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# TERRORISM IS A REAL THREAT TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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| **Exercise *Solo Flight*** | **Exercice *Solo Flight*** |

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

**TERRORISM IS A REAL THREAT TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

By: Major Radcliffe H. Barrett

**TERRORISM IS A REAL THREAT TO TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THE WIDER CARIBBEAN REGION AND IS NOT AN OVER EXAGGERATION.**

**Introduction**

The calamitous events of the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the United States (US) have resulted in a world where the threat of terrorism is now always at the forefront of the international security agenda. The 9/11 attacks on the soil of the world's most dominant economic and military power, were a series of coordinated occurrences which killed and injured thousands and caused significant infrastructural damage. This attack subsequently set in motion a series of events that have changed the course of life across the length and breadth of the world; as terrorism is a global movement which transcends borders and creates mayhem.[1] Undeniably, the accelerating pace of globalisation, technological progression, changes in risk and terrorism have reshaped the dynamics of the world. While some of these changes present new opportunities, some present a myriad of challenges, especially to national security.

The crux of the matter is, terrorism is a threat to sovereignty, governments' reputation, credibility, the safety of citizens and national, regional and international security.[2] From this perspective, though experiences have not been widespread and frequent, the Caribbean as a region, is not immune to acts of terrorism. Indeed, the most frequent terrorist experiences have been concentrated on the island of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) where citizens have travelled to conflict zones in Iraq and Syria to fight alongside militants, thus, demonstrating how the country has been enveloped in global terrorism and how their return poses a threat to national safety and

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[1] Ross, Carne. What impact did 9 have on the world? 'Stateless phenomenon needed to be fought by stateless means'. September 5, 2011. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/sep/05/9-11-impact-world-al-qaida, 7.
[2] Crenshaw, Martha. Terrorism and Global Security in Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Asll. *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Changing World.* Washington, Dc: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2013, 78.

security.[3] Today, the threat of terrorism and terrorist related activities in T&T is a key focus of concern.

This paper will discuss the susceptibility of T&T to terrorism, highlighting conditions conducive for the conduct of terrorist activities based on previous terrorist events, radicalisation, the return of Foreign Fighters (FFs) and terrorism financing. The paper will also examine the response, the employment of anti-terrorism and counterterrorism strategies by government and law enforcement to ameliorate this scourge.

**Overview - Understanding the Issue**

The island of Trinidad and Tobago is high risk and vulnerable; a suitable target for terrorists activities and feeding ground for terrorist recruitment. The island is no stranger to terrorism activities as in 1990, Yasin Abu Bakr, leader and founder of the Jamaat al Muslimeen group and his followers, stormed the House of Parliament in an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Trinidad and Tobago[4] in what was classified as an act of terrorism. It was noted that Bakr, formerly known as Lennox Phillip, was converted to Islam while a student in Canada.

Egregious acts of terrorism affects everyone irrespective of ethnicity, culture and nationality and poses a significant threat to safety and security. Mitchell defines terrorism as "the unlawful use of violence or threat of violence to instill fear and coerce Governments or Societies" … and which "… is often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs

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[3] IHS Markit. Returning foreign fighters pose risk to Trinidad and Tobago. April 25, 2019. https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/returning-foreign-fighters-trinidad-tobago.html, 2.
[4] Ellis, Evan. Gangs, Guns, Drugs and Islamic Foreign Fighters: Security Challenges in Trinidad and Tobago. September 8, 2017. https://theglobalamericans.org/2017/09/gangs-guns-drugs-islamic-foreign-fighters-security-challenges-trinidad-tobago/, 3.

and committed in the pursuit of goals that are usually political."[5] Trinidad & Tobago is a part of the Caribbean group of islands and a member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM). Of significance, one of the tenets within this joint agreement (Article 45) underpinned by the Treaty of Chaguaramas, relates to regional free movement, "Member States commit themselves to the goal of free movement of their nationals within the Community."[6] Considered a major tourism destination and due to the close proximity to its neighbours, many travellers easily island-hop around the region, going from shore to shore to experience a variety of scenery and culture in one trip. Additionally, globalisation enables the movement of people.

