The Intersection of Terrorism and Organized Crime

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Abstract: In the years following the events of 9/11, increased attention has been given to the intersection between terrorist groups and organized crime. This paper will explore the nexus between the two – how are defined, their motivations, and how to prevent them. Both groups share key similarities within their methods and organization. The intersection of these groups is on a continuum but can be generally categorized by 1) coexistence 2) cooperation and 3) convergence. Differences lie within the end goals of the two groups: terrorists wish to achieve political and ideological goals and criminal organizations pursue financial gains. In the paper, a case study of the crime-terror nexus within the Tri-Border region of South America and Hezbollah is analyzed. This paper ends with a discussion of the implications of this nexus for counter-terrorism and law enforcement, and ways to prevent opportunities for intersection.

Keywords: terrorism, organized crime, illicit trade, Hezbollah, Tri-Border Area

Introduction: Defining Terrorism and Organized Crime

The definition of terrorism has taken many forms over the years. A comprehensive definition is difficult as the term carries grandiose social and political effects, and often defining the term depends on the political sympathy of the definer. This lack of universality can lead to problems within academic analysis, law-making, and developing a counter-terrorism strategy. With inflated media coverage and strong political rhetoric

surrounding the word, a clearly identified definition is of utmost importance. Attempting to uncover the nuances within each definition is outside the scope of this paper, so for the sake of coherence within this analysis, terrorism will be discussed using the definition created by Bruce Hoffman in his book *Inside Terrorism*. Hoffman defines terrorism as "the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change"[70]. The key takeaway from his definition is "the pursuit of political change". Political motivation is often the line that separates an act of terrorism from an act of violent crime or other forms of political violence. Apart from political motives, terrorism also aims to generate widespread psychological damage through fear to individuals beyond their initial targets[71]. Mass media plays an essential role in the spread of this fear. Although Hoffman does not include media in his definition, he understands their significance asserting, "Indeed, without the media's coverage the act's impact is arguably wasted, remaining narrowly confined to the immediate victim(s) of the attack rather than reaching the wider "target audience" at whom the terrorists' violence is actually aimed"[72].

Like terrorism, organized crime lacks a universally agreed-upon definition[73]. The United States Federal Bureau of Investigation defines organized crime as, "Any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities. Such groups maintain their position through the use of actual or threatened violence, corrupt public officials, graft, or extortion, and

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[70] Bruce, Hoffman, "Defining Terrorism," In *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 1–42, Accessed July 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hoff12698.5.

[71] Ibid., 43.

[72] Bruce, Hoffman, "The Old Media, Terrorism, and Public Opinion," In *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 182–204, Accessed July 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/hoff12698.5.

[73] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices on the Nexus between Transnational Organized Crime and Terrorism**,"** March 2019, https://www.thegctf.org/Portals/1/Documents/Framework%20Documents/2018/GCTF-Good-Practices-on-the-Nexus_ENG.pdf?ver=2018-09-21-122246-363.

generally have a significant impact on the people in their locales, region, or the country as a whole"[74]. The motive for organized crime is quite clear: money. Financial gains are the motivator behind mercenary crimes including, drug trafficking, human trafficking, extortion, money laundering, kidnap for ransom, robbery, and counterfeiting[75]. Those involved in organized crime engage in these acts "to advance and/or protect their criminal agendas"[76]. Terrorists do partake in these activities for short-term financial gain, but unlike terrorism, financial gain is both the short-term and long-term goal of organized crime. Criminal activities also serve the purpose of obtaining or maintaining power. More often, money is the means to this power, but without a solution of both, crime groups cannot continue their stronghold over their state and its institutions[77].

Historically, organized crime and terrorism have been diametrically opposed in their position on the state and use of violence. Organized crime typically has long-term vested financial interests within the state and its institutions. Author Jack Jarmon in his book titled, *The New Era in U.S. National Security,* describes this relationship as parasitic. Organized crime needs a functioning and stable host to survive; thus, "crime members are often established members and depend upon state institutions and structures to operate, expand, and invest"[78]. Terrorism, on the other hand, seeks to destabilize the state either by changing the

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[74] Gregory F Treverton, Carl Matthies, Karla J. Cunningham, Jeremiah Goulka, Greg Ridgeway, and Anny Wong, "Organized Crime and Terrorism," In *Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism* (California: RAND Corporation, 2009), 11–26. Accessed July 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mg742mpa.8.

