# Research Report

**Forum: General Assembly First**

**Issue: Taking action to stop terrorists from travelling through international borders**

**Chairs: Jessica Bonnema and Casper Pachocki**

## CalsMUN 2018

### Cals College Nieuwegein

# *Table of Contents*

# *Personal Introduction*

Hey everyone! My name is Jessica Bonnema and I'm a 16-year-old student of the Stedelijk Gymnasium Haarlem. For CalsMUN I'll be the Chair of the General Assembly First Committee.

I am simply fascinated by how MUN works and how everyone can learn so much from it. Ever since I started participating, I haven't missed any conference I could attend and I'm also part of the Secretariat for the conference at my school. This will be my 16th conference of which my 4th as a Student Officer and I'm truly looking forward to the conference. I'm hoping for a productive, but definitely also fun, weekend with all of you.

Hi future delegates,

My name is Casper Pachocki, and I will be one of the chairs of the GA 1 for the upcoming edition of CalsMUN (2018). After serving as the deputy Secretary General of CalsMUN 2017 and being a delegate in CalsMUN 2016, I thought it was time to fulfil the duty of being a chair. I have participated in 5 MUN sessions, of which CalsMUN was the most dear to me. I hope to be able to guide you through the GA 1 with my experience, so that you will learn the most and enjoy yourselves.

If there is one advice I could give you, it would be the following: if knowledge and ability aren't enough, be persistent.

Enjoy CalsMUN 2018,

Casper

# General Assembly First

The First General Assembly is the committee that can be called the Disarmament and International Security [DISEC], as the name suggests, this committee deals with affairs and disputes that threaten to endanger the stability and security of a region or the world in the general. This committee is also a committee of the real United Nations, or to be more specific: it is a sub-committee of the General Assembly. On the United Nations website, its main topics are described as the following:

"The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime."

# General Assembly First

# Issue: Taking action to stop terrorists from travelling through international borders
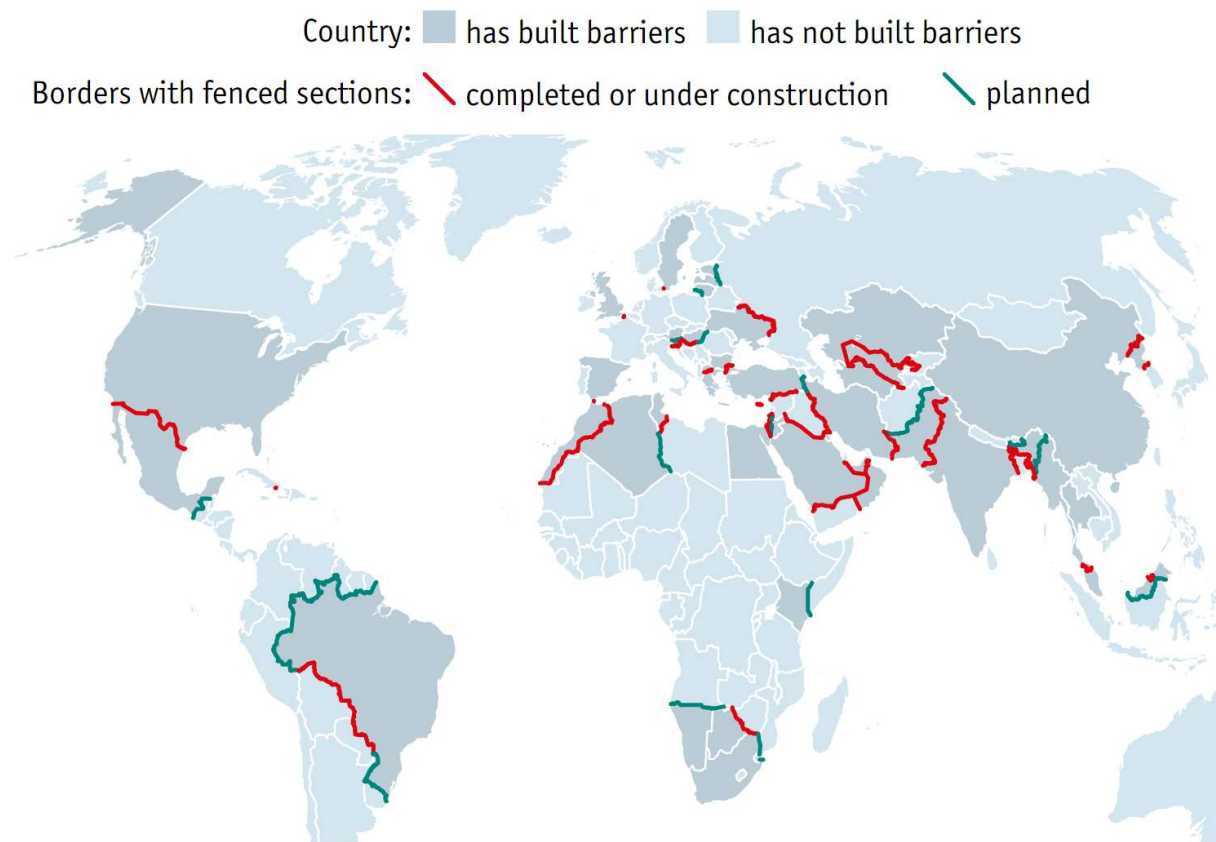
**Introduction**

