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International cooperation for countering terrorism within the UN: theoretical-empirical aspects

Cristina EJOVA*

Abstract

This paper explores the policies of the United Nations and specialized institutions concerning the coordination of international community efforts to combat terrorist threats. Terrorism remains a significant threat to international security, despite the war in Ukraine taking priority in terms of insecurity. In this regard, international cooperation aimed at countering terrorism remains relevant, and the actions taken between 2015 and 2018 must be expanded and intensified. Such cooperation requires the participation of a broad spectrum of actors in international relations, including states, governmental international organizations, and civil society. Terrorism continues to be a global problem, and multilateral cooperation is both timely and necessary to counter it. Terrorist movements have not taken a break, despite their lack of large-scale actions, as they continue to express themselves through the activities of crisis cells or lone wolves. Consequently, prophylaxis methods must be supplemented, considering the new forms of terrorism expression. The United Nations organization continues to prove itself as the institution authorized to develop the legal framework and coordinate international efforts to counter this scourge.

Keywords: international terrorism, international cooperation, United Nations

Introduction

One of the most pressing and discussed issues on the global agenda in recent years is the problem of international terrorism, as well as the activities of states and the international community in countering it. Terrorism is a real, long-term, and large-scale threat. Currently, it is one of the major factors affecting global development and shaping the socio-political agenda at all levels, from national to international. The threat of terrorism is transnational in nature; therefore, it cannot be suppressed by any state in isolation. Only close interaction of the international community is the most important factor in the effectiveness of implementing global anti-terrorist policy and efficient cooperation among participating states. International cooperation in the fight against terrorism is continuously based on building an efficient system for combating terrorism. The UN and European

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regional organizations have made the greatest contribution to strengthening international cooperation in the field of counterterrorism.

The study of terrorism as a scientific subject emerged relatively recently. At the same time, it has been influencing the development of society since the 19th century, but scientific works dedicated to this phenomenon only began to appear in the second half of the 20th century. It's worth noting that in the 21st century, in the Western world, the last stage of researching the phenomenon of terrorism in the social sciences began. In 2001, representatives of the main directions in socio-political thought in the United States paid special attention to international terrorism, associating this threat with the conflict between the Christian and Muslim civilizations. Of course, the role of the events of September 11, 2001, which provoked an immediate response in the scientific community, was crucial. Numerous works were developed to both explain the tragedy of terrorist acts and address the issue of terrorism in the modern world. Since that moment, terrorism has become a very important topic on the agendas of security experts, government agencies, and scholars, leading to the publication of numerous scientific papers.

A significant contribution to the research on the evolution of terrorism and its changing forms was made by D. Rapoport, the author of the concept of the “four waves” of terrorism. The researcher analyzes contemporary terrorism, treating it as a means of revolutionary violence through these “waves” of terrorism. The main criteria for distinguishing one wave from another are its global nature, common driving force, objectives, and strategy differing from the previous wave. The first wave, the anarchist one, occurred at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (1870-1920). The next one is the “anti-colonial wave,” beginning with the legalization of the principle of self-determination after World War I, followed by acts of violence after World War II, such as the civil wars in Algeria or Vietnam. The third wave (1960-1980) is known as the new left or Marxist wave. Marxist terrorists sought to dramatize their actions, using assassinations and assassination attempts on politicians as visible punishment for their policies. They also employed kidnapping and hostage-taking strategies to attract public attention. Unlike nationalist terrorists, they lacked broad support, which led to the collapse of this wave. The fourth wave (1970–2020) is the religious one, with Islam at its center. However, terrorist groups professing other religions (such as Sikhs in Punjab, Aum Shinrikyo in Japan, or Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka) are also included in this wave. During this period, religious terrorism gained momentum and became a global phenomenon (Rapoport, 2004).

A renowned researcher of the theoretical aspects of terrorism, Professor I. Primoratz from the University of Melbourne, in “*Terrorism: The Philosophical Issues*,” has classified definitions of the concept of terrorism based on three main content areas: defining terrorism through the lens of

violence; extensive and narrow definitions of terrorism; and non-standardized definitions of terrorism (Primoratz, 2005).

Noam Chomsky, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a representative of American “dissident alternative” thinking, is a consistent critic of U.S. administrations and their policies. Chomsky argues that the main sources of international terrorism are the world’s major powers, particularly the United States, in his case study. Other areas of analysis include the relationship between international terrorism and transnational organized crime, the introduction of concepts such as “Islamic terrorism” and “global terrorism” into the scholarly discourse, and an extended interpretation of the theory of asymmetric threats to international security (Chomsky, 2002).

