

**Committee:** Special Political and Decolonization Committee

**Issue:** Nationalism and self-determination in times of international terrorism

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**Position:** Co-Chair

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Deniz San, and I am currently a sophomore in the American Collegiate Institute in Izmir/Turkey. I am looking forward to chairing the Special Political and Decolonization Committee this year, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual session of the ACGMUN. Even though I have been to six MUN conferences prior to ACGMUN, this will be my first time attending an ACGMUN and I am sure it will be an amazing experience.

Our committee has two very interesting and controversial topics this year and I am sure the house will enjoy debating them very much. One of the most significant recommendations I will give is that every delegate should be aware of their stance on each issue since our committee is utterly dependable on each and every one of your member states' policy. Research the topics well, even if you are not planning on specifically focusing on them so that you could participate in the debates.

I hope that this study guide will be the foundation of your resolutions, clauses, and ideas. Do not forget that it would be better if you researched further than this report, since the issues are very extensive and require a deep understanding of their every aspect. If you have any further questions on the issue or the study guide, please feel free to contact me on my email address: dsan@my.aci.k12.tr!

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Recently, the idea that self-determination and nationalism invoke international terrorism throughout the world and should be outlawed has become a common belief. However, the aforementioned concepts are entirely different from one another and are not directly linked to each other. We can define terrorism as the entirety of all kinds of criminal acts with the intention of advancing a religious or political cause. Before the self-determination laws, the UN merely condemned the criminal act itself, without an aim or motive. When the right to self-determination was recognized internationally, international confusion was formed because “all acts aimed at preserving international or national peace in accordance with the traditional *ius in bello* (rules of war practice)” (Duursma) were internationally legalized.

This case has been understood as permitting the inclusion of terrorism to the right to self-determination. Self-determination merely allows the conservation of territorial sovereignty during times of conflict. This also includes the right to be able to defend the territory from any external interference. The acts of preservation or defense must be accordance with international laws of war and especially the Geneva conventions (1928, 1929, and 1949). If the national constitution does not permit it, then acts of preservation of the territory may include various criminal acts as long as it corresponds with the international law of war.

Consequently, from an objective point of view, rights to self-determination and nationalism allow certain acts of crime in specific situations e.g. protecting a territory and sovereignty. However, the idea that it invokes terrorism is not factually and legally correct.

## DEFINITION OF KEY WORDS

### Nationalism

Nationalism is an ideology that considers patriotic manners, devotion and loyalty for a state/country as a base. It is actually a rather modern movement. Of course, ever since the beginning of time people have always been attached to their territory, their customs and traditions, and to specific authorities. In world politics, it is considered as the identification of desirability of the nation according to their principles. We have clearly seen that extreme nationalism can be considered as a cause of national and international terrorism.

## **Self-determination**

The right to self-determination allows a group of people to establish a government or choose one of their own. Nationalist movements have initiated the start of self-determination acts, for example during French and American revolutions. The Allies have considered it as a peaceful advance during WWI. Later on, the UN adopted it as one of its main goals. The UN Charter has two separate definitions for self-determination. A group of people or a government has the right of autonomy, which means they are able to determine their own internal branches and systems by means of economy and politics. Further on, an individual has the right to determine the way they will associate with a state or legally constitute herself/himself to that state.

## **Terrorism**

The UN defines terrorism as actions besides the ones specified in Security Council resolutions and the Geneva conventions stated above, which aims to harm or cause death to civilians and non-military participants, or to restrict or induce a government or an organization to obey a certain order/request. According to the UN, terrorism advances due to the weak capacity of a government to pursue order and combat external occupation or conflict. In addition, it flourishes in contexts of regional conflict and foreign occupation; and it profits from weak State capacity to maintain law and order.

## **Nationalist Terrorism**

Nationalist terrorism is a consequence of a resolute loyalty and devotion to a group of people that thinks they have been oppressed and unfairly treated, persecuted by the government and the population. These groups are often identified by their ethnicity which includes aspects like religion, traditions, language, and customs. Nationalist terrorism draws the attention to the certain state of that group. Their aim is generally to establish an independent territory which would be defined as homeland for this group of people.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Nationalism and International Terrorism**

International terrorism has been affecting our world ever since World War II. With the rise of Nazi Germany specifically, we have witnessed a lot of destructive actions that were justified at the time because they were seen as “acts of nationalism” and “self determination”. Nationalism, at least at the extreme forms in

which it was expressed (e.g. Nazi Germany), creates a desire to eliminate any other ethnicity or race from their territory to fully appreciate their own race. This often leads to the feeling of superiority of certain races or ethnicities, which directly links to racism as well. However, terrorism also leads to nationalism in forms of prejudice among the people. A very solid example of this would be the current rise of Islamophobia all around the world after the multiple so called Islamic State attacks.

