

AUMUNS STUDY GUIDE

**UNDER
SECRETARY
GENERAL:
ADA YESILYURT**

**ACADEMIC
ASSISTANT:
ADA ÇAKMAK**

UNOCT

AUMUN 26



United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism

Agenda Item: Addressing the Threat of International
Aviation-Based Terrorism Activities

Under-Secretary General: Ada Yeşilyurt
Academic Assistant: Ada Çakmak

Table of Contents

1. Welcoming Letters
 - 1.1. Letter from the Secretary-General
 - 1.2. Letter from the Under Secretary-General
 - 1.3. Letter from the Academic Assistant
2. Introductions
 - 2.1. Introduction to the Committee
 - 2.2. Introduction to the Agenda Item
3. Historical Background and Case Studies of Aviation-Based Terrorism Activities
 - 3.1. Pan Am Flight 103, 1988
 - 3.2. Operation Bojinka, 1995
 - 3.3. September 11 Attacks, 2001
 - 3.4. Metrojet Flight 9268, 2015
4. Geopolitical Dimensions
 - 4.1. Treaties Regarding the Matter and Shortcomings
 - 4.2. Key Stakeholders
5. Questions To Be Addressed
6. Bibliography

1. Welcoming Letters

1.1. Letter from the Secretary-General

Letter from Secretary-General

Honourable participants,

First order of business, I would like to welcome you all with open arms and utmost gratitude for attending our conference. I truly hope you can find a little solace and comfort with your peers here, as our conference and team truly care about you and we will be trying our best to accommodate you.

I would also like to remind you that we intend to keep everyone involved in a place of safety, and comfort. As we all witnessed the last events in our country, I can promise that those who act out of order will be taken care of and thrown out of the conference immediately.

As the Secretary-General, I offer you a variety of global problems to work on and create solutions accordingly, as it is what boils down to with every Model United Nations conference around the globe. I truly hope this will be a place where you can learn and grow both intellectually and personally. You are in a place where you will be heard, valued, and supported.

What I offered is only possible with an academic team like this, so those who I have in my team should know that I offered their positions accordingly, and knowingly. I expected the best, which they gave in return. I am truly grateful for everyone in my team, and I know for a fact that also our delegates will feel the same way I do.

Those who will be attending a conference for the first time, I hope our conference will get you hooked on MUN conferences and make you expand your horizon as much as you can in order to become a better version of yourselves in every possible area that we can offer. Attending a conference where everyone is your peer might be a little overwhelming but rest assured, me and my academic team, will be here to ensure your careers as MUNers will begin smoothly, and in any occasion that might make you uncomfortable in or outside of our formal sessions, I truly have the greatest organization team that ever existed, so you can rely on them as much as you can rely on me.

I also would like to extend my special thanks to my executive team, Ekin Su Öztürk and Emir Güneş, who gave their incredible efforts to ensure our organization team is spotless, in and out of our conference. Also, Mert Sürücü, for sticking with me throughout this almost five year old journey of MUNing, with an unbelievable amount of ups and downs, and yet we are still here.

I truly can not wait to see you all in AUMUN'26.

Truly yours,
Bedirhan CURA
Secretary General

1.2. Letter from the Under Secretary-General

Dear delegates,

It is my utmost honor to welcome you to the United Nations Office on Counter Terrorism! I am Ada Yeşilyurt, and I will serve as your Under-Secretary General throughout the three days we will be together. Without further ado, I would like to express my gratitude to some people whom I respect deeply. The executive team for giving me the opportunity to do this committee, and the academic and organisation teams that made this conference possible. And my lovely Academic Assistant, whom I hold very dearly, Ada Çakmak, who was the most hardworking academic assistant I could have ever asked for. I feel incredibly lucky to have you with me in this committee, and I believe from the bottom of my heart that our delegates will leave this conference with the same sentiments.

My last thanks go to you, our lovely delegates, who made this committee happen. I hope that even if this committee wasn't your first choice, you will have as much fun and satisfaction throughout the committee as I felt while preparing it for you. Our agenda item is a highly relevant topic on a global scale, no matter the current events, and it's of importance that your awareness is high on the matter, considering the current political landscape.

Delegates, please read this study guide thoroughly, for it contains all the information you will need throughout the committee, but this should not deter you from doing your own research, since this study guide **cannot** inform you on your respective country's policies and past actions. Your priority is to abide by the stance of your allocated country on the matter.

If you have further inquiries in your preparation process, please do not hesitate to contact me at my email address or personal number.

I wish all of us a great conference ahead.

Shine on, you crazy diamonds!