One of the more recent significant works in this field is “*Counter-Terrorism: International Law and Practice*,” authored in collaboration by De. Frias, K. Samuel, and N. D. White. This work emphasizes the study of human rights mechanisms in the context of counter-terrorism, as well as the integration of international and national legal mechanisms in the fight against terrorism (De Frias, Samuel, White, 2012).

In the same vein, it’s worth mentioning the work “*Counter-terrorism strategies in a fragmented international legal order: Meeting the challenges*,” edited by professors L. van den Herik and N. Schrijver. According to the authors, a significant boost in the development of international law in this field will ensure the relationship between different branches of international law, the systematic application of its norms for combating terrorism, the use of a comprehensive strategy within the international legal framework, with a strong emphasis on international cooperation in preventing and investigating terrorism. This also includes broadening the foundations for the use of force against terrorism and the relationship between human rights law and international human rights law in the fight against terrorism (Herik and Schrijver, 2015).

Referring to the exponents of international relations theory who have contributed to the study of international terrorism to varying degrees, we can mention the following: neorealists such as K. Waltz and S. Waltz, who view terrorism as a tool of state foreign policy, used to achieve strategic objectives at the lowest cost without altering the structure of the international political system; representatives of the liberal institutionalism school, R. Keohane and J. Nye, who classify terrorism as a phenomenon that introduces structural changes in global politics and requires international community cooperation to combat it; constructivists like A. Wendt and A. Spencer, who focus on the socio-cultural causes of terrorism and the role of identity in shaping extremist ideologies.

K. Waltz, in his article “*The Continuity of World Politics*,” notes that the problem of modern terrorism is associated with an imbalance in the modern global political system caused by the dominance of the United States (Waltz, 2002, p. 20). According to the theorist of the

neoliberal school, R. Keohane, terrorism in the near future will be defined “inductively and operationally as acts of illegal violence that the vast majority of states, members of the anti-terror coalition, consider illegitimate.” (Keohane, 2002) From the perspective of J. Nye, terrorism is not the most prevalent threat in developed countries. In fact, it is a “form of theater” because the terrorists’ task is to attract public attention, not just to cause casualties. Social media platforms play a significant role in spreading terrorist acts, ultimately benefiting the terrorists, as they aim for extensive public outcry. Modern jihadist terrorism is a long-term phenomenon, “cloaked in religious garb,” and its emergence is attributed to the loss of identity due to globalization processes. To eliminate it, Nye suggests the use of “smart power,” which involves both tough measures to combat terrorists and “soft power” to prevent the recruitment of new terrorists (Nye, 2016). A. Wendt, one of the founders of constructivist international relations theory, insists that international relations are not something given but rather something fundamentally created. He emphasizes the influence of ideas and individuals and how they shape state policies. Thus, terrorism is inseparable from the discourse of national security within which it exists. Terrorists, in forming their identity, construct their own values (Wendt, 1999, p. 51). A. Spencer delves into the issue of identifying a universal definition of terrorism. He underscores that most researchers agree on the presence of violence in the concept of “terrorism” and the political motivation behind this violence. However, differences in defining terrorism are numerous and involve means and goals of violence, the nature of the targeted objects, the status of terrorism and its victims. Furthermore, there is no consensus on whether only the civilian population is considered the victims of terrorist attacks or if terrorist attacks can also be directed towards the police and the army; whether terrorism targets are specifically selected due to their symbolic nature or if they are random targets. Moreover, there are varying opinions regarding the goals of terrorism and its “communication strategy.” (Spencer, 2006, 1995)

The theoretical and methodological basis applied in the analysis of United Nations policies and specialized institutions concerning the coordination of international community efforts to combat terrorist threats, as applied in this article, encompasses an interdisciplinary approach to the study of terrorism. This approach has developed in recent decades through the interaction of political science with other scientific disciplines, including philosophy, sociology, and law. However, despite the multidisciplinary research on terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon, a universally accepted approach to analyzing the aspects of the research problem and research methodology has not been established within the scientific community.

We will emphasize that the methodological and theoretical-scientific framework of this research employs general scientific methods for understanding socio-political phenomena. This includes the *descriptive method and systemic, institutional, and structural-functional approaches*, which enable the scientific definition of the field of study, clarification of key categories, highlighting the conceptual aspects of the research topic, and outlining the prospects for the development of cooperation within the United Nations in combating terrorism, as well as identifying possibilities for improving the international legal means used in this fight.