Paradoxically, this free movement also provides an avenue for terrorists to exploit movement across borders easily. Free movement then becomes a detriment instead of an advantage to regional integration and collaboration. Crenshaw suggests that globalisation is concomitant with terrorism based on factors, such as, movement of people, technological innovation and permeability of borders.[7] In February 2019, the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), published a travel advisory against travel to Trinidad and Tobago, highlighting that the prospects of terrorist attacks were very high. The advisory furthered that "… lone-actor attacks could be indiscriminate in nature, likely conducted in crowded places and those frequented by foreigners …."[8] Additionally, attacks on its critical oil and gas infrastructure would be catastrophic to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and the environment.[9]

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[5] Mitchell, Allyson. Terrorism Defined. December 2012. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/terrorism-defined, 2.
[6] Maas, Willem. Trade, Regional Integration, and Free Movement of People. 2015. http://www.yorku.ca/maas/Maas2015a.pdf, 114.
[7] Crenshaw, Martha. Terrorism and Global Security in Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Asll, 2013, 70.
[8] IHS Markit. Returning foreign fighters pose risk to Trinidad and Tobago, 2.
[9] Caribbean Community and Common Market. CARICOM Counter-terrorism Strategy. March 29, 2018.
https://www.caricomimpacs.org/Portals/0/Documents/CARICOM%20COUNTER%20TERRORISM%20STRATEGY%20Final.pdf?ver=2018-03-29-233917-437, 10.

In a broad perspective, Javers submits that Caribbean islands are soft targets and contends that a soft target is characterised as being an easy target for terrorists to attack.[10] The US Department of State in furtherance advanced that permeable borders, inadequate law enforcement capabilities and lack of resources are obstacles which impact security and provides opportunities for terrorists groups to exploit these vulnerabilities.[11] Kazi supports the point that, "porous borders can facilitate the illicit movement of … terrorists."[12] Trinidad and Tobago is ideally located as "an active transit point for regional and extra-regional irregular migration to North America and Europe."[13] This presents a huge security challenge for the authorities as smugglers readily take advantage of the unsecured borders. The Caribbean as a region, is highly "concerned about the vulnerability of their borders to transnational organized crime networks and the attendant risk of those perceived vulnerabilities being exploited by terrorists."[14]

**Terrorist Financing**

Terrorists and terrorist organisations require financing to fund their operations. Funding can accrue from legitimate and illegitimate sources, such as, personal donations, profits from businesses and charitable organisations who are terrorist sympathisers. Since 9/11, crucial resolutions and legislative frameworks have been promulgated by the United Nations to disrupt terrorists' financial systems; criminalising terrorist financing, reporting suspicious transactions and supporting more robust international cooperation.[15]

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[10] Javers, Eamon. How to derail an attack on a soft target: Experts. November 20, 2015. https://www.cnbc.com/2015/11/20/how-to-derail-an-attack-on-a-soft-target-experts.html, 1.
[11] U.S. Department of State. Chapter 1. Country Reports: Western Hemisphere. https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2017/282846.htm,1.
[12] Kazi, Reshmi. The Correlation Between Non-State Actors and Weapons of Mass Destruction. *Vol. 10, No. 4* (Fall 2011), 5.
[13] International Organisation for Migration. Trinidad and Tobago. March 2011. https://www.iom.int/countries/trinidad-and-tobago, 2.
[14] *Ibid, 2.*
[15] Kaplan, Eben. Tracking Down Terrorist Financing. April 4, 2006. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/tracking-down-terrorist-financing, 6.

The US Treasury Department reported in September 2018, and as recently as March 2019, that two dual US/T&T citizens solicited money and subsequently facilitated transfers to Syria to support T&T ISIS fighters.[16] A growing trend has been the increased use of technology for payments, such as wire transfers[17] which makes cross border payments seamless, speedy and anonymous and has prompted regulators to amend and strengthen monitoring activities. Notably, six Trinidadian individuals or entities have been placed on the international sanctions list.

