

Theoretical Pathways of Understanding Terrorism's Economic Impact

Djareche Adel ¹, Dahman Abdelheq ²

¹ National Higher School of Political Science (Algeria), Laboratory of Public Policies and Developmental and Security Challenges in the Maghreb
djareche.adel@enssp.dz

² Phd in Political Economy of Middle East, Institute of Middle East and Islamic Counteris Studies, Marmara University, Türkiye,
abdelheq.dahman@uskudar.edu.tr

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Abstract:

This article deals with a number of issues related to the phenomenon of terrorism from an economic perspective. Initially it provides an attempt to understand the phenomenon of terrorism by addressing its various definitions and the contexts in which it was applied in. Also, this topic examines the economic nature of terrorism and the contributions that it may add to the very understanding of causes, effects, ways, and means to reduce opposed risks from an economic perspective. It has been concluded in this article that terrorism has very negative effects on national economies, especially if the state suffers from a large spread of terrorist groups and an increase in terrorist activities and operations, which would affect wealth and spread panic and fear.

Keywords: Effects; Terrorism; Causes; The cost of terrorism; Counter-Terrorism.

Corresponding author: *Djareche Adel, djareche.adel@enssp.dz*

1. Introduction

Due to its extensive effects across numerous industries, terrorism is currently regarded as one of the most significant asymmetric security concerns that adversely affect worldwide security. Technical, informational, network, and communications development is referred to by the term TINC (development, network, and communication). On the other hand, because terrorism has both a security cause and a security effect, it is impossible to analyze the variable of terrorism from a single, limited perspective that only takes a military perspective. Rather, it must be considered according to a mutual approach that includes several variables, including the unstable economy, which this paper attempts to address.

Terrorist activity has an economic dimension that has benefits and costs from the point of view of those involved in it. It has economic reasons, motives, and effects that target production factors and economic projects. Many experts in the field of terrorism have come to look at it from two angles. The first is that it is a destructive phenomenon for economies that prioritizes the destruction of vital economic facilities such as factories, airports, energy sources, and tourism facilities, and the second is that terrorism has become a productive organization that uses factors of production in an illegal way to reach its goals.

As a result, the following questions were raised:

- What exactly is economic terrorism?
- How can it be fought in light of its negative economic and national security effects?

In order to answer these questions, the following hypothesis will be tested:

- The increase in terrorist activities and operations has dangerous effects and repercussions on the national economy

With regard to the importance of the study, it stems from the importance of the topic of economic terrorism which is very important.

The objectives of the study are put as follows:
definition of the concept of terrorism.

Highlighting a topic that links two variables—the first is economic, and the second is security. There is a need to develop a transdisciplinary strategy

that can comprehend the reality of the terrorist phenomenon, which cannot be understood from a single perspective.

Tackling the most important economic methods and tools that can be used to combat terrorism.

In terms of the study's methodology, the descriptive analytical approach was used to precisely define and explain the characteristics and factors of the phenomenon under examination.

1. Economic terrorism

2.1. Definition of Economic Terrorism:

Although numerous researchers and reputable institutions have worked for more than three decades to define a precise definition upon which we can base our measurement of terrorism, no definition has yet been reached, which creates some uncertainty regarding how to combat terrorism and how to use this concept. Nonetheless, it is speculated that this term is equivalent to dread, panic, intimidation, coercion, and other negative emotions in everyday conversation and that it generally refers to the threat or use of violence to advance political objectives ¹.

When discussing terrorism from an economic perspective, this notion results from the fact that it not only has an immediate negative impact on human life but also has the potential to create a wide range of economic issues. Raising the costs of commercial transactions can seriously harm nations and economies indirectly. For example, it may cause the strengthening of security measures to ensure the safety of employees and customers or an increase in insurance premiums. The terrorist attacks that took place in Yemen on the American ship "**Cole**" in 2000 and on the French tanker "**Limburg**" in 2002 caused severe damage to the shipping industry in that country, and these two attacks also caused a 300% increase in insurance premiums for ships using that route and prompted ships to detour around Yemen entirely ².