The *descriptive method*, based on specific contemporary categories and concepts, has been extensively utilized to review events related to the evolution of combating and preventing terrorism within the United Nations. The *systemic method* involves treating terrorism as a comprehensive and holistic phenomenon, while simultaneously providing the definition of the systemic foundations of international counter-terrorism cooperation within the United Nations. Successfully countering terrorism is only possible through international cooperation since modern terrorism transcends national borders and takes on an international character. The *institutional approach* has facilitated the study of the United Nations' activities, including through the content analysis of their adopted documents and the formal aspects of their work. International organizations, particularly the UN, that operate in the fields of human rights, counterterrorism, and peace studies, have a greater influence on the changes and maintenance of the balance of the international security architecture. In this work, we utilize the theory of the *new institutionalism* in the analysis of international terrorism countermeasures through international institutions. New institutionalism highlights the influence of the behavior of individuals or groups on social institutions and the regulatory role of the restrictive framework created by institutions in human relations. Formal international institutions have the capacity to strengthen peace, reduce the risk of conflicts, and curb the growth of terrorist activities. In the research process, *structural-functional analysis* has been employed. The political aspects of countering international terrorism have been analyzed as a complex of structural components, each fulfilling a distinct function. This method has allowed for the analysis of international cooperation and legal regulation in countering terrorism, as well as the definition of the fundamental elements of the United Nations' anti-terrorist policy.

Next, the conceptual aspects of international cooperation within intergovernmental international organizations concerning the combat of terrorism, as well as the policies of the United Nations and specialized institutions regarding the coordination of international community efforts to combat terrorist threats, will be subject to analysis.

1. International cooperation in the fight against terrorism: theoretical aspects

Recently, there has been an active discussion about the necessity and importance of international cooperation in the field of counterterrorism. Despite some differences of opinion, all participants in the anti-terrorist discourse unanimously agree that successfully combating terrorism is only possible under the conditions and within the framework of international cooperation, since modern terrorism transcends national borders and acquires an international character.

In this regard, we consider it important to emphasize the importance of understanding the essence of the concept of “international cooperation” in its theoretical and legal context. International cooperation is a direct expression of peace and international security. The modern international system includes mechanisms for cooperation among its subjects. In the rapidly globalizing world of today, new forms of international cooperation are constantly emerging, as economic, financial, and information and communication interdependence in world politics increases (Tsygankov, 2019, p. 238).

Russian professor Tsygankov P. defines international cooperation as “various ways of cross-border interaction between subjects of the international system based on norms of international law and national legal systems, based on the principles of independence, respect for national sovereignty of state entities, and ensuring mutual benefit of the participants. International cooperation can cover a wide range of areas - political, economic, cultural, military, scientific-technical, and environmental” (Tsygankov, 2019, p. 239). New transnational structures constantly emerge on the world stage, and substantive, inter- and supranational actors are increasingly penetrating world politics, which become the subject of academic study.

Another Russian researcher, M. Muntean, notes that “international cooperation reflects a process of interaction between two or more actors in which the use of armed violence is excluded, and joint searches for opportunities to implement common interests dominate. Contrary to the ordinary understanding, cooperation is not the absence of conflict, but the “elimination” of its extreme, crisis forms” (Muntean, 2006, p. 176).

As rightly noted in the literature, the principle of international cooperation received conventional consolidation and universal recognition only in the 20th century. The idea of comprehensive cooperation between states, regardless of differences in their political, economic and social systems, is the basis of the UN Charter. In accordance with the Charter, states are obliged to engage in international cooperation in resolving international economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems, as well as to maintain international peace and security and take effective collective measures for that purpose.

Subsequently, the principle of international cooperation received a more specific substantive meaning through the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (Krysanov, 2018, p.23). According to this declaration, states are mandated to collaborate with other nations to preserve international peace and security. Additionally, they are obligated to work towards establishing universal respect and adherence to human rights and fundamental freedoms, while striving to eliminate racial discrimination and religious intolerance. In their international interactions within economic, social, cultural, technical, and trade domains, states must adhere to the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference. Moreover, member states of the United Nations are required to engage in cooperative efforts with the organization, participating in joint and individual measures as outlined in the relevant provisions of the Charter.

It should be noted that international cooperation does not arise without certain conditions. Among scholars, there is an opinion that international cooperation presupposes the presence of three elements: common goals of partner states, their expectation of benefits from the situation, and the mutual nature of these benefits (Tsygankov, 2019, p. 239).

Traditionally, cooperative relations involve bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, the conclusion of various types of alliances and agreements that provide for mutual coordination of political courses (for example, for the purpose of joint conflict resolution, ensuring common security, or resolving other issues of common interest for all parties involved) (Muntean, 2006, p. 177).

