CHAPTER V. THE DEFINITION OF TERRORISM: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL REGULATION AND POLICY

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Abstract *This chapter addresses the complex and contentious issue of defining terrorism within international law and policy. Despite the severe threat that terrorism poses to international and national security, resulting in significant loss of life and the disruption of societal stability, a universally accepted definition of terrorism remains elusive. This paper aims to clarify the current definitions and the challenges in reaching a consensus. The research investigates the various international and regional definitions of terrorism, examining key documents and conventions, such as the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TESAT), and other significant treaties and resolutions. Through a comparative analysis, the study identifies the core elements commonly recognized in these definitions: the unlawful and intentional nature of the act, the serious harm caused, and the primary objective of intimidation or coercion. Employing a qualitative research design, the methodology involves a thorough literature review and an analysis of international legal instruments and policy documents. The paper scrutinizes definitions from diverse sources, highlighting discrepancies and commonalities, and evaluates the implications of these definitions on international cooperation and legal frameworks. The findings reveal a fragmented landscape, where definitions of terrorism vary significantly across different international and regional bodies. The lack of a unified definition complicates legal proceedings, extradition, and*

international cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts. The paper underscores the importance of a clear and comprehensive definition to enhance the effectiveness of global counter-terrorism strategies and to ensure consistent legal standards. In conclusion, this paper contributes to the ongoing debate by mapping out existing definitions and proposing pathways towards a more cohesive international legal framework. It calls for intensified efforts to bridge the definitional gaps and to develop a universally accepted definition that can effectively address the multifaceted nature of terrorism.

Keywords: *terrorism, international law, definition, security, counter-terrorism, policy*

5.1. Terrorism as a threat to international and national security

Terrorism poses a significant danger and threat by instilling fear, disrupting societies, and causing loss of life and property. It undermines stability and security, often targeting innocent civilians and critical infrastructure to achieve political, ideological, or religious goals. The unpredictable nature of terrorist attacks makes them particularly challenging to prevent and combat, exacerbating their impact on global peace and security.

This is underlined in various strategies and policies at both the international and national levels. The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2004) has underscored that "acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy, threatening territorial integrity, security of States and destabilizing legitimately constituted Governments."

TESAT, or the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, is an annual publication by Europol that provides a comprehensive overview of the terrorism landscape in the EU, including statistical data, trends, and the analysis of terrorist

activities and counter-terrorism measures. The 2023 TESAT (Europol, 2023) again stressed that "terrorism constitutes an attack on our society intending to create fear and chaos among EU citizens" (p. 4). Speaking about numbers, TESAT indicates that "in 2022, 16 terrorist attacks took place in the EU and an additional 12 attacks failed or were foiled. While the attacks directly affected seven Member States, more Member States arrested suspects in terrorism-related cases. Tragically, four people were killed in terrorist attacks in the EU, two resulting from jihadist attacks and two from a right-wing terrorist attack" (p. 4)

Thus, the threat is evident and is always relevant; however, its definition is far from clear, as will be demonstrated below.

5.2. The problem and significance of defining terrorism

As Kalliopi Koufa, the United Nations (UN) Rapporteur on Human Rights and Terrorism (2004, p. 8), has pointed out, the issue of terrorism is one of the most controversial issues in international law and politics today. Perhaps no word in the modern language evokes such a range of emotions, from faith in radical change to rage and condemnation. The popular saying "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" is also reflected in the debate on the definition of terrorism, a problem that contributes greatly to the complexity of the issue (Vasiliauskienė, 2014, p. 32). The term "terrorism" itself (*terreur*) was coined to describe the policy of intimidation used during the French Revolution.

An early international legal document which aimed to define terrorism was the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism, which was adopted by the 24 Member States of the League of Nations on November 16, 1937. Article 1 of the Convention defined acts of terrorism as "criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public." The Convention specified the kinds of anti-state actions that were to be considered acts of terror (e.g.,

attacking public officials, heads of state and their families, or the destruction of public facilities). It required signatory states to enact laws making such acts extraditable offenses in the event one of their nationals committing an act of terror in a foreign country. The Convention never came into effect, in part because disputes among the Member States over the articles on extradition prevented ratification (Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism, 1937).

Terrorism is also difficult to define because it involves a political assessment of the actions and motivations of the individuals or organizations concerned. Often, the term is used irresponsibly in political disputes in order to humiliate the opponent, as the word "terrorist" itself is stigmatizing. Thus, it is often the case that the evaluation and labelling of terrorist acts depends on the sympathies and support of the evaluator, so that a terrorist attack might be labelled as a "fight for independence" by a state that supports the movement in question, while another hostile state would label it as a "heinous terrorist attack." However, these political considerations should not affect the legal content of the definition of terrorism (Vasiliauskienė, 2014, p. 31).