With threats, such as, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction and other acts of terrorism continuing to increase exponentially, encroaching on human rights, civil liberties and literally holding citizens and governments as hostages of terror, terrorism financing is of tantamount priority. The acquisition of weapons, which could range from small arms, IEDs, WMDs, ammunition and other implements are of concern based on the accessibility and modus operandi of terrorists and consequently "… the danger of terrorists' acquisition and use of catastrophic weapons presents "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security."[18] There is a vibrant gun trade between T&T and Venezuela which has contributed to the unpleasant anomaly of "an oversupply of guns in the country relative to normal criminal needs."[19] In one instance, it was noted that the use of firearms accounted for approximately seventy five percent of murders on the island. It was estimated, in 2015, that "… there were 147 gangs, with 1,698 members, responsible for approximately 34% of all murders in the country"[20], to include Islamic criminal gangs.

[16]Bensman, Todd. Did the Maryland Terrorism Suspect Have Ongoing Ties with Jihadists in His Native Trinidad? April 11, 2019. https://cis.org/Bensman/Did-Maryland-Terrorism-Suspect-Have-Ongoing-Ties-Jihadists-His-Native-Trinidad, 2.
[17]Levitt, Mathew. How do ISIS terrorists finance their attacks? November 18, 2015. http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/ homeland-security/260597-how-do-isis-terrorists-finance-their-attacks, 3.
[18]Kazi, Reshmi. The Correlation Between Non-State Actors and Weapons of Mass Destruction, 3.
[19]Ellis, Evan. Gangs, Guns, Drugs and Islamic Foreign Fighters: Security Challenges in Trinidad and Tobago. September 8, 2017. https://theglobalamericans.org/2017/09/gangs-guns-drugs-islamic-foreign-fighters-security-challenges-trinidad-tobago/, 3.
[20]Ibid, 10.

**The Advancement Technology**

The advent and subsequent advancement of technology provides a global reach with a multiplicity of avenues to convey information, through mediums, such as, worldwide web, Internet, television and social media platforms. The use of technology not only eliminates physical distance across borders but also provides a great deal of anonymity. Paganini argues therefore, that terrorism will benefit from technology, since "technology is a foundation of modern society because it governs its dynamics."[21] Conway too supports this view, avowing that, terrorists use the Internet for the purposes of information provision, networking, recruitment, information gathering and financing.[22] Mates opined that it makes the risk of cyber-attacks and other forms of attacks on information systems real.[23]

Terrorists have been known to hack into computer systems and steal personal information and disrupt services, for example, in the corporate and governmental levels of society.[24] While it has not been widespread, there have been reports of unauthorised hacking against government agency websites and emails of private citizens in the Caribbean region including T&T by persons affiliated with terrorist organisations.[25]

**Impact of Radicalisation**

Individuals seeking a sense of identity or belonging in a close group exposes them to the risk of radicalisation. Radicalisation is described as a process by which individuals and groups

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[21]Paganini, Pierluigi. The Role of Technology in Modern. February 3, 2018. http://resources.infosecinstitute.com/the-role-of-technology-in-modern-terrorism/Terrorism, 1.
[22]Conway, Maura. Terrorist 'Use' Of The Internet and Fighting Back. September 2005.
https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/archive/downloads/research/cybersafety/papers/maura_ conway.pdf, 3.
[23]Mates, Michael. Technology and Terrorism. April 2001.
https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/ul_kom/natopa/raporlar/bilim%20ve%20teknoloji/AU%20121%20STC%20Terrorism.htm, 3.
[24]*Ibid*, 6.
[25]Caribbean 360. Website of Jamaica's government information agency hacked. June 23, 2015. http://www.caribbean360.com/news/website-of-jamaicas-government-information-agency-hacked, 2.

