



Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Analýza teroristických útokov v Európskej únii so zameraním na útoky spáchané vo Francúzsku

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Abstract:

This paper deals with terrorist attacks and analysis of the threat of terrorist attacks in European Union with emphasis on acts of terror in France. Evaluation of individual years will be provided based on terrorist attacks statistics between 2000 and 2020. One of the aims of this work is to graphically depict and analyse criminal acts in given country and to evaluate types and consequences of these crimes. Another aim of this work is to graphically represent and point out the differences in execution of terrorist attacks and to provide data on death toll for various types of terrorist attacks. Article is of informative nature, since is not possible to predict future emergence of terrorist attacks based on historical facts used.

Keywords: terrorism, terrorist attack, analysis, France.

Abstrakt:

Príspevok sa venuje problematike teroristických útokov a analýze samotnej hrozby teroristických útokov v Európskej únii so zameraním na teroristické útoky vo Francúzsku. Na základe štatistiky počtu teroristických útokov od roku 2000 po rok 2020 vyhodnotíme počet teroristických útokov za jednotlivé roky samostatne. Cieľom práce je graficky znázorniť a analyzovať trestné činy v menovanej krajine a vyhodnotiť druhy a následky ich páchania. Cieľom práce je grafickým spôsobom zobrazit' a poukázať na rozdielne povahy teroristických útokov s vymedzením konkrétnych počtov usmrtených osôb pre jednotlivé druhy teroristických útokov. Článok má informatívny charakter nakoľko sú v ňom použité historické fakty, pri ktorých nie je možné predikovať budúci vývoj hrozby teroristických útokov.

Kľúčové slová: terorizmus, teroristický útok, analýza, Francúzsko.



Introduction

The concept of terrorism is not an ideology itself, but more of a tactics, or a method used to achieve various goals. It is difficult to define this concept unambiguously. Main differentiating aspect of terrorist criminal acts is the brutality with which these are committed. The absence of straightforward definition is showing that every act of terrorism needs to be approached individually, with extra attention, since these crimes, in many cases, end with massive victim count. There is not way to generally categorize terrorism, we are only able to categorize based on method used to commit the crime or based on which large terrorist organization executed it. The best way how to represent reality is an analysis of facts, since these can be verified through reliable sources of information. This is the reason why I chose the method of analysing the crimes individually.

1. Terrorism

The real reason, or cause of terrorism is hidden in vast and complicated set of factors, dealing mostly with the person that committed the crime. A plethora of terrorist attacks are an outcome of group work. In other cases, we, are dealing with intentional action of an individual. The number of involved people is irrelevant, since cause of the action applies to every criminal individually. Most of the time it is necessary to analyse the subjective element of an individual criminal. Every act, or every action has different consequences in human mind. In terrorism, we are often dealing with a set of different secondary actions, concluding into the act of terrorism itself.

The threat level of terrorist attacks with the risk of losing innocent lives of civilians is rising globally. The fact is that during the last years, this threat has become multiple times higher mostly for Europe, but the base of these threats can be located to Near East. Inhabitants of Near East always have the risk of potential terrorist attack in the back of their minds, due to the history, but Europeans unfortunately do not. In my opinion Europeans are very naive and that is a consequence of European lifestyle and low numbers of terrorist attacks. Most people are convinced that nothing can happen to them, even when the risk is present everywhere, no matter how small it is, and this type of thinking is often exploited by various terrorist groups operating in Europe. I do not consider myself competent enough to say what caused this growing risk, but following numbers related to this topic are facts. [2]

The activities of terrorist organizations are often funded by other illegal activities. Question is, if they can cover 100% of expenses, or if they need any external source of income. In organizations of this nature an investor is often present, and they are equally guilty. Not regarding the intention, it is obvious, that terrorist group, or individual terrorist who committed particular action is 100% guilty every time, but sometimes it can be convenient to analyse if the motivation does not stem from the inside of the organization. It needs to be noted, that members of these groups often depict themselves as law-abiding citizens, they live their everyday lives in communities with friends and families. Anyone can be the criminal, not attracting any extra attention. When we are dealing with organised terrorist groups operating on national, or international level, financing is an important question. In modern world it is very dangerous, and in European Union even unacceptable to finance terrorist groups directly by state. Sadly, we can still point out countries which are supporting

Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Marek MAJERNÍK

terrorist groups or armed movements. Jozef Klavec provided a simple explanation on this by classifying countries to:

- Countries supporting international terrorism network
- Countries actively fighting terrorism

Representatives of both can be considered sponsors with various subjects of interest, which do not need to be closely specified, since it is clear from previously stated classification. The amount of money connected to the aforementioned classification is also a problem. Constant support of fight against international crimes, effective cooperation between forces fighting terrorism and as high of a quality of their work as possible are crucial.