Legally speaking, economic terrorism is prohibited, just as many other crimes, including money laundering, organized crime, and economic crime, have costs and advantages. Because they have two crucial production variables, namely: capital, terrorist organizations can also be

viewed from an economic perspective as productive organizations. Work entails the efforts and time of people associated with terrorist organizations, while capital refers to the sources of funding for terrorism, such as aid to sponsoring nations, and the trafficking of illegal drugs and weapons, among other things.

Furthermore, terrorist groups' acts of violence tend to cause economic damage by targeting economic vital centers, which are soft targets when compared to security targets³. An example of this is the terrorists' targeting of the Tiguertourine gas complex in the Algerian desert in January 2016. Which led to the killing of more than 40 people of different nationalities, and losses of millions of dollars, and had it not been for the professional intervention of the army, the economic losses would not have been greater, especially since this facility is considered a vital centre for the Algerian national economy⁴.

The term economic terrorism is a mixture of the two variables of economy and terrorism. The first variable indicates that science or field attempts to study, distribute and consume the wealth of society. This word usually refers to human activity that is against scarcity⁵, while the second is related to the variable of terrorism. Brain Jenkins proposes a brief and simple definition that is used in many studies dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, and he sees in it a transgression of the contradictions that many thinkers have about its definition, as he considers it as: "the use or threat to use force with the aim of bringing about political change."⁶

Moreover, the use or threatened use of force is designed to bring about a political change.

When combining the two variables, the equation will be formulated as follows: ***T(Terrorism) + E(Economy) = Economic Terrorism***, which means in the linguistic expression economic terrorism, as it is defined as those terrorist operations and activities that target the interests and economic centres of the state, and considers Professor Saad Ben Ali Al-Shahrani, one of the specialists in the study of terrorism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in his article on "***The Economic Factor in the Terrorist Phenomenon***", according to him, economic terrorism consists of threats and violent acts intended towards places of business, activities, or interests

connected to a nation or another actor, with the intent to harm or kill. People are confused by economic activities in the states of production, distribution, and consumption ⁷.

2.2 The relationship between terrorism and economic activity

One of the fundamental components of the process of economic development is security and political stability. Without security, development cannot occur, and without development, a strong state with solid foundations cannot exist ⁸, and the former US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara explains this in his statement: “There is a state of instability that has begun to prevail in a large area from the surface of the globe, as there is a direct relationship between instability and the economic situation of states.

The military issue is a limited and superficial aspect of the major security problem, as military forces can help provide law and order, but moreover, it is necessary to provide a solid base of law and order in the political society until it becomes a shield behind which development is achieved, which is the basic truth of security ⁹. In addition, terrorism is one of the security threats, it disturbs the process of economic development, as it leads to poor productivity and flight of capital as a result of fear and panic to places where safety and tranquillity exist, and this is what we see in every terrorist operation where

We uncovered a series of characteristics that suggest an economic imbalance, such as a decline in the money and currency markets, the stock exchange, a rise in prices, and businessman flight, all of which are impacts that contribute to a flaw in the economic system. Economic contacts impede the development process, and so the relationship's limitations are negative because terrorism is the enemy of the economy, which is the lifeblood of civilizations ¹⁰.

2. The causes of economic terrorism

When attempting to analyze the most significant causes of economic terrorism, we will come across two viewpoints, each with its own set of arguments. The first theory is that terrorism is motivated by economic deprivation, which means that poverty, deprivation, inequality, and

marginalization are all motivations for terrorist activities. The higher the deprivation, the greater the possibility of violent organizations emerging and joining them. Ted Gore puts forward the idea of economic deprivation, as he considers that violence breeds when there is a discrepancy and a gap between what individuals believe they will achieve and what they actually receive through the distributive economic process. If the relationship is negative, then this will create "frustration" that will lead to violence. This link exists between terrorism and economic deprivation. For example, terrorist groups prefer to resort to deprived areas in poor and developing countries to hire frustrated people who are easy to employ, at the lowest cost in order to achieve more benefits ¹¹.

The opposing proposal, in contrast to the first, believes that the factors are not a major cause of terrorism, particularly at the individual level, and they base this on various arguments, the most important of which are as follows:

Several of the individuals who were or are still active in terrorism come from wealthy families, such as Osama bin Laden, the millionaire, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Carlos, and others. The prevalence of terrorism in established and prosperous countries that enjoy economic prosperity is not limited to poor countries, and so it is not a phenomenon associated with poverty alone, as advocates of the first proposal believe ¹².