The evolution of collaboration between states and various actors in international relations has led to the establishment of a comprehensive network of global and regional intergovernmental as well as non-governmental organizations. The escalation of global interdependence and the emergence of pressing global issues have substantially amplified the necessity for broadening multilateral cooperation and have played a role in extending its scope into various aspects of human existence. In the contemporary era, international cooperation encompasses not only matters related to trade and peaceful conflict resolution but also the tackling of global challenges, including terrorism and other critical issues.

International cooperation is an indispensable element for the implementation of anti-terrorism activities, both in the development of a unified strategy to combat terrorism and eliminate its causes, and in the exchange of specialized data and other information. Terrorism has its own specificities in different regions of the world, which consequently dictates the need to adapt unified norms and strategic provisions for countering it.

Although international cooperation in the field of combating terrorism has emerged relatively recently, a certain system of managing this cooperation has already begun to take shape at three levels: binary (cooperation between two states), regional (cooperation within the geographic or geopolitical region), subregional (cooperation at the level of groups of states united by historical and cultural traditions, common political interests), and global (cooperation of all or several states). At each of these levels, management has its own goal, complementing and strengthening the functional tasks of other levels.

In this context, international cooperation in countering terrorism operates at various levels: inter-state, intergovernmental, and interdepartmental. Heads of state define the primary directions of their countries' domestic and foreign policies in the fight against terrorism and represent their nations in international affairs, including the signing of bilateral and multilateral treaties. However, the central responsibility for addressing terrorism on the international stage typically falls upon authorized government agencies within a state. These agencies have a broader range of duties in this regard. Often, in accordance with national laws, these entities are empowered to engage in international cooperation and enter into interdepartmental international agreements. Consequently, interdepartmental international collaboration has assumed an increasingly crucial role in the fight against terrorism, driven by the imperative need for such cooperation (Novoskoltseva, 2015, p. 118).

The international counterterrorism system operates based on: unconditional condemnation as criminal of all terrorist activities, methods and practices, and the fact that they have no justification, regardless of where or by whom they are committed; the inadmissibility of justifying acts of terrorism, regardless of the political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that guides the individuals who commit them; the uncompromising fight against international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; the strengthening of international cooperation between states, international organizations to prevent, stop and eliminate all forms of international terrorism; ensuring, in accordance with the provisions of international treaties and domestic law, the detention and prosecution or extradition of persons who have committed or contributed to the commission of acts of terrorism; not granting asylum to persons who are involved in terrorist activities or contribute to them; the non-participation of states in the organization, incitement, provision of assistance or participation in terrorist acts in another state, or facilitating organizational activities aimed at committing such acts on its territory (Novoskoltseva, 2015, p. 119).

The international fight against terrorism includes mutual cooperation for the exchange of relevant information regarding the prevention and fight against terrorism; making joint efforts to prevent and stop terrorist acts; preventing and ceasing the use of the country's territory for the preparation of any

acts of terrorism; obstructing the financing activities of terrorists and terrorist organizations; expanding cooperation in the field of combating international terrorism by concluding special international treaties and their rapid implementation; aligning domestic legislation with international treaties in the field of combating international terrorism; providing comprehensive mutual assistance in connection with criminal investigations or prosecutions in the case of a terrorist act; preventing the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups across state borders (Antipenko, 2002, p. 25).

One of the priority directions of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism is the development of international legal norms. Currently, international cooperation in the field of combating terrorism takes place in the process of elaborating common norms of international legislation and aligning them with the norms of national legislation, as well as in coordinating efforts and initiatives in various international anti-terrorism organizations, both at the global and regional levels. An effective and productive fight against terrorism requires that all conventions, declarations, resolutions, and decisions of international organizations not only be of a declarative nature but also contain a truly broad practical aspect.

The current international legal framework for international cooperation in combating terrorism represents a certain system that includes sources at the universal, regional, and bilateral levels. This system can be addressed from several perspectives: special anti-terrorism agreements, agreements that affect individual aspects of the fight against terrorism, and documents of international organizations in the field of combating terrorism. The fundamental principle of international cooperation in this area is the principle of universal condemnation and recognition of the illegality of terrorism in all its manifestations, wherever and by whomever terrorist acts are committed.

2. UN as a global counter-terrorism center

Currently, under the auspices of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, 19 universal agreements have been developed that address distinct aspects of countering international terrorism and refer to certain types of terrorist activities (Office of Counter-Terrorism). In this regard, there are many acts adopted at the UN level that condemn terrorism as a method for solving political, economic, and other issues. Without a doubt, the UN is the only universal mechanism involved in maintaining international peace and global security, which collectively regulates international relations and ensures sustainable development and stability of states. The entire international legal system of the contemporary world order is built on the basis of the UN Charter.

