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THE EVOLUTION OF TERRORISM IN RUSSIA IN THE YEARS 2015-2022. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON

ABSTRACT: In the years 2015-2021, Russia's rank in Global Terrorism Index became lower every year. In 2015 and 2016, it was classified as third among the European countries, behind Ukraine and France. In the following period (2017-2021), the United Kingdom also found itself ahead of Russia, which fell to the fourth position. The present article has the form of a quantitative analysis. The research goal is to identify trends related to terrorism that take place in the Russian Federation in the years 2015-2022 (in some parts, the analysis covers the time span between 2015 and 2021, due to lack of data). According to the hypothesis: The phenomenon of terrorism in Russia is closely related to the activities of jihadist organizations, and groups with a different profile pose a marginal threat. Quantitative analysis of the attacks conducted in the analyzed period will enable the verification of the hypothesis and determine the prospects for the development of this aspect.

KEYWORDS: Russian Federation, Terrorism, Jihadism, Far-Right Terrorism, North Caucasus

Introduction

According to Russian law, terrorism “shall mean the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing the adoption of a decision by state power bodies, local self-government bodies or international organizations connected with the intimidation of the population and/or other forms of unlawful violent actions” (National Antiterrorism Committee, 2006). The Russian definition of terrorism has been extended, i.a., to local government units. This makes it possible to prevent the activities of various separatist organizations, which is a direct reference to those in the former Soviet republics, such as Chechnya. Russia has been struggling with separatist Chechen terrorism since time immemorial. The largest attacks in its history were carried out in 2004 on a school in Beslan and in 2002 on the theatre in Dubrovka. Although committed by different organizations, in both cases they were linked to Chechen militants. The definition of terrorism, adopted within the system of a given state, is not without significance because the consequences of its determinants are the actions of specific authorities. Definitions are functional and

serve to legitimize them. The above-mentioned one makes it easier to declare certain groups as terrorist. For this reason, the perception of criminal threats differs from country to country.

Consequently, the Russian definitions are unlike those of the Western countries and organizations. In her publication, the author focused on the Western approach to terrorism. In 2015, Russia's rank in the Global Terrorism Index began to decline. In the period 2015-2021, it became lower every year, successively 30th, 33rd, 34th, 37th, 39th, and 44th (Global Terrorism Indexes 2016-2022). In 2015 and 2016, it was third among European countries, behind Ukraine and France. In the years 2017-2021, Russia fell to the 4th position behind the United Kingdom (Table 1). Despite that, between 2015 and 2021, it was ahead of countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden. In 2022 many states recorded a decrease in deaths from terrorism. Only 44 countries registered at least one fatality. This is a significant decrease from the peak of 55 states in 2015. Also, the numbers diminished by more than a third since the peak in 2015 (Global Terrorism Index 2022, 4). Although the situation in the Russian Federation continued to improve, the number of attacks went down by 83%, and the deaths from terrorism dropped by 71% in 2021 compared to 2020, Russia is still in the infamous European and Eurasian leader (Global Terrorism Index 2022, 42).

Table 1. Terrorist incidents in Russia (2015-2022)

Year	GTI Position in Europe	GTI Rank	Worst terrorist attack	Perpetrator
2021	4	44	2021-12-7, Moscow 2 dead / 4 injured	Sergey Glazov
2020	n/a	n/a	2020-12-28, Grozny 3 dead / 1 injured	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State
2019	4	39	2019-12-19, Moscow 3 dead / 4 injured	Jihadi-inspired extremists
2018	4	37	2018-05-19, Grozny 7 dead / 3 injured	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State (suspected)
2017	4	34	2017-04-03, Saint Petersburg 16 dead / 63 injured	Imam Shamil Battalion/ Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ)
2016	3	33	2016-10-09, Gudermesskiy 8 dead / 4 injured	Unknown
2015	3	30	2015-09-15, Rubas 3 dead / 0 injured	Unknown

Source: Author's own work on the basis of the GTI and the Global Terrorism Database

After the invasion of Ukraine, Russia is in a difficult political and economic position. The longer the war in Ukraine continues, the greater the possibility that the latter will immerse itself in internal instability, mainly in its poorer regions. As a result, new waves of terrorism and their proliferation (primarily from the Caucasus) to other territories are likely to spread. The methodological assumptions of this study are presented in the next section.