become socialised to a particular view or ideology considered radical or extreme regarding political, social or religious ideals and aspirations that reject the current status quo. It encompasses a tendency towards or support for the use of violence as a justified means to an end, in the name of religion.[26]

Approximately five percent of the T&T's population is Muslim; a number that has raised global security concerns.[27] Ellis indicates that, the majority of the Foreign Fighters (FFs) recruited originated from those gangs identifying themselves as Islamic.[28] Religion is not the problem but it becomes problematic "… because religion brings a whole host of absolutistic symbols and images and justifications that act as an accelerant to terrorism."[29]

It is said that based on socio-economic conditions precipitated, for instance, by lack of employment opportunities, feelings of alienation, discrimination, inequality and feelings of injustice are ripe conditions for young people to be attracted to and exploited by terrorist organisations.[30] In this regard, Millar was quick to point out that, addressing socio-economic conditions should be highest priority as they engender conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism "… and that governments …must offer a viable alternative to those who could be susceptible to terrorist recruitment and to radicalisation leading to violence."[31] As such, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 encourages countries to engage and empower young people through participation, protection, partnerships, disengagement and reintegration.[32]

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[26]House of Commons - Home Affairs Committee. Roots of violent radicalization. February 6, 2012. https://publications.parliament. uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect /cmhaff/1446/1446.pdf, 142.
[27]Bensman, Todd. Did the Maryland Terrorism Suspect Have Ongoing Ties with Jihadists in His Native Trinidad?, 2.
[28]Ellis, Evan. Gangs, Guns, Drugs and Islamic Foreign Fighters, 6.
[29]Gibson, David. Does Religion Cause Terrorism? It's Complicated. October 31, 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/31/religion-terrorism_n_944143.html-terrorism_n_944143.html, 2.
[30]Prange, Astrid. Islamic State and the mosques of Trinidad. March 25, 2017. https://www.dw.com/en/islamic-state-and-the-mosques-of-trinidad/a-38121529, 3.
[31]Millar, Alistair. Multilateral Counterterrorism: Harmonizing Political Direction and Technical Expertise. https://www.stanleyfoundation.org/publications/pab/MillarPAB1210.pdf, 1.
[32]Kim, Serin. Developing Strategies to Curb Incitement and Recruitment of Young People to Extremist Cause. January 2018. http://qatar.thimun.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/GA1_ExtremistCause_Kim.pdf, 3.

However, the government has been cited for humiliating "… Muslim men and women and locked them up, and accused them of crimes, and accused them of wanting to commit terrorist acts."[33]

**Returning Foreign Fighters (FFs)**

In October 2014, it was confirmed that US authorities detained a Trinidadian teenager who had intended to join the Islamic State (IS). Additionally, two (2) other Trinidadian males were identified as fighting with IS. Subsequently, the mother of one of the individuals pronounced that, her son joining IS was driven by the necessity to find a greater belonging.[34] Notably, it was stated that approximately 130 T&T nationals have travelled to Iraq and Syria to join the IS[35] which raised the fear that returning FFs would conduct terroristic operations in T&T.[36] This activity suggests that the threat of terrorist attacks in T&T is real. The situation was further exacerbated by the report that in July 2016, nine (9) Trinidadians were detained in Turkey having been identified as persons attempting to transit into Syria as FFs.[37] The UN Security Council Resolution 2178 articulated the concern that FFs may pose a serious threat to their country and member nations and furthered that, they are using their extremist ideology to promote terrorism.[38]

Media is an important instrument used by terrorist networks to good effect as the dissemination of information can project and influence their strategic interest and goals. In an

