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## Terrorism, Tourism and Religious Travellers

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# Terrorism, Tourism and Religious Travellers

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Curiously, while tourism is cited as the world's largest industry (UNWTO, 2016), it is simultaneously a fragile industry that is highly vulnerable to the impact of the ongoing threat of terrorism. Internationally, terrorism influences the tourist mind-set in a number of ways, in particular it creates fear for travellers and causes economic and social impacts to change the behaviour of people and dissuade them from visiting certain places in the world. Thus, the impact of terrorism has caused tremendous damage to the travel industry. A number of countries which previously depended quite heavily on the tourism industry are suffering in terms of economic development.

This paper discusses critical issues related to terrorism, that are faced by travellers to religious and sacred sites. The paper will illustrate the impact of recent terrorism phenomena upon travellers in two ways: first, the potential personal hazards to travellers caused by terrorist incidents; second, the impacts caused by stringent anti-terrorism laws and security measures, to travellers while they are in transit.

**Key Words:** terrorism, impact, tourism, law, incitement, religious tourism

## Introduction

The tourism industry has developed and grown over the last 50 years and continues to grow as societies become more mobile and prosperous, through better economic wealth that has been created, in particular by the industrialised countries of the world. During this time, countries have used tourism as a strategic development tool for their national economy and they see it as a key sector which can increase their national GDP (Diaz, 2014).

According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2014) over 300 million travellers visit the world's leading religious sites every year. Therefore, the religious tourism industry is helping the economic growth of countries through increases in employment, hospitality and the overall travel industry. Tourism in general, and religious tourism in particular, also provides and creates social interactions between visitors and host communities, arguably cultivating tolerance, respect and mutual acceptance of different cultures (Nolan and Nolan, 1992; Cohen, 2006). The UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai (2014) has stated:

*Among the many motivations for travelling, visiting cultural or religious sites ranks high on travelers' wish lists. Leveraging the growing interest for religious tourism worldwide is not only beneficial for the tourism sector, but crucial in building cultural dialogue and peace (UNWTO, 2014)*

The benign concept of travel, once universally accepted, changed with the 9/11 attack, which presented a shocking new perspective to the world, of international terrorism explicitly linked to travel. Following this, there was a more questioning view of travel, paralleled with a tendency in the west to discriminate and to associate Muslims with religious extremism and terrorism; a new term for the victimisation of individuals, based on religion was adopted - 'Islamophobia'. Originating in the 1970s, this term is 'deliberately unspecific about whether it refers to a religion, a belief system or its faithful adherents around the world' (Peretz, 2011), it is a disruptive term, which feeds the very terrorism it proposes to challenge. This is reminiscent of the process defined by Cohen in 1972 of the role of the 'media amplification spiral' (Cohen, 2011). In his analysis of the Mods and Rockers, he noted how labels were used to stigmatise the characteristics of the

**Table 1 : Forms of Religious Terrorism**

	<b>Defining Goals</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Apocalyptic</b>	Cataclysmic destruction to people, property, environment. Hasten arrival of a 'new world'	Aum Shinrikyo Elements of JDL / Kach Some Strains of Christian Identity
<b>Create Religious Government</b>	Abolish secular state Create a state governed by religious law and doctrine Create trans-state religious government	Lebanese Hizbollah Christian Identity Hamas Elements of JDL/Kach
<b>Create Religiously Pure State</b>	Remove groups from other religions Remove groups from within same religions with different interpretations of faith.	Elements of JDL/Kach LeT Shiv Sena / RSS
Gregg, 2014		

outsiders, defining their actions as 'bad' and then further reporting the subsequent actions in the context of these bad terms and constructing them as worse. We see this with Islamophobia where the argument simplifies to: Muslims are terrorists; you are a Muslim; therefore you are a terrorist. The folk devil is established and then reinforces the definition of what is portrayed as good and evil within the consensus of the media's perception of our societies. Just as we were denied the space in which to think about youth cultures with the mods and rockers, so this moral panic denies us the ground to think about Islam in any terms other than those prescribed in the coverage. There are examples of positive actions taken by Muslims, for instance following the terror attack near the Houses of Parliament in London in 2017 but these receive little or no media coverage because the narrative carries different values and challenges the simple message at the heart of Islamophobia.

This issue has given rise to international concerns over the fair and just treatment of individuals and Islamic countries have taken initiatives to counter the stereotyping of Muslims, anti-Muslim attacks and antireligious statements via international instruments. Muslim majority nations and the countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) have put through several United Nations resolutions calling for support against the defamation of religions since 1999.

'Religious Terrorism' is very problematic to define in the modern age. Over the last 50 years the term has been used by governments and society in general, such that its use is commonplace in the modern lexicon. A scan of online global media illustrates the wide current use of the term, for a variety of purposes - in Nigeria (Yusuf, 2017), Pakistan (Express Tribune, 2017), Bahrain (Beedie, 2017), USA (Lavers, 2017), Indonesia (Nugroho, 2016) and many other jurisdictions. Religious terrorists are portrayed as having an evil ideology - using religion to achieve their motives and to share their brutal extremist views, to justify their cause for carrying out terrorism, regardless of their denomination, whether they are Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh etc..

Religiously motivated terrorism is a complicated, multi-dimensional phenomenon and there is no unified theory that explains it. Having too many definitions is actually a greater problem than a lack of definitions. Laqueur (1999) argues that this lack of consensus is largely due to the fact that there is not one single type of terrorism and that terrorism, as a tactic, is constantly changing its means, motives and actors. Academics and policy makers are still struggling to come up with a definition that avoids unnecessary issues regarding individual rights, since the use of the term 'religious terrorist' depends on the perception of the terrorists' motivation, often mediated by the ideology or belief-

**Table 2 : Religious Terrorism's Targets**

	<b>Specific Targets</b>	<b>Abstract Targets</b>
<b>Domestic</b>	Workings of the state – assassinate leaders, attacks on infrastructure, undermine authority of state	Attacks on secular art and other cultural institutions Attacks on secular intellectuals Attacks on historic, other religious sites / artifacts
<b>International</b>	States that support regimes Foreign government presence / militaries International tourists.	'Secular' or 'Western' culture. Globalization.
Gregg, 2014		

**Table 3(a) : Global Newspaper Headlines linking Terrorism and Tourism**

- \* Thomas Cook revenue falls after terrorist attacks slow holiday demand  
(*English Guardian*, 28.7.2016)
- \* Australian travellers turn away from Europe tourism as terror fears persist  
(*Australian News.com.au*, 10.05.2016)
- \* Tunisia attack: Foreigners and locals lament dwindling tourism  
(*bbc.com*, 3.7.2015)
- \* Under the shadow of terror: France's year in review  
(*France24*, 30.12.2016)
- \* Mideast Tourism to Turkey down after String of Terror Attacks  
(*Sudan Vision*, Jan. 2017)
- \* Terrorism Devours Tourism  
(Pakistan e-newspaper *DAWN.com* 01.11.2012)
- \* Terrorism Scares Away the Tourists Europe was Counting on.  
(*New York Times*, 29.7.2016)

**Table 3(b) : Global Newspaper Headlines linking Terrorism with Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage**

- \* Israel warns Jewish pilgrims of 'severe' terror threat in Tunisia  
(*The Times of Israel*, 09.05.2016)
- \* Amid terrorist threats and increased security, the gentle visibility of our faith is more important than ever  
(*The Catholic Herald*, 31.08.2016)
- \* Iran Bans Pilgrimage to Iraq's Samarra after Terrorist Attack  
(*Tasnim News Agency*, Iran, 07.11. 2016)
- \* Lag B'Omer pilgrims flock to Tunisian synagogue amid terrorism concerns  
(JNS.org *Jewish and Israel news*, 25.05.2016)
- \* Egypt terror attack targets Christian pilgrims in Sinai  
(*The English Telegraph* 16.02.2014)

set of the person using the term, which may be different from those carrying out the acts.