1. Methodological Remarks

The following article has the form of a quantitative analysis. Its goal is to identify trends related to terrorism that occurred in the Russian Federation in the years 2015-2022 (in some parts, the analysis covers the period of 2015-2021, due to lack of data). Terrorism is a dynamically changing phenomenon. The research conducted a few years earlier may not fully reflect its complexity at the present time. Generally, it is caused by the dynamics of change that takes place in international relations and internally (in a given state, region). A case in point is Burkina Faso, which in 2011 and 2012 was in the 113th position, in 2015 in the 52nd position in the Global Terrorism Index; and a few years later, in 2019, it entered the top 10 in the 7th position; in the following year, moving up one place, and in 2021, to the 5th position (Global Terrorism Index 2022, 19). Therefore, it is necessary to enhance this area of study and monitor the situation, even in the countries where it is relatively stable, as in the case of Russia. However, there is a disparity in scientific literature; numerous scientific studies address the issue of terrorism in Russia before 2015 (e.g. Geifman 1995; Anemone 2010; Orttung | Latta 2008; Monaghan 2010). Various publications deal with the problem of terrorism in MENA, Africa, and Southern Asia. It is inevitable, from 2016 to 2021, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia were among three states with the highest impact of terrorism (Global Terrorism Index 2020; Gaub 2017). Russia was placed in much further positions (Table 1). Among the European states it was always in the top five. Nevertheless, regions and countries less threatened by terrorism should not be forgotten. In certain circumstances, i.e., the previously mentioned case of Burkina Faso, everything may change rapidly. It ought not to be disregarded as after the invasion of Ukraine, Russia is in a difficult political and economic situation. Thus, a prolonged conflict in Ukraine may lead to the greater possibility that Russia will become immersed in internal instability, which could divert the attention of the authorities and security services from terrorist threats.

The analysis includes theoretical and empirical methods: scientific literature analysis, classification, generalization, comparative data analysis, systemic analysis, and statistical data analysis. For quantitative data, the author used those extracted from the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

A measurable outcome of the study is the identification of trends in the terrorist threat in Russia. In such a large country multifold tendencies related to terrorism on its territory may be transferred to the neighboring states or close and even distant regions. Accordingly, terrorist issues there (not being among the countries most threatened by terrorism) should not be ignored.

2. Terrorist attacks in Russia

In 2015-2020, 157 terrorist attacks occurred on the territory of Russia. Few of them ended in fatalities; in many others, the only victims were the perpetrator(s). The table below presents data on incidents of this kind in Russia, with at least one fatality. The ones in which the offenders themselves were victims are omitted from the list. These very assumptions made it possible to isolate 48 instances.

Table 2. Terrorist incidents in Russia, with at least one death (2015-2022)¹

	Date	Place	Group	Fatalities/ Injured	Target type
1	2	3	4	5	5
1	2021-12-7	Moscow	Conspiracy theory Extremists	2/4	Government (General)/ Private Citizens & Property
2	2020-12-28	Grozny – Chechenya	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	3/1	Police
3	2019-12-31	Magas – Ingushetia	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	2/4	Police
4	2019-12-19	Moscow	Jihadi-inspired Extremists	3/4	Government (General)/ Private Citizens & Property
5	2019-11-02	Moscow	Unknown	2/0	Government (General)
6	2019-07-21	Saint Peters- burg	Unknown	1/0	Private Citizens & Property
7	2019-07-01	Bamut	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	2/0	Police
8	2019-02-11	Vinogradovo	Unknown	1/0	Private Citizens & Property
9	2019-01-12	Unknown	Unknown	2/1	Government (General)
10	2018-07-20	Kizilyurt	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	2/0	Police