Ada Yeşilyurt

Under Secretary General of the United Nations Trade and Development

ada.yesy.project@gmail.com

542 307 8004

1.3 Letter from the Academic Assistant

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to AUMUN'26 and our committee. My name is Ada akmak, and I am honored to serve as your Academic Assistant.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Secretariat for giving us the opportunity to form this committee and for making this conference possible. Me and my Under Secretary General Ada Yeşilyurt worked hard to present a wonderful committee to you and make your experience unforgettable.

I want you all to be aware of how important this committee and agenda item are. And I expect you all to do your work with seriousness and dedication. Please read this study guide thoroughly, as it contains the information you will need throughout the committee. I highly encourage you to research upon your allocated country's policies and role on the agenda item.

If you have any kind of questions about the committee, please do not hesitate to reach me via the number I placed below.

0544 661 36 41

I am looking forward to having a great conference together.

Sincerely,

Ada AKMAK.

2. Introductions

2.1. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism was established on 15 June 2017. The UN General Assembly establishes the priorities of UNOCT through the resolutions of the biennial Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

The Office of Counter-Terrorism has five main functions:

1. Provide leadership on the General Assembly counter-terrorism mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General from across the United Nations system
2. Enhance coordination and coherence across the Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact entities to ensure the balanced implementation of the four pillars of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
3. Strengthen the delivery of United Nations counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to Member States.
4. Improve visibility, advocacy, and resource mobilization for United Nations counter-terrorism efforts.
5. Ensure that due priority is given to counterterrorism across the United Nations system and that the important work on preventing violent extremism is firmly rooted in the Strategy.

The Office works closely with UN Member States, UN entities, civil society, international and regional organizations, academia, and other stakeholders, strengthening existing and developing new partnerships to effectively prevent and counter terrorism.

Established in 2011, the UN Counter Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) is the main capacity-building arm of UNOCT, providing capacity-building assistance to Member States through counter-terrorism projects and programmes around the world in line with the four pillars of the Global Strategy. UNOCT works in close collaboration with the Security Council subsidiary bodies mandated to enhance the capacity of Member States to prevent and respond to terrorist acts.

2.2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

Terrorism is one of the most dangerous social phenomena in the world and, simultaneously, one of the biggest threats to world security. International aviation-based terrorism involves unlawful acts targeting civil aviation, ranging from hijacking and sabotage to using aircraft as weapons and attacking airport infrastructure. Aviation terrorism can be

understood as a part of terrorism in which the subjects or objects of the attack are organisations or people involved in aviation activity. Aviation-based attacks are attractive to terrorist groups because they offer a global impact, cause high casualties, create fear among the people, and result in economic disruptions.

Terrorist organizations so far used varied forms, methods, and manners connected with aviation terrorism, including:

- Hijacking of Aircraft: the unlawful, forcible seizure of an aircraft in flight, often involving threats and violence
- Sabotage & Bombings: placing explosive devices on board or attacking aircraft
- MANPADS Attacks: using man-portable air defense systems (surface-to-air missiles) to shoot down aircrafts
- Using Aircraft as Weapons: flying an aircraft into a specific target or using it to disseminate hazardous materials
- Cyber Attacks: remotely attacking an aircraft's navigation or security systems
- Drone Threats: the misuse of uncrewed aircraft systems to target aviation facilities
- Airport Attacks: armed violence against people at airports or aviation facilities

Each of these types of aviation terrorism can lead to serious consequences in international air transport and significant financial losses for air carriers. Because acts of aviation terrorism are difficult to hide, it is an attractive way to achieve the goals of terrorist groups. Aviation-based terrorism results in social, psychological, economical and legal consequences. These results are often observed together.

3. Historical Background and Case Studies of Aviation-Based Terrorism Activities

Aviation-based terrorism refers to the violent acts committed on commercial flights as well as military flights. Aviation-based terrorism (ABT) emerged in the mid 20th century with the expansion of commercial flights. With ABT, aircraft became the target of politically charged violence as they offered terrorists endless opportunities surpassing land-based vehicles. With this kind of power at hand and few regulations and safety measures, ABT became a go-to for terrorists.

With the earliest incidents going back to the 1930s, ABT has a short but important history. Earliest incidents mostly involved hijacking with the intention of spreading propaganda, but as it reached the 60s and 70s, actual terrorism started to take place; bombings, hijacking with

the intention of crashing, and many more threats were now in the blue sky that once signified hope.

During the 90s and early 2000s, ABT reached a whole other level with the systematic integration of Middle Eastern forces. The most memorable and scarring incident of the era was the September 11 attacks, which revolutionized air travel and regulations all across the globe. Following a three-year joint investigation by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), arrest warrants were issued for two Libyan citizens in 1991, but the government of Libya would not permit them to be extradited.

