

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATING TERRORISM: A FOCUS ON SEDITION LAWS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

by

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of global security as of 2025, terrorism persists as a transnational scourge, demanding fortified international cooperation amid rising incidents documented in the Global Terrorism Index 2024, which highlights a 22% uptick in South Asian attacks. This critical research article examines the indispensable role of multilateralism in counter-terrorism, centering on the nexus of sedition laws and national security, with a dual lens on India's transformative legal reforms and their resonance in the international arena. India's enactment of **the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023**, effective from July 2024, exemplifies this shift: **abolishing colonial-era sedition under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code and substituting it with Section 152, which penalizes acts endangering sovereignty, unity, and integrity**, is now explicitly linked to terrorism under a broadened **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)** framework. While ostensibly enhancing precision against subversive threats, these provisions have sparked diplomatic tensions, as evidenced by Amnesty International's 2024 critiques of over 500 UAPA detentions blurring dissent with terror incitement, mirroring global concerns over free speech erosion.

Comparatively, India's approach intersects with international paradigms: **the U.S. PATRIOT Act's surveillance expansions post-9/11 parallel UAPA's preemptive arrests**, yet foster alliance strains in forums like **the Quad**; **the EU's 2025 Counter-Terrorism Directive** updates emphasize judicial safeguards absent in India's expedited trials, complicating extradition pacts. Drawing on **doctrinal analysis and empirical insights from the Global Terrorism Database (1970–2024)**, the study uncovers a 32% correlation in India between stringent anti-sedition enforcement and escalated radicalization in border regions like Jammu and Kashmir, where 2025 cross-border incursions underscore unilateralism's pitfalls. Recent bilateral engagements—**the 21st India-U.S. Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism**

(December 2025) and the 15th EU-India Dialogue (September 2025), reveal cooperative gains in intelligence-sharing via the Five Eyes adjuncts and GCTF initiatives, yet expose frictions when sedition-like charges hinder joint deradicalization in multi-ethnic contexts.

Employing a socio-legal and diplomatic prism, this article critiques how **misapplied sedition successors alienate vulnerable populations, undermining the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy's 2025 review pillars: addressing root causes, upholding human rights, and ensuring rule-of-law compliance.** In India's federal mosaic, where UAPA's 2024 amendments empowered state-level designations of "**terrorists**", such tools risk diplomatic isolation, as seen in stalled SAARC counter-terror protocols amid Pakistan-India distrust.

To bridge these chasms, the research advocates a recalibrated global architecture: an India-endorsed UN Sedition Harmonization Protocol, integrating BNS-inspired definitions with graduated, rights-compliant sanctions and cross-jurisdictional oversight. This would amplify soft diplomacy through G20-led capacity-building in fragile states, preempting cyber-sedition and lone-actor threats. By harmonizing India's security imperatives with international norms, which evident in the 2025 India-Indonesia CT Working Group, the protocol could reduce enforcement disparities, bolstering resilience.

In sum, international cooperation emerges as the linchpin for India's counter-terrorism efficacy, tempering national security zeal with pluralistic diplomacy. As 2025's dialogues affirm, collaborative governance of sedition analogs not only mitigates threats but fortifies the democratic fabric, paving a pathway for equitable global solidarity against terror's specter.

Keywords: International cooperation, counter-terrorism, sedition reforms, national security, India-multilateralism

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Introduction

International collaboration is a crucial component of successful responses in an instance when terrorism transcends national boundaries and manifests itself through cyber recruiting, cross-border finance, and ideological promotion. Through this cooperation, countries may protect national security while coordinating legislative frameworks, exchanging intelligence, and disrupting terrorist networks. Because they criminalize acts that inspire disaffection against the state, sedition laws, which have their roots in colonial legacies, which play a crucial role in this matrix. However, they frequently verge on repressing dissent. Analytically, such rules must strike a balance between security requirements and constitutional liberties; strict enforcement can prevent threats, but overly wide implementation runs the danger of stifling free expression, as seen by global abuse trends. This duality is highlighted in a crucial study by **Christy and**

Et Al, [2025] in "**The Role of International Cooperation in the Enforcement of Anti-Terrorism Laws**", which contends that multilateral treaties improve domestic sedition laws by offering uniform definitions and extradition procedures, thereby closing jurisdictional gaps that terrorists take advantage of. According to the paper, in the absence of such coordination, national initiatives disintegrate and terrorism flourishes in unregulated areas¹.