The fight against terrorism has been at the center of attention of international organizations since 1934, when the predecessor of the UN, the League of Nations, took the first major step in

outlawing this phenomenon by discussing the draft Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism. In 1937, at the initiative of the League of Nations, the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism and the Convention on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court (ICC) were approved at the international conference in Geneva. The first convention never entered into force, although it was signed by 24 countries. However, the document laid the foundation for subsequent international acts. It should also be noted that at this conference, one of the first legal definitions of terrorism was formulated – “terrorist attack”, which referred to criminal actions against the state to provoke fear in certain individuals or groups of the population.

After the end of World War II, the number of terrorist attacks did not decrease. On the contrary, in the context of ideological confrontation and the rise of national liberation movements in former colonies, the problems associated with the terrorist phenomenon worsened even further. The spread of terrorist attacks throughout the world, in all its forms and manifestations that threaten the lives or lead to the death of huge masses of people, has led the international community to respond to global threats and challenges by creating international legal barriers against the escalation of terrorism and taking coordinated measures to eliminate it.

It is important to mention that, by that time, the distinctive and dangerous aspects had been highlighted, revealing the criminal nature of any manifestation of international terrorism. One of the most concerning aspects was the significant quantitative increase in terrorist attacks (since 1970, 5,534 terrorist attacks have been recorded worldwide) and the brutality with which they are committed, posing an escalating public danger that threatens both international and national security. Moreover, the increasing number of civilian casualties further emphasized the gravity of the situation. Adding to the complexity was high level of funding for terrorist activities owing to stable links with transnational criminal organizations involved in national and international drug trafficking and illegal arms trafficking. Another alarming trend was the desire and attempts of terrorist groups to acquire weapons of mass destruction for their possible use. Additionally, the interaction between domestic and international terrorism was more obvious. Furthermore, the new types of terrorism emerged that use information systems, especially electronic devices and high-quality technological equipment. One of these, for example, is cyberterrorism (Ledyah, 2013).

Various forms of terrorist attacks have led to the development of numerous sectoral conventions dedicated to different types of terrorist behavior. The oldest international treaty, the Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, dates back to 1963. Subsequently, conventions on the unlawful seizure of aircraft (1970) and for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation (1971) were adopted.

Later, the tragic events of September 1972, related to the Olympic Games in Munich, when members of the Israeli national team were taken hostage from the Olympic Village, became the reason for unifying the efforts of the international community in combating terrorism. As a result, in December 1972, based on UN General Assembly Resolution 3034, an Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism was established, which included representatives from 34 states.

The 1970s and 1980s became a decade of tumultuous activity by all types of left-wing, right-wing, and nationalist groups, who chose hostage-taking as a means to achieve their goals. Thus, US ambassadors in Guatemala and Brazil, as well as ambassadors of the Federal Republic of Germany in Guatemala, Haiti, and Brazil, were kidnapped. In 1975, 70 people were captured by the Carlos group in Vienna, including 11 ministers of countries of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In 1978, the famous politician Aldo Moro was kidnapped and then killed in Italy (Nigmatullin, 2005, p.17).

In 1973, three special committees of the UN reviewed the definition of international terrorism, its main causes and preventive measures applied in relation to it. Difficulties arose already in the stage of clarifying the definition of the “terrorism” concept. The committees could not prepare the necessary materials due to divergences regarding political positions on legal aspects: definitions of the concept of international terrorism, criminal prosecution norms, extradition of terrorists, granting political asylum.

Efforts to solve the problems that arose were made during the 27th, 31st, and 39th sessions of the UN General Assembly. Thus, states presented their own comments on this issue to the UN Ad Hoc Committee on International Terrorism during sessions in 1973 and 1977. In turn, this committee presented its reports on the results of UN sessions in 1973, 1977, and 1979. Between 1979 and 1994, the UN General Assembly adopted seven resolutions and a declaration on measures to eliminate international terrorism, namely Resolutions 34/145, 36/109, 40/61, 42/159, 44/29, 46/51, and 40/60.

In total, from the 1960s to the early 1990s, the UN and its specialized agencies developed 10 international agreements (8 conventions and 2 protocols) that represent legal instruments for combating terrorism: The Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, 1963; The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, 1970; The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, 1971; The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, 1973; The International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, 1979; The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, 1980; The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, 1988; The Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection, 1991; The Protocol for the

Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation, 1988, which complements the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation; The Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf, 1988, which refers to terrorist activities carried out on fixed offshore platforms.