Terrorist groups operating in specific geographic region or state, focused on fight against current political establishment, are scope-wise the opposites of international terrorism. But in this case, it is very important to define intentions of each group. Here we can distinguish three groups:

- National liberation types fighting the government establishment
- Groups fighting against state establishment for the purpose of liberation or separation of specific part of land (separatist organizations)
- Radical movements defending specific legal establishment with created armed groups using terrorist methods

In the middle of 1980s, there was a rise in popularity of movements focused on religion, cults or fundamentalist movements inspired by thoughts and ideas from various international religions. [1]

1.1 Islamic state and best known terrorist attacks in France

First historical aspects about Islamic state are dated back to 2003. This organization was originally named Islamic state in Iraq and Levante, also known as ISIL. It is not necessary to specify the geographic scope of their operations, since it is noted in the name of the group. Iraq and Syria are countries of Near East. Like the most of radical terrorist organizations, even this one is known by orthodox interpretation of Sharia law which is Islamic law system characteristic by brutality against everyone, who does not worship Islam religion recognized by them. One of the priorities of this group was, from the beginning, declaration of caliphate. First known leader of this group since 2004 was Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, neutralized by US Army in 2006. [3]

In the late afternoon of November 13, 2015, nine specific terrorist attacks were committed in the streets of Paris, France. Series of attacks caused the death of 130 people and more than 100 were severely injured. Attack in Bataclan club had the highest number of victims – 87 innocent people died. Attackers were shooting into the crowd of people trying to escape. The killing continued after the attackers walked into the club. In the final stage of the attack, the attackers locked themselves on the second story of the building, where they were neutralized by armed forces. One of the attackers committed suicide by activating explosive system attached to his body. Total number of attackers was four. [4]

Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Marek MAJERNÍK

On the January 7th 2015, around 11:30, the second most serious terrorist attack took place in France. It was the attack on editorial office of Charlie Hebdo magazine, where attackers killed 12 people using firearms. Attack was quick and the attackers fled from the crime scene immediately after the attack. Based on provided information, the attack was a response to caricature depicting prophet Muhammad, which was published in Charlie Hebdo. [5]

This is not focused on individual terrorist attacks, but considering importance of these crimes, it was necessary to provide information on some of them, for a better picture on given problematics. Aforementioned terrorist attacks are considered as the biggest and most brutal attacks in France in last 50 years at least.

2. Analysis

Based on the diversity of countries in European Union and significant differences in inhabitant counts, the second most populous country in Europe, with nearly 67 million inhabitants, was chosen for analysis. Statistic data and specific databases of global terrorism are giving us an opportunity to provide comparison between France (67 million inhabitants) and Germany (83 million inhabitants). During specific time frame, there was 1,96 times more terrorist attacks in France than in Germany. Between 2000 and 2020, 478 terrorist attacks were committed in France. During the same time period, there was 244 attacks committed in Germany, and 146 terrorist attacks in Italy (60 million inhabitants). These numbers are the reason, why France is the main topic of this document. Since number of inhabitants is irrelevant to amount of terrorist attacks, data provided are only for informational use. [5]

Goal of this paper is to point out specific numbers of terrorist attacks in France and to help the reader create their individual opinion on reality of the last two decades. Main classification of terrorist attacks is based on the type of attack. For this classification, we have chosen these types of attacks:

1. Assassination
2. Armed assault
3. Bombing/Explosion
4. Hijacking
5. Hostage taking (Barricade incident)
6. Hostage taking (Kidnapping)
7. Facility/Infrastructure attack
8. Unarmed assault

Assassination is an act whose primary objective is to kill or more specific, prominent individuals. Armed assault is an attack whose primary objective is to cause physical harm or death directly to human beings by use of a firearm, incendiary, or sharp instrument. Bombing or explosion is an attack where the primary effects are caused by an energetically unstable material undergoing rapid decomposition and releasing a pressure wave that causes physical damage to the surrounding environment. Hijacking is an act whose primary objective is to take control of a

Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Marek MAJERNÍK

vehicle such as an aircraft, boat, bus, etc. for the purpose of diverting it to an unprogrammed destination, force the release of prisoners, or some other political objective. Hostage taking (Barricade incident) is an act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Hostage taking (Kidnapping) is an act whose primary objective is to take control of hostages for the purpose of achieving a political objective through concessions or through disruption of normal operations. Kidnappings are distinguished from Barricade Incidents (above) in that they involve moving and holding the hostages in another location. Facility or infrastructure attack is an act, excluding the use of an explosive, whose primary objective is to cause damage to a non-human target, such as a building, monument, train, pipeline, etc. Such attacks include arson and various forms of sabotage (e.g., sabotaging a train track is a facility/infrastructure attack, even if passengers are killed). Unarmed assault is an attack whose primary objective is to cause physical harm or death directly to human beings by any means other than explosive, firearm, incendiary, or sharp instrument (knife, etc.). Attacks involving chemical, biological or radiological weapons are considered unarmed assaults. [6]

Based on the complexity of online international terrorism database, which is very thoroughly elaborated, relevant information from closed and processed years is provided. For the purposes of this paper, last fully processed year is 2019. Provided data consists of terrorist attacks, specified in aforementioned database consisting of more than 200 000 documented crimes from 2000 to 2020. Analysis of terrorist attacks based on specific years they were committed in, and method how they were carried out was the first step. Obtained data are provided in following tables, and for better presentation they are depicted in graphs. Goal of this paper is to refer to specific counts of terrorist attacks in France and help readers to create their own opinion and view of reality in the last 20 years.

Following part of work depicts counts of registered terrorist attacks. In Table 1 there are terrorist attacks sorted by years. Table 2 provides statistics of terrorist attacks based on aforementioned types of attacks, with data on fatality count for every attack type.

2.1 Number of terrorist attacks in individual years

Table 1: Number of terrorist attacks in France between years 2000 and 2019, GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE. [6]

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
28	21	32	34	11	33	34	16	13	9
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
3	8	66	18	14	38	25	42	13	20

Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Marek MAJERNÍK

2.2 Terrorist attacks distribution based on attack type.

Table 2. Distribution of terrorist attacks based on type of attack between 2000 and 2019. GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE [6]

Act/Attack	Count	Fatalities
Assassination	4	7
Armed assault	56	159
Bombing/Explosion	302	10
Hijacking	1	1
Hostage taking (Barricade Incident)	11	55
Hostage taking (Kidnapping)	4	0
Facility/Infrastructure attack	81	0
Unarmed assault	19	3
	478	235

2.3 Results

Based on the analysed data, we are able to provide evaluation of following facts. During analysed timespan of last 20 years, there were 478 registered terrorist attacks in France. Based on aforementioned distribution of terrorist attack types, 302 bombing/explosion attacks with 10 fatalities, 81 facility/infrastructure attacks without any fatality, 56 armed assaults with 159 fatalities, 19 unarmed assaults with 3 fatalities. 11 Hostage takings (Barricade Incident) with 55 fatalities, 4 Hostage takings (kidnappings) without any fatality, 4 Assassinations with 7 fatalities and 1 Hijacking with one fatality were recorded. Total count of fatalities is 235.