[75] Sam Mullins, and James K. Wither, "Terrorism and Organized Crime," *Connections* 15, no. 3 (2016): 65–82. Accessed July 9, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26326452.

[76] Ibid., 70.

[77] Louise I. Shelley and John T. Picarelli, "Methods and Motives: Exploring Links between Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism," *Trends in Organized Crime* 9, no. 2 (2005): pp. 52–67, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12117-005-1024-x.

[78] Jack A. Jarmon, "The New Era in U.S. National Security: an Introduction to Emerging Threats and Challenges" (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 163–184.

status quo, or mere destruction. Second, terrorists threaten to carry out acts of violence with hopes of procuring mass publicity to voice their political aims and bring about change, while criminal organizations wish to be more covert and deliberate with their use of violence[79]. This dichotomy exemplifies why the intersection of the two groups was hard to imagine. During the 1990s, scholars warned that the nexus of terrorism and organized crime would be detrimental to national security, but no systematic study took place to analyze their assertion. It was not until a few years after the War on Terror began that studies took place to understand the two groups' interaction[80]. Although these differences seem staunch, similarities within their organization and operations help in understanding this eventual nexus. Both groups are rational actors that use extreme violence with 'loosely networked cell structures' which contain 'back up leaders and foot soldiers' who are 'highly adaptable and resilient' and pose as an asymmetrical threat to the United States and other nations abroad[81]. The similarity within the structure of both groups can occur without contact. Organized crime and terrorist groups frequently use the loose network cell structure in order to frustrate law enforcement. These operational cells are highly flexible and rarely have connections with leadership. This allows both groups to "set up or close down operations overnight, maintain distance between operational and planning cells, move and use financial resources quickly and secretively, and make decisions without headquarters' approval"[82].

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[79] Mullins and Wither, "Terrorism and Organized Crime", 66.

[80] Shelley and Picarelli, "Methods and Motives", 10.

[81] Thomas M Sanderson, "Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2004): 49–61. Accessed July 12, 2021. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26999200.

[82] Ibid., 54.

The Drivers of the Intersection

There are many factors at play impelling the crime-terror nexus. First, financing is at the core of the two groups' overlap. After the decline in state-sponsored terrorism in the early 1990s and governments' increased adeptness at tracking terrorist's financial transactions after the War on Terror, the need for self-financing was evident. This pushed terrorists to crime in order to eliminate the opportunity for governments to interdict their funds[83]. The 2010 Obama Administration reiterated this concern stating, "Terrorists and insurgents increasingly are turning to [transnational organized crime] TOC to generate funding and acquire logistical support to carry out their violent acts[84]. Terrorist groups require funding to not only carry out attacks but "finance day-to-day recruiting, training, and maintenance, and to provide sanctuary for terrorist organizations"[85]. This diversification of terrorist's capabilities functions not only to spread their political agenda, but often survival. Long-standing terrorist groups like the Taliban, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and Al-Qaeda have turned to the illicit trade to generate income. Illicit trade as outlined in the UN Security Council's resolution 2195 involves all money, goods, or value obtained by illegal or unethical activity[86]. It should be noted that these groups did not enter illicit trade purely for financial reasons. Other reasons include, "destruction of history, demoralization of communities, the weakening of social solidarity, and harms individuals' health and well-being"[87]. Jarmon expands upon the new capabilities of terrorists referencing a fat-

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[83] Jarmon, "The New Era", 168.

[84] "Transnational Organized Crime: A Growing Threat to National and International Security," National Archives and Records Administration, National Security Council, 2010. Accessed July 14, 2021. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime/threat.

[85] Treverton, "Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism", 15.

[86] Louise I Shelley, "Illicit Trade and Terrorism," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14, no. 4 (2020): 7–20. Accessed July 12, 2021. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26927661.

[87] Ibid., 7.

wa issued by Hezbollah asserting, "If we cannot kill them with guns, so we will kill them with drugs"[88].