The other economic factor that economists deal with as one of the factors that can help increase terrorist incidents is represented by globalization, which provided opportunities that did not exist for terrorists and terrorist organizations. On the one hand, economic globalization created differences between classes and negatively affected the distribution of income and wealth between developed and developing countries and between classes ¹³.

Situational theories, which explain terrorism as a result of the surrounding external factors that influence individuals' decisions, are another theory that explains terrorism with an economic dimension. It is significant because there is evidence from interviews with several terrorists who have indicated that the doors were closed in their faces and that they thought they had no choice but to carry out terrorist attacks.

Tore Bjorgo outlines a list of situational factors, including economic ones, that he views as among the deep roots of terrorism. The following are the most important of these factors:

- State failure or weakness.
- Lack of democracy.
- Absence of justice and inequality.
- The emergence of charismatic leaders.
- Poverty, unemployment and racial discrimination.
- Corrupt or illegitimate governments.
- The presence of external forces supporting illegitimate governments.
- Exposure to foreign occupation or colonial powers¹⁴

According to proponents of the "**rational politics**" idea, such as Martha Crenshaw and Ehud Chirinzak, terrorist activity is a logical means of action aimed at accomplishing distinct interests according to the logic of "win/lose," and that parties use terrorist action to achieve their goals. Terrorist activity is chosen as the most effective technique of increasing gains by the terrorist as one of the realistic possibilities¹⁵.

3. The most prominent economic effects of the terrorism phenomenon

Without a doubt, terrorism has devastating impacts on the national economy, which is the lifeblood of nations, especially if it has the necessary capabilities and conditions. Terrorist groups are not only interested in killing the most people, but also in producing economic ramifications that can last for weeks or months, which they can then use as a bargaining chip to achieve their political objectives. From this standpoint, this component tries to address the most prominent economic effects and repercussions of terrorism through the language of numbers and then tries to clarify the most prominent sectors affected by terrorist activities¹⁶.

4.1. Material Effects of Terrorism on the Global Economy:

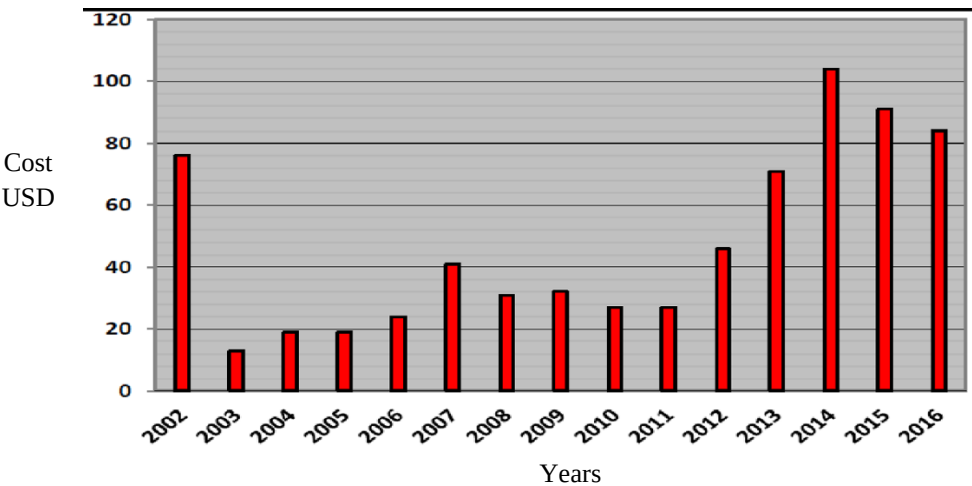
Reading the Global Index of Terrorism

According to the Global Terrorism Index, the global economic impact of terrorism decreased by 7% in 2016 to \$84 billion; This is the second year in a row that this cost has decreased since 2014, when it reached a record level, with a total impact of \$104 billion.

Since 2001, the economic impact of global terrorism has shown three peaks against three major waves of terrorism according to the chart (see Figure 01), where the first was after the attacks of September 11, 2001 in New York and Washington, DC, which led to deaths and material losses amounting to \$ 65 billion in The United States (USA) only, and the second peak occurred in 2007 as a result of the increase in terrorist activities and attacks affiliated with Al-Qaeda, which coincided with the increase of the international coalition forces in Iraq.

