

# [State terrorism and non-state terrorism](https://assignbuster.com/state-terrorism-and-non-state-terrorism/)

### State terrorism is often a neglected phenomenon in terrorism studies. Discuss how terrorism has been used as a weapon by states over the past 50 years. Is state terrorism fundamentally different from non-state terrorism?

### ABSTRACT

Over the past half century States like Zimbabwe, Iraq, Myanmar, North Korea and Bosnia have conducted violent actions, against their own nationals and foreigners home and abroad. These actions though lethal and damning were considered justified by the respective Governments as appropriate in the pursuit of political objectives. At the same time, these violent acts are condemned by the international community as terrorism. However the state justifies it actions as state security supported by its sovereignty and constitution notwithstanding the outcry. The Cold War was advertised as the ideal environment for state terrorism but with the absence of tangible evidence to support these claims studies only surmised the depth of its employment. The identity and nature of state terrorism have evolved considerably through the years particularly during the period of the 70’s and 80’s. The post-Cold War era has provided the backdrop for an increase in non-state terrorism predominantly because factions like the ‘ Mujahideen’, that were given support in the fight between “ super powers” were now determining their own future without any guiding hand or resources to support the efforts. These non state actors and the emergence of the phenomenon of radical Islamic terrorism have provided fodder to eclipse the focus on state terrorism. These apparent paradigms shift meant a decreased focus on state terrorism and a convergence on non state terrorism. This in no way signaled the discontinuance of the phenomenon but merely another evolution in the cycle and the possible creation of a more menacing brand of an already lethal ritual.

This paper will be twofold in nature; initially it will explore the viability of state terrorism as an effective tool (using case studies) used by governments within the last 50 years to achieve its political aims. Secondly, it will submit as highlighted by Professor Igor Primoratz moral arguments that will highlight the differences between state terrorism and non state terrorism.

### 1. Introduction

\* Outline the paper

\* Define Terrorism, State terrorism, Non state terrorism

\* Thesis Statement – Even though states terrorism does not occupy the prime hallways in scholarly studies, it does not signal the closing stages of an art but merely a juncture in the evolution cycle of a lethal tendency

### 2. State terrorism as the first prominent form of terrorism

\* The early instances of state terrorism

\* Internal Terrorism – against national of a country, with a political aim

\* External Terrorism

o Coercive diplomacy – discrete and controlled, and makes non compliance intolerable.

o Covert state terrorism – aimed at producing fear and chaos

o Surrogate terrorism – assistance to another state or organization to improve capability to perform terrorism

o “ Overt to covert” – Shift from state terrorism to state sponsored and state supported terrorism

\* Use of war as a proxy/ cover for state terrorism

### 3. Evolution of States Terrorism

\* Totalitarian states employment of revolutionary or ethno-focused terrorism

\* The Cold War struggle as fertile ground for state sponsorship of terrorism.

\* State terrorism as an extension of foreign policy

\* Politico-religious motivated states terrorism

### 4. Uses of Terrorism by state actors

\* Case studies of totalitarian regimes

o Joseph Stalin and Russia – 1922 – 1953

o Adolf Hitler and Germany – 1934 – 1945

o Idi Amin and Uganda – 1971 – 1979

o Augosto Pinochet and Chile – 1974 – 1990

o Robert Mubabe and Zimbabwe – 1987 to present

### 5. Shift away from state sponsored terrorism

\* Post Cold War era changes in philosophies of traditional sponsors of terrorism

\* International pressure due to treaties and conventions

\* Terror groups forced to be motivated towards self determination as a means for resources and safe havens.

\* The synthetic drugs era and the impact on terrorism financing

\* Globalization

### 6. Differences between state terrorism and non state terrorism

\* Moral Arguments

o The state mode of terrorism claims vastly more victims than terrorism by non-state actors.

o State terrorism is mired and compounded by secrecy, deception and hypocrisy.

o State terrorism breaches international commitments but non state terrorism can never.

o Non state terrorism is often justified by the argument of no alternative.

### 7. Conclusion

\* Though there has been a shift in focus on the topic of state terrorism, there has been no decrease in its employment; rather it means that states were probably given the opportunity to unleash a greater diversity of lethality against its enemies.

\* Further, less focus meant that states could continue to use a hidden hand to provide the motivation to non state actors to destabilize and destroy its political enemies, while embedding terrorism as a fundamental instrument of the states machinery, its foreign policy and counter-terrorism policies.

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