

Religion - Ethnic Dispute & Conflicts

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Abstract

In this research paper I will be trying to discuss topics related to religion and ethnic disputes and their social movements toured violence, I will be discussing three deferent examples and deferent types of religion and ethnic conflicts in last century through a comparative study using multiple references for each topic.

You will be able to know the main reasons and motives behind these uncivilized and unacceptable violence behaviors at the local, regional and international levels is are, plus the effect of secularism in some of those countries.

Finally, will conclude with the role of UN and Its organizations plus the leading major countries in managing such conflicts and violence between nations internally and externally through sanctions and banding those counties from UN and other solutions.

Introduction

Renouncing violence and racism in all its forms, especially with regard to violence and hatred emanating from religion, is one of the priorities of all international and regional organizations and bodies, and it must also be one of the priorities of all political systems of government around the world, and the extent to which all these organizations, bodies and political systems respond to this must be measured. Acting accordingly, the classification of organizations, bodies and countries will be re-evaluated based on their commitment to rejecting violence and hatred in all its forms, and this may result in penalties of various forms if they violate the regulations and laws that will be enacted.

There are also foreign interventions that aim of it to destabilize some countries and societies by supporting extremist religious models that seek to destabilize security and economic, social, political and ideological stability in various countries, as mentioned by Hillary Clinton in her book [Hard Choices](#), which is a memoir by the former US Secretary of State. Hillary Clinton, published in 2014, covers the period of her administration of the US State Department from 2009 to 2013, where she touched in the book on the US government's support during the era of President Barack Obama for the Muslim Brotherhood (which was recently classified as a terrorist group in many countries, especially Middle Eastern countries who has suffered greatly from the influences of this extremist terrorist group for many years).

Also in another research ([THE ROLE OF RELIGION AS A MULTI-TRACK DIPLOMACY IN PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION, by MR. P.E. EZEME May 2013](#)), he mentioned that "The multi-track system originated due to the inefficiency of pure government mediation. Moreover, increases in intrastate conflict (conflicts within a state) in the 1990s confirmed that "Track One Diplomacy" was not an effective method for securing international cooperation or resolving conflicts. Rather, there needed to be more interpersonal approach in addition to government mediation. For that reason, former diplomat Joseph Montville invented "Track

Two Diplomacy” in order to incorporate citizens with diversity and skills into the mediation process”.

I will be discussing three deferent examples in this paper trying to give more than one point of view to give a clear indication regarding religion and violence, those examples are (A) Northern Ireland, (B) former Yugoslavia, (C) India.

I will start with the three examples that I mentioned in the introduction in the same order:

A- Northern Ireland:

The first example we will begin this paper with is the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. These conflicts began at the beginning of the twelfth century when the English barons began to seize Irish lands. This conflict continued for centuries of conflict, and by 1703 90% of Ireland became owned. For the English nobility, the Catholic peasants had to pay land rent fees to the barons, and as Jeff Wallenfeldt the *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA* EDITOR mentioned in his article ([the Troubles Northern Ireland history](#)) “violent sectarian conflict from about 1968 to 1998 in Northern Ireland between the overwhelmingly Protestant unionists (loyalists), who desired the province to remain part of the United Kingdom, and the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic nationalists (republicans), who wanted Northern Ireland to become part of the republic of Ireland. The other major players in the conflict were the British army, Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR; from 1992 called the Royal Irish Regiment), and their avowed purpose was to play a peacekeeping role, most prominently between the nationalist Irish Republican Army (IRA)”

Then complete restrictions were put in place to prevent the possibility of revolt against them. A set of laws and punishments were issued in the period between 1695 and 1728, which were allocated to Catholics in Ireland, and this included preventing them from buying and owning land, voting, carrying weapons, and obtaining a good education.

In 1801, a Federal Act was passed that abolished the powers of the Irish Parliament and officially united Ireland with Britain to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, an idea that many Irish Catholics opposed at that time.

The Irish Catholic peasants remained vulnerable to the British feudal lords, who deliberately used certain lands for profitable crops for them, which made the Irish depend largely on a diet of potatoes. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the potato crops were exposed to a certain disease, which harmed the peasants, and the British government stood at that time without any Support, assistance, or intervention by it, and more than 1.5 million farmers died of hunger during this period.

In 1916, Irish Republicans fought to end British rule in Ireland in a conflict known as the Easter Rising in Dublin. This uprising sparked a civil war that led to the division of Ireland into the Irish Free State. It was independent, but remained part of the British Commonwealth until 1949, and Northern Ireland, which It remained within the United Kingdom.