In December 1994, the UN General Assembly once again drew attention to the issue of terrorism by adopting the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. As an annex to this resolution, the Declaration to Supplement the 1994 Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism (1996) was adopted. It states that: “the States Members of the United Nations reaffirm the importance of ensuring effective cooperation between Member States so that those who participate in terrorist acts, including their financing, planning or incitement, are brought to justice; they stress their commitment, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law, including international standards of human rights, to work together to prevent, combat and eliminate terrorism and to take all appropriate steps under their domestic laws either to extradite terrorists or to submit the cases to their competent authorities for the purpose of prosecution.” (Dopolnyayushaya deklaraciyu o merah po likvidacii mezhdunarodnogo terrorizma, 1994)

In accordance with the 1994 Declaration, states are encouraged to take effective and decisive measures in conformity with international law and universally recognized human rights standards.

The Declaration also provides for a series of practical measures to enhance international cooperation, the implementation of which should be assisted by the Secretary-General of the UN. These measures include the collecting data on the status and implementation of existing multilateral, regional and bilateral agreements relating to international terrorism, including information on incidents caused by international terrorism, as well as on criminal prosecution and penalties, based on information received from depositaries of the agreements and member states. This involves gathering information on incidents caused by international terrorism as well as details on criminal prosecution and penalties, obtained from depositaries of agreements and member states. Another key initiative involves the preparation of a comprehensive set of national laws and regulations addressing the prevention and eradication of international terrorism in all its forms. This process relies on input received from member states. Additionally, the Declaration mandates an analytical review of current international legal instruments concerning international terrorism. This review aims to assist states in identifying aspects of the issue not covered by existing instruments, providing a basis for further exploration within the legal framework of conventions addressing international terrorism. Furthermore, the Secretary-General is entrusted with evaluating the United Nations system's capacity

to support states in organizing training and courses focused on combating international terrorism crimes. These measures collectively serve to enhance global collaboration and coordination in the fight against international terrorism (Dopolnyayushaya deklaraciya o merah po likvidacii mezhdunarodnogo terrorizma, 1994.)

The 1996 Declaration essentially reproduces the provisions of the 1994 Declaration. UN member states reaffirmed their unequivocal condemnation of all actions, methods and practices of terrorism, wherever and by whomever committed. At the same time, provisions were included stating that deliberate financing, planning of terrorist acts and incitement to commit them are also contrary to the purposes and principles of the UN. In addition to the text of the first declaration, the second one states that in concluding or applying extradition agreements, acts of terrorism should not be considered as political offenses and, therefore, should not be excluded from the scope of such agreements. Furthermore, states are encouraged, even in cases where there is no treaty, to consider facilitating the extradition of suspects involved in terrorist activities to the extent permitted by national law (Chernyadeva, 2018, p. 87).

Recognizing the increasing role and major impact of the terrorist threat, the UN General Assembly established an Office of Counter-Terrorism within the UN Secretariat in 1999, which began its operations in April of that year. The main focus of the Office of Counter-Terrorism is on research and technical cooperation, as well as contributing to the intensification of international cooperation in the field of preventing terrorism.

Although in the late 1990s the UN took a series of measures to combat terrorism, these did not have a major impact on reducing the activities of international terrorist organizations. The tragic events of September 11, 2001, became a real impetus for the development of measures aimed at fighting international terrorism. The issue of countering international terrorism became one of the most important topics on the agenda of the 56th and 57th sessions of the UN General Assembly (in November 2001 and September 2002). The 57th session of the UN analyzed the results of the fight against terrorism one year after the events of September 11, 2001, and identified the further directions of activity of the international community in this area.

Resolution 1368 of the United Nations Security Council, adopted on September 12, 2001, called on the international community to intensify efforts to prevent and suppress terrorism, to promote coordination and full implementation of the anti-terrorism conventions and resolutions of the Security Council within national legislation. The implementation of these measures is mandatory, and their violation may result in the imposition of sanctions by the United Nations Security Council.

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1373 on September 28, 2001. This was an important moment in the global campaign against terrorism. The resolution was adopted in

accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter (threats to peace and international security) and is mandatory for all UN member states, with non-compliance leading to punitive measures against the state that violates its provisions. The resolution delineates several key features aimed at addressing the issue of terrorism. Firstly, it recognizes terrorism as a threat to peace and security. States must cooperate in the prevention and suppression of terrorism. Moreover, each state has the right to prevent and suppress the financing and preparation of a terrorist attack on its territory, taking all possible legislative and administrative measures. Furthermore, states are obliged to refrain from organizing, instigating, facilitating, or participating in terrorist attacks in another state or allowing the use of terrorists, to suppress the recruitment of members of terrorist organizations, and to refrain from providing weapons to terrorist groups. The resolution criminalizes the collection and provision of assistance in the collection of assets, including any funds, in any form for terrorist attacks and the freezing of such assets. In addition, states are urged to deny refuge to those individuals who finance, plan, support and commit terrorist attacks, either by prosecuting them on their own territory or by transferring them through a request for their prosecution, etc.

