Terrorism – The irredeemability of a concept

March 2025

TERRORISM, COLONIALITY, ABOLITION, RACE, COUNTER-TERRORISM

Dr Rabea M Khan
Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK
R.khan@ljmu.ac.uk

'Terrorism' continues to dominate headlines, it stirs a wide range of emotions in the general public and the fear of it informs numerous domestic and foreign policies worldwide, many of which have cost countless and many more innocent lives than the acts of violence that were labelled "terrorism" in the first place. But what exactly is 'terrorism', and should we care to locate or identify an accurate definition for it?

Abstract

'Terrorism' is a concept that is notoriously difficult to define, and terrorism researchers have spilled much ink in debating the most accurate definition for it. However, as I show in this entry, it is more important to acknowledge this concept's *irredeemability*, rather than its many competing and conflicting or contradicting definitions. Terrorism is a racially infused, pejorative concept with negative racial and colonial associations and connotations. Therefore, regardless of how (inclusively) 'terrorism' is ultimately defined, it can never function as an analytically useful or objective descriptor or classification of political violence. It is first and foremost a moral category, which functions to strip off (political) legitimacy from those to whom it is applied. It is also a category with colonial origins and an enduring colonial and racial function, justifying harmful, discriminatory and at times genocidal, practices under the framework of 'counter-terrorism'.

What is the solution, then? I contend in this entry that the aim should be nothing short of abolition of the concept. The goal of abolitionist activism and praxis is to do away with hegemonic structures and frameworks that continue to enable colonial rule in one form or another. While the focus of contemporary abolitionist thinkers and activists has predominantly been on the prison system, their goal also extends to all the institutions, concepts and logics that are attached to colonial legacies, and which continue to enable racial capitalism, global punishment, and colonial logic. 'Terrorism' is one concept that enables such colonial forms of control, carcerality and global punishment.

In this entry I show how the concept of 'terrorism' is racialised, irrespective of the actual race of its perpetrators, and is therefore irredeemable. It cannot be recovered, reformed or re-invented in a more inclusive, less racialised way, for example through well-meaning efforts to include actors that are usually left out of terrorism discourses (such as white supremacists, far-right actors, or states themselves). I further show how the concept has colonial origins, being used historically as a colonial category to suppress anti-colonial resistance in many contexts. Finally, I show how responses to 'terrorism', under the framework of 'counter-terrorism', continue to function for colonial purposes and disproportionately target racialised and minoritised people around the world. Thus, ultimately I argue that abolishing the counter-terrorism apparatus, which is responsible for ongoing neo-colonial rule and racial violence and is closely linked to carcerality and the prison system, first requires the abolition of the concept that enabled counter-terrorism regimes in the first place: 'terrorism'.

Introduction[1]

'"Terrorism" is a growth industry' (Breen Smyth et al., 2008, p. 1). Countless books, articles and other media on the topic are published every year; conferences, programmes and university courses on 'terrorism' remain popular; and many jobs in academia, the NGO sector and the governmental and security sectors are dependent on the continued acceptance of 'terrorism' as one of the most dangerous threats to the modern world. Meanwhile, counter-terrorism programmes continue to receive some of the highest funding from government bodies globally. In other words, the so-called 'terrorism industry' is thriving (Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989; Mueller, 2006), made possible by the continued acceptance of 'terrorism' as a valid classification of political violence.

This acceptance persists despite the arbitrary and inconsistent employment of the term 'terrorism'. Although there is no universally accepted definition of 'terrorism', there is some consensus regarding its most basic elements: the targeting of civilians, political motivation, and a symbolic nature (i.e. the intention to intimidate a wider audience than those directly targeted) (Schmid & Jongman, 1988, p. 5). However, there is a general reluctance to apply the label of 'terrorism' to white supremacist, far-right violence, to colonial violence, or more generally to acts of state violence that would fit this basic definition.[2] In parallel, there is often an over-eager readiness to apply the label to non-state, non-Western, usually non-white, often Muslim actors.