The uprising was a series of violent unrest among the Irish, mostly Protestants who preferred to remain part of the United Kingdom, and the minority, mostly Catholics, who wanted to become part of the Republic of Ireland. The minority carried out a series of Catholic civil rights marches in the mid-nineteenth century, where They protested violations of their civil rights, and the matter even developed into violent confrontations with Protestants who supported remaining within the United Kingdom. Britain sent its own British military forces, which clashed with the paramilitary Provisional Irish Republican Army while unionist paramilitaries

launched a campaign of sectarian violence against the Catholic community. As unrest increased, London suspended Northern Ireland's parliament and imposed direct rule.

Here we see that this disagreement essentially stems from religious doctrinal differences between Catholics and Protestants, and there were many other examples like this scenario throughout Europe at various times, and it is the eternal dispute that exists between Catholics and Protestants throughout the ages until the present day.

B- India Hindu conflict:

Here we can see a summary for this conflict in [\(The Great Divide\) book by William Dalrymple](#) when he stated at the beginning of his introduction “Across the Indian subcontinent, communities that had coexisted for almost a millennium attacked each other in a terrifying outbreak of sectarian violence, with Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other—a mutual genocide as unexpected as it was unprecedented.” It’s clear that the conflict between Hindus and Muslims started in just a couple of decades, plus it has a historical background when the Islamic conquests happened in India during the eleventh century, all ethnic groups had a main challenge at the time between Hindus, Bengal, Gujarat and now Muslims.

And this challenge on who should lead and benefit from the country was clear during the last decades specially between the Hindus and Muslims who are the highest populations in India, so far, such challenges can be controlled easily and managed by the Authorities. But what if the government supports one party over the other ones, where the upper majority and the largest political positions in the state are reserved for Hindus, and they are given all oppressive powers and turn a blind eye to the racist actions of individuals and leaders of Hindu groups towards Muslims in India, and disrespect for religion and belief and fighting them in various forms? Which often leads to violence that leads to the killing of many Muslims during the events of daily life, and the strange thing is that there is no reaction from the government towards these extremist groups, whether by pursuing, prosecuting or punishing them, and this behavior naturally pushes these groups to more violence. Extreme.

Naturally, the Islamic groups will react in the same way and follow the violence in response to the actions, which in some stages reached the bombing of places where Hindus gather as a form of retaliation for the acts of violence that the Hindus had previously committed.

The question here is: Is this situation considered healthy? Of course not, what are the solutions? Given that Indian society has become completely divided on this issue, future generations must be made aware of the importance of mutual respect between different religions and beliefs and peaceful coexistence between them in the same society, but of course these steps must come and be implemented by the government through the implementation of effective laws that protect against these racist actions and actions. The freedom to follow and practice religions is guaranteed with ease. Another question: Are there indications from the Indian government in the current period of such solutions? No, unfortunately, successive Indian governments in the last twenty years do not give any positive impression regarding this issue, which may lead to the intervention of external parties in the conflict, as happened previously with the intervention of some parties from Pakistan in the conflict, as well as the transfer of the conflict to other countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh. Therefore, the international community must take decisive decisions on this issue and put pressure on the Indian government to put an end to these violations by Hindus, who are the vast majority in the country.

C- Yugoslavia breakup and conflict

Yugoslavia became independent and today there are 6 independent countries, so why exactly was Yugoslavia divided? Let us first look at what are the reasons for this happening. Therefore, we will return to the year 1918 at the end of World War I, when this state was born from the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro, in addition to lands belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and its previous name was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. But it was changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

I can also add a part of **Nikolina Zenovic article in Europe Now Journal** ([The Lasting Impact of the Breakup of Yugoslavia](#)) when she stated “The breakup of Yugoslavia has taught us to question international, European, and Balkan laws and norms. Through reconsiderations of belonging, the breakup led former Yugoslavs to reposition themselves in post-Yugoslav, European, and global spaces. In addition to influencing conceptions of identity in the Balkans and among former Yugoslav immigrants, it also led to numerous guides for international law”.

The events began in 1941, when the Axis powers (Germany and Italy) occupied it during World War II, and this was the main reason for the effective end of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

In the year 1945, after the loss of the converted countries due to the Allied victory in World War II, it was re-established, but this time as a socialist state, and included all (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia) under one flag.

There were always ethnic conflicts between the different races in the country, which ultimately led to the collapse of the country. Under the administration of their first president, Josip Broz Tito, the country tried hard to promote the concept of “brotherhood and unity” among the six republics, while using force in Sometimes to suppress nationalities that could pose a threat to the approach he was following to ensure peaceful coexistence between different races, but things changed for the worse after his death, and the country’s economy took a dangerous turn at that time in the early eighties of the last century, and the intensity of racial tensions increased significantly between the races. Six, and the proportion of different nationalities increased, which began to grow rapidly, in addition to the collapse and disintegration of communist thought, and then the Soviet Union. All these challenges led to the collapse of the Yugoslav state.

