



مركز الفكر

A Monthly Newsletter

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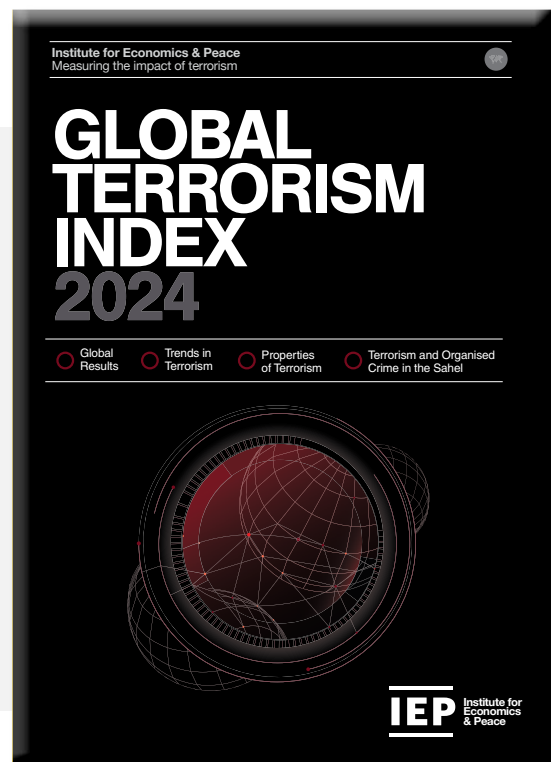
IMCTC Holds Ramadan *Iftar* Banquet

