Dialectical Relationship Between Terrorism and Human Security: A Sociological Approach

Relación dialéctica entre terrorismo y seguridad humana: enfoque sociológico

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the dialectical relationship between terrorism and human security to reveal its dimensions and their role in counterterrorism and to understand what motivates individuals to join terrorist groups. Adopting a qualitative methodological design, data were analyzed through deductive reasoning from the sociological perspective. The findings revealed that terrorist threats to human security could not be addressed through traditional mechanisms alone. They require a new consensus that recognizes the linkages and interdependencies between development, human rights, and national security through a comprehensive approach that uses a wide range of new opportunities.

Keywords: Human rights, human security, risk society, terrorism.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la relación dialéctica entre el terrorismo y la seguridad humana para revelar sus dimensiones y su papel en la lucha contra el terrorismo y para comprender qué motiva a las personas a unirse a grupos terroristas. Adoptando un diseño metodológico cualitativo, los datos fueron analizados a través del razonamiento deductivo desde la perspectiva sociológica. Los hallazgos revelaron que las amenazas terroristas a la seguridad humana no pueden abordarse únicamente a través de los mecanismos tradicionales. Requieren un nuevo consenso que reconozca los vínculos e interdependencias entre el desarrollo, los derechos humanos y la seguridad nacional a través de un enfoque integral que utilice una amplia gama de nuevas oportunidades.

Palabras clave: Derechos humanos, seguridad humana, sociedad de riesgos, terrorismo.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has contributed to the predominance of a market economy and an increase in technological development and communications. Although this has positive results, there are some negative results, such as security threats to humanity. Currently, the world faces challenges such as abatement of norms, national identity crises, financial instability, unemployment, and an absence of functional security. These challenges make societies a porous environment for global terrorism, necessitating the formulation of a new template for the concept of security by accentuating the importance of individuals to confront such threats (Maxted & Zegeye: 2001, pp. 95-109). Human security represents an important challenge in the context of terrorism and is crucial to achieving various development indices such as human progression, the fulfillment of basic needs, and a tranquil existence without fear and risk for the future.

Terrorism is a prominent global phenomenon of the 21st century that exceeds geographical, political, and cognitive fields (Carberry: 1999, pp. 685-719) and has spread across the Arab region. Ever since the Arab Spring, the Arab region has been burdened by political instability resulting in the return of terrorism in various forms and patterns. It involves persistent threats that are strategically, socially, economically, and politically motivated. Furthermore, the threat to human security has been linked to human rights (Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: 2008, Kienle: 2013, p. 1). On March 23, 2018, the United National Human Rights Council (HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL: 2014) endorsed a decision that confirmed the harmful impacts of terrorism on human rights and freedom. Condemning terrorist acts as criminal and unjustified, the UNHRC encouraged measures that guarantee consistency between counterterrorism laws and execution measures with international human rights law. This study clarifies the impacts of terrorism on human security while highlighting the controversial relationship between terrorism and human security from a sociological approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Security: Concept and Dimensions

The idea of human security emerged from the philosophical sciences and Renaissance and Enlightenment intellectuals. Philosophers of the social contract, including Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, indicated that the human journey is based on survival instinct and a tendency toward stability. A social contract is essential to realize a systematized society based on constant rules through an established terminology for the concept of natural human rights. This can help ensure justice, peace, discipline, human rights, and freedom. Philosophers have emphasized that the desire for peace and the search for security are the primary reasons why people engage in societies and enter social contracts. Through the social contract, the state becomes the means for guaranteeing individuals' security, wherein security is restricted to protecting state borders and sovereignty and developing the state's interests (Rousseau: 2018). Human security roots can be traced to four freedoms (freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from fear, and freedom from want) announced by American President Roosevelt on January 6, 1941. He believed that such freedoms would form the basis of a postwar international system and clarified the necessity of resisting aggression and finding a world where peace, security, and democracy can prevail (Bodnar: 2010; Kaye: 2014).

The concept of human security is explicit in the 1994 proposal by the Human Development Report issued by the United Nations Development Programme (United Nations Development Programme: 2015) as individual security that maintains dignity and fulfills financial and moral needs. The report also indicated the "liberation of fear, need, and calamity." Human security is achieved by (i) protecting individuals from violence, armed conflict, civil wars, and internal and external terrorism and by (ii) confronting poverty and unemployment, hunger, diseases, pandemics, and natural disasters.

