

Extremism and international terror

Terrorism can be defined as the 'unofficial or unauthorized use of violence and intimidation in the pursuit of political aims'.

The latest Global Terrorism Index (2018, reporting on the year 2017) summarizes terrorist data. According to this Index:

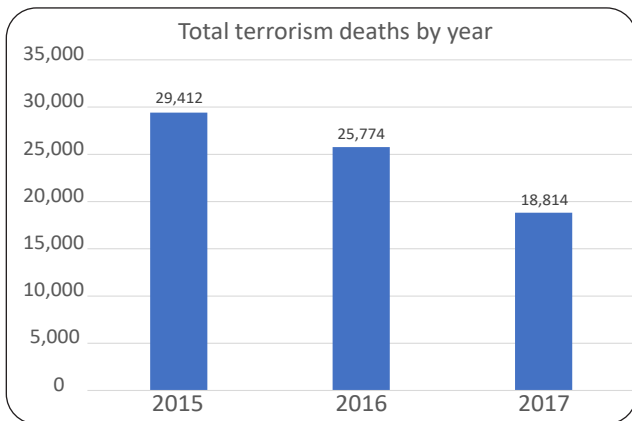
- The ten worst countries for terrorism in 2017 were: Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia, India, Yemen, Egypt and the Philippines. These ten countries accounted for 84% of all terror deaths in 2017.

- Islamic extremism remains the greatest driver of terrorism. It is declining from its recent peak in 2014 thanks to the defeat of the so-called 'Islamic State', the cooling of some Middle Eastern wars and improved anti-terrorism action. Far-right terrorism, often aimed at Muslims, is growing but from a low base.

- In 2017, 67 countries suffered at least one terrorism-related death and 19 countries recorded over 100 deaths.

- Likely future terrorism hot-spots include Southeast Asia and the Sahel region of Africa (especially from Mali through to central and Northern Nigeria).

✚ Pray that evil is overcome with good. Pray for the poverty-reduction and peacemaking efforts that tackle the roots of terrorism. Violent and unjust



Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Terrorism Index 2017 and 2018: Measuring the impact of terrorism.

foreign policy by wealthier nations can contribute to causes of terrorism also.

✚ Pray for peaceable and just responses to acts of terrorism; pray that communities will disown acts of terror done in their name. Pray when acts of terror happen, many people will seek the Prince of Peace.

✚ There have been remarkable, repeated examples of Christians forgiving and praying for those who have murdered their loved ones or destroyed their churches. Pray for the many followers of Christ who have been affected by terror. Pray that the Kingdom of God will advance through them.

THE NATIONS

NIGERIA

With 201 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country. Roughly half Muslim and half Christian, wrestling with poverty, inequality, and corruption, Nigeria somehow grows, thrives, holds together and moves forward. It is a young democracy after years of military rule. In 2015 power passed from the incumbent government to the opposition peacefully for the first time.

The Government faces a huge task. 'Boko Haram' and other Islamist extremists have killed thousands of Christians. Responding, the army stands accused of abusing human rights (and, simultaneously, of incompetence). Oil money is stolen. Ethnic tensions simmer. The environment suffers. Expensively trained doctors emigrate.

The Church continues to enjoy rapid growth. Some of this growth is exported to the West and to elsewhere in Africa. Few countries have Nigeria's strength in prayer: Nigeria routinely holds million-strong prayer meetings. Many believe that positive developments in politics and church growth are the result of prayer. Thousands of Muslims, maybe even hundreds of thousands, have come to Christ.

✚ Nigeria's greatest spiritual challenge is discipleship – not Islam, not corruption, not even persecution. Divisions, cults of personality, false teachings, promises of prosperity that pander to greed, all harm the flock. Pray that humility, simplicity and holiness might become the hallmark of the Nigerian church; much else would follow.



NIGER

The Sahara-desert state of Niger is home to 23 million people, but only a few tens of thousands are followers of Christ. It is one of the world's poorest nations. Many people are subsistence farmers or cattle herders. Half the population is aged 14 or under.

Christian missionaries continue to serve by bringing aid, development, health and education. They have won a respect for the gospel, and the Church is growing slowly. Poverty is declining, but the high numbers of malnourished, poorly educated children could become yet another lost generation.

✚ Call out to God for transformation! Niger has an open door to the loving service of the Christian Church.