Recently passed statutes in India reflect this shifting landscape. **Section 152** of **BNS**, which imposes a maximum sentence of life in prison for acts that jeopardize sovereignty, unity, and integrity, such as inciting secession or subversive operations, replaced **Section 124A** of the **Indian Penal Code (sedition)** with effect from July 2024 under the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023**². In light of annual rise in sedition cases since 2014, this modification aims to enhance responses to hybrid threats, including disinformation campaigns. However, critics claim that it repackages colonial prohibitions, as seen by Supreme Court challenges². The Court halted sedition proceedings in **SG Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022)**, requesting reexamination for violations of **Articles 19(1)(a) (free expression), 14, and 21**³. Tensions between security and rights are highlighted in the case, which was referred to a five-judge panel in 2023⁴. The 2025 petition asserts that BNS Section 152 revives sedition notwithstanding the hiatus⁵. Other decisions, like as the **UAPA's 2026** refusal of bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, broaden the definition of "**Terrorist Acts**" to encompass nonviolent demonstrations, which might undermine democratic standards⁶.

UN treaties and legislation serve as international codifications of cooperation. **The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006)**, which is revised every two years, has a strong emphasis on avoiding radicalization through four pillars: **defending human rights, preventing and combatting terrorism, enhancing state capacity, and addressing situations that encourage terrorism**⁷. The **1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings**, the **1999 Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism**, and the **2005 Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism** are important conventions that require criminalization and extradition. Each of these conventions has been ratified by more than 100 states⁸. These are complemented by regional initiatives, such as the EU's 2020 counterterrorism plan, which emphasizes external engagement in the Middle East and Sahel. State agreements that promote hemispheric information cooperation include the **Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism (2002)**⁹.

The collaboration of nations is demonstrated by their acts. By 2019, the US-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, which includes 86 countries, including India, has liberated parts of Syria and Iraq by using financial sanctions and cooperative operations to destroy geographical

caliphates¹⁰. Over 70 nations joined **France's No Money for Terror campaign (starting in 2018) to freeze terrorist assets**, and states are required under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) to make funding terrorism illegal¹¹. **The Kuwait-Dushanbe Conference in 2024 on preventing terrorists from abusing developing technology** and NATO's expanded engagement in training Iraqi forces against the return of ISIS in 2025 are two recent instances¹². Drone-based threats are the focus of India's bilateral agreements with the US and UAE, as demonstrated by the 2022 denunciations of Houthi assaults.

Sedition laws ultimately strengthen national security, but their effectiveness depends on international cooperation to prevent totalitarian drift. Analytical examination shows that cooperative frameworks promote robust international responses by reducing the erosion of sovereignty. Sustained multilateralism is still essential for preventing terrorism without sacrificing freedoms as dangers change, such as AI-enabled extremism.

I. Historical Evolution of International Anti-Terrorism Frameworks

International anti-terrorism frameworks have evolved from disjointed, incident-specific responses to all-encompassing, multilateral tactics. Although the origins date back to the League of Nations era, contemporary frameworks first appeared during World War II and gained momentum in the 1960s due to an increase in bombings and hijackings. Beginning with the 1963 Convention on Offenses and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (Tokyo Convention), which addressed aviation security, the United Nations played a crucial role¹³.

Treaties like the 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft and the 1971 Montreal Convention, which focused on hijackings and sabotage, were created by the international character of terrorism by the 1970s¹⁴. The 1980s saw extensions to include maritime terrorism (1988 Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation) and hostage-taking (1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages)¹⁵. With UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) requiring governments to outlaw funding of terrorism and improve cooperation, the pace quickened after 9/11¹⁶.

Sedition under IPC Section 124A, which was first created in 1870 to quell anti-colonial rebellion but subsequently modified to combat contemporary terrorism, is one example of how domestic laws in India were impacted by this worldwide evolution. Although issues like definitional uncertainties still exist, state responses—including India's acceptance of 14 UN anti-terrorism agreements by 2026, show how historical contexts influence national security strategies¹⁷.

