



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

Global Terrorism Index 2026 Highlights Growing Concentration, Digitalisation and Conflict-Linked Evolution of Global Terrorism Landscape

Published On: 23-07-2026

Recent Developments:

- The **13th edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026** reported that **terrorism-related deaths declined by 28%** and **terrorist incidents fell by 22%** in 2025, recording the **lowest levels since 2007**.
- Despite the overall decline, the report highlighted that **terrorism is becoming more concentrated, decentralised, digitally driven and closely linked to armed conflicts**, creating new challenges for global security.
- The **Global Terrorism Index** is published annually by the **Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)**, an independent, non-profit think tank headquartered in **Sydney, Australia**.

Global Terrorism Index (GTI):

About GTI:

- The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI)** is the world's leading report measuring the impact of terrorism across **163 countries**, covering about **99.7% of the global population**.
- The index evaluates countries using **four indicators, number of terrorist incidents, fatalities, injuries and hostages**, with scores calculated using a **five-year weighted average** to reflect the long-term impact of terrorism.
- The report uses data from the **IEP Terrorism Tracker** and other verified datasets to analyse long-term global terrorism trends.

Major Findings of GTI 2026:

- **Global terrorism** continued its downward trend, with **5,582 deaths** and **2,944 incidents** recorded during 2025, representing the lowest levels in nearly two decades.
- **Pakistan** became the **most terrorism-affected country** for the first time, while **India ranked 13th** globally.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa**, particularly the **Sahel region**, remained the global epicentre of terrorism, accounting for more than half of worldwide terrorism deaths.
- **Islamic State (IS)** remained the world's deadliest terrorist organisation, while **JNIM, TTP, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** and **Al-Shabaab** continued to dominate regional terrorist activity.

Emerging Trends in Global Terrorism:

Geographical Concentration:

- Nearly **70% of global terrorism-related deaths** occurred in **Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**, indicating increasing geographical concentration.
- Terrorism is shifting from a global phenomenon to a **few high-intensity conflict zones**.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Conflict-Driven Terrorism:

- Nearly **99% of terrorism-related deaths** occurred in countries experiencing **armed conflict, fragile governance or political instability**, highlighting the strong relationship between conflict and violent extremism.

Digitalisation and Decentralisation:

- Terrorist organisations increasingly rely on **online radicalisation, encrypted communication, social media recruitment, lone-wolf attacks and autonomous cells**, making early detection more difficult.
- **Youth radicalisation** has emerged as a major concern, with lone-wolf attacks becoming increasingly common in Western countries.

Border-Centric Terrorism:

- More than **three-fourths of terrorist attacks** occurred within **100 km of international borders**, facilitating infiltration, arms trafficking, illegal financing and movement of militants.

Adaptive Terror Networks:

- Terrorist organisations increasingly function through **smaller decentralised modules**, exploit local grievances and rapidly modify operational tactics to evade counter-terrorism responses.

Impact of Geopolitical Conflicts:

- Prolonged conflicts in **West Asia**, political instability and fragile states continue to create favourable conditions for terrorist resurgence and emergence of new extremist organisations.

Understanding Terrorism:

Meaning of Terrorism:

- There is **no universally accepted legal definition** of terrorism because of differing political, legal and diplomatic perspectives among countries.
- Most accepted definitions include **use or threat of violence, targeting civilians or non-combatants, creation of fear and pursuit of political, ideological or religious objectives**.

United Nations Perspective:

- The **United Nations** broadly describes terrorism as criminal acts intended to cause death or serious injury, spread terror among civilians or compel governments and international organisations to act.

Legal Position in India:

- The **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023** defines terrorist acts as activities threatening **India's sovereignty, unity, integrity, security or economic stability** through violence, destruction of critical infrastructure, kidnapping or counterfeit currency.
- **Section 15 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)** provides India's principal statutory definition of a **terrorist act**, while **Section 2(1)(k)** links the legal interpretation of terrorism to this provision.

India's Counter-Terrorism Doctrine:

Zero-Tolerance Policy:

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- India follows a **zero-tolerance approach** that rejects any distinction between terrorists and their sponsors while maintaining that no political, ideological or religious cause can justify terrorism.

Proactive and Preventive Strategy:

- India's doctrine has shifted from **reactive response to intelligence-led preventive action**, supported by **precision operations**, enhanced surveillance and calibrated retaliation.
- The doctrine has been demonstrated through the **2016 Surgical Strikes**, **2019 Balakot Air Strike** and **Operation Sindoor (2025)**.

PRAHAAR Framework:

- The **PRAHAAR Framework** institutionalises **intelligence-led pre-emptive deterrence**, while clearly separating terrorism from any religion, ethnicity or civilisation.