How, then, should decolonial and postcolonial scholars and activists engage with the concept of 'terrorism'? I argue here that engaging with 'terrorism' from a post- or decolonial perspective means first acknowledging that 'terrorism', regardless of its definition, is a concept that carries racial, gendered and colonial implications and assumptions. Its mere use in discourse is already a form of violence that perpetuates these implications. Instead of further entertaining the endless scholarly debates on how to most accurately define or most inclusively employ the term

[1] Please note that this entry constitutes an amended and abbreviated version of an article that was originally published in *Critical Studies on Terrorism* entitled 'A case for the abolition of terrorism and its industry' (2024). It also contains excerpts from another published article in *Review of International Studies* entitled 'The coloniality of the religious terrorism thesis' (2023).

[2] Examples of state violence that fit the definition of 'terrorism' but are not usually discussed in this way are the bombing of Dresden in WW2 and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima as well as Nagasaki (see Richardson, 2009). For an example of a white supremacist attack that fits standard definitions of 'terrorism' but was not referred to as such, see Heike Schotten's (2015) discussion of the Charleston Massacre.

'terrorism', scholars, activists and policy makers alike should abandon it, acknowledging that it is irredeemable as a valid classification of political violence.

As postcolonial scholar Jasmine Gani (2017) notes, we cannot just abstract a 'concept' from its (historical) 'conception' and thereby erase the colonial intent or function it has served historically. This intent is perpetuated in the continuing use of such concepts, even if their historical conception is erased or unacknowledged. Even though its meaning might have changed over the years, 'terrorism' has always existed as a moral category with the purpose of denying legitimacy to those to whom it is applied. It is therefore an analytically useless concept, because it does not objectively describe any form of political violence but rather denotes the actors thus labelled as illegitimate and morally wrong (Brulin, 2015).

In the following, I demonstrate how 'terrorism' is a racialised and irredeemable category through 1) its racial conception more generally; 2) its colonial origins and function; and 3) the colonial responses to it under the framework of 'counter-terrorism', both historically and today. I conclude by arguing that the only legitimate engagement with the term from a decolonial perspective would be abolitionist in nature.

Racial conception of terrorism

It is well-known to post- and decolonial scholars that race extends beyond skin colour or phenotype and operates by categorising not just bodies but also concepts, phenomena, or practices as white (or white-adjacent) and non-white. Racial identities can be inscribed onto, or imagined in, concepts, practices or other bodies. Proximity to whiteness can be signalled through certain languages or practices that are associated with whiteness, regardless of the actual race of a person's or institution's make-up. 'Terrorism', then, is undeniably racialised as a tactic that is usually associated with non-white people, their governments, the Middle East, or – before the 1980s – the Soviet Union and 'eastern bloc nations' (see Third, 2014).

However, 'terrorism' is also racialised (and gendered) more specifically through the indirect denial of rationality to those to whom the label is applied. Terrorism itself is often coded as a form of 'asymmetrical' or 'unconventional warfare', as 'extranormative' and 'unorthodox' (Horowitz, 1983; Wilkinson, 2001; Crenshaw, 1983). Such definitions of terrorism are a coded and gendered way of attributing disorder and irrationality to 'terrorism' and contrasting it with the

legitimate modern nation-state, which is tied to whiteness and notions of masculinity (Gentry, 2016, 2020) and which is explicitly excluded from most definitions of 'terrorism' (Jackson, 2008).

Terrorism, then, constitutes a disordered and non-normative form of violence, usually reserved for non-state actors, in contrast to the legitimate, ordered and just violence perpetrated by the modern nation-state (i.e. counter-terrorism). Thus, and as noted by Gentry and Sjoberg (2015, pp. 151–2), the terrorist actor is regularly seen as 'exemplify[ing] disordered thinking or disordered politics'. Encoded irrationality is further exemplified by the inherent immorality attached to terrorism; terrorist violence is often described as 'senseless' or 'mindless' (Third, 2014, p. 214), 'desperate' (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 15), or the form of violence that constitutes the 'ultimate evil' since it is 'atrocious, mad, mindless' and ultimately unjustifiable (Townshend, 2002, p. 21).