The ongoing and seemingly unstoppable series of terrorist attacks affecting the western world as well as the Middle East is one of the most worrying and difficult issues that the global community has to deal with in the present times.

Many civilians and even some politicians argue that borders should be completely closed, with the strictest controls. But is this physically possible? For example, won't countries suffer economically when transport of goods for international trade is made more difficult? This research report should give you an idea of how we can take action to stop terrorists from travelling through international borders.
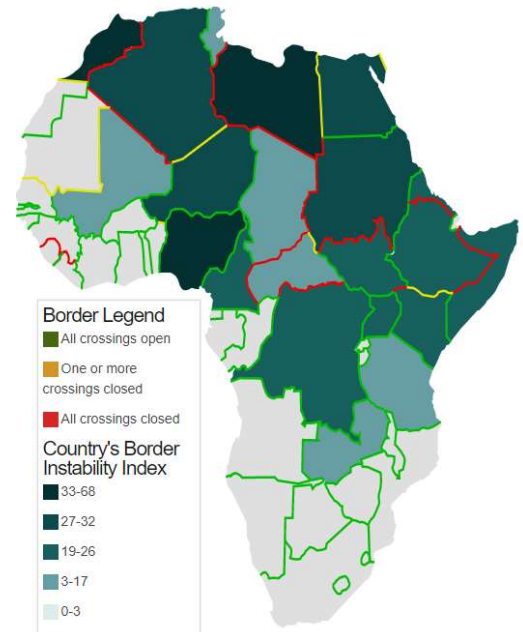
**General overview**

International borders



There is a reason, a story or a conflict behind every single line that is drawn on the world map, international borders are rather strange things. Some borders are easily crossable: without even noticing there was a border you'll realise that you are now in

another country. Others, however, have an extreme barrier such as a demilitarized zone that makes it impossible for civilians to travel between these nations. The map above should give you an idea of which borders take a lot of effort to cross. As you can see, the red zones on the map are the middle east and central Asia, while there are barely any hard borders in Europe and Africa. In Europe, we have the Schengen area, where barely any border control takes place, but in Africa there is no such zone, and no obvious reason for all those open borders can be found. The image on the right will give you a more detailed view of African borders and how open they are.



Border Legend
All crossings open
One or more crossings closed
All crossings closed
Country's Border Instability Index
33-68
27-32
19-26
3-17
0-3

Open or closed borders?

Because of both terrorism and the refugee crisis, the discussion about international borders arose. Should we have open borders for the economic benefits and better international cooperation, or closed borders for more control on migration and increased security?

How the 9/11 terrorists entered the USA

On the 21st of August 2004, the Staff Report on 9/11 has been published by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States. This report covers the immigration histories of 94 terrorists who operated in the United States between the early 1990s and 2004, including six of the September 11th hijackers. Other than the hijackers, almost all of these individuals have been indicted or convicted for their crimes.