One illustration of the breadth of definitions, and the struggle to understand this phenomenon is the work of Gregg, who outlines various 'forms' of religious terrorism (see Table 1) and then identifies a range of different types of target (Table 2), based on the specificity of attack and nature of the terrorist.

Juergensmeyer (2004) points out that the relationship between religion and violence has been noted since before the bible, and while religion is often used to explain acts of violence and terrorism, it is rarely that simple; terrorism is usually an act linked to broader geopolitical issues. In the UK, the term 'religious terrorism' was inextricably linked to conflict between

Irish Catholic paramilitary groups (IRA/INLA) and 'Loyalist' Protestant groups (UVF/UDA) in Northern Ireland from the early 1970s to the 1990s. Since the establishment of peace between the British government and the IRA, the focus and use of the term in the UK has shifted to refer to Muslim or Islamic terrorism. Many commentators note that the simplistic labelling of these (and other) conflicts as 'religious' is quite misleading and an attempt to simplify complex political, social and ideological aspirations; Nardin (2001, 683) wonders whether the term 'religious terrorism' is simply an act of 'journalistic convenience', which does disservice to the complicated concepts of power and conflict which it encompasses, serving to displace responsibility to religious rather than secular authorities. In Table 3(a), we highlight the media use of the link between terrorism and tourism but the headlines in Table 3(b) refer specifically to religious contexts.

### Impact of Terrorism on Tourism

Tourism is a fragile industry that is highly vulnerable to the impact of crises, disasters and the ongoing threat of terrorism (Baker, 2014). International risks, such as threat and terrorism effect the tourist mind-set in a multitude of ways (Clayton, Cisneros-Mustelier and Korstanje, 2014), but, the authors in this article suggest that terrorism impacts on travellers in two main ways. The first is fear / aversion to travel linked to risk of personal hazards to the travellers caused by the reaction to and surrounding terrorist incidents. The other is the risk of irritation, harassment or persecution caused formally and informally by changes in attitudes to religious travellers by anti-terrorism laws and security measures which impinge on travellers while they are in transit. The question posed here is, how these impact on tourism in general, and religious tourism in particular.

A dramatic example of tourism being damaged by a single event was an attack in Tunisia on 26 June 2015 at the tourist resort of Port El Kantaoui, about 10 kilometres north of the city of Sousse, where a gunman killed 38 tourists on the beach, 30 of whom were British (BBC, 2016). The entire tourism industry of Tunisia has suffered significantly from this single event. Since then, Tunisia has seen major declines in tourism; employment has decreased and businesses have closed. Tourists fear repeat attacks and thus, refuse to go back to Tunisia. The knock-on impacts of such an occurrence are a slow-down in the local economy and a resultant shortage of employment opportunities.



Intentionally, attacks on tourist areas (such as the 1997 attack in Luxor, Egypt; 2004 Madrid train bombings; 2002 / 2005 Bali bombings; 2005 attack in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt etc.) have had significant adverse economic effects. In 2015 alone, the WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), highlighted terrorism impacting on tourism in Egypt, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Thailand and Tunisia (WTTC, 2016).

Declines in tourism occur in addition to an interlinked reluctance by international companies to do business where terrorist attacks have taken place. A visible example of this is the impact of terrorism on operators such as Thomas Cook. In September 2016 a report on their business stated

*Thomas Cook has been hit hard since summer 2015 by terrorist attacks in Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey (Farrell, 2016).*

Further emphasising the intensity of these impacts the company's chief executive stated that the industry is currently suffering its greatest turmoil in thirty years (Farrell, 2016). Table 3(a) illustrates that the impacts of these events as they have been discussed in the media around the globe.

However, not only does terrorism impede travel to religious sites, there are incidents when the act of worship itself is actively, and aggressively targeted by terrorists (see Table 3(b))<sup>[1]</sup>. Examples of such attacks include:

- the Taliban's demolition of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan in 2001 (Margottini, 2009);
- Jewish extremists attacking Israel's Church of Loaves and Fishes in 2015 (Lawler, 2015);
- the November 2016 attack on pilgrims in Samarra, Iran, home to the holy shrines of Imam Ali al-Hadi and Imam Hassan al-Askari (PressTV, 2016);
- the targeting of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo in December 2016 (Gov.uk, 2017).

While there is evidence that strategic management approaches can lessen the impact of once-off terrorism events, long-term strife such as is evident in Egypt, is much more difficult to mitigate (Parkinson and Heyden, 2015). The USA based Worldwatch Institute claims that:

*Before September 11th, [2001] travel and tourism was the world's largest industry, accounting for one in every 12 jobs. When the massive \$3.6 trillion industry almost ground to a halt after the terrorist attacks, the ripple effects extended well beyond the United States,*

*exposing the vulnerability of countries too dependent on international tourism (World Watch Institute, ND).*

The influence of terrorism on tourism causes the greatest economic impacts on host communities who have depended on the tourism market for decades. Leading authors like Goldblatt and Hu (2005) and Korstanje and Skoll (2013) state that regular terror attacks can cause severe decline in tourism demand and create social deprivation in the host community. However, there is a general consensus that the impact of individual terrorism events on the travelling public is quite short term, and related somewhat to the interest in terrorism displayed in Figure 1.

A report by Morris in 2016 for the Telegraph newspaper (following terrorism attacks in Brussels) noted that surprisingly, the tourism industry recovers more quickly from individual acts of terrorism than from ongoing natural disasters and other risks.