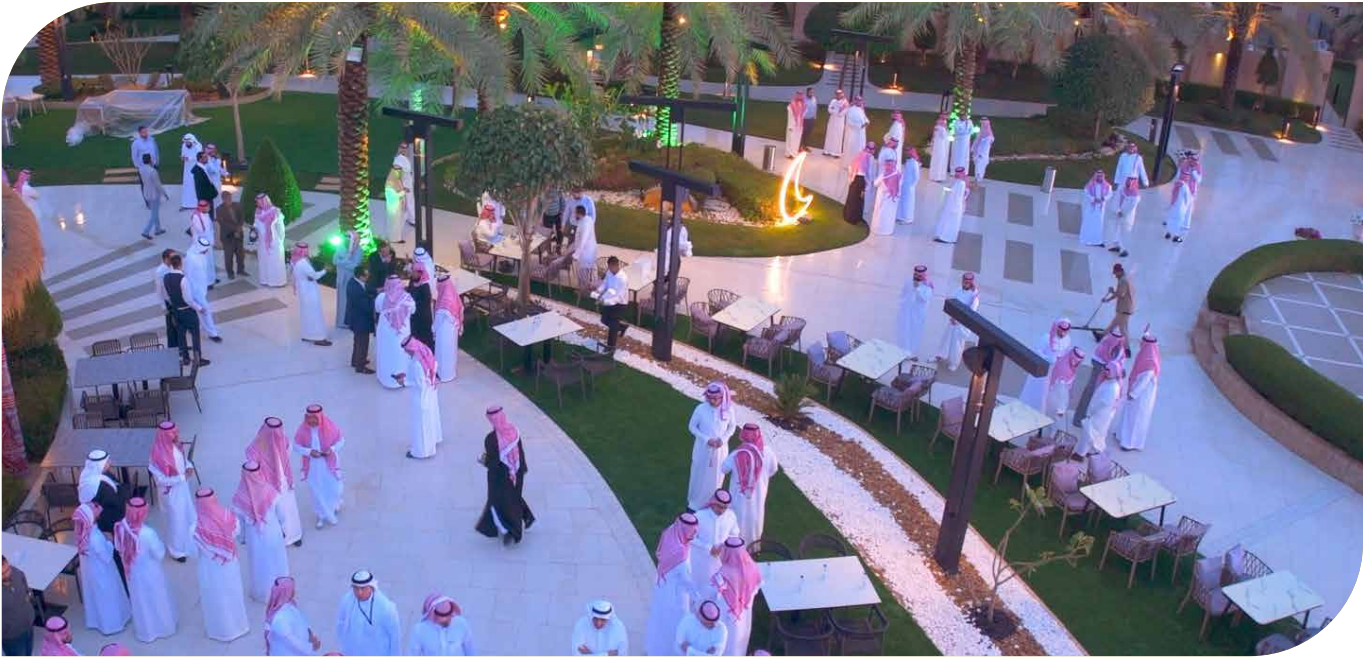


On Monday, 8 Ramadan 1445H, corresponding to March 18, 2024, IMCTC held its annual Ramadan *Iftar* banquet. The *Iftar* event was preceded by a speech delivered by IMCTC Secretary General, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Moghedi, in which he congratulated all Muslim peoples on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan. His Excellency also reviewed IMCTC values and objectives in seeking to improve IMCTC institutional efficiency and effectiveness. These events serve as an opportunity to strengthen the interconnection between the delegates of IMCTC Member States and its staff members and to enhance affiliation, extend bridges of communication, exchange opinions, and open channels of meaningful dialogue, in pursuit of the fulfillment of IMCTC goals and principles.

Overview of the Global Terrorism Index 2024

The 11th edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2024 was released at the end of February 2024, providing a comprehensive summary of the main global trends and patterns of terrorism. GTI is an assessment tool used to measure and analyze how widespread terrorism has become around the world. It aims to identify terrorist threats and their impact on international public security and stability. GTI was developed for the first time in 2007 by the Institute for Economics and Peace, an independent research institution that aims to enhance understanding and cooperation in the areas of global peace and security. It is worth noting that the index is published on an annual basis and depends on a wide range of reliable sources and statistical data. GTI serves as a valuable tool for the international community and for decision makers in their pursuit to understand the nature of terrorist threats and their development at the global level.