Importantly, this dominant construction of 'terrorism' relies on the assumption that it is mostly perpetrated by non-state actors who set out to challenge the legitimate, Westphalian state. To understand how this association with non-state actors also racialises 'terrorism' conceptually, it is important to understand that the idea of the modern (Westphalian) nation-state is a racial and gendered notion, which is tied to whiteness and masculinity and associated with colonial notions of modernity, progress and civilisation. As postcolonial scholars have noted, the very inception of the modern nation-state in Europe was linked to racial hierarchies and functioned for colonial purposes.[3] Thus, opposition to this state and its monopoly on violence is an inherent threat to a system that, as decolonial and postcolonial scholars point out, is defined by coloniality and governed by (structural) white supremacy. Violent non-state actors who threaten this system are thereby also threatening modernity and civilisation. It therefore comes as no surprise that many dominant conceptualisations of 'terrorism' have also characterised it as an 'attack on modernity' (see Third, 2014, p. 84).

Thus, while not all terrorism that is acknowledged or labelled as such is obviously racialised (i.e. occurring in the non-West or perpetrated by non-Western, racialised people), the term is nonetheless racialised conceptually as an act of violence that is imagined as an attack on either the state, modernity, progress or anything associated with it (i.e. the project of Western modernity). Thus, explicitly anti-capitalist, communist and left-wing groups or dissent, even

[3] For more detail on this see Gurminder Bhambra's work: Bhambra, Gurminder (2022), A Decolonial Project for Europe, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 60 (2): 229-244.

when perpetrated by 'white' actors, have been labelled and studied as 'terrorism' (Husain, 2021a, p. 208) much more readily than right-wing, white supremacist and Christian-inspired violence, which is seriously under-studied and rarely labelled in this way.

Colonial origin and function

The recent colonial history of the employment of 'terrorism' as a category serves as an illustration and constitutes a manifestation of the racial conceptualisation discussed above. As early as the start of the twentieth century, it was common for Europeans to refer to Indigenous, anti-colonial revolts and resistance as 'terrorism' (Nakissa, 2022; see also Deery, 2003; Prakash, 2013, pp. 503–4).[4] In fact, some examples of well-known anti-colonial resistance that were labelled as terrorist include Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) in Apartheid South Africa, the Algerian FLN with which Frantz Fanon was involved, SWAPO in Namibia, or the Mau Mau in Kenya. Many other anti-colonial movements or groups on the African continent, as well as left-wing groups in Latin America and around the world more generally, were labelled 'terrorist' after the Second World War and particularly during the Cold War (Oando & Achieng, 2021, p. 359). Many Black liberation movements in the US, for example the Black Panthers, were also considered 'terrorist' at the time (Meier, 2022; Husain, 2021b). Indeed, it has become a cliché to point out that Nelson Mandela, who was later globally acknowledged and revered as an iconic anti-colonial freedom fighter, was on the US terrorism watchlist until 2008 (Richardson, 2006, p. 27).[5]

In fact, in the 1970s the UN had to amend its own definition of 'terrorism' after pressure from newly independent (and formerly colonised) states, who insisted that the official definition of 'terrorism' must be worded in such a way as to no longer include national liberation movements such as those that had achieved their own independence and liberation from colonial rule (Hoffman, 2006, p. 24). This demonstrates that the conflation of 'terrorism' with anti-colonial,

[4] The criminalisation of political dissent by colonial powers, of course, did not always take the same form and the assigning of 'terrorism' was not the only tool for it. It also is not the only tool today. Other frameworks like the discourse on 'radicalisation' and 'extremism' should be studied in the same vein and as potential tools for modern-colonial powers to discriminate against minorities, political dissent, and system-threatening actors.

[5] However, as noted in the previous section, race does not refer to skin colour or geographical context alone. Indeed, many violent resistance movements to occupation or foreign control on European soil have also been studied through the prism of 'terrorism'. The Basque ETA in Spain and the Irish IRA constitute examples of this. Basque and Irish resistance was suppressed in similar ways that violent and non-violent anti-colonial resistance was suppressed in India, Kenya, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria and many other places through the framework of 'counter-terrorism'.

anti-racist struggle has persisted ever since the term first entered political and academic discourse, and since the early days of the study of terrorism as a separate sub-discipline. It also goes to show how the classification of politically active groups as 'terrorist' served the political and colonial purpose of signifying illegitimacy, rather than constituting an analytical category to objectively classify a certain form of political violence.