¹ Attacks where the perpetrators themselves were the only victims are unlisted.

cont. Table 2

1	2	3	4	5	5
11	2018-05-19	Grozny	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State (suspected)	7/3	Police/ Religious Figures/ Institutions
12	2018-02-18	Kizlyar	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	6/5	Religious Figures/ Institutions
13	2018-01-03	Avtury	Unknown	1/0	Police
14	2017-11-05	Yandare	Unknown	3/5	Police
15	2017-10-01	Babayurt district	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	1/0	Police
16	2017-09-30	Kizlyar district	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	1/0	Police
17	2017-08-28	Kaspiysk	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	3/1	Police
18	2017-08-17	Khasavyurtovsky district	Unknown	2/1	Private Citizens & Property
19	2017-05-24	Minusinsk	Unknown	1/0	Journalists & Media
20	2017-04-21	Khabarovsk	Islamic State of Iraq and the Syria/ Neo-Nazi extremists	3/1	Government (General)
21	2017-04-08	Malgobek	Unknown	2/0	Police
22	2017-04-04	Astrakhan	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	2/0	Police
23	2017-04-03	Saint Petersburg	Imam Shamil Battalion, Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ)	16/63	Transportation
24	2017-03-24	Naurskaya	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State/ Separatists	12/3	Military
25	2017-01-29	Shali	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	5/2	Police
26	2016-12-29	Khasavyurt	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, Khasavyurt Group	3/0	Police
27	2016-12-25	Makhachkala	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, Khasavyurt Group	2/1	Police
28	2016-10-27	Pervomaysky	Unknown	1/0	Government (General)
29	2016-10-09	Prokhladny	Unknown	3/0	Police
30	2016-09-26	Karatyube	Unknown	1/0	Religious Figures/ Institutions
31	2016-08-17	Balashika	Islamic State of Iraq and the Syria	3/1	Police

cont. Table 2

1	2	3	4	5	5
32	2016-08-12	Izberbash	Unknown	2/0	Police
33	2016-08-10	Assab	Unknown	1/0	Government (General)
34	2016-06-17	Tabasaransky district	Unknown	2/4	Police
35	2016-06-16	Suleyman-Stalsky district	Unknown	5/2	Military
36	2016-04-29	Shamilskiy District	Unknown	1/0	Police
37	2016-03-29	Sirtych	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	1/2	Police
38	2016-03-30	Kapiysk	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	2/1	Police
39	2016-02-29	Moscow	Unknown	1/0	Private Citizens & Property
40	2016-02-15	Dzhemikent	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	4/16	Police/ Private Citizens & Property
41	2015-12-29	Derbent	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	1/11	Tourists
42	2015-12-01	Khasavyurt	Unknown	1/0	Religious Figures/ Institutions
43	2015-09-15	Rubas	Unknown	3/0	Private Citizens & Property
44	2015-09-09	NovyKurush	Muslim extremists (suspected)	1/0	Religious Figures/Institutions
45	2015-08-20	Kara-Tyube	Unknown	1/0	Religious Figures/Institutions
46	2015-08-09	Unknown	Unknown	1/2	Military
47	2015-03-04	Derbent	Unknown	1/0	Government (General)
48	2015-02-27	Moscow	Muslim extremists (suspected)	1/0	Private Citizens & Property
49	2015-02-24	Dagestan republic	Unknown	3/1	Police

Source: Author's own work on the basis of the Global Terrorism Database

In 2015, there were 22 attacks in Russia, and 9 of them lead to fatalities. In most cases, the perpetrators were unidentified. Among all of them, including those that did not end in deaths, the most frequent targets were religious figures/institutions (6). The terrorists then targeted police (5) and private citizens and property (2) (Russia, GTD).