The findings show widespread terrorist violations of immigration laws. The report highlights the danger of a lax immigration system, not just in terms of who is allowed in, but also how terrorists, once in the country, used weaknesses in the system to remain there.
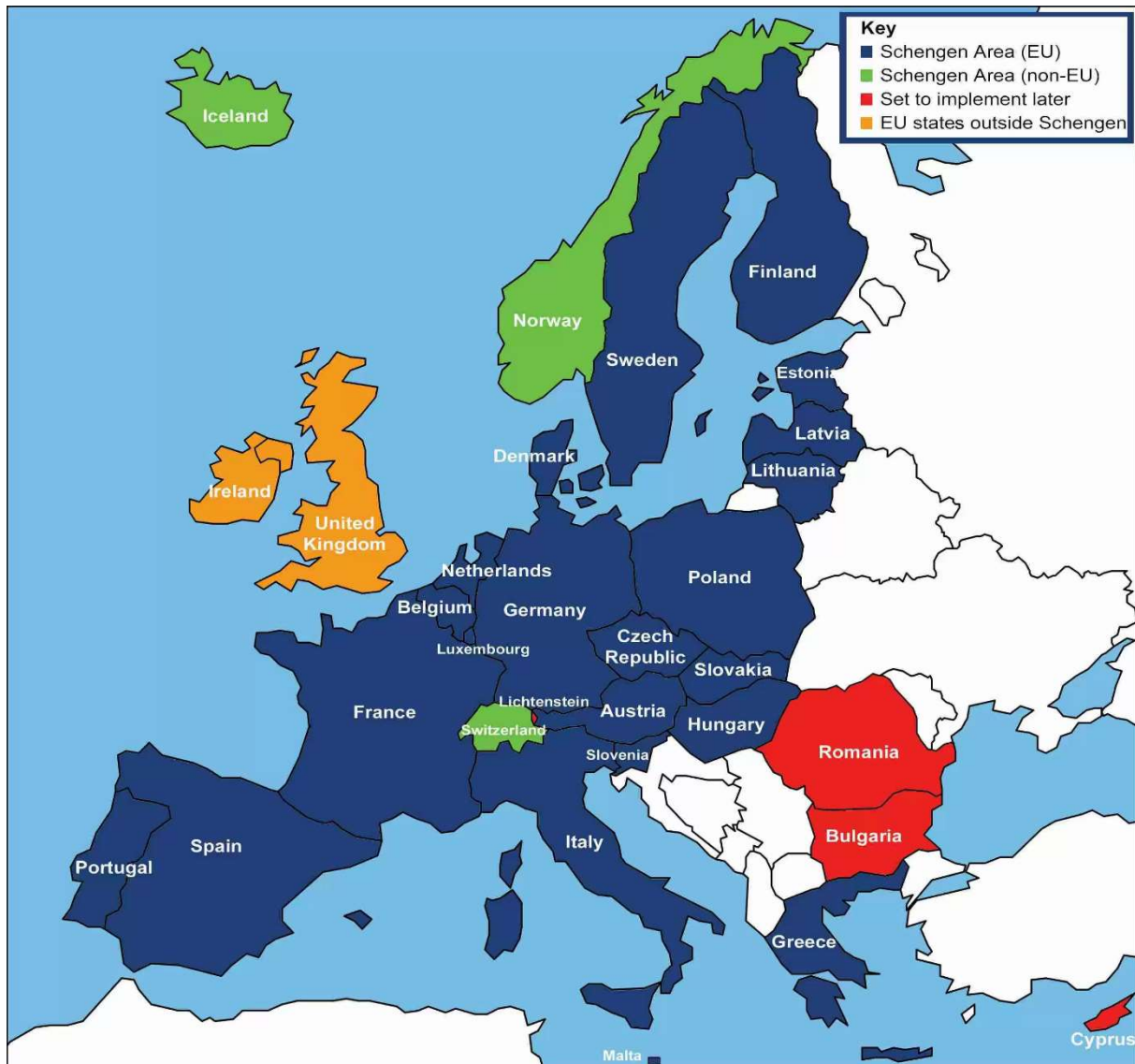
Most important findings

Of the 94 foreign-born terrorists who operated in the United States between the early 1990s and 2004, the study found that about two-thirds (59) committed immigration fraud in order to enter or stay in the country. Furthermore, temporary visas were a common means of entering; 18 terrorists had student visas and another four had applications approved to study in the United States. At least 17 terrorists used a visitor visa - either tourist or business. In another 17 instances, terrorists claimed to lack proper travel documents and applied for asylum.

IT SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND THAT THOSE MEANS DO NOT ONLY APPLY TO THE USA, THESE ARE COMMON WAYS OF ENTERING ANY COUNTRY! THESE ARE THE HOLES IN THE SYSTEM THAT SHOULD BE ERADICATED.

The Schengen area

The on the 14th of June 1985 signed Schengen agreement, led to the creation of Europe's Schengen Area, in which internal border checks have largely been abolished. In 1990, the Agreement was supplemented by the Schengen Convention which proposed the complete abolition of systematic internal border controls and a common visa policy.



The Schengen Area operates very much like one single state for international travel purposes with external border controls for travellers entering and exiting the Schengen area, but with no internal border controls. It currently consists of 26 European countries covering a population of over 400 million people and an area of 4,312,099 square kilometres (1,664,911 square miles).

Schengen is often criticised by nationalists and Eurosceptics who say it is an open door for migrants and criminals such as terrorists. Many believe that if we close the European borders, far less terrorist attacks will take place and the perpetrators of the attacks will escape less easily.

At the level of counter-terrorism, there's surely merit in looking at border checks, since it will make things harder for those who would do us harm. But it should be kept in mind that passport controls will not completely shut down the spread of the terrorist ideas. Besides, closed borders would form an extreme trade barrier and thus have negative economic consequences.

