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## Issue Brief

*(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)*

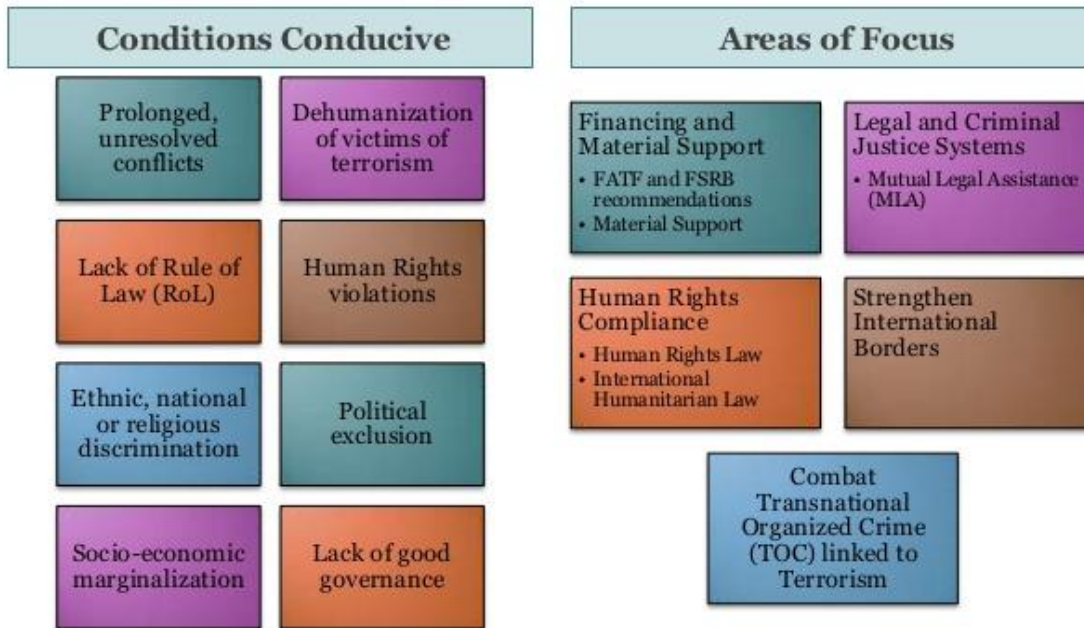
# UN Counter Terrorism Strategy: Challenges for Pakistan

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## Overview of Terrorism: UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy



While Pakistan struggles to eliminate the menace of terrorism, the international community, and especially the United Nations has also been actively pursuing plans and strategies to circumvent the spread of terrorism. Pakistan had been on the path of eliminating terrorism and militancy long before the initiation of the National Action Plan, which came immediately after the Peshawar Army Public School (APS) school attack in December 2014. The brutal terrorist attack presented one of the greatest challenge to Pakistan's security.

The year 2015 witnessed major initiatives by Pakistan to curb and eliminate, as well as develop long-term strategies to obliterate terrorism in all forms. The international community has appreciated Pakistan's efforts in eliminating terrorist networks and has praised the successes achieved by the military operation Zarb-i-Azb, an operation aimed at eliminating terrorist networks and cleansing the country of terrorism.

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in September 2006. The strategy is a unique global instrument to augment national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. Through its acceptance, all member States have agreed for the first time to a common strategic and operational approach to fight terrorism. This consensus not only sent a clear message that terrorism is unacceptable in all its forms and expression, but also resolved to take practical steps individually and collectively to prevent and combat it.<sup>1</sup>

The United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism was established through the adoption of General Assembly Resolution 71/291 on June 15, 2017. The creation of the Office is the first major institutional reform undertaken by the UN Secretary-General. The strategy is a unique global instrument to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism.

Pakistan can benefit from the United Nations Counter Terrorism strategy. However, terrorism being a regional problem, requires neighbouring states to cooperate and jointly work against the menace of terrorism, and UN involvement in this regard can be a useful tool. The UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy has four pillars including:

1. Addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism
2. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism
3. Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard;
4. Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

The United Nations has time and again taken several initiatives in this regard and since terrorism poses a multipronged challenge and has to be fought at several fronts, it is important to note that the United Nations has launched the *Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism* partnership that will help further strengthen "counter-speech" protections through research and evidence-based efforts and technical

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<sup>1</sup> UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

and policy decisions around the removal of terrorist content, as specified by the United Nations Executive Directorate.<sup>2</sup>

Although, Pakistan continues to fight and prevent terrorist strongholds, based on the four pillars as defined by the UN Global Counterterrorism Strategy, it faces numerous challenges in this regard, such as strained resources and other pressures which emanate from the counterterrorism operations. Pakistan must make an effort to involve the United Nations in combating terrorist financing, as well as help in countering the activities of non-state actors. The international dissemination of the threat requires an inclusive response that provides solutions on national, regional, and international levels, and addresses not only the methods but also the factors that can contribute to the spread of terrorism.

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<sup>2</sup> UN welcomes major partnership initiative with tech giants to counter terrorism online, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/06/un-welcomes-major-partnership-initiative-with-tech-giants-to-counter-terrorism-online/>