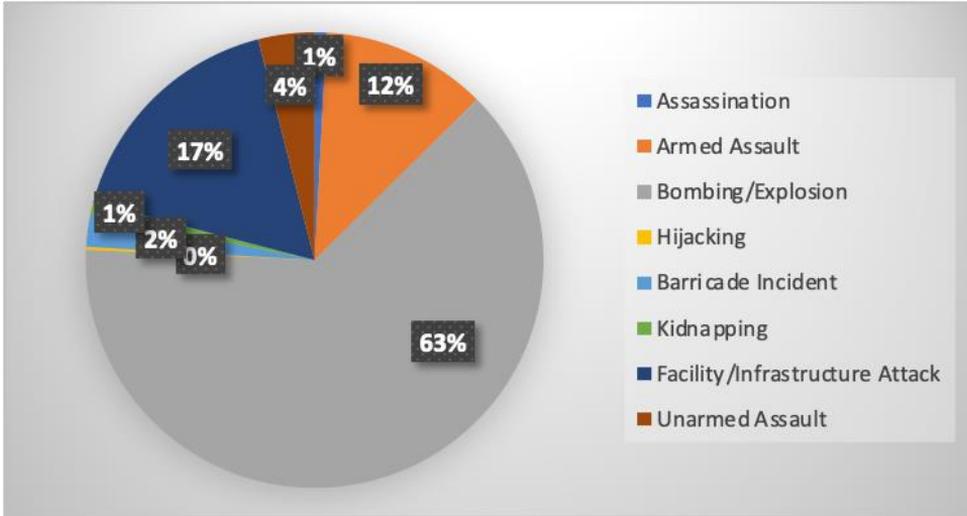
The most frequent type of attack during the given timespan were attacks using explosives. 302 bombings/explosion attacks (63% of all attacks) were registered. In graph depicting total fatality counts one can see that despite of high percentage of bombings, there was 10 fatalities recorded, which covers 4% of all fatalities. The opposite trend is obvious in armed attacks. Despite of 56 armed attacks (12% of all attacks), 159 fatalities were recorded, representing 68% of all fatalities. It is important to mention the second most frequent type of terroristic attacks, which is represented by Facility/Infrastructure attacks. We register 81 attacks of this type (17% of all attacks) in total. Despite the number of this type of attacks, no fatality was recorded in connection.

The facts mentioned above are depicted in following graphs for better reader orientation. First graph is depicting percentage of individual terrorist attack types and second graph is dealing with total number of fatalities connected to specific terrorist attack type.

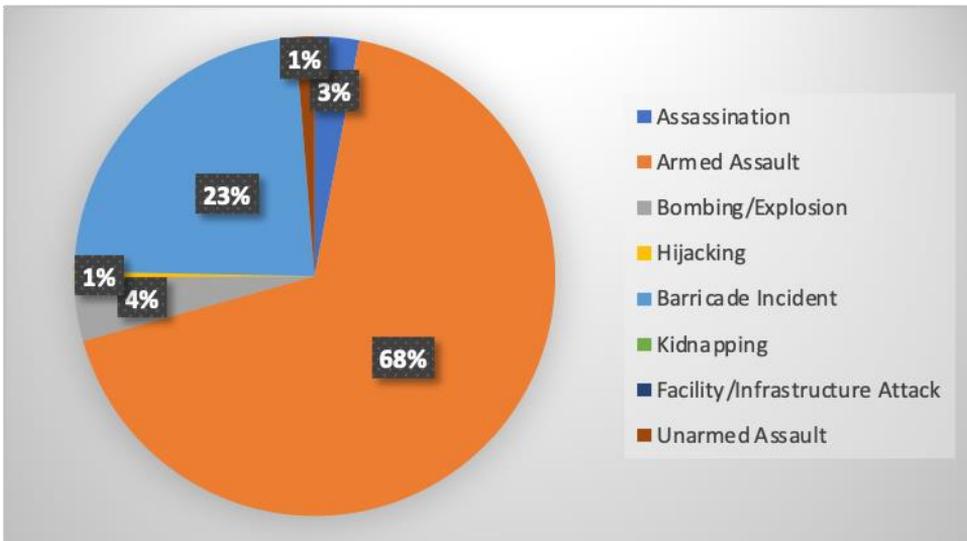
Analysis of terrorist attacks in European Union, focused on attacks committed in France

Marek MAJERNÍK

Graph 1. Distribution of terrorist attack types between years 2000 and 2019, GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE [6]



Graph 2. Total fatality count between years 2000 and 2019, GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE [6]



Conclusion

Analysed data do not show any regressing tendencies of terrorist attack threats. Aim of this work is not to predict the evolution of future terrorist attack threats, but to evaluate the obtained facts on terrorist attacks committed. Evaluating the data, we were able to conclude outcomes, but the most important fact we want to point out in this paper is the threat of fatalities connecting to the individual terrorist attack types. I definitely cannot corroborate, that the mentioned facts will be relevant in the future, but it is obvious, that in some types of terrorist attacks there is a higher threat of fatalities. Loss of every human life caused by intentional killing is a tragic incident, therefore every act of terror, without regarding historical facts, is a threat of highest importance which cannot be neglected.

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