On September 8, 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, thereby creating a practical basis for providing effective assistance to states in their anti-terrorism actions at the national, regional, and global levels.

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the form of a Resolution and an annexed Plan of Action (A/RES/60/288), represents a unique document aimed at improving national, regional, and international efforts in the fight against terrorism. Its adoption for the first time signaled that UN member states had coordinated and adopted a common strategic and operational basis for combating terrorism. This conveyed that terrorism is not accepted in any form or manifestation, and the decision was made to undertake collective and individual measures to eradicate this phenomenon. The Strategy represents a first complex, collective, and international institutional-legal basis aimed at approving measures to combat terrorism. It is based on the unconditional and strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of who, what, where, and why it is used (United Nations, 2010).

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy includes four main directions of action: Direction I: measures aimed at addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; Direction II: preventing and combating terrorism; Direction III: strengthening the capacity of states to prevent and combat terrorism, as well as strengthening the role of the UN system in that regard; Direction IV: ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism (United Nations, 2006).

The Strategy emphasizes that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. The document also confirms the responsibility of states to refuse to provide financial and operational asylum to terrorists and not to allow terrorists to abuse the national asylum system by bringing them to justice based on the principle “to extradite or prosecute.”

By adopting this strategy, the General Assembly has reaffirmed and consolidated its direct role in the fight against terrorism. All member states are required to take prompt measures to implement this strategy and to demonstrate the unwavering determination of the international community in the fight against terrorism.

The uniqueness of this document also lies in the rare unanimity regarding a common strategic approach in the fight against terrorism. This signal should be considered one of the most significant and positive results of international cooperation, as the UN member states have unanimously recognized that terrorist methods are unacceptable in any of their manifestations and will not be justified in the eyes of the international community.

Essentially, this document is the first act of the UN that defines the concept of this international organization in the fight against terrorism. It emphasizes the need “to pursue and reinforce development and social inclusion agendas at every level as goals in themselves, recognizing that success in this area, especially on youth unemployment, could reduce marginalization and the subsequent sense of victimization that propels extremism and the recruitment of terrorists.” (United Nations General Assembly, 2006)

The General Assembly reviews the strategy every two years, making it a living document that takes into account member states’ counter-terrorism priorities.

The latest review of the Strategy, the seventh in number, took place on 21-22 June 2021. The General Assembly reviewed the report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/73/866) on the progress made in implementing the Strategy over the past two years. The Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution (A/RES/75/291) to review the Strategy, as well as the six previous resolutions to review it.

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 70/109 “A world against violence and violent extremism,” which recognized “the need for a comprehensive approach to preventing and countering violent extremism and to addressing the conditions conducive to its spread.” The resolution also underlined “the importance of education, including human rights education, as the most effective means of promoting tolerance, in preventing the spread of extremism by instilling respect for life and promoting the practice of non-violence, moderation, dialogue and cooperation, and encourages all States, the specialized agencies of the United Nations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute actively to this endeavour.”

Through this resolution, the General Assembly recommends UN member states to better understand the causes of violent extremism, especially among women and youth, in order to develop comprehensive solutions to counter this threat, and highlights the conviction that wars and armed conflicts can cause the spread of radicalism and violent extremism, as well as hinder the development of human society and harm the well-being of humanity.

An important event for the international community was the presentation on January 15, 2016, in front of the United Nations General Assembly, by the Secretary-General, of the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The plan contains recommendations for member states to examine and adopt a more comprehensive approach in the fight against violent extremism and the factors that generate it at the local, national, regional, and global levels.

The Plan reports that violent extremism is a multi-faceted phenomenon that is not clearly defined. This phenomenon is neither new nor characteristic of a particular region, nationality, or religious system. However, in recent times, terrorist groups such as the “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL), “Al-Qaida”, and “Boko Haram” are attempting to form a general perception about violent extremism and raise the discussion about the means of countering this threat. The dissemination of ideas of religious, cultural, and social intolerance by these groups has serious consequences for many regions of the world, as they retain territories and use social networks.

In January 2017, António Guterres (Portugal) was elected as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, but the change in leadership could not reverse the decline in the fight against extremism. December 1, 2017 the UN Secretary-General presented a report entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”. The report contains statistical data on UN projects and initiatives aimed at preventing extremism, of which 40 projects aim to strengthen good governance, protect human rights and the rule of law; 31 projects aim to improve the quality of education, develop professional skills, and promote employment; 29 projects aim to promote expanded dialogue and conflict prevention; 27 projects aim to empower young people; 23 projects relate to the strategic communications, the internet, and social networks; 22 projects focus on gender equality and empowering women; 18 projects focus on community outreach and 33 projects address other areas of activity in preventing violent extremism, including the development of national or regional plans for preventing violent extremism at the request of member states and regional organizations (United Nations, 2017).