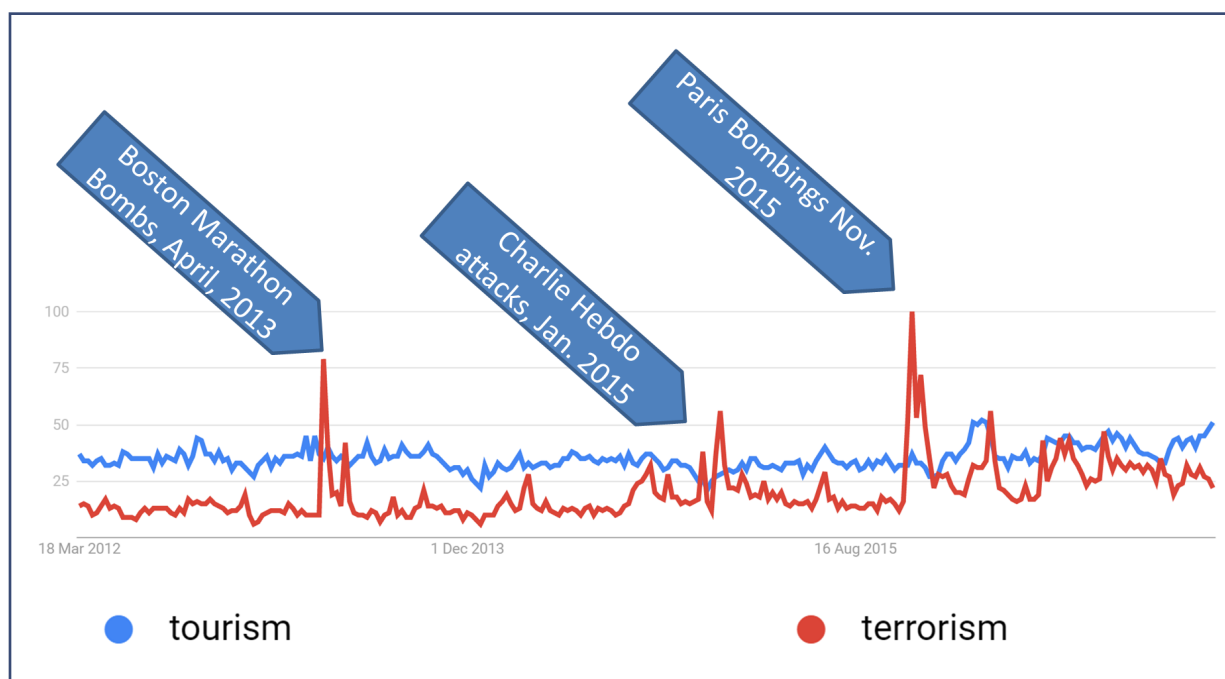
*Nadejda Popova, travel project manager for [Euromonitor], said the [Brussels] attacks were likely to result in a 10-20 per cent decline in bookings, due to fears of future attacks. However, this is not expected to have a long-term impact as the European travel industry has proven to be very resilient to such external impacts and recover fairly quickly (Morris, 2016).*

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2016 (b)) go so far as to estimate the time-lines involved, suggesting that after three years of decline, pre 9/11 airline revenue levels in the USA had recovered and began to increase. Citing cases by various authors (such as Fielding and Shortland (2011) and Castano (2005)), they suggest that tourism is highly resilient and that within a year, most destinations have recovered from once-off terrorist attacks. Developing this concept further, the WTTC note that political instability is far more damaging than such once-off attacks. It appears that it takes tourism 21 months to recover from disease events, 24 months to recover from environmental disasters and 27 months from political unrest (Zillman, 2015). Hence the shifting of terrorism from the domain of political protest to religious conflict makes good sense to the policymakers.

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1. As the Editor was undertaking final editing of this paper (following various revisions and the addition of a number of recent case studies to make the paper more 'current') news was breaking of attacks on two Christian Churches in Egypt during Palm Sunday services, which have been attributed to Islamic State (Gaballa and Tolba, 2017).

Figure 1 : Interest in Tourism and Terrorism over time (March 2012-March 2017)



Source: generated using trends.google.com

However, it is noted elsewhere (Baker, 2014) tourists avoid destinations which continuously suffer from terror attacks. Thus, the impact can depend on the country, its image and its location (for a detailed in-depth statistical discussion on this see WTTC, 2016 (b)). Tourists will come back to European countries (or cities such as New York) quite promptly after an isolated terror attack, but, it appears to be more difficult get them back to countries such as Tunisia or Egypt, where conflict is perceived to be ongoing. Therefore, attacks on tourism destinations in North Africa, the Middle East, mainland Europe etc. have direct impacts of varying degrees on tourists and the tourism industry.

While many terrorism incidents have impacted on tourism in general, the focus of this paper is on religious tourism in particular, and evidence for the disruption of faith based travel is visible in various countries around the world, often directly linked to attacks on sacred sites by terrorists. Countries like Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Israel and Tunisia, which all have attractive religious tourism offerings, have suffered in this regard and have experienced decline in religious visitors due to intentional targeting by terrorist attacks.

### Terrorism and the Holy Places of the World.

Deeply rooted in biblical traditions, 'sanctuary' was a legal term used in Greek and Roman times and allowed an individual to use a religious site as a temporary refuge and protection from 'the civil law' (Field, 2008). This idea was widely recognised in Medieval Europe where it evolved into concepts such as 'diplomatic immunity' and 'asylum' (Marfleet, 2011).

Thus, there is a long-standing understanding of sacred sites as sanctuaries, and belief that they should be protected from the vagaries of war and terrorism<sup>[2]</sup>. Freedom of religion, and practice, worship and observance is legislated for in article 18 of the International Convention on Human Rights (also Article 9 of the European Convention on Human

2. A comprehensive website called *International Humanitarian Law* [located at <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/home>], by the International Committee of the Red Cross provides a catalogue of international treaties rules and practices related to humanitarian action. In **Rule 38 - Attacks against Cultural Property** [[https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v2\\_rul\\_rule38](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v2_rul_rule38)], a vast range of international treaties, instruments, rules and guidelines are presented which outline the importance of protecting religious sites and objects, many of which define attacks on religious or spiritual sites as war crimes.

Rights, Article 1 of the American Constitution etc), thus, the defacement or destruction of holy sites, or targeting of adherents celebrating their faith is viewed as a heinous crime or act of terrorism.

The following sections will provide a number of case studies dealing with sites where religious travel and pilgrimage has been impeded or impacted by acts of terrorism.

### Israel

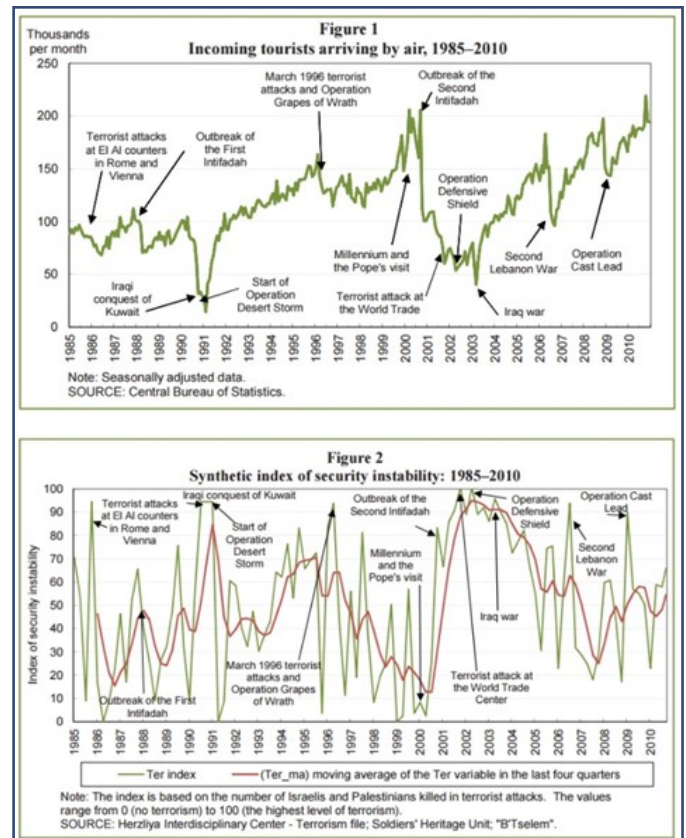
Numerous authors have written about religious tourism and pilgrimage to Israel and The Holy Land, many dealing creatively and astutely with various aspects of the security / political situation (such as Collins-Kreiner, Kliot, Mansfeld and Sagi, 2006; Cohen, 2014; Feldman, 2016; Gelbman, 2016). The focus of most research is on Christian pilgrimage, however some work has been undertaken on Jewish pilgrimage (such as Luz and Collins-Kreiner, 2016), and some mention is made of Muslim Pilgrimage (see Cohen-Hattab and Shoval, 2015; Leppakari and Griffin, 2016). While the majority of research links terrorism and 'security issues' to fluctuating numbers, some, such as Israeli newspaper Haaretz, suggest that 'Israel's Tourism Sector Sees Little Fallout from Terror Attacks' (Rozenberg, 2016). Definitive reports by organisations such as the Bank of Israel, however, state unequivocally that 'The demand from tourists to visit Israel is largely dependent on the security situation' (Bank of Israel, 2014:37). Cohen (2014), basing his comments on extensive analysis of tourist trends, notes that on the macro-level, Israeli tourism follows an overall pattern of growth, but, regularly suffers from declines which correspond with times of high terrorist activity.