As Heike Schotten (cited in Aitlhadj et al., 2024) also notes, one of the essential ideological functions of 'terrorism' is to 'characterise the existence and resistance of the colonised as a threat to the survival and flourishing of colonial "civilisation".' Illustrating this point, Joseph McQuade (2020, p. 243) demonstrates how British colonial administrators constructed Muslim Indians as predisposed to terrorism because their activities were often linked to anti-colonial resistance at the time. As McQuade (2020) notes:

> *[. . .] Only by rigorously interrogating the premises and cultural perceptions that underlay early discourses of "terrorism" in the colonial world does it become possible to understand how the term came to acquire its current connotations. Ultimately, such an approach is key to any attempt to understand the modern phenomenon of "terrorism" in analytical, rather than political, terms.* (p. 248)

This is further illustrated by the case of Palestine. Just as European colonisers in India, South Africa, Malaya, and other places labelled anti-colonial resistance as 'terrorism', and their subsequent response as either 'counter-terrorism' or 'counter-insurgency', so has Israel labelled Palestinian resistance (whether violent or not) 'terrorism' and its own response to it 'counter-terrorism' in a much more contemporary case of settler-colonialism. As Israeli historian Illan Pappé (2009, p. 127) notes, Palestinian history and nationalism have intentionally been construed as 'terrorism' by American and Israeli civil society, media and governmental spaces (see also Aitlhadj et al., 2024, p. 2; Said, 1987, p. 199). In fact, beginning in the 1970s Israeli think tanks, government officials and media have actively generated a dominant discourse that associates 'terrorism' with mostly Arabs and Muslims, especially Palestinians (Said, 1987; Schotten, 2024; Herman & O'Sullivan, 1989). As is further reflected by Benjamin Netanyahu's self-authored book from 1986, entitled *Terrorism: How the West Can Win*, it also intended to associate 'terrorism' with anti-Western, anti-modernity, and civilisation-destroying perpetrators (Netanyahu, 1986, pp. 61–62; Aitlhadj et al., 2024, p. 4; Schotten, 2024, p. 7). This very clearly demonstrates the coloniality inherent in modern discourses on 'terrorism', which are only facilitated even more by the concept's racial conception more generally.

The coloniality of counter-terrorism

The racialised construction and imagination of 'terrorists', and 'terrorism' more generally, ultimately produces and enables counter-terrorism practices and policies that are clearly racial and (neo-) colonial. These practices, such as militarised policing, surveillance, (global) punishment, imprisonment and detention, are included in the range of practices that abolition scholars and activists have long campaigned against. A growing body of literature now advocates for the abolition of the counter-terrorism apparatus (Muslim Abolitionist Futures, 2021; Nguyen, 2023; Husain, 2020; Wright, 2024), and there are also increasing voices pointing to the racial nature of contemporary (as well as past) counter-terrorism practices and their resemblance to colonial forms of rule (see Abu-Bakare, 2020; Dunlap, 2016; Meier, 2022; Owens, 2015; Sentas, 2006; Sabir, 2017).

For example, as legal scholar Vicki Sentas (2006) demonstrates, contemporary counter-terrorism legislation and practices in Australia serve to marginalise and police Aboriginal communities, thereby constituting the continuation of colonial forms of rule under a different guise. As Husain (2020, 2021a) further demonstrates, contemporary US-led counter-terrorism campaigns have also made use of tactics and practices first tested out in colonial settings to quell anti-colonial resistance. The contemporary manifestations of counter-terrorism, then, constitute neo-colonial forms of control, surveillance and rule, both domestically, where they disproportionately target Black people (see Meier, 2022; Micieli-Voutsinas, 2023) as well as abroad in the name of 'intervention', such as in Afghanistan in the name of the Global War on Terror (see Owens, 2015).