As societies transform through development, such as from industrial to modern and global, and from a bipolar to a unipolar system, they also transform from relative security to risk societies. This necessitates a

Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana; ISSN 1316-5216; ISSN-e 2477-9555
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new security template that is compatible with the new national context of civilizational informatics. Thus, human security is a dynamic concept that differs from traditional security perceptions that consider individual security through state security. By considering individuals as the reference unit of analysis, states' security cannot adequately guarantee individuals' security. Some states have ignored legal frameworks and threats to individual security; this has further increased since the Cold War, which led to conflicts between individuals in each state rather than only between states. Therefore, human security appeared as a tool for new international social contracting. However, human security is not an alternative to state security; they complement each other.

The final report of the Commission on Human Security (Commission on Human Security: 2003) helps determine the right to be respected in light of specific conditions, and wherein human security is defined as the ability to "protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment." In 2009, the committee expanded this to include human rights, good governance, achieving economic growth, and preventing the rise of disputes. Human security subsumes human rights; therefore, it represents a group of interests protected by law. This is based on two main variables: security globalization and security humanization (Benedek: 2008, pp. 7-17)

Human security considers a sequence of human rights according to priorities based on the conditions of each society and is compatible with the ideas of fear and need. Thus, it may be understood and clarified by issues related to human rights, such as the lack of food, drugs, care, education, and security. Accordingly, all international conventions, including the UN Charter of 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1984, emphasized that human rights are based on the principle of equality between people, are required for an individual to live as a human, and must be protected to establish international peace and security. While respect for these rights is important, especially civil, economic, and social, such as providing shelter, food, healthcare, and labor, this is insufficient for human security. Appropriate conditions are necessary to achieve human security because individual, national, and international security require human rights protection, and any breach of them is considered a threat to human security. Stemming from this international perspective of human rights, exposure to the concept of human security has increased in countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations worldwide. Commissions on human security are being formed to protect human rights and address human security challenges, the most serious being terrorism and extremism (United Nations Development Programme: 2015).

The application of the concept of human security started with the Arab League Agenda in 2001 and the Arabic edition of the Human Security Report issued by the Human Security Committee in 2004. The Human Security Conference in the Arab region discussed this matter in light of international challenges indicated in the 1999 Human Development Report: "Globalization from a Humanitarian Aspect." The risk posed by globalization on human security was summarized through seven elements: lack of financial stability, absence of functional security, absence of health security, absence of cultural security, absence of personal security, absence of environmental security, and absence of political and social security. These were previously clarified in the Human Development Report, which considered human security as having multiple elements and dimensions:

1) Economic security includes values related to economic security, income, employment.
2) Food security involves ensuring basic food supplies.
3) Health security covers several issues, such as obtaining clean water, living in a healthy environment, obtaining healthcare services at reasonable prices, prevention of diseases and pandemics, and basic knowledge to live a healthy life.
4) Environmental security covers issues such as preventing water and air pollution and preventing natural disasters such as drought, floods, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

5) Societal security means facing threats that affect social structure and maintaining heritage, cultures, languages, and common values while preventing racism and ethnic conflicts and protecting indigenous communities.

6) Political security is related to protecting human rights and welfare, including protecting people from state suppression, freedom of the press, freedom of expression, freedom to vote, and elimination of political detentions, imprisonment, mistreatment, and banishment of citizens.

These six elements intertwine into a singular unit. The need for a human security template is related to two dynamics groups. The first is represented by the need for human security as a response to complicated old and new security threats, such as severe and sustained poverty, ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, pandemics, terrorism, and sudden economic recession. Such threats have transnational dimensions and exceed the traditional concepts of security, focusing solely on external military attacks. The second emerges from the need for a comprehensive approach that uses a wide range of new opportunities for addressing such threats. Human security threats require a new consensus that acknowledges correlations between development, human rights, and national security (Human Security Unit: 2009, Duralia: 2016, pp. 26-35).