As for the third peak, it can be observed since 2013, with the increase in the levels of violence mainly caused by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) ¹⁷ which continued over the last four years, peaking in 2014, while the impact reached the economy for the years 2015 and 2016, respectively, amounted to 91 and 84 billion US dollars.

Figure 01: The cost of terrorism at the global level during the period 2002-2016. Unit: billion US dollars



Source: Global Terrorism Index 2017 Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism, 2018, p 80.

Furthermore, the countries that mainly suffer from terrorism are located in the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia. In 2016, Iraq once again had the largest economic impact of terrorism, with an estimated percentage of about 24% of the Gross Domestic Product

(GDP), followed by Afghanistan, with a rate of It exceeds 13% of its GDP, and the following table shows the countries that have the highest economic effects of terrorism in relation to the GDP¹⁸.

Figure 02: the economic effects of terrorism in relation to the GDP of the top ten countries

Rank	Country	The percentage of the GPD	Rank	Country	The percentage of the GPD
1	Iraq	24%	6	Nigeria	3%
2	Afghanistan	13%	7	Yemen	2%
3	South Sudan	9%	8	Central African Republic	2%
4	Syria	6%	9	Burundi	1%
5	Libya	3%	10	Turkey	1%

Source: Global Terrorism Index 2017 Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism, 2018, p 81.

By the same token, when comparing terrorism with other forms of violence, the economic impact of terrorism is much less than that of other forms of violence, as it represents 1% of the global cost of violence, which was estimated at about \$14.3 trillion, which represents about 12.6% of the global GDP¹⁹.

4.2. The sectoral repercussions of terrorism on the international economy

It is established that terrorist groups targeting economic sectors in the world, especially transportation, public utilities, squares, hotels and

restaurants, and sabotaging the tourism industry in many countries all fall within what is called in the “**combat-terrorism**” literature as: “**soft targets**” because they are not as secure as the sovereign institutions of the state. Its impact is not limited to the economic aspect only, but extends to other sectors, and its impact transcends the borders of countries, especially since the world has become, thanks to the process of globalization, a large “semi-unified economic market”²⁰.

It is probable to elaborate on the impact of terrorist operations and activities on the economy based on specification in several points which are as follows:

- **Impact on the tourism sector:** It is argued that it is the sector most affected by terrorism, as evidence and indicators have emerged confirming the decline of the tourism sector at the global level due to terrorism. 3%, and Rolf Fratiage, founder of the company, said that security concerns and terrorist threats are one of the main factors that caused this decline. % They either chose not to travel or spend their vacation in their country as a result of security factors, and terrorists work in several aspects in this sector, including the following:
 - Kidnapping foreign tourists and demanding a ransom for their release.
 - Striking vital archaeological sites to affect sources of tourism income, such as what ISIS did in destroying cultural heritage in both Syria and Iraq.
 - stealing national antiquities and trying to exchange them for weapons; It is a new phenomenon that has developed rapidly. According to Matthew Bogdanos, the antiquities trade comes in second place after obtaining financing by paying ransoms in cases of kidnapping as a source of funding for terrorist groups.
 - Influencing investors in the tourism field, as terrorist operations undermine the confidence of foreign and local investors in Sector²¹.
- **Impact on Trade Movement:** Terrorist activity has a clear impact on the movement of goods. The high risks of terrorism and the growing fears contribute to the difficulty in the flow of goods and the movement of

goods. For example, the movement of goods and the storage of raw materials in Tunisia, Bahrain and Kuwait were hindered by terrorism in the wake of the terrorist attacks in 2015. Therefore, some countries resorted to transporting goods through services of slowest and most expensive ocean freight, which represents additional costs for countries²².

