

YUNMUN XXX

Counter-Terrorism Committee

Topic 1: Terror Attacks on Soft Targets

As illustrated far too often in the past several decades, wars are no longer confined to armies and battlefields. Rather, terror attacks on civilian soft targets have become effective ways for countries or organizations to kill or injure thousands, while arousing fear amongst civilian populations in the process. It has proved difficult in recent years for law enforcement around the world to sufficiently protect civilian locations that are specifically designed to be open and inviting. Establishments such as malls, restaurants, and parks are constructed to incorporate heavy foot traffic, making it difficult to prevent attacks as well as to contain them if they do occur.

A study conducted for the World Economic Forum indicates there has been a sharp rise in global urban terror attacks since 2011.¹ Terrorists have shown no restraint in carrying out shootings, stabbings, bombings, and car rammings in institutions and public spaces around the world. In fact, one research study conducted by the West Point United States Military Academy concluded that “soft-civilian targets, including markets, bus stations, internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, and educational and religious institutions, were the predominant focus of suicide attacks conducted by Boko Haram between 2011 and 2017.”²

The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee held a briefing in June 2019 to address the vulnerability of civilian populations.³ While many ideas were discussed, no concrete measures were taken to effectively tackle the problem. The issue we will be addressing in our committee is how to create national, regional, and international partnerships among Member States to share information and experiences in combating soft target terrorist attacks. This project can serve as a forum to

¹ <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/CTED-Analytical-Note-Soft-Targets.pdf>

² <https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2017/08/Exploding-Stereotypes-1.pdf>

³ <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/news/event/open-briefing-counter-terrorism-committee-protection-soft-targets-local-engagement-public-private-partnerships/>

establish the best practices in preventing, investigating, responding to, and recovering from such attacks.

Delegates should consider the following questions when writing position papers and working in committee sessions:

1. How can states raise awareness in their central governments, individuals, cities, and businesses about the importance of protecting civilian soft targets from potential terrorist threats?
2. What particular measures can the CTC recommend to central and local law enforcement to investigate threats, prevent attacks, and respond to the aftermath of attacks that do succeed?
3. Are some civilian locations more vulnerable than others?
4. How can states balance both security and access to public spaces while preventing attacks?

Do not limit your research only to the topics mentioned above but these issues will springboard our discussions in committee sessions. I urge you to research this topic and your countries in depth so you can be prepared for the complex discussions we will be having.

Best of luck,

Shana Adler
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