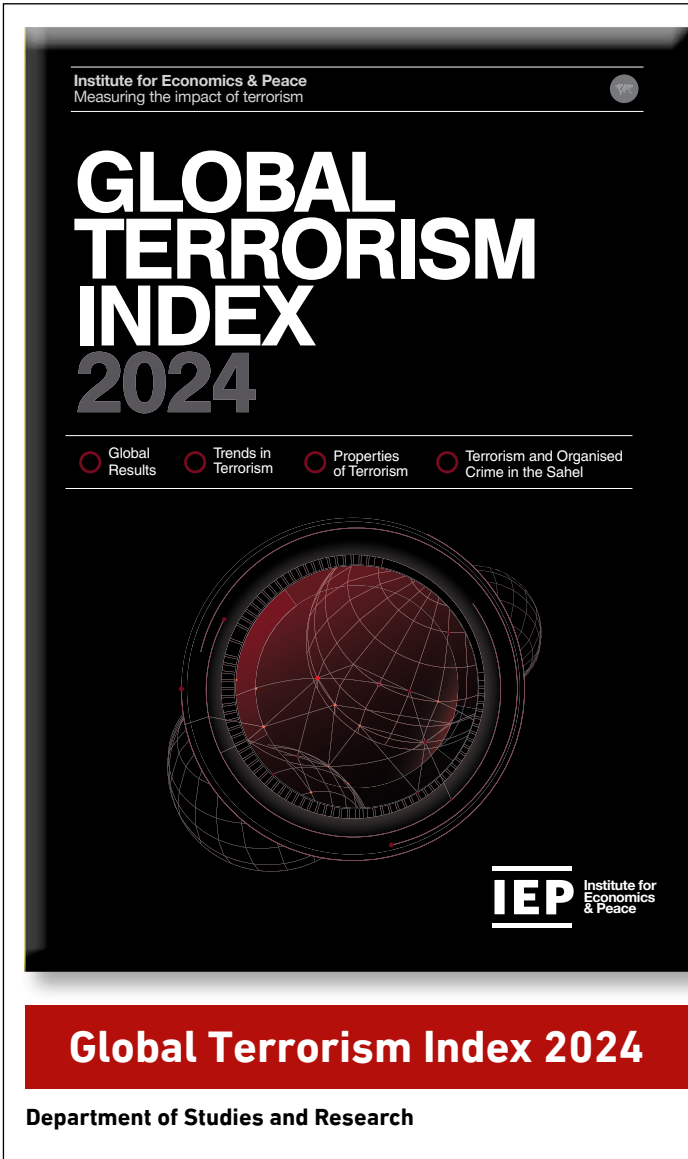




**Photo coverage of
the IMCTC annual
Ramadan Iftar**







The eleventh edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2024 was released at the end of February 2024, providing a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism since 2012. The GTI report is produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), using data from Dragonfly's TerrorismTracker database and other sources.

According to the GTI, in 2023, deaths from terrorism increased by 22% to 8,352 deaths and are now at their highest level since 2017, although they remain 23% lower than at their peak in 2015.

Whilst the number of deaths increased, the number of incidents fell, with total attacks dropping by 22% to 3,350 in 2023. Pakistan recorded the most incidents of any country, with 490 attacks recorded. The rise in deaths but the fall in the number of incidents shows how terrorism is becoming more concentrated and more lethal. The number of countries recording a death from terrorism fell to 41, considerably lower than the peak of 57 countries recorded in 2015 and the 44 recorded in 2022.

Burkina Faso is ranked first on the GTI for the year 2024. Throughout the previous years that the GTI covers, it is the first time a country

other than Afghanistan or Iraq has been top of the index. Almost 2,000 people were killed in terrorist attacks in Burkina Faso from 258 incidents, accounting for nearly a quarter of all terrorist deaths globally. According to the GTI, the impact of terrorism in Burkina Faso has increased every year since 2014, with terrorism also surging in its neighbors, Mali and Niger. In Burkina Faso in 2023, deaths from terrorism were up 68%, even though attacks decreased by 17%.

The most notable improvements in terrorism occurred in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iraq was ranked outside of the worst ten countries in the index for the first time, with less than a hundred deaths from terrorism recorded in 2023. Total deaths have fallen 99% since their peak in 2007, with incidents falling 90%. Afghanistan has also seen a significant improvement in the impact of terrorism, with deaths and incidents falling 84% and 75% respectively since 2007.

Worthy of note is that the GTI does not include acts of repression and violence committed by state actors and as such, acts committed by the Taliban are no longer included in the scope of the report since the group's rise to power. The deadliest terrorist groups in the world in 2022 were the Islamic State (IS) and its affiliates, followed



by Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), and al-Shabaab.

The Islamic State (IS) remained the deadliest terrorist group globally for the ninth consecutive year, recording both the highest number of attacks and deaths from terrorism. Although the group is still highly active, its impact has been falling for almost all of those nine years. Deaths attributed to the group and its affiliates – Islamic State-Khorasan Province, Islamic State-Sinai Province, Islamic State-Sahel, and Islamic State in West Africa – fell by 17% over the last year to 1,636, the lowest number since 2014. The group carried out attacks in 20 countries in 2023, down from 30 countries in 2020.

Terrorism had been falling or remaining steady for several years prior to 2023, with substantial falls from 2015 to 2019 followed by several years of minor fluctuations. However, the last 12 months saw the largest percentage increase in terrorism since the inception of the GTI, even as total attacks fell considerably.

This dynamic reflects an intensification of terrorism, with fewer attacks committed by fewer groups while causing a larger number of fatalities. The number of active terrorist groups has also fallen considerably over the past 15 years, with 66 groups recording at

least one attack last year, compared to 141 active groups in 2009. This increase in the intensity of terrorism has driven a rise in the lethality rate of terrorist attacks to just under 2.5 fatalities per attack, compared to 1.6 in 2022, the highest level since 2015.