- ***Impact on the productive process:*** Terrorism affects society's productive capabilities, and attempts to weight it towards fighting terrorism instead of spending it on supporting the development process. Let us take, for example, the case of Iraq. The economic advisor to the Iraqi government, Mazhar Muhammad Salih, confirmed that the war against ISIS cost Iraq large sums, amounting to an estimated 30 billion dollars, in addition to the allocation by the Iraqi government of 25 billion dollars to support the security forces²³, and he added that The productive sectors in the governorates that are witnessing military operations have been paralyzed, as oil production has stopped at the Baiji refinery, whose oil exports were estimated at about 300,000 barrels per day, in addition to the organization's control of a wide area of agricultural land, which represents 40% of the total wheat output²⁴.
- ***Influencing investment:*** The increase in terrorist activities and operations is aimed largely at attracting investments, including internal and external ones, given that capital is by nature a coward who hates political unrest and terrorist operations and flees from them. For example, the attacks in Tanta and Alexandria led to a state of confusion among investors, prompting some of them to Random selling of shares, which was reflected in the performance of stock exchanges and banks in Algeria²⁵.
- ***Spread of unemployment:*** One of the most prominent indirect effects of terrorism on the economy is the spread of unemployment, as the decrease in consumer spending and the decrease in investment spending rates towards the economy lead to further slowdown and then stagnation, which leads to political and social problems. At the sectoral level, thousands of workers have been laid off. layoffs in the air transport

sector alone in the first week of the September 11 attacks amounted to about 100,000 jobs, and this means widespread unemployment, which is one of the dangerous manifestations in any country because of its negative repercussions on society.

- The other reflection of terrorism is inflation, which leads to a general increase in the value of prices, and is accompanied by an impact on the value of money and in circulation, which leads to a decrease in its actual value after an increase in the volume of money in goods and services in commercial markets²⁶.

4. Fighting terrorism from an economic perspective

It is crucial to stress in this section that the judiciary plays a crucial role in combating terrorism from an economic angle because it takes a comprehensive approach to the problem, looks for its underlying causes, and attempts to address them rather than relying solely on security and legal measures. It is supported by a number of mechanisms and techniques, including the following:

5.1. Paralyzing the financing capacity of terrorism and eliminating its sources

The *Counter Terrorist Financing Group (TFWG)* change is an American group whose mission is to provide technical assistance to countries which are at risk of terrorism. It is chaired by the US State Department. Financing Terrorism is any support in its various forms that is provided to individuals or organizations that support terrorism or those that want to plan values for terrorist acts. In the sense that they are operations carried out by certain parties to support terrorist groups with money, equipment, and devices in order to carry out terrorist activities and actions that violate and threaten public security²⁷.

Other strategies used by terrorist organizations to raise money include ransom, involvement with organized crime gangs, the sale of stolen commodities and artifacts, the seizure of both public and private property, and the imposition of tribute and taxes. Countries have used a series of the

following actions to shut off sources of funding and avenues for obtaining funds and support:

- Banking agencies cooperate with intelligence and national security agencies to uncover the movement of suspicious funds.
- Using a set of procedures to follow up the work and activities of civil society organizations and charities and their daily dealings.
- Providing security protection and tightening control of oil and gas wells and transport pipelines in a manner that prevents terrorist groups from approaching them for the purpose of benefiting from them.
- Tracking money transfers and money entering and leaving countries.
- Tracking the manifestations of excessive wealth among citizens and their high cash income, especially those with suspicious or illegal sources ²⁸.
- Preventing the payment of ransoms as one of the methods used to finance terrorism, and embodying it on the ground through the state's commitment on the ground, in an actual and tangible manner, not to give any ransom to terrorists. Standard, as the value of one kidnapped foreigner can reach one million dollars, which contributes to the revival of the material spirit of terrorism to carry out more activities ²⁹.

5.2. Radical treatment of the economic causes of terrorism

It is not a practical approach to focus just on the formal (security and legal) methods to eradicate terrorism because doing so is equivalent to chopping down a dangerous tree by the branches without addressing the roots, which are what keep terrorism from dying off. Therefore, the economic worldview advocates for achieving general contentment rather than relative deprivation, as well as justice in distribution.

Ted Robert Gurr defines the issue of relative deprivation, as a term used to denote the tension that develops due to the contradiction between

what should be (expectations) and collective satisfaction with it (value)³⁰, here the researchers believe that the deprivation of people and their failure to achieve their goals compared to some Other individuals make them live with dissatisfaction and resentment, which leads them to carry out violent methods, and perhaps terrorist activities to express their deprivation and dissatisfaction with reality, which is one of the points that terrorist leaders exploited to include people with them, especially in those countries that live in poverty and suffer from Marginalization and exclusion of certain groups at the expense of others. Some empirical studies also confirm that terrorism is more likely if there is inequality between individuals and groups in terms of income or wealth distribution. It expresses its displeasure with violence, and it punishes those who possess and are distinguished from it, so it is often that terrorist groups portray themselves as fighting for the poor or social justice³¹.