Even in many postcolonial countries, contemporary counter-terrorism practices continue to be used by the political elites in the same ways in which they were used and introduced by colonial administrators prior to national independence. This can be observed in Egypt, where anti-terrorism laws were first introduced by the British to suppress anti-colonial resistance and are now used by the government against political dissidents (Abozaid, 2022; Alzubairi, 2019; Finden & Dutta, 2024). In India, similar laws introduced by the British to quell anti-colonial resistance are now used by the current government to target Muslim Indians and other political dissidents (McQuade, 2020; Chakkuparambil, n.d.). The anti-terrorism legislation that was introduced to Palestine under British mandate law to target both Jewish and Arab resistance was subsequently adopted by the newly established state of Israel (Klein, 2005, p. 2223; Barak-Erez,

2012, p. 598), which used it to suppress and target Palestinians resisting Israeli settler-colonialism (Hughes, 2019). Similarly, in Kenya Western anti-terrorism frameworks have been imported and resemble colonial forms of rule (Oando & Achieng, 2021).

Conclusion – A call for the abolition of 'terrorism' and its industry

'Terrorism', then, cannot simply be redeemed or reclaimed as an inclusive, just, or neutral classification of political violence, because it does not function for any analytically useful purpose. Rather, its function is inherently colonial and hegemonic. Palestinian-American poet Fargo Nissim Tbakhi (2023) illustrates this very poignantly in rejecting the idea of making 'terrorism' more inclusive and broadening it to also include states' actions rather than just those of non-state actors. As Tbakhi states, including Israeli or American state violence under the umbrella of 'terrorism' ultimately only reifies a category that cannot be recuperated, and which will continue to constitute 'a one-sided weapon [whose] bullets belong to the state'. In a similar vein, Atiya Husain (2020) commented on the increasingly loud calls from the political left in the US to classify the Ku Klux Klan as a 'terrorist' organisation:

> *[. . .] this call is misguided. To correct the problem, we do not need things on the right to be classified as terrorism, too; we need to void the category of terrorism completely. It cannot be salvaged because the very thing that gives it its meaning is its racial connotations, even when it is used for white supremacists. Far from a neutral word meaning very, very bad, terrorism is a deeply racialized concept. It is <u>because</u> of those racial meanings that the word has more punch than "white supremacy," for example.*

The responsibility and task of postcolonial and decolonial scholars, educators and activists, then, is to call for the abolition of 'terrorism', not engaging with this term in any other way but to challenge its existence, use and weaponisation.

Abolition, as feminist-abolitionist scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore (2022) has pointed out, is as much about presence as it is about absence. While abolitionist thinking is certainly about imagining and working towards the absence of all the practices, institutions and structures that enable genocide, racial violence and global punishment, it should also be about the presence of alternative forms of justice systems. In the case of abolishing 'terrorism' discourse, the alternative should not be difficult to imagine. Indeed, violence that is commonly branded as 'terrorist' can always be alternatively discussed using more helpful terminology that lacks the

same racial connotations and colonial implications. At the same time, such violence always needs to be accompanied with appropriate contextualisation that rejects an automatic delegitimisation or 'moral dismissal of nonstate perpetrators of violence – via the label 'terrorist" (Ab Razak, 2018; see also Nguyen, 2023, p. 81; Sen, 2022).

Cross-references

Khan, R. M. (2024). A case for the abolition of 'terrorism' and its industry. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17(4), 1019–1042.

Khan, R. M. (2024). The coloniality of the religious terrorism thesis. Review of International Studies. Published online. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210523000517

References

Ab Razak, M. (2018). Can Violence Be Moral? Revisiting Fanon on Violence in The Wretched of the Earth. LSE Middle East Centre Blog, January 8, 2018. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/01/08/can-violence-be-moral-revisiting-fanon-on-violence-in-the-wretched-of-the-earth/

Abozaid, A. M. (2022). Counterterrorism Strategies in Egypt: Permanent Exceptions in the War on Terror. Routledge.

