

Essay: One Man's Terrorist is Another Man's Freedom Fighter

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The Essay

It is the difference of perspective, ideology, interests and political context that makes the same person or group appear as terrorist to some while others regard them as freedom fighter. This dilemma has shaped wars, revolutions and struggles throughout the history. In history, figures like Bhagat Singh, Tipu-Sultan, Mehmood Ghaznavi and Nelson Mandela were labeled as terrorists by some and some consider them as freedom fighter. Various factors often radicalize people to fight. Groups such as Hezbollah, ISIS, BIA, Hamas and Taliban demonstrate how one movement can simultaneously be viewed as a fight for liberation and an act of terror, depending on the observer's standpoint. Therefore, global powers, international organizations, and the media must play a constructive role in developing an impartial and balanced

understanding of such conflicts, addressing their **root causes** and ensuring sustainable global peace.

Prolonged conflicts in any region leads to political instability, failed governance, socio-economic deprivation and psychological trauma. These factors invoke people to fight. The region of **Middle East** is the perfect example of this scenario. The prolonged conflicts have scarred this region from Palestine to Yemen. The conflicts have not only devastated infrastructure and economies but also fractured the minds and future of millions of people. This fueled youth radicalization through despair, identity crisis and manipulation but also became the reason of arousal of many organizations like Hezbollah, ISIs, and Hamas.

Hezbollah was formed in 1980s as Shia Muslim movement to resist the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Over the decades, Hezbollah has evolved into a powerful force both militarily and politically, holding seats in the Lebanese parliament while maintaining its strong army. It portrays itself as a **resistance movement** against Israeli aggression. It is declared as the terrorist by U.S. and some western nations, but viewed as legitimate resistance force by Iran, Syria and many Lebanese. So, the difference in perception shows the **subjective** approach that how one group can be a terrorist and a freedom fighter simultaneously.

ISIS also known as the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria, emerged in the early 2000s and gained

significant attention during the Syrian civil war, and the instability in Iraq. The group rapidly expanded its territorial control across parts of Iran and Syria, establishing administrative structure and governing systems. ISIS positions itself against Western powers, like U.S and NATO, accusing them of occupying Muslim lands and supporting corrupt regimes. ISIS called its fight a **Global Jihad**. While ISIS called its mission a **holy struggle**, some groups saw it as a terrorism. So, this is the difference of perspective, ideology, interests and political context.

Similarly, Hamas, BLA and Taliban also have two groups of people, one who perceive them as freedom fighters and others as terrorists. **Hamas** governs Gaza and resist Israeli occupation. Palestinians call it a freedom movement

defending their homeland. But Israel, the U.S and EU classify it as a terrorist organization. **BLA** also known as the Baloch Liberation Army operates in Pakistan's Balochistan province. It claims to be fighting for the **rights and independence** of the Baloch people, arguing that their region has been economically and politically ignored. Pakistan has declared it as a terrorist organization because of its attack on civilians and state institutions. Its supporters, however, see it as a freedom fighter. **Taliban** (Afghanistan) began as a students trained during the Soviet-Afghan war. They once received support from western powers. Later, they were declared terrorists for harboring **Al-Qaeda** and using violence to impose their version of Islamic Law. These examples

show that the word "terrorist" and "freedom fighter" is totally a subjective approach. what one country sees as a just struggle another may consider it a violent rebellion.

Global powers, international organizations and the media play a decisive role in shaping the world's perception of conflicts and movements that are alternatively labeled as terrorism or freedom struggles.

Global powers often define narratives based on their strategic and economic interests, influencing international opinion through diplomatic policies, alliances and ~~inve~~ interventions.

when these powers act impartially and prioritize justice over geopolitics, they can help in resolving conflicts through negotiation and peace building rather than fueling them through ~~negotiation~~ and biased support or military interference. International

organizations such as **UN, OIC,** and **EU** have the responsibility to uphold international law, ensure human rights and mediate between conflicting parties to prevent the misuse of ^{the} term terrorism for political gains. Similarly, the global media has the immense power in shaping public perception. It should do balanced reporting, fact based journalism and avoidance of propaganda. It can help the world understand the real cause of insurgencies and liberation movements. # Together these actors can promote an environment of fairness, address root causes like occupation, poverty and injustice and contribute to the establishment of sustainable global peace through dialogue and equitable representation of all sides.

The debate over who is a terrorist and who is a freedom fighter

reveals the complex nature of global conflicts shaped by perception, ideology and political interests. History have shown how resistance can be seen differently. In the modern world organizations such as Hezbollah, ISIS, BIA, Hamas and Taliban are interpreted through different lens. They are glorified as a noble struggle for freedom by some and condemned as terrorists by others. This ongoing dilemma highlights that terrorism and freedom fighting are not absolute concepts but deeply subjective realities. To move beyond this paradox, global powers, international organizations and the media must rise above political bias and address the root causes of extremism. Only through an honest and balanced global approach can humanity transform cycles of violence into pathways of peace, justice and mutual understanding.