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[33]Prange, Astrid. Islamic State and the mosques of Trinidad, 3.
[34]The Caribbean Council. ISIS: a moment for Caribbean reflection. 2014. https://www.caribbean-council.org/isis-moment-caribbean-reflection/, 2.
[35]Bensman, Todd. Terror in Paradise: Trinidad and Tobago Is Now a Jihad Hotspot. October 8, 2018. https://cis.org/Oped/Terror-Paradise-Trinidad-and-Tobago-Now-Jihad-Hotspot,1.
[36]Ogilvie, Jaimie. Returning Foreign Fighters in the Caribbean: Issues and Approaches. January 4, 2017. https://publications.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/3476.pdf.2.
[37]Jamaica Observer. 9 Trinidadians nabbed on their way to Syria. August 1, 2016. http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/9-Trinidadians-nabbed-on-their-way-to-Syria, 1.
[38]United Nations Security Council. Resolution 2178 (2014). https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2178, 2.

interview posted in the terrorist magazine 'Dabiq', in August 2016, the threat to the country was

elevated when Trinidadian citizen, Abu Sa'd At-TRINIDADI, explicitly charged Trinidadians to

carry out attacks in the homeland.[39] He further urged Muslims to wage jihad on foreign interests,

such as, embassies and businesses[40] and making the streets run with blood.

The disquiet about returning FFs carrying out the mandate of IS by conducting terrorist

activities in T&T, is not farfetched.  This appeared to be the case with the terrorist attack in

Brussels, Belgium in March 2016[41] and the wave of terrorist attacks in Marawi City, Philippines

in 2017,[42] which were claimed to have been carried out by citizens who returned from Syria.

Additionally, Khalid Masood who committed the terrorist attack in London in March 2017, was

said to have been in Saudi Arabia between 2004 to 2009 where he received terrorist training.[43]

Notwithstanding the fact that there has not been a successful attack in T&T in recent times,

based on the aforementioned activities, the threat of an attack cannot be ignored or discounted.

In fact, in 2017, a combined local and international task force thwarted a plot to attack the annual

Carnival celebrations and arrested four persons.[44] The New York Times in 2017, cited American

officials as expressing consternation "that Trinidadian fighters could return from the Middle East

and attack American diplomatic and oil installations in Trinidad …."[45] The very recent attacks in

New Zealand serves as a reminder and was described as "… extraordinary and unprecedented

…."[46]

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[39]Caribbean Communications Network. Trini Isis Sniper, 8.

[40]IHS Markit. Returning foreign fighters pose risk to Trinidad and Tobago, 2.

[41]Hart, Michael. A Year After Marawi, What's Left of ISIS in the Philippines? What became of the ISIS-linked groups in Mindanao after the Marawi siege? October 25, 2018. https://thediplomat.com/2018/10/a-year-after-marawi-whats-left-of-isis-in-the-philippines/, 2.

[42]Banks, Martin. Three years after the Brussels attacks: The continued threat to Belgium of returning terrorists. April 2, 2019. http://brusselstimes.com/magazine2/14781/three-years-after-the-brussels-attacks-the-continued-threat-to-belgium-of-returning-terrorists, 1.

[43]Burke, Jason. The mystery of Khalid Masood's journey into violence and terror. March 12, 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/mar/25/the-mystery-of-khalid-masoods-journey-into-violence-and-terror, 3.

[44]Bensman, Todd.  Did the Maryland Terrorism Suspect Have Ongoing Ties with Jihadists in His Native Trinidad?, 2.

[45]*Ibid,* 3.

[46]Gunia, Amy, Gajanan, Mahita and Reilly, Katie. What We Know So Far About the New Zealand Mosque Shootings.  March 15, 2019. http://time.com/5552219/new-zealand-shooting-what-to-know/, 6.