It should be stressed that international efforts to define the term terrorism are not as fruitless as they may seem at first sight. There is a reciprocal relationship between national and international law, so that provisions enshrined in national legislation can provide a signal to the international community as to the direction in which international law should move, i.e., which elements should be included in the definition of terrorism. However, there is also movement in the opposite direction, with international efforts to establish a single definition of terrorism having an impact on states, which then revise or introduce for the first time a definition of terrorism, as happened with Canada in 2001 (Wagner, 2003).

From a criminal law perspective, it should be noted that terrorist attacks differ from other "ordinary" crimes in that in the case of "ordinary" crimes, the chances of the police tracking down the perpetrators and solving the crime are greater,

as they may, for example, know how the crime is planned, allowing it to proceed to the very last phase and apprehending the perpetrators at the scene. Ordinary crimes usually have a specific geographic target and a defined victim base, so that skilled police officers can detect them and apprehend suspects. In the case of terrorist crimes, those committed by fanatical individuals are much less predictable, especially in the case of suicide bombings, where the date, time, and location of the attack can be changed in the blink of an eye (Lord Carlile of Berriew, 2007, p. 24). It is therefore relevant to define terrorism as a criminal offence and to identify the means that can be used to combat it.

Marcello Di Filippo (2014) observed that: "As far as international law and terrorism are concerned, reference may be made to enhanced inter-state co-operation tools; derogations from guarantees usually accorded to individuals (in human rights, refugee, or extradition law); special security measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council or other international agencies (including in the financial sector); the application of the international crimes regime; the attribution of violent activity to a state under the law of state responsibility; the justification of the use of armed force; and so on" p. 2).

5.3. The definition of terrorism in international law: the universal level

After the failure of the attempt by the League of Nations and thus lacking a comprehensive strategy, the international community's efforts to define mechanisms for combating terrorism were for a long time characterized by selective and random interventions. This is particularly noticeable at the global level: the UN and some specialized or related agencies adopted various piecemeal or sector-specific conventions that addressed specific aspects of the issue. Additionally, the offenses in these treaties were typically broad enough to encompass conduct regardless of whether it was motivated by terrorist, political, or other purposes. A partial shift from this cautious, sectoral approach occurred with the 1999

Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Di Filippo, 2014, p. 5).

Sectoral conventions[6] criminalize: offences committed on-board aircraft,[7] the unlawful seizure of aircraft,[8] and unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation[9]; acts against internationally protected persons[10]; the taking of hostages[11]; and acts against the safety of maritime navigation.[12] Further conventions include those regarding the marking of plastic explosives for the purpose of detection[13] and those prohibiting terrorist bombings,[14] terrorist financing,[15] acts of nuclear terrorism,[16] and acts against the safety of nuclear material and facilities.[17] These offences are considered terroristic in nature and there is some variation regarding which of these conventions are related to terrorism, but the approach remains the same – to consider the acts listed in all or some of these conventions as terrorist.

In 1972, the UN General Assembly created an ad hoc committee with a mandate to discuss the draft General Convention on Terrorism and define terrorism. This committee did not reach an agreement on the definition of terrorism, but

6 The list was taken from https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/8/17138_0.pdf

7 1963 Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed On Board Aircraft and 2014 Protocol to the Convention on Offences and Certain other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft.

8 1970 Convention for the Suppression of unlawful seizure of aircraft and 2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft.

9 1971 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation and 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation; 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation

10 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents

11 1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages.

12 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation; 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf; 2005 Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation; 2005 Protocol to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf.

13 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection.

14 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings.

15 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

16 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

17 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

in its report, it stressed that the main issue on which there was disagreement was whether or not the actions of national liberation movements should be included in the definition of terrorism (Duffy, 2005).

In the 1990s, the change in the international situation (the end of the Cold War and apartheid, the independence of African countries, etc.) made it possible to hope that a common definition of terrorism was within reach. In 1995, UN General Assembly declaration No. 50/53 (1994) indirectly defined terrorist acts as "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes," and stated that such acts "are in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or other nature that may be invoked to justify them."

To further develop the definition of terrorism, the General Assembly, via Resolution 51/210 of 1996, established a new ad hoc committee, one of the tasks of which was to reach agreement on a definition of terrorism to be enshrined in the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (hereinafter the Convention; Vasiliauskienė, 2014, p. 35). This Convention has not yet been adopted, but two other international conventions related to terrorism have been adopted during the Committee's work: the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted on 9 December 1999; and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adopted on 13 April 2005.