Second, the nexus is often a function of environment. Although this transformation can occur in stable countries like the United States, France, and Canada, group overlap occurs most often in countries that contain an alienated government that lacks rule of law[89]. These countries commonly coincide with additional environmental drivers to intersection including, "corruption, a lack of democratic participation, chronic state failures, crises in political systems, deteriorating socio-economic conditions, civil and regional conflicts, and increased media attention"[90]. Groups then exploit these socio-political weaknesses in order to maintain or worsen conditions. In turn, this creates a conducive environment for the nexus. Moreover, shared spaces increase the opportunity for interaction. These can include "neighborhoods, penal institutions, conflict zones, and failed states"[91]. Penal institutions, notably prisons systems, are notorious places for "recruitment, radicalization and knowledge transfer for both terrorist groups and organized crime groups"[92]. In developed countries, the nexus grows in areas where norms are not shared among all groups. As a result, subgroups expand this nexus with disregard of the established order within their major cities or penal institutions.

Additional environmental factors that allow the crime-terror nexus to thrive are:
1) High border porosity;
2) Population transfers;

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[88] Jarmon, "The New Era", 164.

[89] Treverton, "Film Piracy, Organized Crime, and Terrorism", 18.

[90] Center for Homeland Defense and Security, "Convergence of Terrorism".

[91] Ibid.

[92] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices", 8.

3) Financial and Commercial developments (globalization);
4) Communication technology[93].

High border porosity has allowed for terrorists and organized crime groups alike to partake in illicit trade. Illicit arms trade following the fall of the Berlin Wall was heightened in countries with porous borders paired with weak law enforcement[94]. Globalization and communication technology have enabled informal cooperation between the groups with new markets created for illicit goods, alongside new technology which has created easier methods of surveillance, information access, and communication techniques that avoid detection by law enforcement[95].

These conditions lead to the third driver of this intersection, the desire for legitimacy. Groups often combine resources in failed states that are drained of economic, political, and judicial resources to increase power and find an "in". Jarmon expands upon this idea stating, "Gaining political leverage through corruption and or intimidation in these nations is a natural disposition for many parties in these dire economic environments...Attaining power via direct political involvement or over lucrative economic sectors can be achieved more quickly with force and violence"[96]. Infiltration in legitimate sectors would give terrorists the platform to spread their political ideology, while simultaneously allowing criminal groups to push their illicit business ventures.

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[93] Center For Homeland Defense Security, "Convergence of Terrorism & Transnational Criminal Organizations," CHDS/Ed, May 10, 2018, https://www.chds.us/ed/items/17382.

[94] Sanderson, "Transnational Terror", 51.

[95] Ibid., 50.

[96] Jarmon, "The New Era", 169.

Types of Intersection

The nexus can be generalized into three categories: 1) coexistence 2) cooperation and 3) convergence[97]. Coexistence applies when the two groups exist in the same area at the same time by coincidence. Although by happenstance, their simultaneous existence is mutually beneficial. Both groups contribute in keeping the state weak which allows for their activities to continue undisturbed as, "Governments may simply turn a blind eye to criminal activity, or governmental institutions may simply be too weak to be able to successfully confront the criminal networks or terrorist organizations"[98]. Cooperation occurs when the groups temporarily work together due to mutual interests being served[99]. This can be short-term or long-term relationships that utilize the others' expert knowledge or operational support. With criminal organizations often working illicitly alongside the government, cooperation can be short-lived in order to keep their relationship alive. Long-term relationships have been cited including FARC, but these are merely "the convergence of terrorist and criminal groups into an organization where the two groups' separate, and distinct operations are merged and conflated...the term 'narco-terrorism,' it could be argued, was coined to define just such organizations"[100]. Lastly, convergence is characterized by both groups engaging in behaviors that are associated with the other[101]. All three categories can include the overlap of personnel, activities, interests, and skills to blur the lines between criminal organizations and terrorist groups.

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[97] Center for Homeland Defense Security, "Convergence of Terrorism"; Erik Alda and Joseph L. Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime: The Case of the Sahel Region," *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*3, no. 1 (October 2014), https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.ea.

[98] Alda and Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime".