In 2017, the UN General Assembly also adopted Resolution No. 72/241 “A world against violence and violent extremism”, in which it reaffirmed its previous resolutions adopted in this regard, and called upon states to “respect and protect, in their fight against violent extremism, all human

rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law and to support all actions at the local, national, regional and international levels, in cooperation with civil society, to foster understanding, tolerance and non-violence” (United Nations General Assembly Resolution, 2017).

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) was established in June 2017. The Office of Counter-Terrorism provides UN member states with the necessary political support and a plethora of information on the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as taking action, when necessary, to accelerate the pace of technical assistance in four main areas (United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism). The first head of the Office was appointed the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov. The establishment of the Office is seen as the first major institutional reform undertaken by the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, following the report (A/71/858) on the capability of the United Nations system to support Member States in implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, 2018).

The Office of Counter-Terrorism performs five main functions within the United Nations framework. Firstly, it ensures leadership in implementing the General Assembly mandates on counter-terrorism entrusted to the Secretary-General within the United Nations system. Secondly, it enhances coordination and coherence among entities involved in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact for a balanced implementation of the four pillars of the strategy. Thirdly, the Office of Counter-Terrorism works forward improving the efficiency of UN assistance to member states in strengthening their counterterrorism capabilities. Additionally, it displays UN’s counterterrorism activities and fulfills the informational function of presenting and mobilizing resources. Lastly, the Office of Counter-Terrorism plays a pivotal role in ensuring that counter-terrorism concerns are appropriately addressed across the United Nations system, and it oversees vital efforts in preventing violent extremism, aligning strictly with the established strategy (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, 2019).

Recognizing the fundamental nature of the UN conventions on combating terrorism, states have begun to create certain conditions and mechanisms to ensure them. These include: adopting relevant national legislation (criminal, fiscal, administrative, banking, etc.), developing harmonized norms, preparing relevant agreements at the regional level with the participation of other international organizations (especially, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism), establishing bilateral working groups to combat terrorism, organizing cooperation between states with specialized institutions (especially, interaction with Interpol, FATF, the European Group for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, etc.).

Currently, international cooperation among states to combat terrorism has received a new impetus for development due to the difficult international political situation in the world, especially in Ukraine and the Middle East.

However, despite the intensification of international cooperation in the field of counterterrorism, there has been no agreed and unified legal regime for countering terrorism, there is no generally accepted definition of terrorism, and no comprehensive international treaty on counterterrorism has been adopted.

Overall, a substantive analysis of the principles of international cooperation in countering terrorism indicates that these principles must comply with the UN Charter, the universal conventions on this issue, and the UN Security Council resolutions. To ensure the most effective international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, it seems appropriate to practically implement international obligations in the field of combating terrorism, to reject the use of force in violation of international law, and to effectively monitor the development of regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism within international regional organizations that combat terrorism.

Conclusions

After studying international cooperation in the fight against international terrorism within the UN, it can be concluded that the international community has developed an extensive set of legal instruments to combat international terrorism. Starting with the 21st century, we can observe an increase in international initiatives in the fight against terrorism. The UN continues to be the platform for more productive and larger-scale cooperation in this area. The main achievement of the UN in the formation of non-violent methods to counter terrorism is the creation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, upon signing of which most states agreed on a common approach to fighting terrorism. In addition to developing the normative basis for countering international terrorism, the UN system operates a network of organizations that includes various committees, departments, specialized institutions for combating terrorist threats, as well as structures closely related to this field.

Despite the existence of international legal acts that qualify specific actions as terrorist, a universal definition of the term “terrorism” has not yet been developed at the international legal level. The last reliable way to overcome this problem was the process of developing the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, initiated by India in 1996. However, this process also faced disagreements in states’ approaches to defining terrorism and the issue of the interdependence between terrorism and peoples’ right to self-determination.

At the same time, a major problem is identified at the UN level – the lack of a common concept of terrorism, as well as an international “blacklist” of individuals and organizations suspected of terrorism. Probably, the main reason is the lack of unity among political elites in assessing the essence of this phenomenon.

Further studies in the field of countering and preventing terrorism within the United Nations should focus on analyzing state-sponsored terrorism and possible forms of state involvement in terrorist activities, establishing unified theoretical and legal criteria for defining the concepts of terrorism and terrorist activities. Additionally, they should analyze international legal measures to combat extremism.

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