The absence of human security as a result of the absence of some or all of its six constituent elements in the 21st century indicates the emergence of an international risk society due to the long-term impacts of globalization. The risk society is described as producing, managing, facing, and responding to risks in modern society. Beck (Beck: 2009, pp. 291-299) noted that such risks result from improved manufacturing and technological developments; for example, environmental risks (radiation, toxins that cause cancer and global warming gases), and social, political, and individual risks. In spite of controls for industrial institutions and methods for managing risks and threats, postmodern society cannot effectively recognize, identify, or predict risks. Scientific and technological innovations have resulted in long-term risks and impacts that are not easily calculated because of implicit unpredictability.

Giddens (Giddens: 2013) notes that contemporary society faces high potential risks of low results that are an outcome of globalization. Giddens (Giddens: 2013), however, does not suggest that contemporary society is riskier; rather, society is increasingly focused on future safety and security. Globalization and the ease of crossing national borders play a crucial role in aggravating the globalization of risks and hazards (Beck: 2013, pp. 3-31). Moreover, the risks and hazards of losing one of the six elements of human security include risks related to national and international security, such as international terrorism and ideological extremism, ethnic disputes between minorities and sects, and ethnic and gender conflicts.

Terrorism does not have a unified or common definition. The French Larousse Dictionary defines terrorism as violent acts committed by rebellious groups or a violent procedure used by the government. The Oxford Dictionary defines terrorism as the use of terror to achieve political purposes. Article 1 of the Arab Counter-Terrorism Convention of 1998 defined terrorism as any act of violence or threat thereof for any reason or purpose that occurs to commit individual or collective crimes to spread terror among people by hurting them, making their lives and freedom or security susceptible to risk, causing damage to the environment or public and private properties or occupying them, or endangering any national resources.

These various definitions of terrorism in the political, social, and legal fields indicate that terrorism may be committed by an individual or collectively, and its scope includes national, regional, or international areas, with various applications and mechanisms, such as using violence in all forms, use of explosives and hijacking of vehicles, assassination, and abduction along with acts of sabotage of vital and important political and economic entities, bridges, hotels, embassies, and transportation stations. Terrorism may be doctrinal, resulting from the ideologization of religious texts to fulfill the interests of a specific class or from extremism that results in assassination or banishment of contrary doctrines or sects. It may be intellectual—a terrorist operation that precedes violent acts, an ideology that does not respect other opinions and deprives others' freedom of expression, belief, and thought. These operations include racism, sectarianism, breaches of human

Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana; ISSN 1316-5216; ISSN-e 2477-9555
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rights, dictatorial policies, and the violation of women's rights. Biological terrorism is found under intellectual terrorism and involves the intentional release of viruses, bacteria, or toxins that are spread among humans, animals, and plants, resulting in diseases or death (Erlenbusch-Anderson: 2018; Townshend: 2018).

The primary motives for terrorist acts, conducted individually, collectively, or state-wise, include the following (Krieger & Meierrieks: 2011, pp. 3-27):

1) Economic deprivation: Some scientists have suggested that terrorism is deeply rooted in economic deprivation—in conditions of poverty and inequality in the state. The idea of relative poverty (an imbalance between what individuals think they do not have and what they actually receive through the economic distribution process) becomes an incentive for violence.

2) Economic and social factors: Economic and social factors determine social status among people, and those deprived of these factors may develop grievances that could result in their involvement in terrorism. These economic and social factors may include unemployment, poor healthcare services, lack of education, absence of social justice, poverty, and any other factor that may increase the gap between lower, middle, and upper classes.

3) Civilizational progress weakened the collective conscience that was stressed as a cementing factor in early societies. Law and rational interest became the two standards organizing society and interaction between individuals. Thus, civil individuals, from Émile Durkheim's perspective, who live in the middle of crowds, go unnoticed. Collective attention is weaker, social discipline is less effective, personal connections are weak and scarce, and moral rules are no longer respected. Therefore, the social field becomes a rich environment for acts of sabotage. The individual is affected by the anomaly resulting from unclear, contradictory, or even nonexistent social standards and rules; thus, individuals may respond by adopting a new culture of misconduct or rebellious tendencies (Wallace & Wolf: 2005).