The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (1999), even though it applies only to one element of the fight against terrorism, is a step towards a universal definition of terrorism as it includes the first abstract definition of terrorism in a universal international legal act. It states that "any person commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and wilfully, provides

or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out: (a) An act which constitutes an offence within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the annex; or (b) Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act" (Art. 2).

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the international community unanimously condemned terrorism, expressing its support for the conventions already adopted and its determination to adopt the conventions under preparation (Duffy, 2005, p. 20). The states participating in the Committee's work have been unanimous in their condemnation of terrorism in whatever form it may take. However, this was not enough to adopt the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (2000). Most of the text of the Convention has been agreed on, but there are still outstanding issues.

The main aims of the states drafting Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (2000) are:

1) "the suppression of acts of international terrorism, including those which are committed or supported by States, directly or indirectly", which in the opinion of the drafters of the Convention, "is an essential element in the maintenance of international peace and security and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States", and
2) "to take effective measures to prevent acts of terrorism and to ensure that perpetrators of terrorist acts do not escape prosecution and punishment by providing for their extradition or prosecution."

Thus, it is mostly aimed at ensuring domestic prosecution for terrorist acts and their perpetrators.

Speaking about the proposed definition of terrorism, Article 2 defines

terrorism as an "offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person, by any means, unlawfully and intentionally, does an act intended to cause:

(a) Death or serious bodily injury to any person; or
(b) Serious damage to a State or government facility, a public transportation system, communication system or infrastructure facility with the intent to cause extensive destruction of such a place, facility or system, or where such destruction results or is likely to result in major economic loss;

when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."

The Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (2000) outlines additional offences related to the acts of terrorism described in Article 2. It criminalizes attempts, participation as an accomplice, and involvement in organizing, directing, instigating, aiding, abetting, facilitating, or counselling the commission of terrorist acts. Furthermore, it addresses contributions to these offences by groups with a common purpose, emphasizing that such contributions must be intentional, aimed at furthering the group's criminal activities, or made with knowledge of the group's intentions. The Convention specifies that it does not apply to offences committed within a single state by its nationals if no other state has jurisdiction under specific conditions (Art. 2–3).

To ensure the effectiveness of the Convention, each state party is required to adopt necessary measures to establish the outlined terrorist acts as criminal offences under domestic law and to impose appropriate penalties reflecting the gravity of these offences. Additionally, states must implement legislation ensuring that such criminal acts are not justifiable by political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious, or other similar considerations. The Convention also mandates that each state party establish its jurisdiction over these offences when committed within its territory, on board its registered ships or aircraft, or in other

specified situations (Art. 4–5).

5.4. Regional definitions of terrorism

The Council of Europe. The European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (1977) defines terrorism by referencing the offences previously prohibited by other international conventions. It aims at strengthening the extradition of persons suspected of terrorism. Article 1 states that "for the purposes of extradition between Contracting States, none of the following offences shall be regarded as a political offence or as an offence connected with a political offence or as an offence inspired by political motives:

a) an offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague on 16 December 1970;
b) an offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on 23 September 1971;
c) a serious offence involving an attack against the life, physical integrity or liberty of internationally protected persons, including diplomatic agents;
d) an offence involving kidnapping, the taking of a hostage or serious unlawful detention;
e) an offence involving the use of a bomb, grenade, rocket, automatic firearm or letter or parcel bomb if this use endangers persons;
f) an attempt to commit any of the foregoing offences or participation as an accomplice of a person who commits or attempts to commit such an offence."

The Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (2005) adopts a similar approach to that of the 1977 Convention, where it defines a terrorist offence as "any of the offences within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the Appendix."[18] A State Party may make a reservation of

18 The Appendix lists the following treaties: 1) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague on 16 December 1970; 2) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation, concluded at Montreal on 23 September 1971; 3) Convention on the Prevention and

non-application regarding certain treaties which have not yet entered into force for that particular state. After their entry into force, the reservation ceases to be valid.