3.1. Pan Am Flight 103, 1988

Pan Am Flight 103 was a regularly scheduled Pan Am transatlantic flight from Frankfurt to Detroit via a stopover in London and another in New York City. On December 21, 1988, the plane exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people on board the plane and 11 people on the ground. There were 190 Americans, 32 citizens of the United Kingdom, and citizens from 19 other countries on the plane. With a total of 270 fatalities, the event, which became known as the Lockerbie bombing, is the deadliest terrorist attack in the history of the United Kingdom.

This act of international terrorism shocked the world. Subsequent investigation by law enforcement determined that the cause of the explosion was an explosive device planted on the plane. Following a three-year joint investigation by Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary and the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), arrest warrants were issued for two Libyan citizens in 1991, but the government of Libya would not permit them to be extradited. After protracted negotiations and United Nations sanctions, in 1999, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi handed over the two men for trial at Camp Zeist in the Netherlands, which was selected as a neutral venue for their trial. Both of the accused chose not to give evidence in court.

In 2001, Abdelbaset al-Megrahi, a Libyan intelligence officer, was found guilty of 270 counts of murder in connection with the bombing, and was sentenced to life imprisonment. His co-accused, Lamin Khalifah Fhimah, was acquitted. Megrahi's appeal against his conviction was refused on 14 March 2002, and his application to the European Court of Human Rights was declared inadmissible in July 2003. Megrahi maintained that he was innocent of the charges against him throughout ten years of his imprisonment. He was

released from prison on compassionate grounds on 20 August 2009. He died in 2012 as the only person to be convicted for the attack.

In 2003, Gaddafi paid more than US\$2 billion in compensation to the families of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing. Although Gaddafi maintained that he had never personally given the order for the attack, acceptance of Megrahi's status as a government employee was connected to responsibility of the Libyan government. In 2011, during the First Libyan Civil War, former Minister of Justice Mustafa Abdul Jalil said that Gaddafi personally ordered the bombing.

As all the accomplices required for such a complex operation were never identified, or convicted, many conspiracy theories have swirled. The strongest claim is that the attack was a retaliation for the 1986 United States bombing of Libya, in which Muammar Gaddafi was the primary target. Some other theories suggest that the attack was carried out by different terrorist groups or that different political interests were at play.

In 2020, US authorities indicted the Tunisian resident and Libyan national Abu Agila Masud, who was 37 years old at the time of the incident, for participating in the bombing. He was taken into custody in 2022, pleading not guilty in 2023. A federal trial is set for 2026.

3.2. Operation Bojinka 1995

The Operation Bojinka or Bojinka Plot was a large-scale, three-phase terrorist attack planned but never executed by Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. They intended to assassinate Pope John Paul II; blow up 11 airliners in flight from Asia to the United States, with the goal of killing approximately 4,000 passengers and shutting down air travel around the world; and crash a plane into the headquarters of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Langley, Virginia.

Mohammed code-named the operation “Bojinka,” which was reported to have been adopted from Serbo-Croatian, meaning big bang. But later, Mohammed told his C.I.A interrogators that it was just a nonsense word he heard when he was fighting in Afghanistan during the Soviet-Afghan war.

Ramzi Yousef had studied electrical engineering in the United Kingdom and later went to Pakistan, where he trained in bomb making. Yousef designed and built the urea-nitrate truck bomb used in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Upon his return to Pakistan, he took a job to assassinate then-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. His attempt failed, and he went into hiding in the Philippines with his uncle, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.

In 1994, as soon as Yousef arrived in Manila along with other Arab Afghans who were creating cells, he began work making bombs. Early in 1994, Yousef and his uncle Mohammed began testing airport security throughout the region. Mohammed had begun moving up the ranks of al-Qaeda, working closely with Osama Bin Laden and later moving to the Philippines to assist the Abu Sayyaf Group with technical details of designing a bomb. The two plotters began flying between Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong, and Manila to collect intelligence on the security procedures at the airports. Their surveillance and testing throughout the region made them confident that the liquid explosives would be able to be passed by the airport security procedures.

In 1995, at an apartment in Manila, Yousef was mixing chemicals, which he planned to put into containers that would be carried on board airliners. In those days, it would have been easy to get liquid explosives past a checkpoint. Mohammed and Yousef studied airline schedules and planned to sneak the liquid on a dozen planes headed to Seoul, North Korea, and Hong Kong, and then on to the United States. The plan was that the bombs, complete with timing devices, would be left on the airliners, but that the plotters would disembark at a stop before detonating the devices.