It is worth mentioning that the major attack in 2015 was related to Russia. On 31 October, terrorists killed 224 people. An explosive device placed on a passenger plane flying from Egypt to Russia caused the flight to crash in the North Sinai. The Russian embassy confirmed that most of the passengers were Russian, chiefly tourists returning from the Red Sea resorts (Elgot | Johnston | Khalil 2015). The attack was claimed by the Sinai Province of the Islamic State (Topham | Weaver | Luhn 2015). Since 2015, jihadists from the Islamic State have targeted the Russian-speaking audience through social media. As a consequence, Russian was the third most frequently used language in Islamic State's propaganda materials, after Arabic and English. In June 2015, IS announced the creation of a Caucasus province named Wilayat al-Qawqaz (Global Terrorism Index 2016, 67-68; Seib 2018, 151-196).

In 2016, the number of attacks increased significantly, namely to 56, although only 15 of them culminated in fatalities. In most cases, the perpetrators were unidentified (8 out of 15), the rest were committed by jihadists. Terrorists most often attacked police (27) and religious figures/institutions (6) (Russia, GTD). In 2017, the number dropped to 34 attacks. 12 of them led to fatalities. Once again, the majority of them were carried out by jihadists. The commonest targets were police (10), and journalists and the media (6) (Russia, GTD). In 2018, there was another decrease in the number of attacks – 23; and only 4 of them caused fatalities. All were perpetrated by the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State (CP IS). Terrorists repeatedly attacked police (8) and private citizens and property (5) (Russia, GTD). In 2019, for the third consecutive year, there was a reduction in the number of attacks – 10; and 2 of them did not cause casualties. Deaths associated with the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State fell for the first year since the group became active in Russia. The most prevalent targets were police (3), government (general) (3), and private citizens and property (3) (Russia, GTD).

In 2020, the number of attacks slightly increased; there were 12 of them. The majority of them did not bring deaths. In some cases, by reason of the appropriate response of the services, only the bombers were killed (3 cases). Regrettably, a policeman lost his life in one of the attacks. On 28 December 2020, two assailants attacked police officers with knives and attempted to steal their weapons. Consequently, the police officer and both terrorists were killed and a second officer was injured (Euronews 2020). On New Year's Day a group of ethnic Russians planned to perform an attack in the shopping centers of Saint Petersburg. They contacted ISIS inspirers online. However, they were detected by the special services of the United States, which warned the Russians. The attack was prevented a few days before it was planned (Grabowski 2021, 93).

In 2021, the number of attacks definitely diminished. Russia recorded only one in Eurasia. Sergei Glazov killed two civilians and wounded four others after arguing with a security guard. The assailant refused to put on a mask in a government

building. He believed that the COVID-19 pandemic was a conspiracy (Bunyan | Matthews | Stewart 2021). No group had claimed responsibility for the attack (Global Terrorism Index 2015, 42).

In 2022, merely one attack associated with Russia was performed in Kabul. A suicide attacker approached the Russian embassy. The terrorist was shot dead, but his explosives went off afterwards. At least 10 people, including two embassy employees, died in the attack, and more than a dozen others were injured. The Khorasan Province of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for it (Goldbaum 2022, 9).

In conclusion, it should also be remembered that many of the victims attributed to the attacks were the perpetrators themselves. For instance, in the one of February 24 2015, in which assailants opened fire on a Russian police unit in the village of Sulev Kent in Dagestan, out of the three victims, two were the terrorists themselves. In turn, in the incident carried out on 16 June 2016, during which the assailants opened fire on Russian Armed Forces soldiers in Dagestan, out of five victims, four were the assailants themselves (Russia, GTD). Although the cases with the perpetrators themselves being the only victims are omitted from the list, the perpetrators recurrently accounted for the majority of the fatalities are listed in Table 2. The data show that attacks in which only perpetrators died and those in which there were no fatalities occur very often in Russia. The analysis also demonstrates targets related to the police (53), private citizens and property (19), religious figures/ institutions (17), government (general) (14), and journalists and the media (13). In some cases, terrorists struck several targets simultaneously, in others the target was unspecified (Russia, GTD) (Table 3). Aggression aimed at tourists had the greatest effectiveness (ratio of attacks with fatalities to the total