4) Political reasons/political and institutional systems: Deprivation of political voice, political violence, reduced participation, and political openness, lack of political freedom, especially in semi-open societies (partial democracy), the recurrence of regime changes and return of former régimes with suppressive tactics and vindictive desires, make environments ripe for terrorist acts. Political changes must not threaten ideologies or objectives adversely such that they orientate toward terrorism. Some individuals neglect external political causes behind terrorism because states have become increasingly politically integrated; furthermore, states are members of international conventions and organizations that unify counterterrorism efforts. However, international political integration has a negative impact on internal politics and national sovereignty. International political integration leads to reduced margins of internal policy and difficulty in controlling violent terrorist organizations within states. External policies, with regard to political proximity with the West and coalition structures, may be important for combating terrorism, and traditional or deprived classes may, in turn, resort to violence to resist foreign predominance and Western superiority (Ahmad and Majeed: 2016, pp. 409-423).

METHODOLOGY

This study reviews the theoretical literature related to terrorism across sociological, political, and security studies, guided by functional theory issues and social pathology. Accordingly, this qualitative study adopts a literature review as a methodological approach to collect and combine previously published related studies and literature, which may produce best practices and improve future research quality (Hampton & Parker: 2011, pp. 900-910).

RESULTS

There are several arguments on the definition of terrorism and confusion over its understanding in several published papers. This study clarifies the impacts of terrorism on human security while highlighting the controversial relationship between terrorism and human security from a sociological approach. Three main factors are concerned with terrorism: economic, social, and political. On the economic and social levels, the Arab counter-terrorism strategy focused on countering terrorism by addressing social risk factors that produce it, such as poverty and unemployment, and enhancing citizenship values and human rights.

Studies on the relationship between terrorism, poverty, and education have yielded mixed results; some scholars argue that linking terrorism with poverty and illiteracy or education level is a common fallacy. Krueger and Malečková (Krueger & Malečková: 2003, pp. 119-144) posited that focusing on education as a means for counterterrorism is unsupported by field evidence. However, other studies indicated that education is a means of counterterrorism and educational curricula are important for social awareness against activities of terrorist groups, especially the recruitment of youths.

Studies have shown that most terrorists are from the middle class, while some of them are from the upper class. The results of the international terrorism index outweigh findings that suggest no statistical relationship between poverty and the economic and educational level of terrorists (Abadie: 2006, pp. 50-56; Piazza: 2006, pp. 159-177). The original experimental support for the economic deprivation hypothesis stems from historical evidence related to the illegal execution process. Here, we must review the sociological situation of terrorism through several considerations:

1) Sociologists have given adequate attention to studying terrorism and explained it from various theoretical perspectives, such as globalization and modernity, functionalism, crime, and social pathology. While terrorism is considered a social phenomenon, it may only be explained through another phenomenon. The sociological theory explains why a phenomenon occurs and is developed at multiple levels, ranging from grand theory to highly contextualized and specific micro-range theories; however, it does not identify a single factor but considers a group of factors. Accordingly, terrorism may not emerge as a definite result of one factor or reason, such as poverty or economic deprivation, although they have the highest impact on the spread of terrorism. From a social pathology perspective, terrorism is a negative phenomenon and a social problem, and social problems have three levels. The first level represents problems that strongly affect the surrounding social conditions and have various outcomes in society, such as poverty, war, and racism that result in social problems at the second and third levels, as indicated in the figure below.
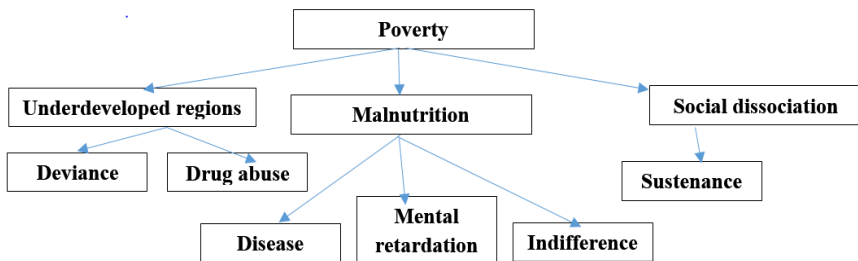