Violent conflict remains the primary driver of terrorism, with over 90% of attacks and 98% of terrorism deaths in 2023 taking place in countries in conflict. All ten countries most impacted by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in an armed conflict. The intensity of terrorism in conflict is also much higher than in non-conflict countries, with an average of 2.7 fatalities per attack compared to 0.48 fatalities.

Terrorism in the West has fallen to its lowest level in 15 years. There were 23 attacks recorded in the West in 2023, a 55% drop from the prior year, and considerably lower than the peak of 176 attacks that was recorded in 2017. Total deaths in the West fell by 22% to 21 fatalities. Both political and religiously motivated attacks fell in the West. Of the seven attacks recorded in the US in 2023, five were linked to individuals with far-right sympathies or connections.

GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf (economicsandpeace.org)

Effect of Video Games on Children's Behavior

By researcher Dr. Nuwair Al-Qahtani
Department of Studies and Research

The progress of digital technologies has resulted in the emergence of many video games recently. These games have become so popular among children that they now constitute an integral part of their daily lives. Therefore, it is now quite important to examine the impact of these games on children's attitudes and to shed light on their role in directing children's behavior towards violence.

Major Reasons for the Spread of Video Games

Digital or video games have become a widespread and popular source of entertainment. One of the main reasons for the spread of these games is that by simply possessing a smart device, one can have easy access to such games. Besides, the diversity of these games has contributed to their adaptability to most interests and preferences. In addition, technical progress, fast internet speeds, and advanced graphics cards have made these games more attractive. Above all, some video games provide a multiplayer feature, thus enabling social interaction among gamers, giving these games a sense of competition and excitement, and increasing their spread.

The Covid-19 pandemic, lockdowns and quarantines have also increased the demand for video games among children. During such periods, traditional forms of entertainment, such as outdoor activities and social gatherings, were restricted, and online gaming provided a means for children to stay entertained, connected and engaged. However, it is significant to note that the popularity of online gaming among children also raises concerns about excessive screen time, potential addiction, and exposure to inappropriate content.

Relationship between Video Games and Violence

Many studies and research have examined the potential relationship between video games containing scenes of violence and aggressive behavior in children. Despite the differences in opinions, several studies have explored and highlighted this relationship, explaining that presenting violence as if it were a natural phenomenon in video games removes the barriers between children and aggressive behavior and normalizes violent behavior. In addition, continued exposure to virtual violence may also make it seem more

acceptable or less traumatic for children, thus affecting their real-world attitudes and behaviors and increasing aggression in real-life interactions. Similarly, the scenes of violence and aggression that children constantly see with their eyes become palatable to the mind over time, not to mention imitation, which poses a serious danger to children because it constitutes part of their behavior. Video games often include characters who perform aggressive actions, such as using weapons and throwing bombs. Such scenes offer the child a model to imitate, namely the strong hero or superman whom he takes as an example or role model. Research indicates that children might apply the aggressive behaviors they see in such games in reality. Excitement also plays a major role in enhancing the impact of video games on children's behavior. Violent games can create an increased sense of excitement in children. This emotional response aggravates aggressive behavior, as children may transfer these feelings to their interactions with others.

Concept of Cognitive Development

Cognitive development can be defined as the process through which a child acquires and develops his or her thinking, problem-solving and decision-making abilities. It includes the growth and maturation of various cognitive skills, including attention, memory, language, and abstract thinking. Cognitive development is also of great importance in shaping children's behavior in several ways. First and foremost, it helps children to understand the world around them and consequently makes them able to analyze cause and effect and to know the interrelationship between them. It also helps children to identify social rules and norms on the basis of which their behavior and their interaction with others are shaped. Problem solving and decision making activities also help to expand children's cognitive skills, and language development is an important aspect of cognitive development. When children learn how to express themselves and understand others through language, this enhances their ability to communicate effectively. Effective communication is also crucial in shaping behavior because it allows children to express their needs, share feelings, and participate in social interactions with peers and adults.