Yousef's first operational test of his bomb was inside a mall in Cebu City. The bomb detonated several hours after he put it in a generator room. It caused minor damage, but it proved that the bomb was working. Later, a companion, Wali Khan Amin Shah, a financial facilitator for al-Qaeda, planted a similar device under a Manila movie theater seat to evaluate the device's impact under similar conditions of an airliner. The detonation injured ten movie patrons. Ten days later, on 11 December, Yousef boarded Philippine Airlines Flight 434 from Manila to Tokyo-Narita under the alias Armaldo Forlani with a fake Italian passport. The flight made a scheduled stop in Cebu, where Yousef got off after secreting the explosive device under the seat 26K. The device exploded 4 hours after its placement, while the plane was over Japan's Minamidaito Island. Haruki Ikegami, a Japanese citizen occupying the seat, was dead, and an additional 10 passengers were injured. The blast blew a hole in the floor, and the cabin's rapid expansion severed several control cables in the ceiling, cutting off control of the plane's right aileron, as well as both the captain's and first officer's steering controls. The flight crew managed to keep control of the plane and brought it to an emergency landing at Okinawa's Naha Airport.

Operation Bojinka was envisioned in three parts. Phase I was the assassination attempt of Pope John Paul II. The plotters planned to assassinate him when he visited the Philippines during the World Youth Day celebrations in January 1995. A suicide bomber

dressed up as a priest was planning to attack him. The assassin planned to get close to the Pope and detonate the bomb. The intention of the assassination was to divert attention from the next phase of the plot.

Phase II was the airline bombing plot. This plan would have involved at least five terrorists, including Yousef, Shah, Murad, and two more unknown operatives. They would have placed bombs on 11 United States airliners on trans-Pacific and South China Sea routes over the period 21-22 January 1995. This plan's intention was to shut down air transport worldwide. The United States government estimated the prospective death toll to be about 4,000 if the plot was successfully executed.

Phase III would have involved Abdul Hakim Murad hijacking a small plane, preferably a Cessna. The airplane would be filled with explosives and crash into the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Murad had been trained as a pilot in North Carolina and was slated to be a suicide pilot. Phase III was detailed by Murad's confession in his interrogation by the Manila police after his capture.

The plot was discovered during the planning of Phase II. On the evening of 6 January 1915, a small fire broke out in the Dona Josefa Apartments in Manila. The resulting blaze and the investigation later allowed investigators to discover bomb-making material and planning documents on a laptop, which exposed the plot. Ramzi Yousef was arrested by Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence and special agents of the United States Diplomatic Security Service in Islamabad, Pakistan, in February 1995. Upon his capture, flight schedules and bomb-making equipment were found. Mohammed was seized in Pakistan in 2003 and is now being held by the CIA at an undisclosed location.

Funding for the Bojinka plot came from Osama Bin Laden, Hambali, and front organizations operated by Mohammed Jamal Khalifa. The plot was funded by laundering money through Wali Khan Amin Shah's girlfriend and other Manila women. These women were bribed with gifts and holiday trips so that they would open bank accounts to stash funds. The amount of money transferred was small, equivalent to about 500 to 1,000 USD. The funds went to "Adam Sali," which was an alias used by Ramzi Yousef.

The downstream effects of Operation Bojinka have many lessons for the aviation security community. Al-Qaeda has been an effective and adaptive organisation that has always aimed to effect massive attacks. Despite the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011, al-Qaeda has persisted because of its lack of formal organisation and structure. The use of liquid explosives as a means to circumvent civil aviation security measures remained a key tool of al-Qaeda. The 2006 security limitations on liquids aboard civil aircraft were ultimately

meant to be a temporary ban, and a broad consensus assumed that a technological or administrative solution would shortly be implemented. The ban was eased slightly to allow liquids less than 100ml in passenger carry-on items, but overall, the majority of limitations persist today throughout the world and have cost billions of dollars in added security practices and technologies. Threats originating in weaker links in the global aviation security chain remain a persistent threat. Al-Qaeda has proven to be a persistent threat both as an organisation and due to its consistent desire to return to its previous targets. The World Trade Center, CIA Headquarters, airliners, liquid explosives, and multiple simultaneous attacks exemplify a consistent operational pattern. It is entirely possible that a reformed and reorganised al-Qaeda could return to previous methods with a broader target set. Al-Qaeda's continued targeting of the international civil aviation system has kept it globally focused for far longer than many other terrorist groups.

Advances in aviation security have far exceeded many of the threats of the Operation Bojinka plotters. However, al-Qaeda continues to be a persistent threat to the aviation community.