Charts (Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2) from research by the Bank of Israel (2014:39-40), illustrate the overall impact of terrorism in Israel 1985-2010. Figure 2.1 demonstrates how tourism reacts 'immediately and severely' when the security situation deteriorates, while the second chart plots security instability over the same period (the red line being a 'synthetic indicator of security instability'). Thus, when instability is high (red line in Figure 2.2) visitor arrivals are low (green line in Figure 2.1).

In summarising the situation in their country, the Bank of Israel suggests three overall findings:

- The security situation has a significant impact on tourist arrivals in Israel, but to different degrees depending on the purpose of the visit: tourists

**Figure 2 : Impact of Terrorism in Israel 1985-2010**



Source : Bank of Israel, 2014

coming on a pilgrimage, vacation or for touring are affected to a great extent by the level of terrorism, while those coming on business and to visit relatives are minimally affected;

- Tourists with an attachment to Israel - whether as Jews or as tourists who have visited the country previously - are less affected by the level of terrorism, in each purpose of the visit;
- The impact of economic variables on tourist arrivals is secondary: The economic variables, including the exchange rate, have more of an impact when the security situation is calm (Bank of Israel, 2014:37).

Thus, there is clear indication that pilgrimage to Israel is severely impacted by political and military actions and terrorism.

### France (Lourdes)

One of the world's most popular Roman Catholic sites of pilgrimage is the Marian Shrine of Lourdes in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains in France. Following a number of terrorist related attacks throughout France in 2015 and 2016 (including the shootings at the Charlie Hebdo offices, the Bataclan



bombing, the Bastille day attack in Nice, and the murder of Father Jacques Hamel), which led to a slowdown in tourism (Lec'hvien, 2016), security measures were implemented in Lourdes, to ensure the safety of pilgrims. Described variously as 'discreet but effective' (catholic news service, 2016) and 'heavy security' (Sullivan and Charlton, 2016), it is suggested that measures could remain in place indefinitely at the Marian shrine.

Speaking just before the Roman Catholic feast day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on August 15 2016, when pilgrim numbers normally increase, the information director of the Diocese of Tarbes and Lourdes stated:

*It's our duty and responsibility to take account of the complicated current context by ensuring pilgrims are well received . . . We've been very much affected, collectively, by what's happened . . . This is a time when great numbers of people arrive from around the world - and security is clearly essential if we're to welcome them calmly. . . . This is a place of serenity, peace and prayer - and it will remain so, whatever happens (Catholic News Service).*

The cancellation in France, of major public events and festivals over security concerns led organisers in Lourdes to expect a fall in numbers for the Feast Day in 2016, however, the feared cancellations by pilgrims failed to materialise and in contrast, there was a surge in bookings. Matthieu Guignard, one of the pilgrimage coordinators is quoted as saying:

*because a few fanatics try to sow fear . . . we should [not] abandon our faith, our beliefs, our way of living (Lec'hvien, 2016).*

### **Saudi Arabia (Medina)**

A number of attacks on religious sites have occurred in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In August 2015, a mosque in the city of Abha was attacked, in October of the same year a Shia mosque in Najran city was attacked and in January 2016, four people were killed and 18 others were wounded in an attack on a mosque in al-Ahsa (Aljazeera, 2016). By far the most audacious attack however, occurred in July 2016, in the city of Medina, just a short distance from the burial site of the Prophet Mohammed. Four security officers were killed and five wounded in a suicide bombing outside the mosque known as Al-Masjid an-Nabawi - considered to be Islam's second holiest site (Aljazeera, 2016b). This was one of three attacks across the Saudi kingdom in a 24-hour period (Hilleary, 2016).

As a result, the 2016 holy Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj saw unprecedented security measures, monitoring the pilgrims. More than 5,000 cameras were installed across Mecca, covering a radius of about 10 kilometres around the Grand Mosque, dozens of soldiers were deployed and during the Hajj, Saudi authorities arrested 54 suspected terrorists from a number of different countries (New Arab, 2016). While there is no direct evidence of these incidents impacting on the number undertaking Hajj, the Iranian authorities are citing security issues as one of the reasons why Iranians should not travel to Saudi Arabia for Hajj or the related Umrah (Real Iran, 2016)

### **Iraq (Yezidi Pilgrimage)**

The Yezidis or Yazidis are a Kurdish speaking people who live principally in northern Iraq. According to yeziditruth.org, they number approximately 800,000 people and claim to follow the world's oldest spiritual tradition.

For Yezidis, their most important pilgrimage site is the tomb of Shaykh 'Adi which is located in Lalish, a valley that includes numerous other shrines. The Yezidi faith requires followers to make at least one pilgrimage to Shaykh 'Adi's tomb in their lifetime (as per the Muslim obligation to undertake the Hajj to Mecca), with followers from northern Iraq making the pilgrimage on an annual basis. This pilgrimage is typically undertaken during the Feast of Seven Days, known as the Jema'iyye and referred to as ziyaret, 'the pilgrimage', which takes place during the beginning of October (YezidiTruth, 2017). However, the separation of the Kurdish run northern territory from Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1990 made it difficult for most Yezidis to attend the festival, and subsequent threats of terrorism since 2003 have resulted in low attendance or cancellation of the festival (Jalabi, 2014 cited in Al-Marashi, 2017).