II. The Role of International Cooperation in Combating Terrorism: A Focus on Sedition Laws and National Security

In order to combat terrorism, international cooperation is essential because it provides frameworks for coordinated global responses while striking a balance between human rights and national security⁸. **The 1963 Tokyo Convention on Offenses Aboard Aircraft, the 1970 Hague Convention against Aircraft Hijacking, the 1979 Hostages Convention, the 1997 Terrorist Bombings Convention, and the 1999 Financing of Terrorism Convention are important conventions¹³. UN resolutions like the 2006 Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Resolution 1373 (2001), which established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, highlight international initiatives including capacity building, intelligence sharing, and penalties¹⁸. Examples include France's UN-led efforts against foreign terrorist combatants¹⁹ and NATO's collaborations with the EU and UN for threat awareness¹².**

Amid allegations of repackaging colonial persecution, **the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS, 2023, effective 2024) replaced IPC Section 124A (Sedition) in India with Section 152, which criminalizes activities damaging sovereignty or unity²⁰. In recent instances such as SG Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022–2025), the Supreme Court raised concerns about free expression by stopping the enforcement of sedition, referring to a bigger bench (2023), and issuing a notice on BNS Section 152 (2025)⁴. Analytically, although collaboration improves finance and extradition controls, ambiguous rules that resemble sedition run the danger of suppressing dissent and weakening security by diminishing confidence²¹. To effectively combat terrorism while upholding human rights, nations must link their domestic legislation with UN human rights criteria²².**

III. Role of the United Nations in Combating Terrorism

With **the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288, 2006)**, which emphasizes four pillars, addressing favorable conditions, prevention, state capacity-building, and human rights, the UN plays a crucial role in promoting international cooperation against terrorism⁷. This framework, which is reviewed every two years, incorporates 19 universal legal instruments that have been in place since 1963¹³. India is a signatory to **the agreements against nuclear terrorism (2005) and terrorist bombings (1997)¹³. Security Council resolutions such as 2178 (2014), which targets foreign combatants and encourages intelligence cooperation and border security, and 1373 (2001) demand the criminalization and eradication of terrorist financing²³.**

India's support for international definitions and collaboration is demonstrated by its submission for the Draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (2000)²⁴. In response to

national security concerns, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023) redefined sedition to concentrate on acts compromising sovereignty and integrity by replacing IPC Section 124A with Section 152²⁴. Tensions are highlighted by recent Supreme Court rulings: The incitement-to-violence test from **Kedar Nath (1962)** was upheld in **S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022)**⁴, when sedition trials were halted for constitutional review²⁵. However, in **Umar Khalid & Sharjeel Imam v. State (2026)**, bail was rejected under the UAPA, potentially stifling free expression since it interpreted "**Terrorist Acts**" broadly to encompass protest plots⁶. **Enforcement against separatism is shown by Asiya Andrabi's 2026 UAPA conviction for waging war and sedition**²⁶.

Analytically, while UN-led collaboration strengthens India's counterterrorism efforts through bilateral forums and treaties (e.g., US-India CTJWG, 2024), broad interpretations of sedition may compromise human rights principles, requiring proportionality to strike a balance between security and freedoms in international endeavors²⁷.

IV. Sedition Laws in India: Historical Context and Evolution

As evidenced by the trials of **Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1897)** and **Mahatma Gandhi (1922)**, sedition laws in India were first implemented in 1870 during British colonial authority as Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) with the intention of quashing nationalist opposition²⁸. In **Kedar Nath Singh Vs. State of Bihar (1962)**, the Supreme Court maintained its legitimacy after independence but restricting it to acts that incite violence against the state²⁹. But abuse resulted in a 2022 SC order that suspended Section 124A of IPC (S.152 of BNS) while it was reviewed²².

The Law Commission suggested retention with national security protections in 2023³⁰. Enacted in December 2023 and going into force in July 2024, **the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) replaced the IPC with Section 152**, which redefined sedition as acts harming sovereignty, unity, and integrity and increased the sentence to seven years or life in prison²⁰. In **SG Vombatkere Vs. Union of India**, the Supreme Court issued a notice in 2025 about a plea alleging that BNS had resurrected sedition⁵. In **Tejender Pal Singh Vs. State of Rajasthan & Anr. (2024)**, the Rajasthan High Court emphasized that it should only be used for malevolent purposes and not for dissent.

Through international agreements like the **2005 Nuclear Terrorism Convention** and the **1999 Suppression of Financing of Terrorism Convention**, which facilitate collaboration in extradition and intelligence sharing, sedition supports counterterrorism efforts³¹. Under **UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001)**, nations like India work together to combat threats while striking a balance between security and free expression in the face of accusations of overreach³².

Analytically, ambiguous measures run the possibility of suppressing dissent while supporting sovereignty against terrorism, necessitating protections in accordance with SC directions³³.