[99] Center for Homeland Defense Security, "Convergence of Terrorism".

[100] Alda and Sala, "Links Between Terrorism, Organized Crime and Crime".

[101] Ibid.,; Center for Homeland Defense Security, "Convergence of Terrorism".

Intersection is not confined to the three categories. The reality of the situation is rather grey than black and white. In fact, many scholars conceptualize their relationship along a continuum[102]. Along this continuum, there exists a myriad of intersections. Scholar, Tamara Makarenko, conceptualized this dynamic in her "crime-terror continuum". Makarenko's map illustrates the movement of the two groups along a sliding gradient with the assertion that "Organized crime and terrorism exist on the same plane, and thus are theoretically capable of converging at a central point"[103]. From the left, organized crime moves towards terrorism gradually by first, alliance with a terrorist group; second, use of terror tactics for operational purposes, involvement in political crime; and finally, convergence (represented below in Figure 1[104]).

Figure 1. Makarenko's Crime-Terror Continuum
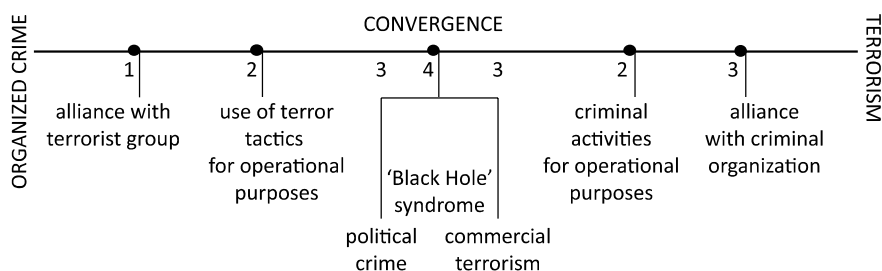
Source: Makarenko, Tamara *The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Organised Crime and Terrorism* 2004.

Shelley and Picarelli agree with Makarenko on the fluidity of movement on the spectrum adding that groups might move backwards, skip steps, or maintain a single form of interaction[105].

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[102] Cameron Sumpter, and Joseph Franco. 2018. "Migration, Transnational Crime and Terrorism: Exploring the Nexus in Europe and Southeast Asia". *Perspectives on Terrorism* 12 (5): 36–50.

[103] Tamara Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum: Tracing the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism," *Global Crime* 6, no. 1 (2004): pp. 129–145, https://doi.org/10.1080/1744057042000297025.

[104] Ibid., 6.

[105] Shelley and Picarelli, "Methods and Motives", 35.

Although Makarenko theorizes the groups are capable of converging, research has revealed that full convergence is few and far between. Professor James Anderson notes that long-term convergence depends largely on whether both groups are able to gain from combined operations while simultaneously maintaining operational security[106]. Rather, many groups resort to cooperation, or appropriation, where "in house" services are used to exchange skills – criminals leveraging terrorist tactics or vice versa[107]. For example, organized crime groups have used terrorist tactics of beheadings and assassinations to intimidate governmental authorities or rival gangs[108]. This was personified in 2006 after a group of gunmen with suspected links to organized crime entered a bar in Uruapan, Mexico, fired their weapons, then tossed five human heads on the dance floor[109]. Additionally, the relationship between the Italian Red Brigades (BR) and Naples Camorra in the 1980s is another example of cooperative interaction. Under pressure, the BR and the powerful crime syndicate, Naples Camorra, joined forces in the kidnapping of a senior politician and several other assassinations. From this short-term alliance, Camorra left with $1 million in commission and agreed to assassinate others selected by the Red Brigades[110]. The ambiguity within the continuum is why broad statements cannot be made about the crime-terror nexus, with levels of embeddedness varying from case to case.

Hezbollah Tri-Border Area Nexus

The Tri-Border Area (TBA) encompasses the border region between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Geographically, the triple frontier is

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[106] Sanderson, "Transnational Terror", 55.

[107] Mullins and Wither, "Terrorism and Organized Crime", 71.

[108] Ibid., 73.

[109] Jarmon, "The New Era," 163.

