

## Terrorism continues to rise – what do the numbers tell us?

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2014 was the most deadly year for terrorism on record with deaths from terrorism rising by 80 per cent from 18,111 in 2013 to 32,685. Most of these deaths were recorded in just five countries with Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria experiencing 78 per cent of all deaths.

While terrorism is concentrated in these countries, more countries than ever before experienced terrorism with a 120 per cent increase in the number of countries suffering more than 500 deaths. While many countries experience no terrorist activity, the number of countries to experience at least one or more deaths from terrorist activity has increased from 59 in 2013 to 67 in 2014. This includes OECD countries such as Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada and France.

The [Global Terrorism Index](#) (GTI) – an effort to measure the direct and indirect impact of terrorism in 162 countries in terms of its effect on lives lost, injuries, property damage and the psychological after-effects of terrorism - demonstrates that terrorism cannot be understood in isolation. Statistical analysis of the patterns of terrorist activity since 1989 found that there are two factors most closely associated with terrorism. These are the levels of political violence committed by the state, and the level of armed conflict within a country.

Possibly one of the most important findings, the GTI finds that 92 per cent of all terrorist attacks between 1989 and 2014 occurred in countries where political violence by the government was widespread, while 88 per cent of all terrorist attacks between 1989 and 2014 occurred in countries that were experiencing or involved in violent conflicts. Only 0.6 per cent of terrorist attacks have occurred in countries with low levels of political terror and no ongoing conflicts.

While there is no overall trend between terrorism and poverty, unemployment and lower opportunities are a driver for some to join terrorist groups. In Africa for example, both Boko Haram and al-Shabaab operate in the poorest parts of Nigeria and Somalia and actively seek out disenfranchised young men. Furthermore, perceived economic injustice can be a major motivation for terrorism. The Fulani militants, a group active in the Middle Belt of Nigeria, are made up of pastoralists whose victims are almost exclusively farmers. Whilst there are some other dimensions to the conflict, including religious differences, it can be viewed as primarily a resource dispute.

Three regions of the world are mostly impacted by terrorism: the Middle East, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. To learn more, [read the full report](#).

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