Cognitive development is a fundamental process that shapes

children's behavior through providing them with the cognitive skills necessary to understand, think, solve problems, communicate effectively, regulate their behavior, and navigate social interactions. It plays a vital role in promoting the development of experienced individuals who are capable of responsible and adaptive behavior.

■ Impact of Video Games on Cognitive Development

Online gaming can have positive and negative effects on cognitive development. This depends on various factors, including the type and duration of the game and the individual characteristics of the child. It is thus necessary to provide an account of certain ways in which video games can impact cognitive development in a positive way. This can be done through games that require players to solve problems and think critically and games that rely on memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility, as well as games that require players to multitask or manage multiple goals or resources simultaneously. Engagement in such games promotes better cognitive development.

As for the negative impacts of video games, they lead to a kind of excessive addiction or excessive screen time. Spending too much time playing video games leads to addiction and could negatively affect cognitive development. It also limits engagement in other activities that contribute to cognitive development, such as reading, outdoor play, and social interactions.

Another negative effect of video games relates to attention problems. Intense engagement in fast-paced, visually stimulating video games can contribute to attention problems. It also weakens social skills, especially in solitary games which lack direct social interaction. Excessive participation in these games can also limit opportunities for face-to-face social interactions, which are important for developing social skills and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, some video games provide quick and simplified solutions to real-life problems or solutions that lack connection to the real world. Thus, engaging in these games restricts exposure to real-life problem-solving experiences and hinders the possibility of transferring skills to practical situations.

■ Role of Violent Content in Perpetuating Violence

The potential impact of violent content in video games on children's attitudes, behaviors and cognitive development has been a matter of concern. This violent content would normalize violence and lead to desensitization to real-life aggression as a result of repeated exposure to real-life violence in video games. In this way, these violent games make children less sensitive to aggression and to the consequences and emotional impact of violence in real life, thus leading to the perpetuation and normalization of violence as an acceptable behavior. Children's habitual exposure to virtual violence blurs the line between virtual and real aggression, which may influence children and drive them to perceive violence as a common problem-solving strategy. Violent content in video games is also a catalyst for aggressive thoughts and attitudes.

Role of the Family in Monitoring Children while Playing Video Games

The role of the family begins with choosing games and ensuring that their content is appropriate for the relevant age group. This role also extends to the presence of family members from time to time in order to set limits, manage time, and monitor and train children in skills that can be used in games, such as critical thinking. In addition, they can monitor the interactions of their children and other gamers in order to protect them from being exposed to indecent language, cyberbullying or online fraud. In addition, the presence and engagement of parents with their children in gaming provides

them with an opportunity to communicate and spend quality time together. By sharing their children's gaming experiences, parents can better understand the content, participate in discussions, and foster a sense of trust and openness.

■ Guidelines for Video Game Designers and Developers

The creation of video games should be subject to several basic criteria to be more effective in achieving the desired positive goals. For example, they should be appropriate for the age group and should focus on positive goals, such as cognitive development. Following are some recommendations to guide video game designers and developers in this process:

1. Understanding the target age group: This requires comprehensive expertise and research in which experts, child psychologists, and specialists in developmental stages share their experiences on abilities, interests, and caveats, and on the basis of which game mechanics and contents should be developed.
2. Focusing on positive goals: These games should focus on interactive learning and on specific educational goals, such as enhancing problem-solving skills, critical thinking, creativity, logical thinking, exploration and analysis.
3. Balanced challenge levels: These games should, in terms of difficulty and ease, match the cognitive abilities of the target age group. This sense of progression is maintained by introducing progressively more complex tasks as gamers reach more advanced levels, while maintaining a balanced level of challenge.
4. Promoting multi-sensory learning: These games engage multiple senses through images, sounds and interactive elements. This enhances retention and understanding, especially for younger players.
5. Developing creativity and problem solving skills: These games incorporate open-ended activities that encourage gamers to think creatively, find unique solutions to challenges and allow for divergent thinking and experimentation.
6. Establishing a monitoring station for video games and applying strict rules with regard to quarrels or offensive language that gamers may use among themselves to control such negative behavior that indirectly leads those gamers towards violence.
7. Strengthening Parental Controls and Security Features: These games should activate features that allow parents to monitor and control their children's gaming experience, including content filters, time limits, and reporting mechanisms.