**Government's Response**

Global and regional security challenges have increased in recent years, becoming more complex, multidimensional and fluid. As such, governments have a responsibility to protect its citizens and must take the necessary measures required to secure and defend its national sovereignty, territorial integrity and people against harm and danger. It has become incumbent on government and law enforcement to take immediate and appropriate steps to outlaw unlawfulness and ameliorate safety and security through the employment of anti-terrorist and counterterrorism strategies. National security strives to protect state political sovereignty, territorial borders and people against acts of aggression; whether internal or external.[47] In a secured world, citizens are able to live in peaceful and safe conditions, freely beneficial to their health and well-being.[48]

The T&T National Security Council in 2017, ratified a counterterrorism strategy to augment "… national counterterrorism operational capabilities and building national resilience in the event of an attack."[49] The provision of equipment, coupled with additional training in counterterrorism from the US administration has significantly enhanced the tactical capability and ability of T&T counterterrorism agencies to respond to terrorist threats. Additionally, with its continued partnership and counterterrorism cooperation with the US, an agreement was signed to establish the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) which would be employed at selected points of entry in T&T to identify terrorist or terrorist suspects.[50] The mutual sharing of intelligence information also formed part of the cooperation.

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[47]Mingst, Karen A., and Margaret P. Karns. "Maintaining International Peace and Security." In The United Nations in the 21st Century, 4th ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2012, 98.
[48]Africa, Sandy. "Human Security in South Africa." Strategic Review for Southern Africa, 37, no. 1 (2015), 181.
[49]U.S. Department of State. Chapter 1. Country Reports: Western Hemisphere, 16.
[50]*Ibid,* 16.

In 2018, the government took steps in amending its Anti-Terrorist Act (ATA) which interdicted terrorism-related actions within and outside of its jurisdiction. It proscribes persons from supporting or facilitating terrorist acts,[51] joining or training with terrorist organisations,[52] mandates citizens travelling to conflict zones to make such declaration; provides the framework for the freezing and confiscation of assets of terrorists and their accomplices[53] and includes increased prison terms and monetary fines. This effort was lauded by the US Government who set forth that "… the passage of amendments strengthening Trinidad and Tobago's Anti-Terrorism Act as a crucial step to bolster regional security."[54]

In furtherance of its Anti-Terrorist measures to address the concerns regarding FFs and their families, violent extremism and radicalization, the government established the Nightingale Team; a multi-agency group, encompassing government agencies, civil society members, academics and religious bodies[55] to provide workable solutions as "terrorism poses multi-dimensional challenges and requires multi-dimensional responses."[56] In response to the concerns of terrorism and in an effort to enhance and guarantee a safe and free region, the CARICOM Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CT Strategy) was implemented in 2018. The CT strategy incorporates prevention, deterrence, denial, disruption, defence and ready response.[57]

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[51] Republic of Trinidad & Tobago. Anti-Terrorism Act. Legal Supplement Part A to the "Trinidad and Tobago Gazette", Vol. 57, No. 93, July 26, 2018. http://www.ttparliament.org/legislations/a2018-13g.pdf. 467.

[52] *Ibid,* 476

[53] U.S. Embassy in Trinidad & Tobago. Country Reports on Terrorism 2017. https://tt.usembassy.gov/country-reports-on-terrorism-2017/, 2.

[54] U.S. Embassy in Trinidad & Tobago. T&T's strong partnerships is a model in the fight against violent extremism. June 28, 2018. https://tt.usembassy.gov/tts-strong-partnerships-a-model-in-fight-against-violent-extremism/, 2.

[55] Janca, Nadonya. George C. Marshall Center Hosts 1st Caribbean Counterterrorism Workshop. March 1, 2019. https://www.army.mil/article/217972/marshall_center_hosts_1st_caribbean_counterterrorism_workshop, 1.

[56] OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Guidelines for Addressing the Threats and Challenges of "Foreign Terrorist Fighters" within a Human Rights Framework. 2018. https://www.osce.org/odihr/393503?download=true, 6.

[57] Caribbean Community and Common Market. CARICOM Counter-terrorism Strategy, 4.