Furthermore, the 9/11 attacks can also be given as an example. After the attack on the Twin Towers of the United States by the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda, the US witnessed a rise in nationalist ideology. Some, falsely, believed that the reason of the attacks was the existence of major Muslim populations in the region. The aforementioned rise in nationalism was directly linked the rise of discrimination, and in specific, Islamophobia.

### **Self-determination and Terrorism**

The right to self-determination of a population depends on the national law of the government that they are constituted in. Consequently, international law won't recognize an action as autonomy if the government of the individual in question disproves such actions in their country's constitutions. Terrorism will be considered a crime in front of international law only if it transgresses self-determination rights and there is no later recognition of the event by the government. There is no clear definition of terrorism as stated above, so justifying it with religious, political, and ethnic means is very difficult, and can be abused easily. However, when we take the possible loopholes of both international and national law into account, terrorism is sometimes justified for ideological reasons. Understandably, we still lack a clear definition of terrorism in international law causing the rise of numerous disputes of which organization should be considered terrorist and which should not. It is necessary for us to define the aforementioned in order to protect international human rights on all levels. The ways through which a group acquires its autonomy plays a big role in the perception that people, governments and organizations have for the specific group as it often is the deciding factor on whether the international community considers the said group as a terrorist group or not. If this group transgresses any human right law by means of harming or causing death, these actions could very well be considered terrorist acts.

### **The Difference between Nationalism and Terrorism**

The concepts nationalism and terrorism may seem like they are directly linked together in some cases, as we have previously discussed, but they are broadly separate as well. Namely, the aim of revolutionaries is to achieve nationalism by means of overthrowing a foreign or colonial rule. They try to free their country from the restrictive rule because of the devotion and loyalty they feel for their homeland.

For example, a large part of the Indian freedom movement was indeed considered to be nationalist.

On the other hand, terrorism seeks to overthrow the elected government. In Pakistan, terrorism was clearly present in Jammu and Kashmir as military weapons have been used, often in the name of religion. Such attempt to overthrow an elected government as well falsely justifying it with religion defines the clear difference between nationalism and terrorism.

### **History of Nationalism**

American nationalism initiated many revolutions and movements around the world so in addition to the ones we already talked about, we can give the influences of America as an important example. It was a product of the eighteenth century. The British residents of North America were affected and influenced by the nationalist movements occurring at the time. The American settlers started to become a nation with citizens that fight for sovereignty and rights, so it was a liberal and humanitarian example of nationalism.

American nationalism was a huge influence on the French revolution. In both countries, citizen armies fought despite being untrained, and were superior to actually trained military-armies that fought without the incentive of nationalism. Both of the revolutions were the results of free individual decisions of nations. So they were created as an act of self-determination.

### **History of Self-determination**

Self-determination allows a group of people to have consciousness to establish their own state or elect their government. During the 1900s, a significant rise of movements of self-determination took place, many of which were heavily influenced by nationalism, after its early expression during the French and American revolutions. For example, after the end of the Second World War, Self-determination was a peaceful approach for the Allied Powers to maintain peace and stability after a highly destructive war and had become (and as considered by some still is) a primary goal. Even before the war we can see clear attempts being made about the increase of self-determination around the world. For instance, US President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points included spreading self-determination as an objective for post-world war process. The consequence of this was the deterioration of the Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and the formation of the Baltic territories.

## History of Terrorism

Major events of potential state-sponsored terrorism have been taking place for the majority of our recent history. For example, in 1914 Europe, state officials of the Serbian government were allegedly involved in the arming of the Balkan organizations which sought the assassination of Franz Ferdinand (the Archduke). 'Young Bosnians' were held responsible for the act to be specific. Additionally, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization survived to use every resource possible from the Bulgarian government against Yugoslavia and internal enemies. Consequently, the aforementioned state-sponsored terrorism is not entirely a modern movement but has been a part of the world history for a long time.