Concluding that in the Schengen zone, borders simply cannot be completely closed: what might then be implementable measures?

**Previous attempts to solve the issue**

After the 9/11 attacks, the United States have definitely taken action to increase border control. The most prominent examples of this are policy changes regarding refugees (intense background screening) and other immigrants and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

In Europe, some controls have been implemented and/or increased, but the European discussion on terrorists and borders truly sparked after the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris.

UNSC resolution S/RES/2178 (2014) clause states:

> "Reaffirms that all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents, underscores, in this regard, the importance of addressing, in accordance with their relevant international obligations, the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, and encourages Member States to employ evidence-based traveller risk assessment and screening procedures including collection and analysis of travel data, without resorting to profiling based on stereotypes founded on grounds of discrimination prohibited by international law;"

However, strict border controls are not always present: the most prominent example of course being the Schengen zone. In the Schengen treaty, there is a clause which states that in unforeseen events, member states may tighten their controls. These tightened controls however, may only be in place for less than two months.

All nations do have the power to deploy their army on their own territory for the sake of national security.

France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden and Norway decided to intensify their border controls, after the Paris attacks of November 13th 2015. And in some of those countries, extra ID checks still take place.

**Possible solutions**

Firstly, an effective way for stopping any unwanted traveller at border is to collect fingerprints to identify the passenger as well as check against blacklists at landing examination. Implementing finger prints in the identification system could also be done by including it in the visa application process.

Secondly, Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database is not that often used by lots of countries worldwide, the best example being Australia where out of more than 30 million international visits, the database was used less than 400 times. At any major international airport, it's not uncommon to have your passport checked four times or more between check-in and boarding the aircraft. But if passenger documents aren't checked against Interpol's database of stolen and lost travel documents, passengers using those documents can slip through layers of security.

Inside the Schengen zone, an implementable idea might be to ask for travel documents when buying and using international bus or train tickets in order to gain more information on who is travelling where and improve the chance of being able to stop terrorists from travelling through international borders.

# Major organizations/countries involved

## Organisations
**The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)**

The CTC is a subsidiary body of the UN Security Council, which was established on the 28th of September in 2001 when the UNSC passed resolution 1373 on counter-terrorism. While the ultimate aim of the Committee is to increase the ability of States to fight terrorism, it is not a sanctions body nor does it maintain a list of terrorist groups or individuals.

**Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)**

"The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) was established by the UN Secretary-General in 2005 and endorsed by the General Assembly through the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by consensus in 2006. The mandate of the CTITF is to strengthen coordination and coherence of counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system. The Task Force consists of 38 international entities which by virtue of their work have a stake in multilateral counter-terrorism efforts. Each entity makes contributions consistent with its own mandate." – un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/about-task-force.

**United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**

The UN organ that mainly focuses on actualizing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy is the very recent United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, established by the General Assembly on the 15th of June 2017.

**Interpol**

The International Criminal Police, more commonly known as Interpol, is an international organization facilitating international police cooperation. Interpol's collaborative form of cooperation is useful when fighting international crime because language, cultural and bureaucratic differences can make it difficult for police officials from different nations to work together. But how is Interpol involved in our issue? Interpol circulates alerts and warnings on terrorists, dangerous criminals and weapons threats to police in member countries. Besides, Interpol helps in guiding international borders.

## Countries

**All Schengen area nations**

As stated in the General Overview part of this research report, internal border checks have largely been abolished in the Schengen area and this makes international travelling easy. These nations should think of which measures are best implementable for their country, keeping the Schengen Convention in mind.

**United States of America**

The USA has been extremely active in investigating cases of terrorist crossing borders and in taking measures to intensify border control.

## *Timeline of related events*

| | |
|---|---|
| 14th of June 1985 | The Schengen agreement was signed |
| 19th of June 1990 | The Schengen Agreement was supplemented by the Schengen Convention |
| 11th of September 2001 | 9/11 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers |
| 28th of September 2001 | UNSC passed resolution 1373, the CTC was established |
| 21st of August 2004 | The Staff Report on 9/11 was published by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States |
| 8th of September 2006 | the UNSC passed A/RES/60/288 on global Counter-Terrorism policy |
| 24th of September 2014 | The UNSC passed resolution S/RES/2178 |
| 13th of November 2015 | Charlie Hebdo terrorist attack in Paris |
| 15th of June 2017 | The UN General Assembly established the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism |

## *Key terms*

**Terrorist**

Oxford dictionary defines the term terrorist as: "A person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims".  There is no universal agreement on the exact definition of terrorism. Even in the resolutions by the UN Security Council about counter-terrorism strategies, no universal definition can be found.

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