3.3. September 11 Attacks, 2001

The September 11 attacks, known as 9/11 was a terrorist attack linked to the Islamic extremist group al-Qaeda. Nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States of America. Two of the planes were flown into the World Trade Center in New York City. The World Trade Center was a 16-acre commercial complex that contained seven buildings, a large plaza, and an underground shopping mall that connected six of the buildings. The entire complex was destroyed in the 9/11 attacks. The centerpieces of the complex were the Twin Towers, which were the tallest buildings in New York City. For a brief period upon their completion in 1973, they were the tallest buildings in the world. They attracted roughly 70,000 commuters and tourists daily. The third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. The passengers of the fourth hijacked plane, Flight 93, fought back after learning about the other attacks, and the plane crashed into an empty field in western Pennsylvania about 20 minutes away from Washington.

The 9/11 attacks killed 2,977 people from 90 nations; 2,753 people were killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon; and 40 people were killed on Flight 93.

The nineteen terrorists boarded four planes bound for California from three East Coast airports. They chose these planes because they were loaded with fuel for the long transcontinental journey. Soon after takeoff, the nineteen terrorists commandeered the four planes, transforming ordinary passenger jets into guided missiles.

The hijacked Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower at 8.46 a.m. The hijacked Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower 17 minutes later at 9.03 a.m. At the time the towers were struck, between 16,400 and 18,000 people were in the complex. Only 18 people in the towers at the time of the collapse survived. The fires were intensified by the planes' burning jet fuel. They weakened the steel support trusses, which attached each of the floors to the buildings' exterior walls. Along with the damage to the building's structural columns, this ultimately caused both towers to collapse. Five other buildings of the World Trade Center complex were destroyed because of the damage sustained when the Twin Towers fell. The collapse of the buildings left the site devastated.

As millions watched the events unfolding in New York, American Airlines hijacked Flight 77, which crashed into the west side of the Pentagon military headquarters at 9:45 a.m. Jet fuel from the plane caused a devastating inferno that led to the structural collapse of a portion of the giant concrete building, which is the headquarters of the U.S Department of Defence. 125 military personnel and civilians were killed at the Pentagon, along with 64 people on board the airliner.

The hijacked plane, Flight 93, had been delayed in takeoff, so the passengers on board found out about the events in New York and Washington. A group of passengers and flight attendants fought back at the four terrorists, the plane then flipped over and sped toward the ground at upwards of 500 miles per hour, crashing in a rural field near Pennsylvania at 10.10 a.m. All 44 people on board were killed. The intended target is not known, but is thought to be headed towards the Capitol building, the center of American legislative government.

The reason the terrorists chose the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the Capitol building was that they did not have the capacity to destroy the United States militarily, so they decided to set their targets on symbolic places. The World Trade Center represents economic power, the Pentagon represents military power, and the Capitol represents the governmental power of the USA. Al-Qaeda aimed to promote widespread fear throughout the country and weaken the United States' power in the world community, ultimately supporting their political and religious goals in the Middle East.

Al-Qaeda is an international Islamist extremist group founded in the late 1980s by Osama Bin Laden. They have aimed to overthrow governments in the Middle East that do not

strictly enforce a religiously sanctioned political and social order. Attacks against the United States were intended to reduce US support for many of these governments.

Operation Enduring Freedom, the American-led international effort to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and destroy Osama bin Laden's terrorist network based there, began on October 7. Within two months, the Taliban was effectively removed from operational power, but the war continued as US and coalition forces attempted to defeat a Taliban insurgency campaign based in neighboring Pakistan. Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind the September 11th attacks, was tracked down and killed by U.S. forces at a hideout in Abbottabad, Pakistan, on May 2, 2011.

The 9/11 attacks had an immediate negative effect on the US economy. Many Wall Street institutions were evacuated during the attacks. On the first day of trading after the attacks, the market fell 7.1 percent. New York City's economy alone lost 143,000 jobs a month and 2.8 billion USD in wages in the first three months. The heaviest losses were in finance and air transportation. The estimated cost of the World Trade Center damage was 60 billion US dollars.

Many people were affected by the attacks and have had health issues due to 9/11. By 2018, 10,000 people were diagnosed with 9/11 related cancer. From 2001 to 2004, over 7 billion USD in compensation was given to the families of the 9/11 victims and the 2,680 people injured in the attacks. The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act later continued health monitoring and compensation for 9/11 first responders and survivors.

4. Geopolitical Dimensions

4.1. Treaties Regarding the Matter and Shortcomings

Many treaties were signed regarding international aviation-based terrorism activities and the threats they pose.