In addition to the above-mentioned criteria, in order for video games to be safer for children, parents should monitor their children while playing these games, first to control their behavior and also to maintain their health, by promoting a healthy balance between screen time and other activities. Playtime should also be controlled so that children would not abandon and replace physical activities and real social communication with virtual ones.

In conclusion, online gaming has become an integral part of children's lives, and its negative impact on their behavior, specifically by pushing them towards violence, cannot be ignored. Although online gaming has potential benefits, it also has risks, namely in terms of exposure to violence. It is important for parents, teachers and game content creators to collaborate and develop guidelines that balance the positive aspects of video games with the need to protect children from violent content that some games contain. Only through this cooperation can we ensure a healthy cognitive development of young minds in the digital age.



Meetings Industry

Department of Studies and Research

Based on global interest in developing economy and business tourism, countries are moving towards the meetings industry, out of belief in its effectiveness as an important element in the growth of the economy. The current revenues of this industry better reflect the general economic situation compared to other counterpart sectors of the economy. The meetings industry is an international term used to refer to the industry of exhibitions, conferences, forums, seminars, and other business events. The International Standard Classification of All Economic Activities, issued by the United Nations Secretariat, defines the "meetings industry" as a specialized commercial activity that offers a supporting service to governments, enterprises, bodies, and organizations. According to the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC), the meetings industry consists of a diverse range of organizers, suppliers, and facilities associated with the development, planning, and execution of business events held to achieve a set of professional, commercial, cultural, academic, and medical goals.

The major goals of the meetings industry include the following:

The objectives of the meetings industry vary depending on the type of meetings held under the umbrella of exhibitions, conferences, forums, and the like, whether they are artistic, commercial, industrial, or otherwise. However, they all accomplish common goals, including the following:

- Achieving economic growth, as an outcome of the strong interrelationship between the meetings industry, as an economic tool, and the economy, which represents a main goal of the

meetings industry;

- Developing business tourism through developing exhibition and conference centers, hotels and airports, as well as developing the regulatory environment, government procedures, and human capabilities;
- Promoting industries and strengthening communication channels between sellers and buyers, or among investors with common interests; this communication results in introducing investors to each other, sharing experiences, and concluding deals;
- Commercial and knowledge exchange and gaining experiences;
- Highlighting investment opportunities in the destination country where the exhibition or conference is held; and
- Providing career opportunities through developing and marketing human capabilities and resources.

In order to achieve the desired goals of the meetings industry, all forces that might obstruct or thwart this development must be avoided. This could be done by paying attention to the motivational aspect and promoting public engagement in the process of professional and product development, education, investment, and by hosting experts and sharing new ideas, products and technologies.

Effects of the Meetings Industry

The meetings industry has economic, tourism, cultural and social impacts. Economically speaking, this industry contributes to



revitalizing the economy. A report prepared by the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC) states that the revenues of the meetings industry represent the general economic situation more than other counterpart sectors of the economy because they stimulate investments and highlight investment opportunities in the destination country where the exhibition or conference is held. They also contribute to cultural and infrastructure development, and help in marketing products and stimulating publicity. The spending of international visitors to exhibitions and conferences on housing, transportation, and services leaves no doubt as to the fact that this industry contributes to stimulating the economy.

The impact of the meetings industry on tourism becomes clear through the tourist activities we notice during exhibitions and conferences. International visitors, or even locals who do not belong to the region, flock to hotels, travel agencies, and tour operators, which increases purchasing power. This would bring positive results and effects on tourism. Therefore, many countries link their tourism strategies with strategies for developing their exhibition and conference sector, noting that tourist trips for the purpose of attending exhibitions and conferences represent more than 15% of the total tourist trips in the world, with more than 135 million trips according to reports of the World Tourism Organization.