Non-state groups on the other hand also emerged after World War II. Especially throughout Africa and East Asia, the desire to maintain the colonial structure imposed by foreign powers ignited with the defeat of the Axis powers. This was one of the main reasons that provoked the merge of non-state terrorism, which has self-determination at its core, as a justification of any group's actions.

## Past Terrorist Attacks Linked to Nationalism and Self-Determination

Groups that seek independence and sovereignty from an established government, motivated by nationalist desires are usually the ones organizing attacks in the country. An example of this is the PKK organization, aiming to establish an independent Kurdish government within Turkey. It must be mentioned however, that the Kurds have a long history of persecution, particularly in Iraq and Turkey and have repeatedly risen to seek independence. The case however is not a main issue of Turkey but has been affecting the entire world, which turned PKK into an organization that is referred to by many as a terrorist organization. Germany, France, and Belgium have reported that PKK organized fundraising and propaganda activities.

Furthermore, in Spain, Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) released their separatist objectives, in association with the Basque separatists (Izquierda Abertzale movement). Their activities mainly focused on propaganda. Spain managed to sabotage multiple attacks in 2015 and 2016, and arrested an ETA leader besides also seizing an important amount of weapons. ETA has instalments in France and other neighboring countries and has been using these as their operation bases, which again makes this autonomy-seeking nationalist group an international terrorist organization.

## Rise of Nationalism In Relation to Islamic Terrorism

Even though Islamic terrorism has been in the headlines as of recently, it's been present in our world for a long time. With the current events, however, it has had a strong influence on nationalism.

Despite being one of the most tolerant and diverse countries, neo-nationalism has started to rise in the Netherlands. During the recent elections of the Netherlands, Geert Wilders ran a campaign mainly focusing on an anti-Muslim propaganda which consisted of banning burqas and mosques. He strongly approved Trump's election and his travel ban. He talked about stopping Muslim immigration from countries during his campaign.

Being the youngest daughter of the family, Marine Le Pen has run a rather successful campaign in the latest elections in France compared to her father. She is the president of the xenophobic, far-right party National Front. The parties' votes have been higher than ever during these elections which could be considered alarming when we consider their rather radical Islamophobic campaign, such as classifying burqas as Islamic provocation.

Several days after Trump's election, the far-right neo-nationalist Alternative for Deutschland has started to actively operate in Germany. AfD also strongly supports president Trump and his legislations on the anti-Islam platform. They have similar policies such as anti-immigration and anti-Islamic. Their main goal is to stop Islamization in Europe.

It is important to mention however, the aforementioned rise of nationalist parties has been supported by the general population indicating the possible distress that many people might find themselves in. Thus, it is important for the stigma associated with certain racial or religious groups to be eradicated in order to stop people from embracing rather "extreme" ideologies.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

### Iraq

After the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, the Kurds were separated from the rest of the Iraqi community. Iraqi Kurdistan has been an autonomous region within the state of Iraq for many years. This region has lived prosperously with the help of Turkey and the US after the invasion of Iraq. The spread of ISIS forced the autonomous government and the Iraqi government to collaborate for the eradication of terrorism. They have made joint military operations until the Battle of

Mosul which marked the end of ISIS in Iraq. After the defeat of ISIS, the Kurdish community under the leadership of Mesut Barzani held a referendum to split from the rest of Iraq. The widespread terrorism in this area contributed to the rise of nationalism among the Kurds in this area which eventually led to the referendum. However after the referendum Mesut Barzani lost the support of Turkey and the US. Without the backing of these two regional powers the Iraqi Kurdistan became a powerless country between Iran, Iraq and Turkey which were against the referendum. They lost the city Kerkuk and Mesut Barzani resigned. This was a huge failure for the Kurdish community in Iraq.

## Syria

With the start of the civil war and the spread of ISIS terrorism, minority groups in Syria such as the Kurds have started to rise. The open help by the West and the US has significantly strengthened the Kurdish militia called YPG in Syria. This militia has been fighting ISIS for years. While ISIS was expanding its territory towards the Kurdish territory, many Kurds have fled to Turkey. While the Turkish government welcomes every refugee including Kurds from Syria, they consider the YPG militia as terrorists due to their connection with the PKK who has been fighting the Turkish government for years. After the defeat of ISIS in the Siege of Kobane many Kurds returned back to Syria. The West considers the YPG as a regional ally against ISIS and they have aided them militarily against ISIS. Right now YPG controls around 1/4 of Syria. YPG also controlled many important petroleum fields and cities like Raqqa which is majorly Arab. They have expressed that they will not give the Arab lands back to the Assad regime and it's clear that YPG wants an autonomous Kurdistan in the region.

