

The Crossroads of Corruption and Terrorism in the Global South

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Abstract : The 9/11 and Christmas bombing attacks in the United States are mostly associated with the inability of intelligence agencies to connect dots based on intelligence that was already available. The 1998, 2002, 2013 and several 2014 terrorist attacks in Kenya, on the other hand, are probably driven by a completely different dynamic: the invisible hand of corruption. The World Bank and Transparency International annually compute the Worldwide Governance Indicators and the Corruption Perception Index respectively. What perhaps is not adequately captured in the corruption metrics is the impact of corruption on terrorism. The World Bank data includes variables such as the control of corruption, (estimates of) government effectiveness, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, regulatory quality, rule of law and voice and accountability. TI's CPI does not include measures related to terrorism, but it is plausible that there is an expectation of some terrorism impact arising from corruption. This paper, by examining the incidence, frequency and total number of terrorist attacks that have occurred especially since 1990, and further examining the specific cases of Kenya and Nigeria, argues that in addition to having major effects on governance, corruption has an even more frightening impact: that of facilitating and/or violating security mechanisms to the extent that foreign nationals can easily obtain identification that enables them to perpetuate major events, targeting powerful countries' interests in countries with weak corruption-fighting mechanisms. The paper aims to model interactions that demonstrate the cost/benefit analysis and agents' rational calculations as being non-rational calculations, given the ultimate impact. It argues that eradication of corruption is not just a matter of a better business environment, but that it is implicit in national security, and that for anti-corruption crusaders, this is an argument more potent than the economic cost / cost of doing business argument.

Keywords : corruption, global south, identification, passports, terrorism

Conference Title : ICAGGHR 2015 : International Conference on Anti-Corruption, Good Governance and Human Rights

Conference Location : Madrid, Spain

Conference Dates : March 26-27, 2015