The meetings industry leaves a cultural imprint through the adoption of exhibitions and conferences, bringing in experts to contribute to the localization of expertise, providing national competencies with new and updated knowledge, sciences, and experiences, and developing the professional practice in different fields. This significant cultural impact becomes evident through

its outcomes, which mainly include developing the capabilities of people working in all governmental or private sectors. This openness to other cultures, cultural exchange, and revival of traditions and heritage all contribute to highlighting civilizations and their great cultural legacies.

The social effects of the meetings industry relate to exhibitions and conferences, which are considered a fertile environment for community engagement. These activities facilitate communication and bonding with the local community and with other communities having common interests. One of the fruitful outcomes of social exhibitions is that they are perceived as a useful means of spending free time for society members as these events improve their educational and training skills, and help them to gain experience and knowledge.

In this way, it is clear that the benefits of the meetings industry are not merely confined to exhibitions or conferences, as its impact is closely associated with capital gains. Worthy of note is that the meetings industry brings benefits to several sectors, including transportation, accommodation, retail business, logistics, space sciences, and renewable energy. These exhibitions and conferences thus offer an environment conducive to providing job opportunities and eliminating unemployment.

Achieving success in the meetings industry is dependent on adopting ambitious plans that focus on self-advancement and development by establishing useful programs and associations and benefiting from the experiences of other countries, as well as adopting the concepts of quality with regard to the meetings industry.

Workshop on Digital Battlegrounds



Who We Are ▾ What We Do

Webinar

14th May 2024

Digital Battlegrounds: Countering Radicalization on Gaming(-adjacent) Platforms (GNET Workshop)

The Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET), with support from the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), is hosting a virtual workshop on *Digital Battlegrounds: Countering Radicalisation on Gaming(-adjacent) Platforms*.

This workshop will feature a presentation from the team behind the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)'s new 'RadiGoMe' project, which explores radicalization and intervention measures on gaming (-adjacent) platforms and spaces, and fosters collaboration with law enforcement to identify high-risk users and illegal content.

This workshop will take the form of an interactive roundtable discussion between

When

Tue 14th May 2024 @ 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Where

Virtual

[Click Here to Register](#)

The Global Network on Extremism and Technology (GNET), with support from the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), is hosting a virtual workshop on Digital Battlegrounds entitled "Countering Radicalization on Gaming Platforms." The Workshop will be held in London on Tuesday, 14 May 2024

This workshop will feature a presentation which explores the

measures carried out to counter radicalization and strengthen intervention on gaming platforms and spaces. It also sheds light on fostering collaboration with law enforcement agencies to identify high-risk users and illegal content.

[Digital Battlegrounds: Countering Radicalization on Gaming\(-adjacent\) Platforms \(GNET Workshop\) | GIFCT](#)

Counter-Terrorism in the Age of Uncertainty

On Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 May, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) organizes its Annual Conference, under the overarching theme: "Counter-Terrorism in the Age of Uncertainty." The Conference will take place in the Hague, Netherlands.

This Conference is held in the framework of the efforts exerted to address the increasingly diversifying patterns and forms of extremism and terrorism that the world has witnessed

within the last years in order to develop durable counter-measures to handle this dilemma. The conference is expected to help paint scenarios of how these trends and phenomena will develop within the next few years in order to identify strategies to counter them while upholding the rule of law.

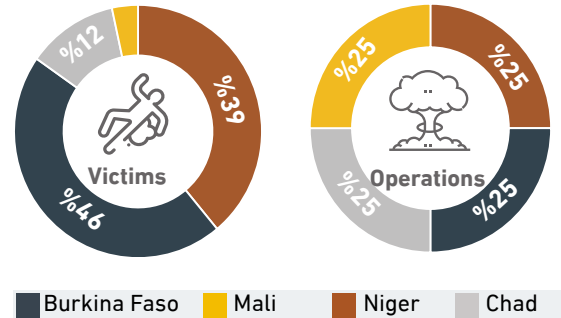
ICCT Annual Conference 2024 "Houston, we have a problem": Counter-Terrorism in the Age of Uncertainty | International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT

Terrorism in the G5 Sahel Countries during March 2024



During March 2024, the G5 Sahel Countries witnessed a decrease by 43% in terms of the number of terrorist operations, and a similar decrease by 8% in the total number of victims (deaths and injuries), as compared to February 2024.