[110] Chris Dishman. 2001. "Terrorism, Crime, and Transformation". *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 24 (1): 43–58.

characterized as a lawless border that permits easy access to urban areas and the surrounding jungle[111]. This area has been recognized as a key center for criminal activities, money laundering, smuggling, intellectual property theft, counterfeiting, and arms and drug trafficking[112]. Criminal activity in this area is rooted in the economic conditions of the TBA countries. All three are riddled with poverty, income disparities, and corruption[113]. Government corruption within the TBA facilitates organized crime and terrorism, and their relationship is conducted like a normal business and fueled by profitable criminal activities. This creates a mutually beneficial nexus among all three groups[114]. With the corruption high and the legitimate economy in decline, an environment is created where law enforcement, the judicial system, and the government turn a blind eye to shady business; consequently, the area has become a haven for terrorist groups and criminals alike. This crime-terror 'haven' makes the TBA an excellent example of Makarenko's 'black hole syndrome' – "situations in which weak or failed states foster the convergence between transnational organized crime and terrorism, and ultimately create a safe haven for the continued operations of convergent groups"[115].

Although Hezbollah is often associated with operations in the Middle East, the terrorist group has a long-standing presence in the TBA of South America and has prospered in the region over the last few decades. The refugee migrants created by the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990) enabled Hezbollah and Iran to create a presence in the

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[111] Trevisi. 2013. "Assessing the Terrorist Threat in The Tri-Border Area of Brazil, Paraguay And Argentia," *International Institutute for Counter Terrorism* (1): 2–65.

[112] Sarah Nielsen, "Fighting Terror in the Tri-Border Area," Wilson Center, December 9, 2019, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/fighting-terror-the-tri-border-area.

[113] Shelley and Picarelli, "Methods and Motives", 60.

[114] Rex A Hudson, and Library of Congress. Federal Research Division. 2003. *Terrorist and Organized Crime Groups in the Tri-Border Area (Tba) of South America: A Report*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/pdf-files/TerrOrgCrime_TBA.pdf.

[115] Makarenko, "The Crime-Terror Continuum," 138.

region. The groups infiltrated the country by "planting numerous agents and recruiting sympathizers among Arab and Muslim immigrants on the continent. Their efforts led to the establishment of formal terrorist cells throughout the region..."[116]. Their presence was finally felt by the masses after two deadly attacks in the 1990s. First, the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed 29 people and injured an additional 250; second, the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) Jewish center in 1994, killing 87[117]. Iran is still a financer of Hezbollah, but their fast expansion led the group to seek outside sources in the region for its growing budget. With organized crime flourishing in the TBA region, the solution was quite clear. Hezbollah found a supportive population for recruitment in addition to strong support and financing with the additional aid of criminal organizations[118].

Initially, the relationship between Hezbollah and the organized crime ring in South America was an unlikely pairing. In fact, the discovery of their connection came about by pure coincidence. In 2007, wiretaps meant to monitor the Medellin cartel picked up Arabic in the transmission. This was later traced back to be Chekry Mahmoud Harb, a money launderer connected to Hezbollah. Their conversation revealed a shipment plan to the Middle East that included multi-ton shipments of cocaine. Later investigations dubbed, "Project Cassandra," took officials down a rabbit hole of a multi-billion-dollar, worldwide operation with cases spanning over a decade – all orchestrated by Hezbollah officials[119]. This investigation uncovered the shift in Hezbollah's operational tactics to incorporate criminal activities and their cooperation with organized crime

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[116] Matthew Levitt. 2016. "Iranian and Hezbollah Operations in South America: Then and Now". *Prism* 5 (4): 118–33.

[117] Shelley and Picarelli, "Methods and Motives", 59.

[118] Trevisi, "Assessing the Terrorist Threat in the Tri-Border Area", 22.