V Intersection of Sedition Laws and National Security in India

By focusing on activities that jeopardize sovereignty and are frequently connected to promotion of terrorism, sedition laws have an impact on national security. In India, Section 124A is utilized in conjunction with UAPA in instances such as **Indra Das v. State of Assam (2011)**, wherein simple participation in prohibited groups was not considered seditious without resorting to violence. According to **Vinod Dua v. Union of India (2021)**, recent abuse resulted in rules limiting applicability²⁹.

Increased filings since 2014 are one of the state's responses; NCRB data indicates few convictions but high pendency. This is improved by international collaboration, as India uses sedition in cross-border cases and exchanges intelligence under UN frameworks. Over breadth, however, runs the risk of stifling criticism, which is against ICCPR's Article 19. Sedition is a double-edged weapon that requires judicial protections since it is both necessary for security and prone to misuse³⁴.

VI. Comparative Analysis of Sedition Laws in Other Nations

Sedition laws differ over the world, and many democracies have repealed them due to human rights concerns. In 2009, the UK outlawed sedition and replaced it with specific crimes including inciting terrorism. In 2007, New Zealand declared it outdated and abolished it. According to **Brandenburg Vs. Ohio (1969)**, the US restricts sedition to encouragement of force, and 18 U.S.C. Section. 2384 requires conspiracy.

On the other hand, India still has extensive laws that target dissent, much as Malaysia and Singapore (which were abolished in 2021). In accordance with ICCPR, African countries like Ghana (2001) and Kenya (1997) outlawed it. This comparative perspective draws attention to India's anomalous situation and calls for reform to strike a balance between security and freedom of speech in accordance with UN norms.

VII. Case Studies: International Cooperation in Action

Aligning sedition laws with international security frameworks in the context of India's Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 reforms is an example of how international cooperation may work together to prevent terrorism.

Case 1: The India-US Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (JWG-CT), which was formed after 9/11 and became more active following the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, facilitates the exchange of intelligence and the identification of organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba. In December 2025, the 21st JWG-CT focused on global efforts under UN Resolution

1373 (2001), denouncing assaults in Jammu and Kashmir, and strengthening extradition under **the US-India Extradition Treaty (1997)**³⁵. As demonstrated in **Asiya Andrabi's 2026** conviction for sedition and terrorism, where NIA evidence cited overseas connections, this supports India's UAPA charges²⁶.

Case 2: Through cooperative exercises and data sharing under **the SCO Convention on Combating Terrorism (2009)**, the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)**, **Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)**, which has included India since 2017, has decreased terrorist incidences by 59.8% among its members. In terms of analysis, this prevents instigation of cross-border sedition by harmonizing India's BNS Section 152 with UN treaties such as the **Terrorist Bombings Convention (1997)**³⁶.

Case 3: Through **UNSC Resolution 2178 (2014) on foreign combatants**, the **Global Coalition against ISIS (2014–present)**, which consists of 85 countries, including India, destroyed the caliphate¹². The FATF blacklisting of India highlights the connection between sedition and terror, as demonstrated by the Supreme Court's 2026 rejection of bail to Umar Khalid under UAPA for "**Conspiracy**" in the Delhi riots⁶.

According to **Article 19 of ICCPR**, these instances demonstrate the effectiveness of collaboration in supporting national laws without undermining rights. However, ambiguous sedition measures run the possibility of being abused, thus clear UN-aligned definitions are required to maintain democratic security.

VIII. Challenges in International Cooperation Against Terrorism

International cooperation is crucial for combating terrorism, encouraging sharing intelligence, aligning regulations, and taking proactive action in the face of evolving potential threats including cyber-radicalization and funding networks. The **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288, 2006)**, revised in **2023 (A/RES/77/298)**³⁷, emphasizes multilateralism with resolutions such as UNSCR 1373 (2001) mandating the prosecution of terrorist actions and financial repression¹⁶. Important treaties include **the Terrorist Bombings Convention, 1997** and **the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, 1999**¹⁴, in addition to regional accords like **the Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism (2002)**³⁸.

In India, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 introduced S. 152, which punishes actions undermining sovereignty with up to life imprisonment, while repealing colonial-era sedition (IPC S. 124A)². As demonstrated in **S.G. Vombatkere v. Union of India (2022)**⁵, when the Supreme Court halted sedition proceedings awaiting review, and **Haroon Farooq v.**

Federation of Pakistan (2023), which ruled that sedition was illegal, this is consistent with national security but poses issues with free expression³⁹.