Country	Terrorist Operations		Victims (Deaths and Injuries)	
	Feb. 2024	Mar. 2024	Feb. 2024	Mar. 2024
Burkina Faso	2	↓ 1	27	= 27
Mali	2	↓ 1	23	↓ 2
Niger	2	↓ 1	14	↑ 23
Chad	1	= 1	0	↑ 7
Mauritania	0	= 0	0	= 0
Total	7	↓ 4	64	↓ 59



Sectors targeted by terrorist attacks

	Military Sector		Civilians		Public Buildings	
	Victims	Operations	Victims	Operations	Victims	Operations
Burkina Faso	0	0	27	1	0	0
Mali	0	0	0	0	2	1
Niger	23	1	0	0	0	0
Chad	7	1	0	0	0	0

Terrorist operations and victims according to perpetrators

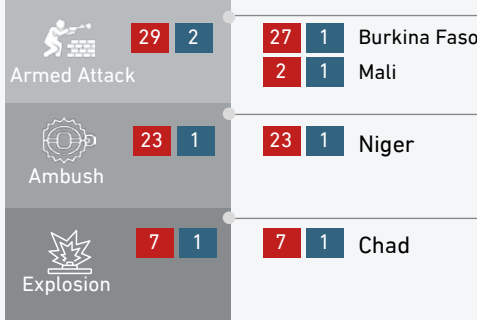
Daesh in the Greater Sahara

23 1 Niger

Boko Haram

7 1 Chad

Impact of terrorist operations according to perpetration method



Key Political and Security Developments

- **Burkina Faso:** The government of Burkina Faso, in view of the prevailing security situation on its national territory, issued a decree extending the general mobilization for a period of one year. The extension allows the country "to continue mobilizing resources, restoring security, and ensuring the protection of the population and their property from the threat and acts of terrorism."
- **Mali:** The United Nations has announced the end of its peacekeeping mission in Mali after ten years of its presence in the country. The spokesperson for the United Nations mission said in a statement: "The mission has officially ended a ten-year deployment of forces in Mali, in a pull-out ordered by Mali's military government."
- **Niger:** The spokesperson for the ruling military junta in Niger said that the junta has revoked, with immediate effect, a military

accord with the United States that allows military personnel and civilian staff from the U.S. Department of Defense on its soil.

- **Chad:** Human Rights Watch called for an independent, foreign-backed investigation into the killing of Yaya Dillo Djerou, Chad's leading opposition figure, before the elections scheduled in two months.

- **Mauritania:** EU countries and Mauritania have recently signed a joint declaration on hosting refugees, ensuring their protection, and enabling them to access services and on preventing irregular migration.

IMCTC RECEIVES DELEGATES OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

On Sunday, March 17, 2024, IMCTC received H. E. Brig. Gen. Abdulrahman Mohammed Turayre, delegate of the Federal Republic of Somalia, to assume his duties at IMCTC headquarters. IMCTC Secretary General, Maj. Gen. Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Moghedi, welcomed the Somali delegate and wished him success in performing his duties. Worthy of note is that the Republic of Somalia is an IMCTC Member State and is sending its first delegate to IMCTC premises, thus bringing the number of countries that have already sent their delegates to IMCTC headquarters to thirty-three.



IMCTC CONGRATULATES MEMBER STATES ON THEIR NATIONAL DAYS

IMCTC congratulated the Republic of Tunisia on the 68th anniversary of its Independence Day, on March 20, 2024. It also congratulated the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the 53rd anniversary of its Independence Day, on March 26, 2024, wishing both countries and their peoples more security and prosperity.