

# **EFFECTS OF TERRORISM ON ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

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In Cameroon, states have become increasingly concerned with preventing terrorist attacks and have created new policy measures and legislation in order to combat terrorism and protect the safety of their population. As governments respond to terrorism and try to protect their citizens from terrorists, these responses may have unintended consequences for these citizens and may be harmful to the state in general, argues that there are at least three responses terrorists could elicit from their targets that would be detrimental to the democratic values of countries;

1. Governments can acquiesce to terrorist demands, which would decrease the government's power.
2. The population could begin to favour a less democratic government, which would decrease the democratic values of the country, and
3. Governments could utilize less democratic means, such as repression of certain rights.

States who respond to terrorism with any of these responses run the risk of decreasing democratic values and increasing repression and human rights abuses. Critics of new measures and legislation being adopted argue that they can have a negative impact on human rights

In the area of how terrorism affects human rights, there is little consensus as to which rights are not only affected the most but which rights are even affected at

all. In order to understand this contention, a three interest model of foreign policy that includes security interests, economic interests and other interests is discussed. Therefore, given this line of thinking, it is reasonable to assume that when a government is confronted with a terrorist threat, they will take any measures they deem necessary in order to counter that threat. These measures will most likely include violating their citizenry's human rights.

While other scholars do not try to predict such a positive outcome, they do agree that there has been a decrease in respect for human rights because of terrorism. It has been argued that the evidence for the assumption that terrorism leads governments to restrict human rights is thus not only mixed but also difficult to interpret. Disconnect and disagreement exists among the scholarly work done on the effects of terrorism on human rights. When analyzing the effect terrorism has on human rights it has been shown that transnational terrorism does not have a significant impact on the impression of civil liberties. This may be explained by the fact that governments which are hindered by a free press and the separation of powers are less likely to restrict human rights after a terrorist attack. This is consistent with other findings that show by itself terrorism was not a serious threat to the fundamental stability and functioning of democratic states. This does not mean that transnational terrorism is a trivial event. The success of terrorism cannot simply be measured by the number of casualties caused but instead in the ability of terrorists to bend the state to their will in fulfilling certain goals. After a state has experienced a terrorist attack, it has been shown that there is an effect on the repression of certain physical integrity rights. Transnational terrorism has a strong negative impact on disappearances and extrajudicial killings, but it does not have a strong impact on torture or political imprisonment. While transnational terrorism may not have a strong impact on certain rights, it has been found that domestic terrorism does. The literature shows there is disagreement over not only which group of rights, physical integrity rights or civil liberties, are repressed after terrorist attacks but there is also disagreement over which type of terrorism, transnational or domestic, has a greater impact on the use of repression. The four physical integrity rights being employed are disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political prisoners, and torture. Disappearances are cases where people have disappeared, political motivation seems likely, and the victims have not been found. Extrajudicial killings

are killings that have been carried out by government official without the due process of law. Political prisoners are those that have been imprisoned by government officials because of speech, non-violent opposition to government policies or leaders, religious beliefs and non-violent religious practices and membership in certain groups, such as ethnic or racial groups. Torture involves the infliction of severe mental and/or physical pain by or at the instigation of government officials. Each measure is assigned a score of 0, the form of repression is practiced frequently in a given year,

1. The form of repression is practiced occasionally in a given year or
2. The form of repression did not occur in a given year.

The three empowerment rights being employed are freedom of assembly, and association, freedom of speech and press, and freedom of religion. Freedom of assembly and association is an internationally recognised right which allows citizens to assembly freely and associate with other persons, in political parties, trade unions, cultural organizations, or other groups. Freedom of speech and press measures the extent to which government censors or restricts speech and press, including the ownership of media outlets. Freedom of religion indicates the extent to which citizens are free to exercise and practice their religious beliefs free from government restrictions. Each measure is assigned a score of 0, the form of repression is severe and widespread in a given year,

1. The form of repression is practically absent in a given year. Because CIRI repressions the realization of rights, the index needs to be inverted in order to represent repression of rights instead. To capture the effect of terrorist attacks, counts of the number of terrorist events in a given year for each country is used to create three terrorism variables;
2. The total number of terrorist events,
3. The total number of domestic terrorist acts, and
4. The total number of transnational terrorist acts.

One such problem being that some events should not necessarily be considered as terrorist events.