**Conclusion**

It is quite evident that the threat of terrorism appears perpetual, as terrorists continue to create mayhem with impunity and attacks are still being perpetrated despite an abundance of dynamic anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism measures. The war on terror is a progressively more complex set of interwoven battles which have become a remarkably global phenomenon.[58]

Terrorism can be aptly described as deliberate acts of violence that seek to create mayhem, poses several threat to the existence of human life, social, economic and the overall well-being of a nation's safety and security and spans across borders. The sad reality is that terrorists do not view themselves as being radical extremists and evil, but rather that their actions are justified.  But so extreme, blinded and brainwashed are they that they become disengaged from normal life and become unconcerned and closed with the loss of life of others (and even their own) and the damage resulting from their actions. Most importantly is their willingness to die for the cause.[59]

The island of Trinidad and Tobago has proven to be an ideal feeding ground for terrorists, in a society with a high number of Muslims and gangs and socio-economic conditions that translate into detached feelings of alienation and disconnect amongst these young Muslims. The Muslim movement's extremist rhetoric views against the status quo, coupled by their cry of discrimination and lack of opportunity engenders the alignment of these young men with terrorist networks.

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[58]Engelhardt, Tom. A New Map Shows the Alarming Spread of the US War on Terror: American counterterrorism forces are in far, far more countries than you realize. January 4, 2018. https://www.thenation.com/article/a-new-map-shows-the-alarming-spread-of-the-us-war-on-terror/, 5.
[59]Urquhart, Brian. Limits on the Use of Force in Crocker, Chester A., Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Asll. *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in a Changing World.* Washington, Dc: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2013, 273.

T&Ts geographical location within the transshipment zone and close proximity to South America, provides opportunity for an active gun trade between T&T and Venezuela which is manipulated by the numerous gangs in the country. The situation is further exacerbated by the region's free movement agreement which hampers effective border control and instead creates openings for these guns from Venezuela and humans to pour through its perforated borders. An island, where phenomenally, there is an oversupply of guns even for the normal gang needs is frightening.

While there have been significant efforts directed at fighting and preventing terrorism, the increased and rapid advances in technology have been fully embraced and retrofitted by terrorist organisations for their own devious activities and have allowed for more pervasive means of conducting their actions. This situation has the potential for debilitating and exponential effects as technology is harnessed to facilitate nefarious actions, per se, recruitment, radicalisation and terrorist financing.  T&T has not escaped this advancement as this methodology seemed to have worked quite well with the recruitment and radicalisation of Muslims to the point that many citizens left for Iraq and Syria to join IS in 2015.

Counterterrorism measures have been employed by the T&T government aimed at protecting citizens, and disrupting or eliminating terrorism. It was highlighted, that as part of counter-terrorism efforts, the government created a mechanism to counter this recruitment to violent extremism and address returning FFs through various processes with a view of minimising recidivism. Additional amendments were made to their Anti-Terrorism Act regarding illicit funds and significant increases in monetary fine and incarceration.

Regionally, national security programmes have to be created to disrupt extremist and terrorist activities and movements within CARICOM with an aim of improving preparedness and

defences against terrorist attacks, responding effectively to terrorist attacks and promoting a culture of resilience. This is critical and will go a long way in the fight against terrorism.

The constant threat of terrorism is real and is not only a national or regional conundrum but a global one and must be taken as clear and present danger to infrastructure, citizens and nation states. The undeniable and poignant quagmire is that "no matter how good security becomes, it will never be good enough to thwart all of the terrorist threats we face"[60] as espoused by Wagner. Therefore, it appears that the efforts against terrorism is without an end, thus, in congruence with the position that, *terrorism is a real threat to Trinidad and Tobago and consequently, the wider Caribbean Region and is not an over exaggeration.*

It is recommended that future research is conducted on the efficacy and robustness of Trinidad and Tobago's Anti-Terrorism Act and as a region, to critically examine which nations may be at risk and as vulnerable as Trinidad and Tobago, with an aim of addressing and redressing terrorism in the Caribbean.

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[60]Wagner, Daniel. Terrorism's Impact on International Relations. March 2003.  https://www.irmi.com/articles/expert-commentary/terrorism's-impact-on-international-relations, 1.

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