## Turkey

The Kurdish Working Party (PKK) has been operating in Turkey for a long time as a non-state sponsored organization. Their goal is to establish a Kurdish government on Turkish soil. However, their only location is not Turkey, they also seem to use other countries as bases such as Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. Their leader Abdullah Ocalan has been captured by Turkish Intelligence Agencies and he is been living in the İmralı (heavily secured island prison) ever since. The insurgency against the PKK has raised nationalism in Turkey. With over thousands of deaths, many Turks blamed the Kurds for supporting this organization. While the PKK is conducting attacks, ISIS has been a greater threat for Turkey. ISIS conducted more than 10 attacks in Istanbul and Ankara (capital city) which led to hundreds of civilian deaths. This resulted in the rise of nationalism and led to the Turkish military intervention in Syria. After these attacks the Turkish community widely supports the actions taken



by the government to eradicate ISIS. It's clear that with many terrorist organizations such as ISIS, PKK and DHKP-C, nationalism in Turkey is on a rise.

## **Spain**

Basque Separatists (ETA) has been operating in Spain for a long time (1959). Their main aim is to establish a Basquean government in between Spanish and French soil. There has been an intense fight between officials of the Spanish government and the ETA militants. After murdering local officials and 800 civilians allegedly by accident, they also destroyed tourism in France and Spain. There is no clue on who provides support and funds to the organization, however Spain claims Latin America help on the issue. ETA, besides Spain, generally operates in Libya, Lebanon, Algeria, and Nicaragua.

## **Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC)**

The Terrorist Integration Center (TTIC) was established in North Virginia on May 1, 2003. Terrorism departments of both FBI and CIA has been relocated to the said center. They focus on analyzing the reports and data of the intelligences. The research center gathers their data from sources all around the world and is actively operating on combating terrorism.

## **United States of America**

When we are talking about the rise of nationalism in the world, it's rather clear that we can't conclude the topic before mentioning the United States. With the 9/11 attacks nationalism and Islamophobia in the US has reached another level. With the 2016 elections and the election of Donald Trump, nationalism has reached a peak in the US. Starting with "The Wall", Donald Trump has various policies on the external relations of the United States. During his campaign he has promised to build a wall between Mexico and the US. He has also banned several countries from the US which he thought were dangerous for his country's safety.

With the influences of the 9/11 attacks, the latest offers of Donald Trump has really moved the US to a whole different position.

## **France**

After the deadly terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015, 130 people lost their lives while more than 350 were wounded, and Marine Le Pen took the liberty of blaming Hollande and the current immigration policy of France. This statement and the growing anti-Islamic sentiment throughout the country helped the party National Front with the regional elections that took place in December 2015.

Currently the National Front is the third largest political power in France and represents far right nationalist sentiment, which includes strong economic protectionism as well as an aggressive stance to immigrants, especially non-European immigrants.

### Germany

Since 2013 the German political Party, Alternative for Germany, has changed its policy from opposing to the bailouts of indebted EU members, to a complete anti-immigration policy which strongly rejects the welcoming policy of Angela Merkel towards refugees, particularly from Middle Eastern countries. The party not only rejects the policy; but also, wants the total deportation of all asylum seekers currently present in Germany regardless of whether or not the countries to which the deportees will be sent back to are safe. The far right nationalism of the party has caused distress since it has been accused of promoting neo-nazi ideas and using neo-nazi language.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1919	During the Paris Peace Conference after World War II, self-determination was promoted by the Great (Colonial Powers).
1941	The start of the Holocaust with the Final Solution. Holocaust was the state-sponsored persecution and murder of more than six million Jews to achieve the "Final Solution" and exterminating the 'incurably sick' who is every person not included in the Aryan race.
1959	1959 was the foundation of the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) separatist group which operates in Spain to achieve Basque autonomy.
1968	Roman-Catholic republicans in Ireland who were generally from the native inhabitants wanted the six counties of Northern Ireland to separate from the United Kingdom.