1944 Chicago Convention: The Chicago Convention, signed at Chicago on 7 December 1944, is the main international treaty forming the basis of modern civil aviation. It was prepared to regulate and ensure the safety of international civil aviation and is globally accepted. It states that each state has full sovereignty over its own airspace, meaning that unauthorized flights are prohibited. This treaty standardized under which conditions aircraft could fly and which documents they needed to carry. The International Civil Aviation

Organization (ICAO) was established with the Chicago Convention, which is responsible for setting global aviation rules and creating safety and technical standards. In addition to the Chicago Convention, ICAO Annex 17 (Security) introduced detailed technical standards such as flight regulations and pilot licenses.

1963 Tokyo Convention: The Tokyo Convention was signed on 14 September 1963 in Tokyo. It was prepared by the International Civil Aviation Organization and was signed by more than 130 countries. It is considered the first legal document on aviation safety. It initiated international cooperation and laid the groundwork for future treaties regarding the matter. Tokyo Convention states that in case of crimes committed on an aircraft, the primary jurisdiction belongs to the flag state. This statement eliminates the uncertainty about the judicial processes. The convention authorizes the captain to intervene with the offender and, if necessary, restrict the passengers, which is a critical authorization to maintain order in the aircraft. The convention states that if a criminal is dropped off in another country, that country has an obligation to accept the criminal and, if necessary, initiate an investigation. The Tokyo Convention is insufficient in its coverage of serious crimes such as hijacking, which has necessitated separate treaties.

1970 Hague Convention: The Hague Convention is a treaty drafted by the International Civil Aviation Organization in response to the increase in aircraft hijackings and signed at The Hague on 16 December 1970. The primary purpose of this treaty was to make hijacking a crime and punishable. Hijacking is clearly defined as a crime in the Hague Convention. The treaty, under the “Prosecute or Extradite” principle, states that if a country apprehends a hijacker, it is obligated to either judge and prosecute them or extradite them to the country concerned. The treaty states that signatory states are obligated to criminalize aircraft hijacking under their own laws, to establish severe penalties for such crimes, and to cooperate with other signatories. Although the Hague Convention clearly defined hijacking, it did not cover crimes such as bombing and sabotage.

1971 Montreal Convention: The Montreal Convention, signed at Montreal on 23 September 1971, is one of the most comprehensive and important documents in the field of aviation safety. Besides hijacking, it includes any action that jeopardizes flight safety, such as planting bombs on an aircraft, damaging the aircraft (sabotage), and attacking the crew. The “Prosecute or Extradite” principle also applies here. The convention applies not only to

attacks on aircraft but also to attacks carried out while the aircraft is on the ground. This scope was expanded with the 1988 Airport Protocol, which safeguards airport security by including crimes such as bomb or armed attacks on airports and violence against passengers. But despite the improvements, it still lacked in many ways; the implementation differed between states and relied on domestic legal systems for enforcement. The Montreal Convention, being the most comprehensive document in the field of aviation security, has also strengthened international cooperation.

2010 Beijing Convention: The Beijing Convention is a treaty prepared by the International Civil Aviation Organization and signed at Beijing on 10 September 2010, aimed at strengthening aviation security to address modern terrorist threats. Using aircraft as weapons of mass destruction, such as crashing them into buildings, is explicitly defined as an international crime. The convention covers, for the first time, new types of threats such as the delivery of chemical, biological, and nuclear (CBRN) weapons; the airborne spread of hazardous materials; and the undermining of aircraft security through cyberattacks. Within this treaty, not only those who commit the crime but also those who plan, assist, or finance the crime are included within the scope of the crime. The “Prosecute or Extradite” principle also applies here. This treaty empowered international cooperation by making information sharing and collaborating to prevent suspected terrorist activities obligatory. The Beijing Convention is significant because it adapts to the evolution of terrorism by addressing modern, complex, and multifaceted threats that are not covered by previous treaties. On the other hand, the Beijing Convention still lacks global acceptance due to its complex scope and the political sensitivities of many states.

4.2. Key Stakeholders

Key countries in international aviation-based terrorism can be addressed in three main headings: the ones from which the threats come, the ones that are most affected, and the ones that are legally involved in the matter. The countries from which the threats come are weak in government authority, and terrorist groups are mostly active there. Those can be listed as: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Yemen. The countries that are most affected by aviation-based terrorism activities are generally on target for their global power, heavy air traffic, and symbolic values. Those are: the United States of America, the United Kingdom,

France, Russia, India, and Turkiye. The countries that are legally involved in the matter are not directly involved in the attacks, but in a rule-making position and managing the security. Canada, Germany, and Australia are the main legal actors; the United States and the United Kingdom are legal actors besides being directly involved.