Abu-Bakare, A. (2020). Counterterrorism and Race. International Politics Reviews, 8(1), 79–99. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41312-020-00074-x

Aitlhadj, L., Finden, A., Haspeslagh, S., Kaleem, A., Khan, R. M., Salhab, A., Schotten, C. H., Sen, S., & Stampnitzky, L. (2024). Where is Palestine in Critical Terrorism Studies? A roundtable conversation. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17(3), 437–462. DOI: 10.1080/17539153.2024.2362966

Alzubairi, F. (2019). Colonialism, Neo-Colonialism, and Anti-Terrorism Law in the Arab World. Cambridge University Press.

Barak-Erez, D. (2012). Israel's Anti-Terrorism Law: Past, Present and Future. In Global Anti-Terrorism Law and Policy, edited by G. Williams, K. Roach, M. Hor, & V. V. Ramraj, 2nd ed., 597–620. Cambridge University Press.

Breen Smyth, M., Gunning, J., Jackson, R., Kassimeris, G., & Robinson, P. (2008). Critical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 1(1), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150701868538

Brulin, R. (2015). Compartmentalization, Context of Speech, and the Israeli Origins of the American Discourse on 'Terrorism'. Dialectical Anthropology, 39(1), 69–119. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10624-015-9371-8

Chakkuparambil, Y. (in development). Unraveling the Web: Geopolitics, The War on Terror And UAPA Laws in India.

Crenshaw, M. (1983). Introduction: Reflections on the effects of terrorism, in Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence, edited by M. Crenshaw, 1–37. Wesleyan University Press.

Deery, P. (2003). The Terminology of Terrorism: Malaya, 1948–52. Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 34(2), 231–247. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463403000225

Dunlap, A. (2016). Counter-Insurgency: Let's Remember Where Prevention Comes from and Its Implications. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 9(2), 380–385. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2016.1178487

Finden, A. E., & Dutta, S. (2024). Counterterrorism, political anxiety and legitimacy in postcolonial India and Egypt. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17(2), 176-200. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2304908

Gani, J. K. (2017). The erasure of race: Cosmopolitanism and the illusion of Kantian hospitality. Millennium, 45(3), 425–446.

Gentry, C. (2016). Gender and terrorism, in Handbook on Gender and War, edited by S. Sharoni, L. Steiner, J. Pedersen, and J. Welland, 146–169. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Gentry, C., & Sjoberg, L. (2015). Beyond Mothers, Monsters and Whores. Zed Books.

Gilmore, R. W. (2022). Change Everything: Racial Capitalism and the Case for Abolition. Haymarket.

Herman, E., & O'Sullivan, G. (1989). The "Terrorism" Industry: The Experts and Institutions That Shape Our View of Terror. Pantheon.

Hoffman, B. (2006). Inside Terrorism. Columbia University Press.

Horowitz, I. L. (1983). The routinization of terrorism and its unanticipated consequences, in Terrorism, Legitimacy and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence, edited by M. Crenshaw, 38–51. Wesleyan University Press.

Hughes, M. (2019). Britain's Pacification of Palestine: The British Army, the Colonial State, and the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939. Cambridge University Press.

Husain, A. (2020). Terror and Abolition. Boston Review, June 11. Accessed June 13, 2023. https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/atiya-husain-terror-and-abolition/

Husain, A. (2021a). Deracialization, Dissent, and Terrorism in the FBI's Most Wanted Program. Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 7(2), 208–225. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649220921898

Husain, A. (2021b). Paper Terror. Adi Magazine, Winter 2021. Accessed June 13, 2023. https://adimagazine.com/articles/paper-terror/

Jackson, R. (2008). The ghosts of state terror: Knowledge, politics and terrorism studies. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 1(3), 377–392.

Klein, C. (2005). On the Three Floors of a Legislative Building: Israel's Legal Arsenal in Its Struggle against Terrorism. Cardozo Law Review, 27(5), 2223–2242.

McQuade, J. (2020). A Genealogy of Terrorism: Colonial Law and the Origins of an Idea. Cambridge University Press.

Meier, A. (2022). Terror As Justice, Justice As Terror: Counterterrorism and Anti-Black Racism in the United States. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 15(1), 83–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2031132

Micieli-Voutsinas, J. (2023). Blackness After 9/11: Topographies of Race and Counter-Terror at the 9/11 Memorial Museum. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 16(1), 215–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2150358

Mueller, J. (2006). Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them. Simon and Schuster.