Al-Marashi (2017) outlines the plight of the Yezidi since the emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, and their subsequent attacks on Yezidi people and destruction of their sites. He claims that all pilgrimages of the Yezidi people to their historical homeland, and even the survival of the physical sites themselves are at risk:

*[w]hat emerged as of the summer of 2014 was a history of religious heritage tourism coming to an end due to religious 'heritage terrorism' (Al-Marashi, 2017:154).*

Thus, in this instance, terrorism is causing the destruction of Yezidi shrines in addition to the ongoing

threat to their communities and their inability to perform religious pilgrimage to Sheikh Adi, thereby bringing their civilization to the brink of extinction (YezidiTruth, 2017(b))

### **India (Amarnath Yatra)**

In July 2015, the Indian Army mobilised 7,500 soldiers under a scheme called Operation Shiva, to locate between 10-15 terrorists who had reportedly entered Kashmir, to target the annual Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage, made by thousands to a shrine high in the Himalayas in South Kashmir. In addition, Central paramilitary forces and the local police deployed another 10,000 people to protect the devotees and the two commonly used routes to the shrine (Ranjan Sen, 2015). Considering the massacre of 11 pilgrims travelling to this pilgrimage by terrorists in 2000, (MacKinnon, 2000) threats of terrorism linked to this event are taken seriously. Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju, told reporters:

*There are credible inputs that some elements may try to attack the yatra. We have made all possible arrangements and taken all possible precautions, but nonetheless we cannot let our vigil or guard down (Variyar, 2015).*

### **Iraq (Arbaeen)**

In November 2016, more than 80 Shi'a pilgrims, many of them Iranian, returning from the Arbaeen ceremony in Karbala were killed in a terrorist bomb attack (McKernan, 2016). In what has been seen as dramatic defiance of this and other acts of terrorism in the area, pilgrims continued to converge on the Shi'a holy city of Karbala in southern Iraq to celebrate Arbaeen. This festival marks the end of the 40-day mourning period for Imam Hussain ibn Ali, whose martyrdom at the Battle of Karbala led to schism between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims and in 2016, Arba'een, which is cited as the largest annual pilgrimage and gathering of people in the world attracted between 17 and 20 million pilgrims (iJet, 2016; Sims, 2016).

## **Dealing with Religious Terrorism**

Many countries make strident efforts to assist pilgrims in their travels, while also protecting their overall territory against terrorism. One such approach is to introduce more stringent controls on travel. A range of restrictive formal border checks exist in many countries such as the USA, India and Israel (Jones, 2012), which act to protect against terrorism. However, many of these instruments cause pressures and strains, impacting on general tourism and religious travel /

pilgrimage. The following are some measures against terrorism risks in religious settings, which have impacts for the wider tourism and travel industries:

- Australia provides a comprehensive yet simple set of guidelines for its citizens travelling abroad on pilgrimage. Interestingly, their guidelines explicitly mention three Islamic pilgrimages Hajj, Umrah and Arba'een (see Australian Government, 2016) – does this suggest that Australian authorities are using an Islamophobic lens?
- In order to deal with the threat of terrorism during Hajj, in September 2016, Saudi Arabia closed many border posts with Yemen and suspended flights between the two countries. *The Gulf News*, Yemen recorded approximately 300 buses queuing for security checks, with some pilgrims waiting 30 hours to be processed, sleeping in the desert, running short of water and food (Gulf News, 2016). In addition, to controlling border entry points, the Saudi authorities are proposing the introduction of electronic bracelets which will track all pilgrims, providing them with information and protecting them. While these various measures may make the Hajj a safer pilgrimage, they might act to deter some pilgrims from undertaking this holiest of journeys.
- In preparation for the Catholic World Youth Day event in Poland (2016) a separate lane was provided on the Polish-Ukrainian border at Dorohusk to facilitate pilgrims (Pope, 2016). However, checks were temporarily introduced at other borders, as was a temporary suspension of the Schengen passport-free zone. A report in the Catholic news service *The Tablet*, suggests that to ensure safety, random security checks were carried out 'on the basis of risk analysis and information provided by the security services of other countries' (Cornwell, 2016) The reintroduction of border checks between Schengen countries, even if temporary would most likely cause a range of difficulties for certain travellers.
- In November 2016, 3,316 Indian Sikh pilgrims were issued with visas to travel to Pakistan to celebrate the 548th birth anniversary of the founder of Sikhism, Baba Guru Nanak. As part of their journey, pilgrims visit various gurdawaras (places of worship), to perform rituals. Tight security was provided for their visits to various historical sites in different cities. Various reports on this event record the gratitude of Indian pilgrims who were both surprised and impressed at the 'VIP protocol', hospitality and reception they received, however, the political tension between both countries and tight anti-terrorism security measures in place must limit the number of pilgrims undertaking this trip (Express Tribune, 2016).

As stated at the outset of this paper, religious tourism and pilgrimage are important elements of international travel, and important sources of revenue for many countries. In addition to the specific measures outlined in the above brief examples, internationally, two main approaches are in place to deter terrorism:

- the development of international legal measures, and;
- travel restrictions.

The following sections will examine some of the institutional frameworks related to these measures, which have been developed and deployed to deal with terrorism related activities; and thereby, which impact on global travel, tourism and pilgrimage. It is suggested that the effectiveness of many such measures is questionable, since the recognition of terrorist groups and labelling their actions and activities can lead to reification of their goals and thus encourage their followers to engage in further acts of terrorism. At the same time, 'blunt' instruments put in place for such a purpose can serve to alienate and victimise the innocent, thus, adding to the targeting of particular groups and thereby assisting in the perpetuation of the terrorists' message.

### **International Legal Measures**

In most jurisdictions globally, the concept of **incitement to terrorism** is identified as an indicator of terrorist intent, and is used to identify, control and mitigate terrorist actions. However, the concept is inherently problematic, as there is still no internationally agreed definition on what it entails (Baker, 2014). Thus, the concept seriously suffers from a lack of certainty. The UK's version of the definition is noteworthy here as it explicitly refers to religious cause as a motive for terrorism. In this case terrorism is defined as:

*the use or threat of action where the use of threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organisation, or intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause (Terrorism Act 2000, Section 1.1.).*

Despite the uncertainty, many international instruments deal with the term incitement in the context of terrorism. In September 2005, the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) adopted **Resolution 1624**, which encourages states to prohibit by law, incitement to commit a terrorist act or acts. In response to this the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the UN-SC, adopted

**SC Resolution 1963** (UN, 2010) which was commissioned to monitor the implementation of legislation on criminalising incitement to terrorism. This is possibly because there has long been a recognition that law - local or international - favours those in power and may therefore seek to deny non-approved cultures, meaning that one community's celebration may be seen as provocative or inciting a response. However, because these resolutions do not directly address the subjectivity of power, some actions are deemed to be inciting when the group owning them cannot see anything wrong with them.