The European Union. Directive (EU) 2017/541 (2017) aims to adapt EU law to evolving terrorist threats by establishing minimum rules for defining terrorism-related offences and sanctions, and by introducing measures for the protection, support, and assistance of victims. Article 3 sets a general definition of terrorism, not linked to the list of international conventions. Article 3 states that terrorist offences are the following intentional acts, which, given their nature or context, may seriously damage a country or an international organization:

(a) attacks upon a person's life which may cause death;
(b) attacks upon the physical integrity of a person;
(c) kidnapping or hostage-taking;
(d) causing extensive destruction to a government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss;
(e) seizure of aircraft, ships or other means of public or goods transport;
(f) manufacture, possession, acquisition, transport, supply or use of explosives or weapons, including chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons, as well as research into, and development of, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons;
(g) release of dangerous substances, or causing fires, floods or explosions, the effect of which is to endanger human life;

Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, Including Diplomatic Agents, adopted in New York on 14 December 1973; 4) International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, adopted in New York on 17 December 1979; 5) Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, adopted in Vienna on 3 March 1980; 6) Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, done at Montreal on 24 February 1988; 7) Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, done at Rome on 10 March 1988; 8) Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, done at Rome on 10 March 1988; 9) International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted in New York on 15 December 1997; 10) International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted in New York on 9 December 1999; 11) International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, adopted in New York on 13 April 2005.

(h) interfering with or disrupting the supply of water, power or any other fundamental natural resource, the effect of which is to endanger human life;
(i) illegal system interference, as referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2013/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (19) in cases where Article 9(3) or point (b) or (c) of Article 9(4) of that Directive applies, and illegal data interference, as referred to in Article 5 of that Directive in cases where point (c) of Article 9(4) of that Directive applies;
(j) threatening to commit any of the acts listed in points (a) to (i)."

Furthermore, Directive (EU) 2017/541 states that the abovementioned acts have to be committed with one of the following aims:

(a) seriously intimidating a population;
(b) unduly compelling a government or an international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act;
(c) seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation" (Art. 3).

Directive (EU) 2017/541 also requires states to criminalize the following offences relating to a terrorist group: "directing a terrorist group; participating in the activities of a terrorist group, including by supplying information or material resources, or by funding its activities in any way, with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the terrorist group" (Art. 4).

The League of Arab States. The definition of terrorism provided in the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism (1998, Art. 1(2)) defines terrorism as "any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs in the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda and seeking to sow panic among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or seeking to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupying or seizing them, or

seeking to jeopardize a national resources."

It defines a terrorist offence by offering a general definition, also adding a list of conventions which define terrorist acts. Hence, a terrorist offence is "any offence or attempted offence committed in furtherance of a terrorist objective in any of the Contracting States, or against their nationals, property or interests, that is punishable by their domestic law. The offences stipulated in the following conventions, except where conventions have not been ratified by Contracting States or where offences have been excluded by their legislation, shall also be regarded as terrorist offences:

a. The Tokyo Convention on offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, of 14 September 1963;
b. The Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, of 16 December 1970;
c. The Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, of 23 September 1971, and the Protocol thereto of 10 May 1984;
d. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, of 14 December 1973;
e. The International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, of 17 December 1979;
f. The provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, of 1982, relating to piracy on the high seas" (Art. 1(3)).

This definition is very broad, as there is no criterion of significant harm to distinguish the crime of terrorism from similar acts that are not considered terrorist attacks because the harm caused is minor. This leaves room for abuse, whereby acts carried out, for example, in the exercise of the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, or in similar cases, could also be considered terrorist attacks. The range of objects covered by the definition of terrorism is also much broader than, for example, the EU definition, as it is foreseen that threats to the

freedom or security of individuals are also considered as part of a terrorist attack (Vasiliauskienė, 2014, p. 40).

The Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Convention of the Organisation of The Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism (1999) aims to "to combat[e] all forms and manifestations of terrorism and eliminating its objectives and causes which target the lives and properties of people." Article 1 of this Convention also defines terrorism quite broadly, almost replicating the definition of the League of Arab States Convention but adding that terrorism also includes threats to international infrastructure or to the stability, territorial integrity, political unity, or sovereignty of independent states.

The Organization of American States. The OAS has adopted two conventions on the question of fighting terrorism. The Convention to Prevent and Punish the Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion that are of International Significance (1971, Art. 1–2) defines prohibited acts as kidnapping, murder, and other assaults against individuals who are accorded special protection under international law, as well as extortion related to these crimes. These acts are considered common crimes of international significance, irrespective of the motive behind them. The contracting states agree to cooperate and take effective measures, as per their own laws and the Convention, to prevent and punish these acts of terrorism. The second anti-terrorism treaty, the 2002 Inter-American Convention against Terrorism, which was negotiated and adopted following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, also adopts a list approach regarding the definition of terrorism.[19]

19 **Article 2. Applicable international instruments**
1.For the purposes of this Convention, "offenses" means the offenses established in the international instruments listed below:
a. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, signed at The Hague on December 16, 1970.
b. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on September 23, 1971.
c. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14, 1973.