Table 3. Terrorist incidents by target type in Russia (2015-2021)

Target Type	Number of attacks
Police	53
Private Citizens & Property	19
Religious Figures/Institutions	17
Government (General)	14
Journalists & Media	13
Transportation	6
Non-Government Organization (NGO)	6
Military	5
Business	5
Educational Institution	3
Unknown	3
Tourists	1

Source: Author's own work on the basis of the Global Terrorism Database

number of attacks, expressed as a percentage). However, this is due to the fact that there was only one such attack. On 29 December 2015, an assailant opened fire on tourists at a historic citadel in Derbent city in Dagestan. At least 1 person was killed and 11 injured (BBC News, 2015). The Caucasus Province of the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. Offence against military targets (60%), government (general) (50%), police (43%), and private citizens and property (42%) were also highly effective. Attacks on business, educational institution, NGOs, and telecommunication indicated lack of effectiveness.

3. Most Lethal Terrorist Attacks and Data on the Perpetrators

The 2001 report states that “As a generator of violence and terrorism in the post-Soviet Russia, ideologically and socially motivated activism has played a marginal role, contrary to what might have been expected in the early 1990s. Violent acts of political extremists in Russia have been limited in scope, and have frequently had little more than a symbolic significance.” (Andrésen, 2001). With the passage of time, terrorism motivated by the ideology of jihadism began to play the most significant role. Analyzing terrorist incidents in Russia in the years 2015-2022 with at least one fatality, it turns out that the greatest threat is posed by Islamists and jihadists, who have perpetrated 40 of 95 attacks (42%). However, it should be noted that the culprits of more than 53% of them (51/95) could not be identified, and therefore, only 4 were conducted by other perpetrators. By contrast, the perpetration is not fully confirmed in all cases. For example, on 21 April 2017, an assailant opened a fire at a Federal Security Service (FSB) office in Khabarovsk. Three people were killed, including the assailant himself. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) claimed responsibility; nevertheless, sources indicated that the assaulter was a Neo-Nazi extremist (Agence France-Presse 2017; Deutsche Welle 2017) (Table 2).

In the years 2015-2021, terrorists conducted 6 attacks on the territory of Russia, in which more than 5 people died. Instances with at least 20 deaths were not recorded. In the period analyzed, the largest attack was that carried out on 3 April 2017 (Table 4). In 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021 there were no attacks in which at least 5 deaths were reported. The largest one of 2016 in Russia was the one from 9 October. The assailants opened fire on policemen at a checkpoint in Gudermesskiy, Chechnya. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that all the eight victims were assailants. Four officers were injured in the clash. No group claimed responsibility for the incident. It was similar on 16 June when the assailants opened fire on Russian Armed Forces soldiers in Suleyman-Stalsky district in Dagestan. Among the five dead, four were the assailants themselves. No group claimed responsibility for that attack (Russia, GTD).

Table 4. Terrorist incidents in RF, with at least 5 deaths (2015-2021)

	Date	City	Group	Fatalities/ Injuries	Target type
1	2018-05-19	Grozny	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State (suspected)	7/3	Police, Religious Figures/Institutions
2	2017-04-03	Saint Petersburg	Imam Shamil Battalion/ Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ)	16/63	Transportation
3	2017-03-24	Naurskaya	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, or Separatists	12/3	Military
4	2017-01-29	Shali	Caucasus Province of the Islamic State	5/2	Police
5	2016-10-09	Gudermesskiy	Unknown	8/4	Police
6	2016-06-16	Suleyman-Stalsky district	Unknown	5/2	Military