Somewhat curiously, the resolution itself (Resolution 1624) does not attempt to give clear guidance on what may constitute incitement. The resolution's preamble refers to the Council being:

*Deeply concerned that incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance poses a serious and growing danger to the enjoyment of human rights, threatens the social and economic development of all States, undermines global stability and prosperity, and must be addressed urgently and proactively . . . in accordance with international law at the national and international level to protect the right to life (UN, 2005:1).*

The resolution itself:

*Calls upon all States to continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, in an effort to prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures, and to take all measures as may be necessary and appropriate . . . to counter incitement of terrorist acts motivated by extremism and intolerance and to prevent the subversion of educational, cultural, and religious institutions by terrorists and their supporters (UN, 2005:3).*

**The Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism** is very broad in its use of the term terrorism, stating:

*For the purposes of this Convention, 'terrorist offence' means any of the offences within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the Appendix (Council of Europe, 2005: Article 1).*

The aforementioned Appendix contains eleven separate Council of Europe conventions. This convention (on the Prevention of Terrorism) later uses the term **public provocation**, it says:



*For the purposes of this Convention, 'public provocation to commit a terrorist offence' means the distribution, or otherwise making available, of a message to the public, with the intent to incite the commission of a terrorist offence, where such conduct, whether or not directly advocating terrorist offences, causes a danger that one or more such offences may be committed (Council of Europe, 2005: Article 5).*

This article then continues to state:

*Each Party shall adopt such measures as may be necessary to establish public provocation to commit a terrorist offence, as defined in paragraph 1, when committed unlawfully and intentionally, as a criminal offence under its domestic law (Council of Europe, 2005: Article 5).*

The UK was one of the leading states to support UN **Resolution 1624** after the London bombing in 2005. In their combatting of terrorism, the UK differentiates between direct and indirect encouragement of terrorism. The Terrorism Act 2006 states that the 'Encouragement of Terrorism' is an offence when one publishes or shares

*a statement that is likely to be understood by some or all of the members of the public to whom it is published as a direct or indirect encouragement or other inducement to them to the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism or Convention offences (UK Government 2006).*

Indirect encouragement includes the glorification of terrorism or specified offences, where it can reasonably be inferred that the conduct that is glorified should be emulated in existing circumstances.

To make the matter more complicated, different states criminalise incitement to terrorism differently. Lack of consensus on this matter creates anomalies on what needs to be criminalised. There is also a lack of consensus on whether freedom of speech should be restricted, and under what circumstances, and to what extent should this apply.

The relationship between the concept of incitement to terrorism and religion is two-fold. The first is when religious speech is found to be supporting, provoking or glorifying acts of terrorism, the other is when offensive speech takes a stance against a religion, inciting a group to commit terrorist offences. Precedent exists for the first of these; however it raises questions and is sometimes severely criticised for stripping people's rights to manifest their religious belief (however intense the provocation or glorification).

However the second category does not often receive much attention. This is possibly because more complex processes are involved. Condemnation of other religions is often done with the protection of the dominant ideology and religious beliefs of the host country. Condemnation is portrayed as natural and therefore the 'right thing' to do, further alienating not only the terrorists but all who may share the religious views that are being condemned

Ginkel (2015) suggests that the problem of incitement takes place at the pre-stage of terrorism. Therefore, criminalisation of incitement to terrorism makes sense, as there are high chances that it might create 'an environment and psychological climate conducive to criminal activity' (Kremnitzer and Ghanayim, 2000: 197). It is important to conceptualise a model of terrorism which does not see every attack as a discrete action. The pre-stage to one act is set in the context of the post-stage reaction to previous acts. The explanation is set within the context of evil extremists as a way of making sense of senseless actions. Media accounts of suicide bombings demonstrate this clearly as the media do not operate in news frameworks which can give any credence to constructions of religious safety through martyrdom. The reporting of terrorism as acts of violence cannot recognise these accounts of 'rational' motivations for the bombers or the way that campaigns to control and contain minority groupings contribute to the feeling of alienation.

The basis for what is seen to be reasonable, is constructed. The political climate legitimises definitions of terror and can add to the publicity surrounding certain opinions. Speech that offends particular religious groups, or contributes to creating hatred, can be used as an igniting factor to radicalise or recruit terrorists, leading to violent extremism - should that be considered as incitement to terrorism? Taking Islamic extremism as an example, the radicalisation process often involves creating anger and frustration, encouraging individuals to defend Islam at the cost of their own lives. Leuprecht *et al.* (2010) identify four levels of the Global Jihad narrative:

Islam is under attack by Western crusaders led by the United States;

Jihadis, whom the West refers to as terrorists, are defending against this attack;

The actions they take in defence of Islam are proportional, just and religiously sanctified; and therefore;

It is the duty of good Muslims to support these actions.

Taking this narrative into consideration, if offensive speech that ridicules or vilifies religious sentiments is used as an igniting factor for terrorist organisations to recruit people (following this narrative) and motivates them to cause violence as a means of defending their religion, would that be considered as an incitement to terrorism?

The question still remains unanswered - whether offensive speech in relation to religion, that causes outrage and violence, should be criminalised under incitement to terrorism or hate speech.

When the international community cannot agree on a single legal definition of *terrorism*, it is thus impossible to define *incitement to terrorism*, let alone clarification between terms such as *Apologie du Terrorisme* as used by French authorities and *direct* or *indirect* incitement to terrorism as used in other jurisdictions (van Ginkel, 2011). Barak-Erez and Scharia (2011) have highlight additional legal elements of importance in this discussion, including the target conduct, the content of speech, the public or non-public character of the speech, the *mens rea* aspect (undertaking an act with intent, knowing it is wrong), and the causal link between the content of the speech and the terrorist act. International legal instruments are very poor in providing detailed guidance on these issues.

### ***Schedule 7 of the UK Terrorism Act 2000***

In the UK, an important definition of terrorism can be found in section 1 of the *Terrorism Act 2000* (TA) part of which, says that acts of terrorism include any action which :

- (a) involves serious violence against a person,
  - (b) involves serious damage to property,
  - (c) endangers a person's life, other than that of the person committing the action,
  - (d) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public, or
  - (e) is designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system.
- (Terrorism Act, 2000)

This definition is often criticised for being overly broad and criminalising a broad range of activities. Based on this definition a range of counter-terrorism measures and policies have been in place in the UK since 9/11.

Security services in the UK currently perceive the threat level for international terrorism as 'Severe' (MI5

website). The perceived threat has resulted in intensified security measures being placed at Airports and all other points of access into the UK. One of the stringent anti-terrorism measures that affect travellers at airports is Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act (2000). Paragraph 2 of the Schedule empowers authorities to question persons passing through ports for the purpose of determining whether they appear to be persons concerned in the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.

The provision does not require the need to show any reasonable suspicion in order to question or examine an individual under this power. An officer on duty does not require any prior authorisation to be sought. A traveller can be questioned for up to one hour and can be taken into custody for up to 6 hours according to TA Sch.7, para.6(4) amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which shortened the maximum period of detention from nine hours to six. Once a person is detained he/she is entitled to consult a solicitor and to have a named person informed of the detention. The detainee under sch 7 of the TA is under the obligation to give fingerprints and DNA samples as well as provide documents and information in his or her possession. The officer may use reasonable force to effect searches. Paragraph 18 of Sch 7 makes it an offence punishable by up to three months imprisonment and/or a fine if the detainee wilfully fails or contravenes a prohibition, or obstructs, or seeks to frustrate, a search or examination under or by virtue of this Schedule. Such wide powers imposed under Schedule 7 have raised serious concerns about it's compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR) has argued that the powers are incompatible with the legal requirement imposed by Articles 5 and 8 of the ECHR (HL Paper No.56, HC 713)

There are numerous cases where the legality and proportionality of schedule 7 powers have been questioned but, despite protests from various sources (for example: <https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/countering-terrorism/schedule-7>) most judges conclude that the powers imposed in schedule 7 are not incompatible with the ECHR.