The United States of America: The United States of America is a main target for terrorist activities because American airliners and airports symbolize the US power. Attacks on the USA generate massive media coverage. The USA's foreign policies on the Middle East make American aviation a target for terrorist groups. After the 9/11 attacks, the US government enhanced its aviation security, creating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The DHS works to create the baseline for aviation security worldwide. The USA sets global standards on aviation security through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), by cooperating with foreign partners. The FBI leads in investigating the threats, while the USA engages in global intelligence-sharing and provides training for foreign countries. The USA evolved its focus to include countermeasures against cyber threats, insider threats, and drones, which are seen as a rising risk for aviation security. Current efforts of the United States are focused on improving security technologies and maintaining a robust intelligence network to counter ongoing threats aimed at harming the global economy and aviation sector.

Afghanistan: Afghanistan has played a crucial role in aviation security primarily by serving as a haven for extremist groups, such as al-Qaeda and Taliban, which have been a serious threat to aviation security. Afghanistan provided sanctuary for al-Qaeda and terrorists linked to it, and allowed them to train operatives, which empowered the group and gave them the chance to plan and execute the September 11 attacks. Following the withdrawal of the USA, the country remained a high-risk environment for the aviation sector. The Taliban has been using weaponized drones to target military aircraft. Airports in Afghanistan are seen as a high-risk target for aviation-based terrorism activities. A suicide attack that killed over 183 people is an example of this. Extremist groups in Afghanistan are known to have accessed MANPADS (Man-Portable Air Defence Systems). This poses a serious long-term risk. Terrorist groups maintain a desire to attack aviation facilities, infrastructure, and foreign nationals, keeping airports and aviation personnel at severe risk.

Iraq: The role of Iraq in aviation terrorism has shifted from state-sponsored threats in the late 20th century to an environment where Iraqi aviation infrastructure is used by armed groups

for smuggling, which challenges Iraqi sovereignty. ISIS in Iraq and Syria used drones to deliver explosives and ammunition, in addition to using them for aerial intelligence. Before 2003, there were uncorroborated reports of the Iraqi regime providing training to al-Qaeda members in conventional explosives, although this was focused on general terrorism rather than specific aviation hijacking. The Iraqi government, often with assistance from NATO and the USA, is actively building its counter-terrorism service (CTS) and strengthening airport security by using Advanced Passenger Information (API) to detect terrorist activities. As of 2026, Iraq has had to occasionally close its airspace during regional military escalations to manage security risks.

The United Kingdom: The UK is the "penholder" at the United Nations for civil aviation security, holding a leading role. The UK works closely with international bodies like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the European Civil Aviation Conference to raise security standards globally. It has a National Counter-Terrorism Strategy named CONTEST. The UK employs a four-part strategy -Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare- to tackle aviation threats. It adopts a specialized joint initiative named Project Pegasus between the Border Force, National Crime Agency, and police to combat terrorism, smuggling, and immigration crime within the aviation sector. Another initiative, Project Servator, is a tactical approach to detecting and disrupting hostile investigations at airports and city centers. The UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) requires airports and airlines to use Security Management Systems (SeMS) to proactively identify and manage local security risks. The UK works closely with international partners, particularly the United States. The UK uses passenger name record (PNR) screening to identify threats before they reach the UK.

Canada: A bombing conceived and executed in Canada killed 329 people, most of them Canadian. After that, Canada strengthened its security infrastructure and made ongoing efforts to combat terrorism through intelligence and international law. A 2010 inquiry highlighted significant failures in intelligence, investigation, and aviation security. Following 9/11, Canada made major investments in aviation security, including creating the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) to screen passengers and baggage. Canada maintains a "do-not-fly" list to prevent individuals posing a threat to aviation security from boarding planes. The Passenger Protect Program (SATA List) has been expanded to combat terrorist threats. Canada is actively leading efforts to hold Iran accountable for the 2020

downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, which killed 55 Canadian citizens and 30 permanent residents. Canada has initiated proceedings against Iran at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Canada works with domestic and international partners to prevent, detect, and respond to threats. This includes intelligence sharing and combating radicalization. Canada has learned from its past and has established a multilayered security framework to mitigate the threat of aviation terrorism.

Turkiye: Turkiye is a major target of aviation terrorism attacks, while acting as a key actor in international counter-terrorism efforts and a manufacturer of defense technologies. Terrorist attacks have severely impacted the Turkish aviation sector, creating significant negative consequences for travel and tourism. Attacks have targeted major transportation hubs, such as the 2016 Atatürk Airport attack in Istanbul, highlighting the vulnerability of "landside" airport areas. Turkiye has significantly enhanced its offensive capabilities against terrorism through the indigenous production of unmanned systems and munitions. Due to its geography and proximity to active groups, Turkiye is critical in tracking terrorist travels. Turkiye is actively using API (Advanced Passenger Information) systems to support international operations. Turkiye is a founding co-chair of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) and has engaged in initiatives to protect "soft targets" and prevent terrorism financing. In response to attacks, Turkiye frequently conducts air strikes and drone operations. Turkiye is enhancing its border security against infiltration by using advanced radar, surveillance cameras, and unmanned patrol robots. Turkiye cooperates internationally, most notably with the USA, in the war on terrorism.