Muslim Abolitionist Futures. (2021). Accessed January 23, 2024. https://www.muslimabolitionistfutures.org

Nakissa, A. (2022). Liberalism's Distinctive Policy for Governing Muslim Populations: Human Rights, Religious Reform, and Counter-Terrorism from the Colonial Era Until the Present. History Compass, 20(9). https://doi.org/10.1111/hic3.12748

Netanyahu, B. (Ed.) (1986). Terrorism: How the West Can Win. Avon.

Nguyen, N. (2023). Terrorism on Trial: Political Violence and Abolitionist Futures. University of Minnesota.

Oando, S., & Achieng, S. (2021). An Indigenous African Framework for Counterterrorism: Decolonising Kenya's Approach to Countering "Al-Shabaab-Ism." Critical Studies on Terrorism, 14(3), 354–377. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2021.1958182

Owens, P. (2015). Economy of Force: Counterinsurgency and the Historical Rise of the Social. Cambridge University Press.

Pappé, I. (2009). De-Terrorising the Palestinian National Struggle: The Roadmap to Peace, Critical Studies on Terrorism. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 2(2), 127–146. https://doi.org/10.17539150903021399

Prakash, A. (2013). Colonial Techniques in the Imperial Capital: The Prefecture of Police and the Surveillance of North Africans in Paris, 1925–Circa 1970. French Historical Studies, 36(3), 479–510. https://doi.org/10.1215/00161071-2141118

Richardson, L. (2006). What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Terrorist Threat. John Murray.

Sabir, R. (2017). Blurred Lines and False Dichotomies: Integrating Counterinsurgency into the UK's Domestic 'War on Terror'. Critical Social Policy, 37(2), 202–224. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018316683471

Schmid, A., & Jongman, A. (1988). Political Terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories and literature. North-Holland Publishing Company.

Schotten, C. H. (2015). Why the Charleston Massacre Isn't Terrorism, and Palestinian Resistance Always Will Be. Mondoweiss, 15 July, available at: https://mondoweiss.net/2015/07/charleston-palestinian-resistance

Schotten, C. H. (2024). Zionism and the war(s) on terror: Extinction phobias, anti-Muslim racism, and critical scholarship. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17(4), 996–1018. https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2024.2337448

Sen, S. (2022). The Colonial Roots of Counter-Insurgencies in International Politics. International Affairs, 98(1), 209–223. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab201

Sentas, V. (2006). Counter Terrorism Policing – Investing in the Racial State. ACRAWSA E-Journal, 2(1), 1–16.

Tbakhi, N. F. (2023). Notes on Craft: Writing in the Hour of Genocide. Accessed February 9, 2024. https://proteanmag.com/2023/12/08/notes-on-craft-writing-in-the-hour-of-genocide/

Third, A. (2014). Gender and the political: Deconstructing the female terrorist. Springer.

Townshend, C. (2002). Terrorism: A very short Introduction. Oxford University Press.

Wilkinson, P. (2001). Terrorism versus Democracy: The Liberal State Response. Routledge.

Wright, H. (2024). "Don't bring race into it": White ignorance, UK counterterrorism and the impact agenda. Critical Studies on Terrorism, 17(4), 949–972.

Further reading

Abu-Bakare, A. (2020). Counterterrorism and race. International Politics Reviews, 8, 79–99.

Gentry, C. (2020). Disordered Violence: How Gender, Race, and Heteronormativity structure Terrorism. Edinburgh University Press.

Khan, L. A. (2005). The Essentialist Terrorist. Washburn Law Journal, 45(Fall), 47–88.

Razack, S.H. (2008). Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics. University of Toronto Press.

Said, E. W. (1987). The Essential Terrorist. Arab Studies Quarterly, 9(2), 195–203.

Schotten, H. (2018). Queer Terror: Life, Death, and Desire in the Settler Colony. Columbia University Press.

Stampnitzky, L. (2013). Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism". Cambridge University Press.