Source: Author's own work on the basis of the Global Terrorism Database

In 2015, the biggest number of perpetrators remained unknown (17), while Muslim extremists and the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State were the most dangerous know perpetrators of attacks. In 2016, the vast majority of them were unidentified (37). The deadliest group in Russia was the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, with seven attacks. In 2017, most of the culprits behind them were unaccounted (16). The most dangerous groups in Russia were the Caucasus Province, the Islamic State, the Imam Shamil Battalion, and Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ), indicating a still growing presence of the Islamist-related terrorism in Russia. In 2018, the greatest number of committers remained unknown (12), and the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State was ranked second, with eight cases. In 2019, the trend continued, the highest number of unidentified perpetrators amounting to five cases, and the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State was ranked second, with two attacks. In 2019, the deaths caused by the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State fell for the first time since it became active in Russia (Global Terrorism Index 2020, 48). In 2020, the highest number of offenders was unrecognized (7), and the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State and Jihadi-inspired extremists were ranked second, with two attacks each (Russia, GTD). In 2021, the only attack was conducted by Sergei Glazov, a conspiracy theory extremist.

Most deaths caused by identified terrorist groups in Russia are attributed to the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State and its parent organization – the Islamic State, also referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The Caucasus Province (with the Khasavyurt Group) was the only organization that conducted

Table 5. Perpetrators of all the terrorist incidents in Russia (2015-2021)

Target Type	Number of attacks
Unknown	97
Caucasus Province of the Islamic State and Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, Khasavyurt Group	29
Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)	5
Muslim extremists	4
Jihadi-inspired extremists	4
Anti-Semitic extremists	3
Neo-Nazi extremists	3
Anarchists	2
Imam Shamil Battalion	2
Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ)	2
Caucasus Emirate	1
Chechen Rebels	1
Christian State-Holy Rus	1
Conspiracy theory extremists	1
Cossack Separatists	1
Gunib Group (Dagestan)	1
Kizilyurtovskiy Group (Dagestan)	1
Makhachkala Gang (Dagestan)	1
Misanthropic Division (Neo-Nazi)	1
Separatists	1
SERB Group (Russian Liberation Movement)	1
Shamil Group	1
South Group (Russia)	1

Source: Author's own work on the basis of the Global Terrorism Database

attacks continuously from 2015 to 2020. However, Table 2 shows that the biggest one was carried out by the Imam Shamil Battalion or Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ), the Caucasian/Russian branches of Al-Qaeda. Therefore, terrorist activity continues to be mainly driven by jihadists. Far-right and far-left incidents are much rarer in Russia (Table 4). The exception is 2017, when various far-right terrorists performed more of them – 6 attacks (neo-Nazi extremists, anti-Semitic extremists, Christian State-Holy Rus, Misanthropic Division, SERB Group) (Russia, GTD). The deadliest terrorist group in this region over the past 20 years were Chechen rebels (Pokalova 2015). The most lethal period in Russia occurred between 2002 and 2004 (Global Terrorism Index 2015, 48).

4. Discussion: Causes of Terrorism

Attacks in which only the perpetrators were killed and those with no fatalities occur very often in Russia. Needless to say, not all terrorists aim to assassinate; in various cases, they seek the attention of public opinion and the media. Furthermore, in the vast majority that took place in Russia between 2015 and 2021, the offenders remained unknown (97). Among those whose criminals were identified, jihadists were in the predominant part (45): Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, CP IS – Khasavyurt Group², Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Imam Shamil Battalion, Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ), Caucasus Emirate, and other unaffiliated Muslim extremists and Jihadi-inspired extremists. Among the groups of perpetrators who carried out at least two offences were also: anti-Semitic extremists (3), neo-Nazi extremists (3), and anarchists (2). The analysis of data in Table 1, also proves that the most lethal attacks are conducted by jihadists. When those whose offenders are unknown are withdrawn from the total number, it becomes apparent that jihadist groups implemented most of the lethal assaults in Russia.³ (Table 3); in this case, removing attacks with unknown criminals, the jihadists were the only culprits.