In the same line of thought, deprivation is not the only variable that causes economic terrorism. Rather, there are other causes as well, such as underdevelopment, repression, repression, exclusion, marginalization, poor economic planning, and lack of investment. In turn, these causes do not negate the role of external factors that stand behind the prevalence of the phenomenon of terrorism economically³², and they can be diagnosed as follows:

- The continuity of an unfair international economic system could lead to the creation of a state of anger and constant hostility among the various peoples of the world, some of whom used "**terrorism**" as a means to express their rejection of this system.
- International competition and conflict in many regions, which in turn carries many economic dimensions.
- The policies adopted by the international financial institutions, particularly the **Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (IB)**, through their programs of economic reform and structural adjustment, are conditional on the adoption of certain policies by the countries implementing these programs, as the application of these programs by

these countries has led to poor distribution of income and the deterioration of purchasing power and the expansion of poverty and marginalization, in addition to the manifestation of violations of economic and social rights in the significant growth that occurred in unemployment figures, in addition to the state's abandonment of the obligation to appoint graduates of institutes and universities, which generated with it a rise in crime and terrorism rates in those countries, because the longer the period of unemployment increases The individual is more likely to drift due to the deterioration of his psychological, social and economic conditions.

- Destroying the economic infrastructure in some countries, including factories, energy facilities, means of transportation, tourism facilities, and others.

Based on the aforementioned, several economic facts must be put in place as a means to confront this phenomenon and eliminate it by following the following procedures:

- Reducing the effects of globalization and eliminating the economic and social differences that fuel terrorism, foremost of which is poverty and marginalization, as if countries establish a global solidarity fund that works to eliminate differences between peoples and reduce the causes of intolerance and terrorism³³.
- Redistributing wealth and development resources and meeting the various basic needs of the individual citizen in a balanced manner that makes him possess the ability to give and build and to avoid the aggressive behavior and actions inherent to the phenomenon of terrorism and in a way that creates a state of mutual trust between the citizen and the state on the one hand and the citizen and the members of the community surrounding him on the other hand.
- Combating bureaucracy and bribery in all state facilities and departments, and building a developed economic base that provides the basic needs of citizens³⁴.

The commencement of the application of the material damage to the groups will be here if these points are made. As a result, the terrorist organizations won't be able to recruit people to join them or allocate their financial resources in a way that ensures their ability to carry out their political objectives in the absence of people.

6. Conclusion:

It is obvious that economic terrorism has devastating effects on national economies and consequences that affect many other industries. As a result, this study aimed to address the terrorist issue using an economic perspective, drawing conclusions from a variety of statistics, figures, and evidence while also underlining the need for additional research and seeking to rely on theoretical studies.

The following can be concluded from this research:

- Terrorism is not only a matter of a security and political nature, but also of an economic nature, and an economic explanation should be provided.
- Terrorism has many economic motives and reasons, including: marginalization, economic deprivation, poverty, unemployment, unfair distribution of wealth and others.
- The repercussions of economic terrorism are not limited to economic activities only, but may extend to other political, security, social and cultural sectors due to the great connection between them and other sectors.
- Some recommendations can also be suggested, as follows:
- Defining an accurate concept of terrorism through which it is possible to measure which actions fall under terrorist activity or not, and in order to build a strategy to combat it.
- The necessity of knowing the phenomenon of terrorism, by studying it from various aspects, instead of focusing only on the security and military aspects.
- conducting research on terrorism that examines its economic component and digging further.

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³² Basir Khaled Barakat, Terrorism in the Economic Perspective... Implications and Solutions, Al-Naba' Magazine, Issue 58, August 2005, see the following electronic link:

<https://annabaa.org/nbahome/nba78/006.htm> . (5/4/2024).

³³ Abd al-Rasul Abd Jassim, Economic Data for Tackling Terrorism, **Al-Naba' Magazine**. Issue No. 78, August 2005, see the following electronic link:

<https://annabaa.org/nbahome/nba78/021.htm> . (13/4/2024).

³⁴ Yaser Khaled Barakat, **Op.cit.**