[119] Emanuele Ottolenghi, "Hezbollah: Narco-Terror and Crime in Latin America," Jewish Policy Center (Jewish Policy Center, January 7, 2021), https://www.jewishpolicycenter.org/2021/01/07/hezbollah-narco-terror-and-crime-in-latin-america/.

groups. In 2019, 25 years after the AMIA attack, Argentina designated Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, making them the first country in Latin America to do so[120]. This was an important milestone in the ongoing investigation of the linkage between organized crime and terrorism in the region. One year prior, the Financial Information Unit (FIU) of Argentina froze assets of the 'Clan Barakat,' an organization involved in both criminal and terrorism-linked financing[121]. Their detection in 2018 uncovered an attempt to launder $10 million in Argentina. The suspect, Lebanese Assad Ahmad Barakat, was arrested later in Brazil[122]. Countless other arrests have highlighted the growing issue of this nexus in the TBA. In a review of open-source information on the connection of Islamic terrorist groups in the TBA between 1999–2003, the Library of Congress reported that terrorist groups in the region include, Egypt's Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, Al-Jihad, al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and al-Muqawamah[123]. Organized crime syndicates and terrorist groups have a mutualistic relationship in the TBA. Hezbollah is a money-laundering powerhouse in the region. Their multi-billion-dollar industry "cleans organized crime's ill-gotten gains through multiple waypoints in the Western Hemisphere, West Africa, Europe and the Middle East"[124]. Hezbollah's presence in the TBA is an important national security risk for the United States and the blurring of groups and actors makes it difficult for officials to draw a line of those involved.

Combatting the Crime-Terror Nexus

As emphasized, the crime-terror nexus is a growing threat to national security for countries around the globe. Their relationship can

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[120] Sarah, "Fighting Terror in the Tri-Border Area".

[121] Trevis, "Assessing the Terrorist Threat in the Tri-Border Area", 22.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Hudson, "Groups in the Tri-Border Area", 5–6.

[124] Ottolenghi, "Hezbollah: Narco-Terror and Crime".

undermine the security, stability, and socio-economic development of affected States[125]. Combatting this threat will be no easy feat for local, national, and international authorities. Although there is no one size fits all solution to neither terrorism nor organized crime, steps can be taken to circumvent their expansion and embeddedness. In their initiative to combat this issue, The Global Counterterrorism Forum outlines four areas of priority when addressing the crime-terror nexus:

1) Legal considerations;
2) Research and information sharing;
3) Local engagement;
4) Capacity building and law enforcement[126].

As the lines blur between groups, legal prosecution becomes increasingly more difficult to address matters of jurisdiction especially in cases involving transnational activities[127]. To help alleviate this judicial strain, coherence between domestic anti-crime and anti-terrorism legislation should exist that matches with regional and international conventions and protocols on the topic[128]. This will ensure a higher level of consistency, so in the case that a terrorist or criminal is accused, they cannot find loopholes in the system based on state, regional, or international discrepancies. New legal prosecutions should also be put in place for charges related to both terrorism and organized crime, rather than choosing to prosecute using precedent of one or the other. In turn, this will make the nexus riskier for potential participants.

Arguably, the most challenging measure is the coordination among local agencies, international institutions, and state and national governments. Effective coordination includes the "exchange of information, interagency/inter-departmental cooperation, adequate resources and

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[125] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices", 3.

[126] Ibid., 2.

[127] Center for Homeland Defense Security, "Convergence of Terrorism".

[128] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices", 3.

appropriate legal frameworks"[129]. Exchanging information will allow for a greater exchange of ideas and policy recommendations to combat this nexus. Examples of possible pieces of shared information can include, "data from law enforcement investigations/arrests/charges, judicial decisions, government policy decisions, changes in law, on-going projects, and initiatives"[130]. It should be noted that this information will still adhere to data protection rules. The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) is a working example of cross border cooperation. INTERPOL facilitates "international cooperative linkages among law enforcement agencies, Interpol, and its member countries' national central bureaus (NCBs)"[131]. In 2002, INTERPOL created the "Fusion Task Force" to address linkages between terrorism and organized crime[132], and has been valuable in the arrest of individuals planning or financing terrorist attacks[133]. Just as terrorist groups and organized crime groups share tactics and practices, law enforcement and intelligence groups need to do the same[134].

At the local level, authorities should work with their communities to circumvent the nexus from the ground up. This can include awareness programs of recruitment tactics against youths, prison radicalization prevention, protection of whistleblowers, and including local partners in anti-terrorism and anti-crime initiatives[135]. Human security conditions like health, economic, and personal insecurity should be addressed in areas prone to the crime-terror nexus. Oftentimes, members of shadow economies have no option but to turn to illicit markets for income.