Four Strategic Pillars:

- **Legislative Empowerment.**
- **Institutional Strengthening.**
- **Decisive Action Against Cross-Border Terrorism.**
- **Multilateral Counter-Terror Architecture.**

Four Pillars of India's Counter-Terror Policy:

Legislative Empowerment:

- **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019** enabled designation of **individual terrorists**, expanded NIA powers and widened jurisdiction over cyberterrorism and offences affecting Indian interests abroad.
- **National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019** strengthened investigation of offences outside India and attachment of terror-linked properties.
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Amendments** strengthened action against **terror financing, hawala networks and cryptocurrency-based funding**.
- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** introduced a comprehensive statutory framework covering terrorism, organised crime, recruitment, harbouring, financing and conspiracy.
- **Arms (Amendment) Act, 2019** strengthened firearm regulation through stricter penalties and digital licensing.

Strengthening Institutions:

- The **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** has expanded through increased funding, **53 Special NIA Courts**, additional regional offices and establishment of the **National Terror Database Fusion and Analysis Centre (NTDFAC)**.
- The NIA has achieved a **conviction rate of about 92.7%** in terrorism-related cases.
- The **Multi-Agency Centre (MAC)** integrates intelligence from **28 agencies**, while the **Cyber Multi-Agency Centre (2025)** strengthens cyber threat monitoring.
- **NATGRID** integrates immigration, banking, telecom and travel databases, connecting **11 Central User Agencies** and all **States and Union Territories**.
- **CCTNS 2.0** uses **Artificial Intelligence-enabled data integration** for seamless sharing of criminal intelligence.
- The **Assistance to States for Modernisation of Police Scheme** has enhanced forensic capacity, surveillance systems, secure communication and specialised counter-terror capabilities.

Operations Against Cross-Border Terrorism:

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- **Surgical Strikes (2016)** targeted terrorist launch pads across the **Line of Control** following the **Uri attack**.
- **Balakot Air Strike (2019)** targeted a **Jaish-e-Mohammed** training facility after the **Pulwama attack**.
- **Operation Sindoor (2025)** reinforced India's doctrine of swift, precise and proportionate retaliation against cross-border terrorism.

Multilateral and Diplomatic Counter-Terror Architecture:

- India actively participates in the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** framework to combat terror financing.
- India hosted the **3rd No Money for Terror Ministerial Conference (2022)** to strengthen global cooperation against terrorist financing.
- India continues to advocate the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** at the **United Nations**.
- India secured the **UN designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist** in 2019.
- **Tahawwur Rana** was extradited from the **United States** to India in **2025**.
- India maintains **Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism** with **27 countries** and **5 multilateral forums**.
- **BHARATPOL (2025)** connects Indian law enforcement agencies with **INTERPOL** for improved international coordination.
- The **Delhi Declaration (2022)** provides guiding principles for countering misuse of **drones, digital technologies, social media and online terror financing**.

Challenges Before India:

Cross-Border State-Sponsored Terrorism:

- Persistent support to terrorist infrastructure across borders continues to remain India's foremost security challenge.

Cyber and Digital Radicalisation:

- Encrypted platforms, artificial intelligence, deepfakes and anonymous communication complicate intelligence gathering and prevention.

Emerging Technologies:

- Increasing misuse of **drones, cryptocurrencies, darknet platforms and unmanned systems** has transformed terrorist capabilities.

Border Management:

- Difficult terrain, porous borders and maritime vulnerabilities continue to facilitate infiltration and illegal movement.

Balancing Security and Civil Liberties:

- Counter-terrorism measures must remain consistent with constitutional values, human rights and the rule of law.

Way Forward:

Integrated Intelligence:

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040

Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

- Strengthen **real-time intelligence fusion**, predictive analytics and Artificial Intelligence-based threat assessment.

Border Security:

- Expand **smart fencing, anti-drone systems, satellite surveillance and integrated border management**.

Counter-Radicalisation:

- Promote community participation, digital literacy, deradicalisation programmes and credible counter-narratives.

International Cooperation:

- Enhance intelligence sharing, extradition cooperation, financial surveillance and implementation of **UN Security Council** counter-terrorism resolutions.

Technology-Driven Counter-Terrorism:

- Strengthen capabilities in **cyber forensics, blockchain analytics, financial intelligence, biometric surveillance and drone detection**.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important International Counter-Terrorism Frameworks:

- **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)** is the first global strategy adopted by consensus to address conditions conducive to terrorism, prevent and combat terrorism, strengthen State capacity and uphold human rights.
- **UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)** coordinates implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** develops global standards against **money laundering, terror financing and proliferation financing**.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001)** obligates States to criminalise terror financing, deny safe havens and strengthen international cooperation.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1566 (2004)** provides widely accepted elements of terrorist acts despite the absence of a universally accepted legal definition.
- **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**, proposed by India in **1996**, seeks to establish a comprehensive international legal framework against terrorism but remains under negotiation due to disagreements over the definition of terrorism