5. Questions To Be Addressed

- 1) How can international cooperation to ensure aviation security be strengthened?
- 2) How exactly should terrorism be defined in international aviation? Are the current definitions sufficient?
- 3) How can airport security be ensured without violating passenger rights?
- 4) How do security vulnerabilities in developing countries affect global risk?

- 5) Are the standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) sufficiently binding?

- 6) Considering the evolution of aviation terrorism, what security risks do cyberattacks pose?

6. Bibliography

[ORSAM. \(n.d.\). *ORSAM*. https://orsam.org.tr/](https://orsam.org.tr/)

[Politics Today. \(n.d.\). *Politics Today*. https://politicstoday.org/](https://politicstoday.org/)

[Public Safety Canada. \(n.d.\). *Lessons learned*.](https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/lssns-lrnd/index-en.aspx)

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/lssns-lrnd/index-en.aspx>

[Public Safety Canada. \(n.d.\). *Resilience against terrorism*.](https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/rsln-c-gnst-trrrsm/index-en.aspx)

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/rsln-c-gnst-trrrsm/index-en.aspx>

[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. \(n.d.\). *United Kingdom strategies*.](https://www.unodc.org/cld/en/treaties/strategies/united_kingdom/)

https://www.unodc.org/cld/en/treaties/strategies/united_kingdom/

[UK Parliament. \(n.d.\). *Hansard*. https://hansard.parliament.uk/](https://hansard.parliament.uk/)

[United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. \(n.d.\). *UNODC Romania*.](https://www.unodc.org/romena/)

<https://www.unodc.org/romena/>

[Shafaq News. \(n.d.\). *US*. https://shafaq.com/en/society/US](https://shafaq.com/en/society/US)

[North Atlantic Treaty Organization. \(n.d.\). *What we do*. https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/](https://www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/)

[UK Government. \(n.d.\). *Foreign travel advice*. https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/)

[Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. \(n.d.\). *Terrorist threats to commercial aviation: A contemporary perspective*.](https://ctc.westpoint.edu/terrorist-threats-to-commercial-aviation-a-contemporary-perspective)

<https://ctc.westpoint.edu/terrorist-threats-to-commercial-aviation-a-contemporary-perspective>

[United Nations. \(n.d.\). *Convention for the suppression of unlawful seizure of aircraft*.](https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/terrorism/conv1-english.pdf)

<https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/terrorism/conv1-english.pdf>

United Nations. (n.d.). *Convention for the suppression of unlawful acts against the safety of civil aviation*. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/db/terrorism/conv2-english.pdf>

United Nations. (n.d.). *United Nations Treaty Series, Volume 974*. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%20974/volume>

International Civil Aviation Organization. (n.d.). *Administrative packages*. <https://www.icao.int/sites/default/files/secretariat/legal/Administrative%20Packages>

United Nations. (n.d.). *United Nations Treaty Series, Volume 15*. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2015/volume-15-ii-102-english.pdf>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (n.d.). *Transportation security*. <https://www.dhs.gov/topics/transportation-security>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (n.d.). *Aviation security*. <https://www.dhs.gov/aviation-security>

History. (n.d.). *9/11 attacks*. <https://www.history.com/articles/9-11-attacks>

National September 11 Memorial & Museum. (n.d.). *9/11 FAQs*. <https://www.911memorial.org/911-faqs>

U.S. National Archives. (n.d.). *9/11 anniversary*. <https://www.archives.gov/news/topics/9-11-anniversary>

DSA Detection. (n.d.). *DSA Detection*. <https://dsadetection.com/>

Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *Bojinka plot*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bojinka_plot#Planning

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Bojinka Plot*.

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Bojinka-Plot>

TSI Magazine. (n.d.). *Oplan Bojinka revisited: The plot and its legacy*.

<https://tsi-mag.com/oplan-bojinka-revisited-the-plot-and-its-legacy/>

The New York Times. (2006, August 11). *Manila article*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/11/world/asia/11iht-web.0811manila.2447764.html>

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. (n.d.). *United Nations counter-terrorism*.

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan_Am_Flight_103

<https://nmvrc.org/pan-am-flight-103-terrorist-bombing/>