Figure 1. social problems at the second and third levels

2)   Individuals were suffering from poverty face malnutrition and poor health conditions (a loss of food and health security) and live shorter lives. Poverty affects the economy in several ways. Poverty reduces work productivity because most poor employees often fall sick, which affects their attention to work, ability to work, and time spent working for their employers. The level of consumption decreases because the poor cannot consume more; therefore, crime, social chaos, violence, and rebellion are more likely when poverty spreads. Sociology indicates that poverty precedes a basic part of capitalism that seeks greater profit by maintaining low wages and employing fewer employees. If trade slows, more people will be dismissed and end up being poor (absence of functional security), resulting in reserve labor. The existing labor force will refrain from demanding additional bonuses and will be satisfied with lower wages. Competition between social classes encourages the elite to maintain their economic positions by reducing the potential of the poor to obtain resources and opportunities, such as those provided by social care systems (Ritzer & Murphy: 2019).

3)   In any classified system, all people, including the poor, pay attention to social movements to improve their capabilities and ascend the social ladder. The middle class will aim for greater movements than the poor, and even the upper class are concerned by social movements as they are afraid of good performers replacing them or reaching even higher classes (Ritzer & Murphy: 2019). This movement results in conflicts and social dissociation, which can result in violence and terrorism.

4)   Considering the social/economic background within the pyramid of terrorist organizations is important for states. The UN General Assembly Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (Rosand et al.: 2008) emphasized the need to eliminate poverty, deterioration, and disease while enhancing continuous economic growth and sustainable development to counter-terrorism. The third pillar of strategy emphasized respect for human rights and the rule of law to counterterrorism because the individual's right to life, freedom, and security is one of the principles of international human rights. The People's Daily Newspaper (Chinese), which represents the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, indicated that China is resisting extremism and terrorism by eliminating poverty. Several unions for Mediterranean members agreed on April 29, 2018, that "the spread of poverty and ignorance with the absence of democracy in Middle Eastern societies is the factor behind the escalation of the severity of terrorism," accentuating the importance of Arab countries not undermining rights and freedoms along with democratic concepts when confronting extremist groups. The UN study dated October 23, 2017, confirmed that poverty is a source of extremism among African youths; specifically, deprivation, poverty, and vulnerability underpinned by weak governance are primary factors.

DISCUSSION

The UN Sustainable Development Goals consider the eradication of mass poverty as the first developmental objective of millennium development and sustainable development objectives. Revolutions have indicated that Arabs and some Europeans, such as those in France, consider rebellions and protests a result of poverty and economic deprivation as well as a claim to the right to improve wage minimums, counter financial and administrative corruption and dictatorial systems, and aim for the eradication of unemployment. We may discuss the political field from this aspect; that is, how the absence of social justice, oppressive political decisions, and concentration of capital among people of political power negatively affect societies' economic situation and individuals' income. These contribute to increasing poverty and unemployment, causing individuals to feel vulnerable and resistant to political participation; furthermore, regimes ignore their rights and claims and neglect improving their economic situation. This supports the idea of individuals turning to terrorism in order to address human rights breaches; however, this is not limited to individuals, as some countries construct and nurture terrorism to protect human rights. Eliminating oppression against certain individuals in dictatorial states ensures people's legal claims and their right to determine their destiny. Sociology explains social problems through the conflict of values and classes as well as individuals' negative responses when their cultural objectives and aspirations are not fulfilled through legal means.

International conventions consider terrorism a direct breach of human security because of its widespread, varied, and dangerous impacts on seven elements of human security. We summarize the mutual relationship between terrorism and human security, based on the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' decisions regarding human rights and main freedoms in the context of counterterrorism, as follows.

1- Terrorist acts may involve the killing of innocent civilians and might extend to genocide, which is a dangerous threat to the first human right: the right to life. Armed groups that actually control lands, such as ISIS in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen, have committed acts of genocide, human trafficking, racism, torture, and other inhuman and harsh penalties. They take hostages; apply collective penalties; arbitrarily breach freedom; perform rape, sexual enslavement, and other forms of sexual violence; and displace individuals; there have also been incidents of forced disappearances. All these are a part of a systemized attack against civilians, especially in Syrian governorates. Spreading terror and fear among people, contrary to the right to security and safe living.