Despite public questioning of the procedures undertaken by examining officers, findings point to dark aspects of Schedule 7 powers. Interviews with community groups and civil society organisations conducted by Choudhury & Fenwick (2012:56)



suggest:

*[a] significant concentration of Schedule 7 stops among individuals of Afghan, Pakistani and Somali background. While the interviews suggest that most relate to flights to and from South Asia, the Middle East or East Africa, there are also examples of Muslims who have been stopped on domestic, European flights.*

Choudhury and Fenwick (2011; 2011(b):86) found that Schedule 7 was having 'the single most negative impact' on Muslim communities and also reported that:

*for some Muslims, these stops have become a routine part of their travel experience . . . this power is silently eroding Muslim communities' trust and confidence in policing (2011:vii).*

Blackwood, Hopkins & Reicher (2013) conducted a study with British Muslims and revealed that they regularly face being examined or detained by counter-terrorism officers at ports, this undermines their trust in and perceptions of fairness in counter-terrorism measures. They also found that that despite research participants having a strong British identity, these experiences undermined their British identity and made them feel excluded from society.

There is emerging understanding that these measures alienate groups and individuals, cause problems for religious travel and pilgrimage and in a very real way, could serve to radicalise terrorists (Yusuf, 2015). Thus, tools, put in place to deter terrorism, seem to be victimising particular groups and by disenfranchising them, may ironically, increase the risk of terrorism.

### ***American Travel Ban***

In addition to international legal instruments, certain countries have introduced strict border controls, utilising tools such as visas, interview procedures etc.. After becoming president of The United States, Donald Trump in one of his first *Executive Orders* (on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017), put in place particular border controls to protect his country from foreign terrorists. He announced:

*In order to protect Americans, the United States must ensure that those admitted to this country do not bear hostile attitudes toward it and its founding principles (The Whitehouse, 2017)*

Amidst a vast range of measures, including the suspension of certain visas, reviews of entry screening processes, alteration to refugee admission programmes and the introduction of biometric scanning, this order

banned any normal visitor to the US from certain countries, whether on holiday, visiting friends and family or on business, except for those holding a green card or one of five specific visas for official bodies such as the United Nations. This ban was applicable for 90 days for people holding passports from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or Yemen travelling to America, and people boarding a flight from one of the prescribed countries to the US. In a flurry of legal cases, restraining orders and interventions by federal judges the legality of the 'travel ban' was in serious doubt, and as a result, the administration proposed a 'new' immigration order, blocking arrivals from six of the originally proposed Muslim majority countries. This second 'ban' was to come into effect on 16 March, but the day before, a Hawaiian court blocked this new attempt to limit arrivals.

Although the legality of this executive order limiting overseas travel into the US has been questioned at every step by the courts, and may not be implemented, it is predicted that the tourism industry of the US will nonetheless suffer severely, because of the fears it creates for travellers. While the interruption of the president's desires to exclude certain nationalities, seen by many as the exclusion of certain religious groups, is contested by many within the USA, it is suggested that the narrative is sufficiently strong to alienate many potential tourists, in particular Muslim travellers, and thus will have a major impact on tourism to the USA.

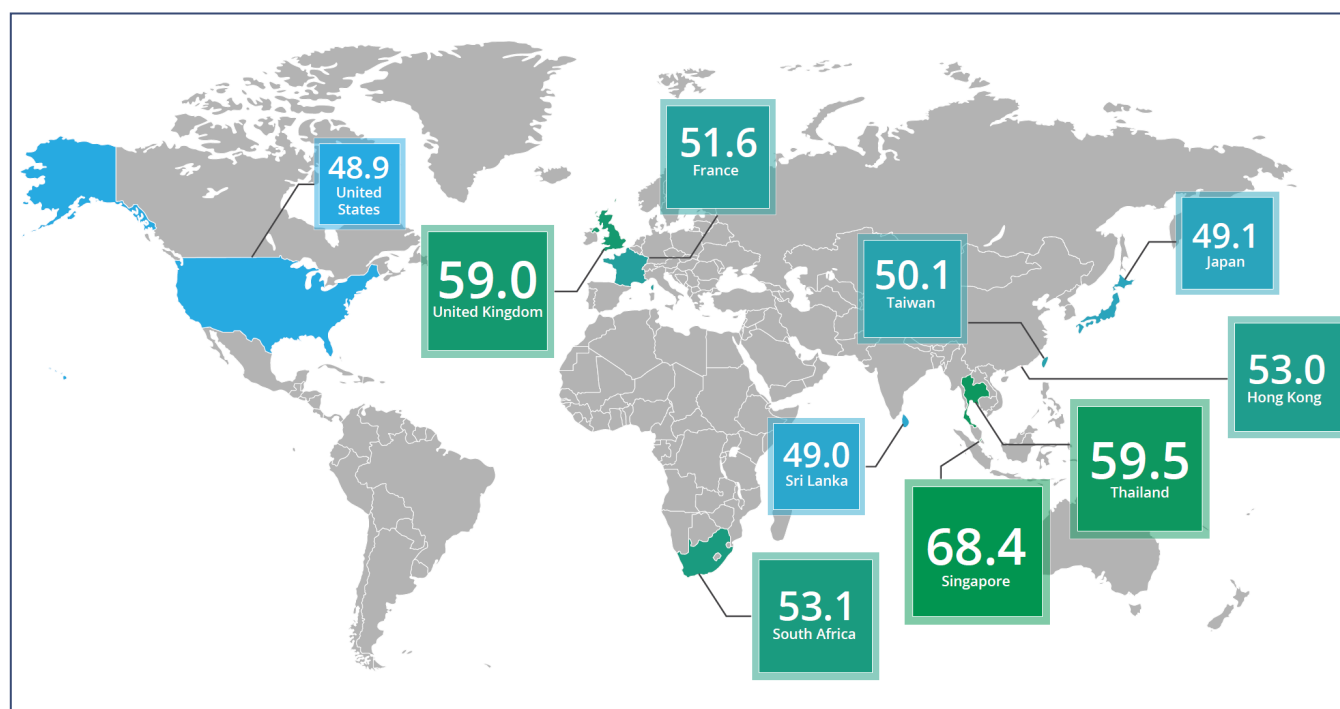
According to travel facts and figures available at the [ustravel.org](http://ustravel.org) website, international visitors spent \$246 billion in the U.S. in 2016. An executive order which restricts certain nationals and imposes more severe security measures at all airports could impact on the USA's position as a tourism destination for foreign travellers. In fact some commentators refer to the 'Trump slump' (Coffey, 2017), estimating a loss of \$74bn in 2017 as a result of the drop-off in tourism due to the president's actions..

The White House uses the term 'international terrorism' to justify the ban on visitors, but this is seen by some to violate the American Constitution as it is a form of discrimination against people of particular ethnic / national / religious origin. In defence of the ban, the government states that the decree is signed by the president in the interest of national security.