1970	Egyptian Islamic Jihad has been operating in Egypt since 1970s. Their original goal is to overthrow the government and establish an Islamic state.
1970	Palestinian Islamic Jihad has started rising in 1970s. Their aim is to destroy Israel and establish an Islamic Palestinian state.
1984	Ever since 1984, Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had been an active group operating in mainly Turkey but also numerous European countries which had transformed the autonomy-seeking group to anterrorist organization.
11 November 2001	Also known as the 9/11 attacks. Islamic extremists Al-Qaeda hijacked 4 planes and destroyed the famous Twin Towers in New York City.

### RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES, AND EVENTS

The UN has been working on combating international terrorism via submitting numerous resolutions in the General Assembly. Below are the resolutions composed by the General Assembly aiming to combat terrorism and nationalist terrorism in light of the Sustainable Development Goals:

#### **A/RES/44/29**

This resolution mean to take action against international terrorism which has damaging influences on innocent civilians while disenfranchising fundamental human rights and freedoms.

#### **A/RES/37/43**

This emphasizes the importance of right to self-determination and allowing the sovereignty of colonial countries to ensure observance of fundamental and crucial human rights.

#### **A/RES/25/2625**

This resolution tries to maintain peaceful relations and a strong cooperation among the member states according the UN Charter.

### **The Anglo-Irish Treaty**

After the Irish War of Independence against British rule, the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed by both the Irish Republican Army and British forces. However, 26 countries who supported the IRA has not approved the treaty and this resulted with a split in IRA forces: supporters and the opposers of the treaty. Nevertheless, the treaty was the biggest factor in the establishment of the Irish Free State.

### **The Treaty of Ghent**

The Battle of New Orleans was the concluding war of the War of 1812. The American forces have managed to defeat a much larger to be British army. In the end, the Treaty of Ghent was signed which put an end to the Battle of New Orleans. As a result, Americans united under the conclusion of the American Revolution against British rule.

### **The Patriot Act**

On the 11th of September in 2001, the jihadist terrorist group Al-Qaeda demolished the Twin Towers of Wall Street with hijacked planes. The importance of the event was the unity and the rush of patriotism seen in Americans against terrorism and violence after the 9/11 attacks that resulted in the death of almost 3000 people.

## **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

As we discussed at the beginning, we suffer from a confusion on the definition of terrorism. Without a clear meaning, some actions are manipulated in such ways that nationalism and self-determination are used as justifications for terrorism. To prevent this, in 2001 the Czech Republic tried to encourage the UN to define terrorism in a clear manner. It was not on common grounds with every member state so their proposal failed. Up to this date, there is no official meaning of terrorism despite numerous attempts.

Additionally, as we again discussed in the beginning the UN has unofficially defined terrorism as: “any action, in addition to actions already specified by the existing conventions on aspects of terrorism, the Geneva Conventions and Security Council resolution 1566 (2004), that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act” (Terrorism).

Furthermore, the UN's General Assembly have passed numerous resolutions on the issue which are listed above, besides enforcing sanctions to countries who fail to eliminate terrorism successfully if necessary during Security Council Meetings.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

As understood by now, the approaches on our issue vary from member state to member state because there are various stances present. Countries who have been greatly suffering from nationalist terrorism in their territory would most likely take a stance on claiming extreme patriotism and terrorism are directly linked to each other, therefore should be eliminated.

Another possible approach could be that self-determination and nationalism are strictly not tied to each other. Self-determination is a human right and cannot be considered as a motive of terrorism.

Terrorism merely links to vile actions by corrupt organizations. Therefore, taking away the right to self-determination would be against the Declaration of Human Rights. It is also the right of citizens to express their love for the country or the group they belong to in peaceful, patriotic acts and again, this kind of expression is not terrorism and cannot be linked to it.

There has been a lot of debate on the definition of terrorism, but the certain fact is that the unclearness of the term causes the controversy on whether self-determination and nationalism could be considered as terrorism.

Therefore, conferences should be established. We are suffering from the vague expression. On common grounds, the UN must define terrorism in order to eliminate the stirring contradictions among member states. This will not only put an end to the discussion on whether self-determination and nationalism could be considered as terrorism or not, but it will also establish/maintain peace among member states who have been disputing.

The disordenance of self-determination rights and laws in government constitutions of countries and the international law further causes disturbance among some countries. By defining them clearly, patriotic acts will no longer stand as an excuse for terrorism. This will prevent justifying terrorist activities with nationalistic approaches.

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