happen to be Muslims.

ATTITUDE OF THE POLICE AND LAW ENFORCING AGENCIES

Concern was expressed over police victimization in dealing with Muslims. Muslims live with an inferiority complex as “every bearded man is considered an ISI agent”; “whenever any incident occurs Muslim boys are picked up by the police” and fake encounters are common. In fact, people argued that police presence in Muslim localities is more common than the presence of schools, industry, public hospitals and banks. Security personnel enter Muslim houses on the slightest pretext. The difficulty of Muslims living in border areas is even worse as they are treated as ‘foreigners’ and are subjected to harassment by the police and administration. Violent communal conflicts, especially like some recent ones in a state, in which there is large-scale targeted sexual violence against Muslim women has a spread affect even in regions of the country not directly affected by the violence. There is immense fear, a feeling of weakness, and consequently a visible impact on mobility and education, especially of girls. The lack of adequate Muslim presence in the police force emphasize this problem in almost all Indian states as it heightens the perceived sense of insecurity, especially in a communally sensitive situation.

CHANGING DIMENSIONS OF TERRORISM

- First, no concession should be made to terrorists and no deals should be struck with them.
- Second, terrorists should be put to trial for the crimes committed by them. For this extradition treaties between and among nations should be signed for the quick deportation or extradition of wanted terrorist so their respective countries.
- Third, such states that sponsor or support terrorism in any way should not only be isolated but sanctions should also be imposed on them by the world community so as to compel them to change their attitude and policies.
- Fourth, counter-terrorism capabilities of those countries who are or have been fighting terrorism should be increased and all possible assistance should be given by the United Nations and members of the world community.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above description, it can be said that the Muslims in the world is viewed with suspicion and accusing them of being terrorist is implicated in false cases. There has been plenty of terrorism and violence committed by human beings from every religious background. Not all

terrorists are Muslims. In fact, not even most terrorists are Muslims. Who is defined as a terrorist, and who is defined some other way is not consistent. Muslims are not only terrorist but people of other community are also involved in these types of activities. People who demand to the government for their own benefits and pressurize the government to fulfill their demands are terrorist and they tortured innocent people reach them harm. Therefore, the government of any country to eliminate this type of anti-social elements, special measures should be taken in order to ensure proper development of the country and the people.

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