### ***Impact of Travel Ban on Muslim Travel***

Halal Tourism is recognised as one of the fastest growing travel segments, and with the development of

Figure 3 : Global Muslim Travel Index 2016



Source: Master Card and CrescentRating, 2016

platforms such as the World Halal Tourism Summit, global awareness of this religious tourism niche has been growing considerably (VOANEWS, 2016). According to the Global Muslim Travel Index (GMTI), Muslim travellers comprised 10 per cent of the global travel market in 2014, spending \$145 billion. In the same year, the US welcomed 2.6 million Muslim travellers, who accounted for 3.7 per cent of arrivals.

In October, 2016, The *Salam Standard* agency suggested that the US was the biggest beneficiary of the global Muslim travel spend (Greenwood 2016), however, the proposed travel ban discussed above, is making the USA very unattractive as a holiday destination for Muslims. Additionally, any individual originally from the 'ban' prescribed countries, currently living in America, be very reluctant to travel overseas for pilgrimage, or any other form of travel, for fear of not being allowed to return.

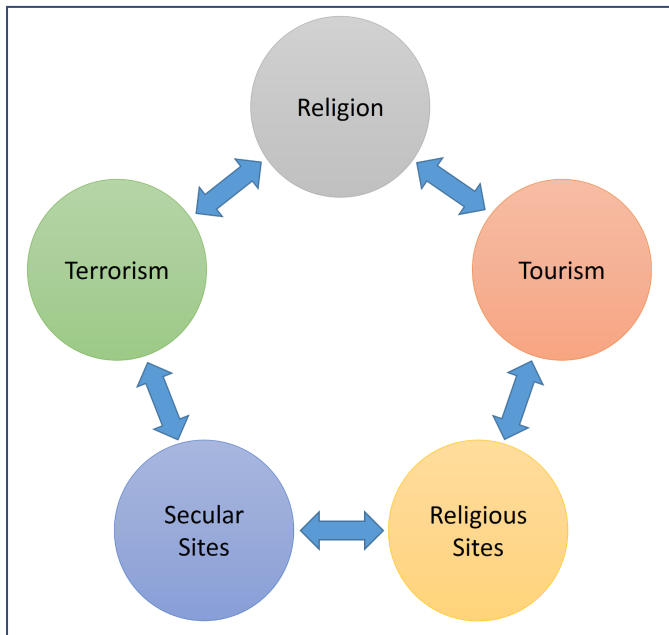
Figure 3 shows that in 2016, the US was ranked as the 10th most popular non-OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation - a cluster of 57 Muslim countries, across four continents) destination for Muslims (having been in 8th position in 2015). The Crescent Rating Company predicts that Muslim travellers will be worth \$200 billion to the global economy by 2020. With the American travel ban and potential harassment in US

(and other Western) airports, it is predicted that Muslims be less interested in travelling to the US. and will travel to places where they feel more welcome.

It took a long time, but, the US eventually managed to recover from the tourism losses of the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and American coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Belau, 2003); and the resultant security initiatives, which restricted access and put stringent security measures in place at US airports, under the 'Patriot Act'. However, the recent attempts at a travel ban may have longer-term impacts in terms of deterring Muslim (and other) travellers from visiting. This is not a one-off event, it is a systematic targeting of individuals of a particular faith, in an effort to deter them from travel to the USA.

### Reflecting on Terrorism, Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage

The difficulty in writing this paper lies in the complex relationships between religion, and terrorism on the one hand and religion and tourism on the other hand. While the main emphasis would like to be on how terrorism impacts on religious travel and pilgrimage, the dominant narrative closely links the motives of terrorists to religion and confounds clarity. The subset

**Figure 4 : Complex Relationship Between Religion, Tourism and Terrorism**

of religion as a motivation for both tourism and terrorism has become recognised as a key factor in explaining the atrocities (Figure 4).

Most experts in the area of terrorism acknowledge that it is not a modern occurrence (Jalata, 2016) and are categorical in their emphasis that ‘the notion of religious violence is unhelpful’ in understanding the phenomenon (Francis, 2015:912). They urge deeper understanding of terrorist motives, noting that religion is often used by terrorists to mask their political goals (Gupta, 2005). Religious travel and pilgrimage on the other hand is espoused as a means of fostering peace, increasing global understanding of ‘other’ and generally being an activity which leads to more harmonious living. However, when terrorism meets with pilgrimage, as noted throughout this paper, the results are similar to other forms of travel. Pilgrims and religious tourists are reluctant to travel. Thus making a stronger case for the ‘religious terrorist’ as their actions not only weaken the host state but also the religion of the others, or if we believe the rhetorical rationalisations the false religions of the others. Religion therefore floats through the explanations of both central concepts here – informing both tourism and terrorism.

When measures are put in place to mitigate against terrorism, religious travellers can get ‘caught up’ in the targeting of potential terrorists. Ironically, the targeting of particular individuals on religious, ethnic or nationalistic grounds, their detention and mis-treatment

can actually add to the radicalisation of particular individuals, and thereby lead to terrorism. The various measures discussed earlier, the targeting of potential terrorists and the proposed bans are setting ominous precedents, and charting very conflictual paths for certain countries in the name of combatting terrorism. The dominant discourse of law and order presumes that ‘we’ are included in the order that the law is designed to protect and promote. This inclusion is often marginal at best and with what is often seen as hostile and aggressive enforcement of this order, attachment to the order can become even more distanced. Therefore appeals to uphold ‘law and order’ contain the seeds of its own downfall, as those elements who were feeling marginalised may come to feel excluded.

Terrorism may have direct impacts on the individual pilgrim or religious tourist, but this is likely to be of short duration. Research shows that the impact of an individual act of terrorism is relatively short-lived. The motivations of those undertaking religious tourism and pilgrimages are outside those of the terrorist reconstruction and remain strong despite attacks. Similarly there are strong religious values in many of the destinations and sites and therefore the pull factors remain despite the perceived threats. The impact will be more long-lasting in developing nations, while developed nations recover more quickly. The second, more indirect impact which terrorism is having, is the implementation of various measures aiming to combat terrorism. Linking particular groups and sets of beliefs with acts of terrorism perpetuated in the name of a certain religion can lead to the victimisation and targeting of potential travellers, and it is suggested that the resultant impacts are more long-lasting and will result in interruptions to religious travel in the long-term.

## Conclusion

This paper has presented some of the more critical issues being faced by religious tourists in light of so-called ‘religious terrorism’. The paper illustrates the atrocities perpetrated in the name of religion, and how religious sites and pilgrims have been targeted by terrorists. It then considers measures put in place to combat such terrorism and the resultant conflict caused by stringent anti-terrorism laws and security measures to travellers while they are travelling to different countries.

Repeated terrorist activities can have long term impacts on countries like Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Israel and Tunisia who

have suffered declines in religious visitors, due to tourists being target by terrorist attacks. It is important however, to deal with this issue in a reflective and holistic manner as there is a major requirement for agencies involved to develop their understanding of the difference between combatting international terrorism and religious incitement towards individual travellers or religious groups.

The rise of religious terrorism or terrorism which is perceived to be motivated by religion is an ongoing problem, which causes regular concerns for religious tourism and pilgrimage, sometimes resulting in catastrophic impacts. It is suggested here that such acts of terrorism will result in increasingly stringent anti-terrorism and counter terrorism laws and policies being implemented around the globe. Therefore, the impact of international terrorism on religious scared sites can be enormous.

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