From here began the disintegration through ethnic differences that led this union to collapse and then began the devastating war that claimed the lives of many civilians. It was noted here that external interference from some countries supported some ethnicities at the expense of the other race, such as communist countries supporting ethnicities that belong to the same ideology. The liberals' support for other ethnicities led to the outbreak of war and many of these countries demanded independence, and Croatia was one of the first countries to raise its own flag in that period.

We note here that racial prejudice and fanaticism were also too strong to be controlled and led to the collapse of one of the largest kingdoms at that time and contributed to the beginning of a fierce war that lasted for many years between these ethnicities.

Conclusion

Before starting this paper I did accomplished a course related to the same topic ([HDS2825x: Religion, Conflict and Peacea course of study offered by HarvardX](#)) delivered by Diane L. Moore Associate Dean, Religion and Public Life at Harvard Divinity School, this course was like the support and structure of this paper, plus I gathered more details and information’s about those topics through the peer discussions during the 18th weeks course, and finally I can conclude with that we need to reactivate, redesign, revive and resuscitation for the international rules and regulations regarding religion and conflicts by imposing strong deterrent and real sanctions on countries and groups that support racism in all its forms, especially religious racism, and these sanctions may lead to the suspension of these countries’ membership in the United Nations and its affiliated organizations, which will push these countries to think seriously about putting an end to these racist behaviors that It generates violence between the people of the state itself or between its people and the peoples of neighboring countries.

The major powers must be more assertive in their foreign relations with those countries that support or condone racist, religious, and social behavior by severing relations and stopping all types of political, commercial, military, and other dealings.

Plus, we should not ignore the strong role of the media and journalists, the role of social media, the role of various artistic messages, the role of internal or international organizations that were established and work to dissolve these ethnic and religious differences.

Only in these ways is it possible to ensure the compliance of these countries and groups with international resolutions on freedoms and non-violence.

Mr. Andrew Cheatham Senior Advisor, Global Policy at United States Institute of Peace mentioned in his article ([Amid Alarming Rise in Conflict, Multilateralism is the Only Answer](#)) on September 27th 2023 “At the opening of the 2023 UN General Assembly session, Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted to world leaders the preamble to the organization’s Charter, which states that “the people of the United Nations” are “determined to save the future.” Generations of war.” But he explained, “Instead of ending the scourge of war, we are witnessing a wave of conflicts, coups and chaos.” In fact, in 2022, there were 55 state-based conflicts and 82 non-state conflicts raging around the world, and the period saw From 2017 to 2021, the highest number of deaths by non-state actors in armed conflicts since 1989. The annual Global Peace Index, which is produced by the peace organization, found that last year there was a 96 percent increase year-on-year in conflict-related deaths. This is an indicator that It is absolutely healthy for the international community in light of the many challenges facing the world today, including challenges related to ethnic and religious problems, and problems related to economic aspects, and there are problems that have increased recently related to the weather and its variables and climate fluctuations that are affecting the world in an accelerating and frightening way. Here there must be a voice. One to reject all kinds of current problems and challenges and to unite among all parties to confront the challenges that will have the greatest impact in the future on all parties.

And I can also add part of Mr. P.E.EZEME in his research ([THE ROLE OF RELIGION AS A MULTI-TRACKDIPLOMACY IN PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION](#)) when he said “Religious communities can also provide social cohesion in the aftermath of violent conflict. They may also provide spiritual support to help people face agonizing pain and suffering with some prospect for the kind of forgiveness that can break the cycle of revenge”. This is one of the solutions that can be interacted with positively and may serve the purpose in one way or another, and if it does not fulfill its role completely, it will have a positive role and impact in the future by forming sufficient awareness among all parties about the importance of defusing these religious and ethnic conflicts and what the negative consequences are.

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Footnotes

1. We can identify such inconsistent security policy towards Islamists – draconian oppression followed by complacency – not only in Egypt, but also among Saudi Jihadis in the 1990s: ‘The torture of the mid-1990s radicalized a generation of militants who were subsequently given considerable room for maneuver’ ([Hegghammer, 2010](#): 78). The inconsistency of security

policy may be a reason why we can observe an increase in violence despite a reduction in repression.

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Biographies

Sobhi Yassein, is a master's degree holder in diplomacy from American University in the Emirates, worked in Education Filed for more than 21 years since 2002, and helped in Establishing two Universities in United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi University ADU & American University in the Emirates AUE) worked in Horizon International Flight Academy as well. Delivered training courses and specialized workshops in the field of Media & Mass Communications, Protocol, Political Science & International Relations, he has taught in the college of Media & Mass Communications in American University in the Emirates (AUE). He has a great passion for all sports, and always contributes to the support of all sports teams at the American University in the UAE and won many titles with the sport teams. Also motivating all students to pay more attention to the practical aspect of the education process.