Based on the list of foreign and international organizations recognized as terrorist in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation, it can be concluded that the greatest threat in Russia is posed by Islamist and jihadist Organizations. 27 out of 32 may be classified as such (Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 2023). Islamic radicalization is not a new phenomenon among societies of Russian Muslims, nevertheless, its motives and factors were different in different centuries. Russia is experiencing an Islamist menace in its Muslim republics: Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardina-Balkaria (KBR), Karachaevo-Cherkessiya (KCHR), and Adygeya, which could soon spread to other territories, such as Tatarstan and Boshkortostan. (Hahn 2007, 1; Yakhshiboev 2017, 14). Although many years have passed since the second Russian military campaign in Chechnya, its consequences are still discernible nowadays. New waves of radicalization in the North Caucasus are visible from time to time. North Caucasian rebels have integrated into radical Islamist networks in the 2000s and that transformed their tactics, yet changes in their motivations were slower to come. The strategic objective of the Chechen rebels was to become an independent state and it remained at the center of their actions for a long time. Nevertheless, the religiousization of the war did not lead to the abandonment of nationalist political goals in the North Caucasus (Juergensmeyer 2006, 133-144; Klimentov 2021, 377). In contrast, more Chechen fighters decided to fight in Syria and other regions

² Islamic State (IS) cell in the Russian city of Khasavyurt, located in the North Caucasian republic of Dagestan (Jamestown Foundation).

³ Attacks that may have been committed by jihadists or groups with a different profile are also taken into account.

because they could not do it in the North Caucasus (Ratelle 2016, 218). However, the analysis demonstrates that so far this has not translated into an increased number of assaults or deaths in Russia.

Conclusions and perspectives

This publication focused on the Western approach to terrorism, based on GTD and GTI data. Quantitative analysis of the attacks performed in the years 2015-2022 confirmed the hypothesis that its phenomenon in Russia was closely related to the activities of jihadist organizations, groups with a different profile (far-right, far-left, separatist, and others) posing a marginal threat. According to T. Bjørge and J. A. Ravndal during the period 2000-2017, there were 406 deadly attacks by extreme-right perpetrators in Russia, resulting in 458 people killed (Bjørge | Ravndal 2019, 11). The research conducted in the study revealed that in the years 2015-2022 far-right terrorists implemented only 9 attacks. It may be related to the fact that between 2006 and 2010, when extreme-right groups murdered large numbers of immigrants and others considered as enemies, the Russian police were reluctant to intervene. Arson and bombing attempts against police stations became common (Verkhovsky 2016, 78). The police finally did so, and from 2009 onwards leaders and perpetrators were arrested and received long sentences. As a result, the number of attacks and deaths, connected with far-right extremists, decreased dramatically (Enstad 2018, 89-103; Bjørge | Ravndal 2019, 15).

Terrorist incidents in Russia had been declining since 2012 when 213 of them were recorded. In 2021 there was only one. A noticeable trend is a gradual decrease in terrorist threat. Russia's 2019 GTI index of 4.219 has been historically the lowest score since the Institute of Economics & Peace published its research (Institute for Economics & Peace 2022). During the years 2015-2022, 157 cases were recorded. The four largest were executed by jihadists: The Caucasus Province of the Islamic State, Imam Shamil Battalion or Katibat al Tawhid wal Jihad (KTJ) and Jihadi-inspired extremists (Table 1). The analysis based on those carried out on the territory of Russia makes it possible to conclude that the 2015-2022 ones were not lethal; quite the opposite, many of them resulted in no fatalities or the victims were the perpetrators themselves. In Russia, the highest number of attacks remains unknown (Table 4). The author assumes that the trend related to the ongoing jihadist threat will continue, although it should be remembered that terrorism is an unpredictable phenomenon and new circumstances may arise at any time that will significantly change the trends presented in the article. The Russian invasion is such a factor in the case of Ukraine, as there is a strong relation between terrorism and conflict, with 97% of all terrorist deaths recorded in a conflict zone. Terrorist attacks in Ukraine peaked in 2015 (58 attacks), while in 2021 there were none (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2022).

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