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[129] Mullins and Wither, "Terrorism and Organized Crime", 78.

[130] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices", 6.

[131] Sandler T, Arce D.G, and Enders W. "An Evaluation of Interpol's Cooperative-Based Counterterrorism Linkages". *Journal of Law and Economics* 54, no. 1 (2011): 79–110. https://doi.org/10.1086/652422.

[132] Sanderson, "Transnational Terror," 57.

[133] Sandler, "Evaluation of Interpol," 84.

[134] Sanderson, "Transnational Terror", 58.

[135] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices", 9.

With efforts to boost education and expand formal markets, the attraction to terrorism and crime may decrease. Outside of economic factors, societal figures can play a large role in reducing this nexus. Individuals like religious leaders, teachers, and family members should be supported in their efforts to help the community through referral programs for citizens who are at high risk of radicalization. In essence, engagement through awareness and education is essential at the local level.

Lastly, capacity building is at the forefront of many countries affected by the crime-terror nexus. In regions corroded by conditions like corruption, poverty, and weak border enforcement, it is easy to see how they became a breeding ground for the nexus. In these scenarios, underlying problems within the country need to be addressed. For example, the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime partnered with its departments on terrorism and organized crime to help weakened states by "strengthening the ability of customs officials, immigration officers, and border guards to counter trafficking in narcotics, human beings, vehicles, and weapons…."[136]. By increasing the investigative capacities of practitioners, the nexus can be slowed. This can include, financial investigations, cyber investigations, or simply increasing border security. The United Nations has repeatedly addressed capacity building in the following resolutions, urging member states to be aware of the nexus and act early.

Table 1. United Nations Security Council Resolutions(UNSCR), Addressing the Crime-Terror Nexus

UNSCR 2195 (2014)	• "International action to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime; • Prevention through securing borders and prosecuting illicit networks"[137]

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[136] Sanderson, "Transnational Terror", 57.

[137] "Security Council, Adopting Resolution 2195 (2014), Urges International Action to Break Links between Terrorists, Transnational Organized Crime | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations (Security Council, December 19, 2014), https://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11717.doc.htm.

UNSCR 2322 (2016)	• "Enhance cooperation to prevent terrorists from benefiting from transnational organized crime; • Investigate and build capacity to prosecute those involved in crime-terror nexus"[138]
UNSCR 2370 (2017)	• "Strengthen member states judicial, law enforcement and border control capacities; • Develop investigative capabilities of arms trafficking networks to address the crime-terror nexus"[139]
UNSCR 2482 (2019)	• "Consider engaging relevant local communities and non-governmental actors in strategic development; • Establishing laws and procedures that allow for broad international cooperation, police to police cooperation, use of joint investigation procedures and coordinate cross-border investigations; • Adopt measures to prevent radicalization within prisons; • Create and promote means of rehabilitation and the reintegration of convicted terrorists"[140]

Conclusions

It is clear that intersection of organized crime and terrorism is a growing threat to the stability of many governments no matter their proximity to the nexus. The two groups are realizing that political and economic power enhance one another – terrorists benefit from the involvement in criminal activities, or from the knowledge of criminals recruited; criminals have benefitted from terrorist tactics to secure influence. Through group intersection in illicit trade, cyberspace, and other criminal activities, their relationship will only grow more embedded without the proper action taken. Having a comprehensive understanding of the nexus is the first step in countering the threat. It is important not to make base claims on the intersection as the nexus is not uniform. Due to the intersection's fluidity on the continuum, law enforcement

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[138] Global Counterterrorism Forum, "The Hague Good Practices, 1.

[139] Ibid.

[140] "Security Council Expresses Concern over Links between International Terrorism, Organized Crime, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2482 (2019)" United Nations (Security Council, July 19, 2019).

and intelligence officials will have to match the agility and adaptability of intersecting crime-terror groups. This security threat is pressing in regions like the Tri-Border Area but is a growing threat to the United States and other UN member states. Cooperation and inclusion at all levels of government and non-government agencies will be needed to combat this ever-evolving nexus.