2- State occupation with counterterrorism and dedication of resources for it affect development efforts and impact different social, economic, and cultural aspects while threatening the human rights related to them.

3- Countries have enacted emergency law, amended detention policies, adapted criminal justice practices and rules, and imposed restrictions on freedom of expression, movement, and peaceful gatherings. Continuous, widespread breaches of human rights, especially the right to privacy, negatively impact freedom of expression, which affects journalists. Authorities use laws for counterterrorism that include loose phrases to accuse reporters and political opponents of several things, including supporting terrorism, which involves unjustified restrictions on the right to freedom of expression.

4- Some countries have issued legislation with loose phrasing for counterterrorism, which includes an inaccurate definition of terrorism and allows arbitrary or racist enforcement by authorities or even prevents people from having human rights. An inaccurate definition of crime might lead to condemnation of innocent people and expand the scope of prohibited attitudes in judicial explanations. This type of legislation may breach the right to freedom and the formation of societies and gatherings while also leading to breaches of rights related to guaranteeing the process of law, including the right to a fair trial. Legislations have been misused to reduce legal activities and to target reporters and those advocating human rights, minorities, political opposers, and other individuals. Some of these people have been subjected to arbitrary detention and torture along with other forms of harsh, inhuman, or abusive penalties and treatment during detention. These aspects are related to measures undertaken by countries to reduce the flow of foreign fighters.

5- Decisions of some countries such as the USA have affected the right to movement. They have also resulted in arbitrary deprivation of the rights to nationality, freedom of religion, belief, opinion, and expression; the right to form societies; and the right to protection from arbitrary or illegal intervention in privacy. For example, any individual traveling to a disputed area should not be assumed to have criminal intentions or to aim to support or engage in criminal terrorist activities.

6- The annual report of the US Ministry of Security and Maryland University indicated that the global economic impact of terrorism in 2017 was eighty-four billion dollars. Terrorism affects economic development, investment, project funding, cash policies, foreign investments, and maritime navigation and aviation. It forces national investors to invest abroad, which impacts the national economy negatively. Terrorism also causes financial losses by damaging infrastructure, as in the KSA, Egypt, and Iraq. Furthermore, terrorism affects the tourism sector; countries susceptible to terrorist acts do not attract tourists, which reduces foreign investment. A global report on food crises (Food and Agriculture Organization: 2017) indicated that disputes between terrorist groups and national forces in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan led to food shortage due to disturbances in food production, theft of crops and livestock, loss of assets and incomes, and population displacement.

7- Biological terrorism threatens health security because it affects the environmental balance and damages the natural environment, increases pollution rates, contributes to the emergence and spread of new diseases, increases rates of pre-existing diseases, and threatens animal and botanical wealth. In the long term, its impacts may extend to deformations among newborns and the filling of agricultural lands with toxins.

Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana; ISSN 1316-5216; ISSN-e 2477-9555
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CONCLUSION

Modernity and globalization have led to the emergence of negative social phenomena that threaten humanity and international safety and security. The most prominent of these is terrorism, which represents a social problem that spreads in societies' social structure while affecting human security across health, social, political, food, economic, and environmental dimensions. Therefore, a threat to human security is one of the most pertinent challenges affecting contemporary societies. Accordingly, terrorism threats to human security cannot be treated through traditional mechanisms but may require a new method that considers the link between development, human rights, and national security. Here, development is an important means to address poverty, inequality, unemployment, and lack of opportunities, which can lead to violence and extremism. The UN Development system helps governments address some of these primary reasons to prevent terrorism. UN agencies are currently supporting governments in implementing sustainable development plans to meet 2030 targets for peace, prosperity, and dignity for all.

Poverty and non-development are the two main factors that cause extremist violence and terrorism. Sustainable and comprehensive development that aims to realize human security in all aspects can contribute to preventing the emergence of disputes and terrorism. Achieving human security must be the main objective and priority in national and international development plans. This not only includes protecting from threats but also empowering individuals and societies with humanitarian potential to fulfill their objectives. This can increase individuals' awareness; furthermore, strengthened social control and collective consciousness can reduce or even prevent opportunities to join terrorist groups or extremist groups and increase individuals' social responsibility toward their nations.

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