The African Union. The definition of terrorism of the African Union (previously the Organisation of African Unity) is included in Organisation of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism (1999). Article 1 defines a terrorist act as "any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to:

i) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or
ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or
iii) create general insurrection in a State."

It further criminalizes "any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or procurement of any person with the intent to commit any act referred to" above.

The Convention (1999) includes an exception regarding the self-determination of peoples. Article 3 states that "notwithstanding the provisions of Article 1, the struggle waged by peoples in accordance with the principles of international

d. International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 17, 1979.
e. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, signed at Vienna on March 3, 1980.
f. Protocol on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, signed at Montreal on February 24, 1988.
g. Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, done at Rome on March 10, 1988.
h. Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, done at Rome on March 10, 1988.
i. International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 15, 1997.
j. International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1999.

law for their liberation or self-determination, including armed struggle against colonialism, occupation, aggression and domination by foreign forces shall not be considered as terrorist acts."

This definition defines the purpose of such an act quite broadly, introducing a new element – the intention to cause a general uprising in the state. The harm caused is defined as grave harm – a threat to life, health, liberty, or the large-scale violation of these goods. The key elements of this definition are therefore the unlawful nature of the act, the serious harm caused, and the purpose of the act – to intimidate, disrupt public services, or cause a general uprising (Vasiliauskienė, 2014, p. 42).

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (1987) deals with extradition issues and adopts a dual approach, providing a list of acts prohibited by certain conventions[20] and as well indicating that "murder, manslaughter, assault causing bodily harm, kidnapping hostage-taking and offences relating to firearms, weapons, explosives and dangerous substances when used as a means to perpetrate indiscriminate violence involving death or serious bodily injury to persons or serious damage to property" will be considered as terroristic and shall not be regarded as political offences. The Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism (2004) aimed at combating the financing of terrorism adds the element of the purpose to the definition: the act is considered terrorist where the purpose of the act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate the public or to compel a government or an international organization to perform or refrain from performing a particular act (Art. 3(1)(b)).

20 Article 1 states: „An offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, […]; An offence within the scope of the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful acts against the safety of Civil Aviation, […]; An offence within the scope of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, […]; An offence withing the scope of Any Convention to which SAARC Member States concerned are parties and which obliges the parties to prosecute or grant extradition".

Thus, in virtually all regions of the world, international organizations have adopted treaties that in one way or another define or regulate the definition of terrorism. The OAS and Council of Europe conventions relating to terrorism define terrorism only in terms of acts that are already prohibited by other conventions regulating terrorist acts, with the aim of regulating extradition procedures. In contrast, other conventions reflect, more or less broadly, the basic elements of the definition of terrorism: the seriousness of the act and the terroristic objective. Thus, it can be stated that international law defining terrorism is dominated by sectoral regulation, defining and prohibiting particular types of terrorist attacks. Although there is no accepted universal definition of terrorism, an analysis of various international treaties and resolutions suggests that terrorism as a criminal offence is defined as an unlawful and intentional act by a person which causes death or serious bodily injury to a person or serious damage to public or private property, if the purpose of the act is to intimidate the public or to compel a government or an international organization to perform or refrain from performing an act (Vasiliauskienė, 2014, pp. 43–44).

Conclusions

In 1972, the UN General Assembly formed an ad hoc committee to draft a General Convention on Terrorism and define terrorism, but it failed to agree on a definition, particularly regarding whether actions by national liberation movements should be included. The 1990s saw renewed hope for a consensus due to significant global changes, leading to the UN's 1995 declaration indirectly defining terrorism as criminal acts intended to provoke terror for political purposes. In 1996, the General Assembly established another ad hoc committee to finalize a definition in the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, which remains unadopted, although significant related conventions were established, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of

Terrorism in 1999. Post-9/11, the global consensus against terrorism strengthened, but unresolved issues have delayed the adoption of the comprehensive Convention, which aims to suppress international terrorism, ensure the prosecution of perpetrators, and prevent terrorist acts, with Article 2 detailing the proposed definition and criminalizing related offences.

International organizations worldwide have adopted treaties that define or regulate terrorism. The OAS and Council of Europe conventions focus on acts already prohibited by other conventions, primarily to regulate extradition procedures. Other conventions incorporate the core elements of terrorism: the seriousness of the act and the terrorist objective. International law on terrorism is thus dominated by sectoral regulation, targeting specific types of attacks. While there is no universal definition, various treaties and resolutions suggest that terrorism involves unlawful, intentional acts causing death, serious injury, or significant property damage, aimed at intimidating the public or coercing governments or international organizations.

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