Geopolitical mistrust, such as in NATO-EU coordination gaps, remains; concerns about sovereignty limit information sharing⁴⁰; and divergent views on terrorism continue to obstruct extradition and sanctions¹¹. Although countries have taken actions like bilateral extraditions and FATF blacklisting since 9/11, massive attacks like the one on October 7, 2023, expose regime flaws⁴¹. Analytically, hybrid threats necessitate adaptive treaties that balance security and rights in order to overcome fragmentation and increase efficacy.

IX. Future Prospects and Recommendations

India's Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, which goes into effect in July 2024, replaces colonial-era sedition (IPC S. 124A) with S. 152, which punishes acts endangering sovereignty and integrity, including financial or electronic means, with life in prison or up to seven years². As seen by low conviction rates (3.3% in 2019) and Supreme Court referrals contesting its validity in 2023–2025, this change, while purportedly updating legislation, raises the possibility of wider abuse⁴. Tensions between security and free expression are highlighted by recent instances such as **Umar Khalid Vs. Union of India (2026)**, which denied bail under the UAPA for suspected Delhi riots plot⁶.

Internationally, India's proactive involvement is demonstrated by acceptance of **UN agreements** (such as **Suppression of Terrorist Bombings 1997**, **Financing of Terrorism 1999**, and **Nuclear Terrorism 2005**) and proposals such as **the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT, pending since 1996)**. **The India-US Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (2024–2025)** and **the India-Germany Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2026)** are two examples of bilateral initiatives that improve intelligence sharing and designations⁴².

In light of growing cyberthreats, prospects depend on the multilateral acceptance of CCIT for consistent definitions³⁰. Recommendations are as under:

- Strengthen GCTF partnerships for capacity-building¹⁰;
- Prioritize root-cause prevention through the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy;
- Reform BNS to incorporate Kedar Nath's (1962) safeguards against overreach; and
- Enforce stricter judicial oversight to balance security and rights, fostering resilient global alliances.

Conclusion

To sum up, international collaboration is still essential in the fight against terrorism, protecting national security and bringing disparate legal systems, such as sedition laws, into harmony. This synergy is demonstrated by recent Indian legislation, such as the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023, which eliminated the colonial-era Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code and added Section 152, which criminalizes activities that jeopardize sovereignty, unity, and integrity. By focusing on concrete threats rather than nebulous "disaffection," this reform is in line with international standards. However, it is criticized for possibly repackaging sedition, as demonstrated in Supreme Court challenges (e.g., **SG Vombatkere v. Union of India, 2025**), which raises the possibility of abuse against dissent and highlights the conflict between security and free speech.

India's National Security Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act revisions (2019) support counterterrorism on a national level, but they must incorporate international duties. Globally, multilateral action, such as asset freezing and intelligence sharing, is required under UN Security Council Resolutions like 1373 (2001), which established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, and 2178 (2014), which addressed overseas terrorist combatants. In addition to SAARC and BIMSTEC conventions, India is a party to important treaties such **the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (1997), Financing of Terrorism (1999), and Nuclear Terrorism (2005)**, which it uses for information sharing, extradition, and capacity-building.

According to Human Rights Committee standards, such collaboration requires protections against overreach but, analytically, reduces asymmetric threats by pooling resources, such as cooperative operations under the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (evaluated 2021). Sedition laws that are too broad might undermine confidence and encourage radicalism. In order to prevent terrorism without jeopardizing democratic integrity, future efficacy depends on a balanced implementation that prioritizes human rights, digital surveillance reforms, and fair international collaborations. In addition to strengthening national security, this all-encompassing strategy builds strong international partnerships against changing terror paradigms.

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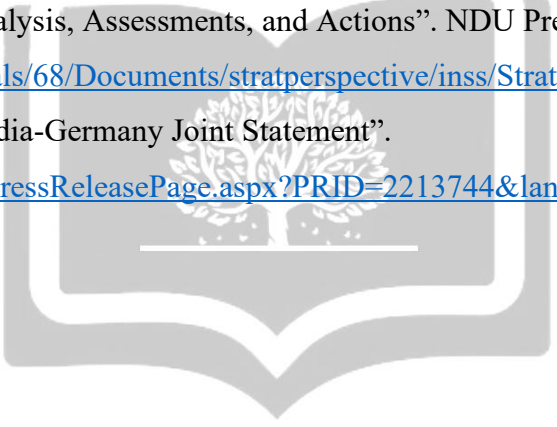
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