Terrorism has plagued human societies from time immemorial. In recent times, as human societies have organised themselves around the nation-state, and as the nation-state has taken on the task of maintain harmonious societies out of diverse communities under the rule of law, the ripple effects of terrorism on the national and international order have reverberated across borders and societies.

In his forthcoming chapter in the *Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, Ben Saul notes that inter-state disputes in Europe in the 1930s arising from contentious requests for extradition of accused terrorists led to the drafting of the 1937 League of Nations Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism and the 1938 League of Nations Convention for the Creation of an International Criminal Court, neither of which came into force due to the outbreak of war.

Ben Saul further points to the problematic definition of “terrorism’ as a legal concept” since the 1930s, an effort that has been reinvigorated by the September 11 attacks and the subsequent Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) that directed all states to criminalise terrorism in municipal law.

It can be argued that a clear legal definition has eluded terrorism for the phenomenon has indisputably distinct cultural, historical and socio-political contexts across time and space. As liberation movements in the then colonies and social upheaval in established states increased after 1945, in the 1950s to 70s witnessed states and societies across the world battle with a wave of terrorism that was largely to national claims. In Africa, liberation movements, from
Algeria to South Africa were almost invariably called ‘terrorist’ at their time. Tanzanian journalist Jenerali Ulimwengu in an opinion-editorial in March 2015 controversially highlights the difference between terrorism in the 60s and 70s to the contemporaneous actors and events. Ulimwengu’s “terrorists of yore” acted in a context of a “blurred line between terror and struggle”.

The Supreme Court of India offers a sobering reflection on contemporary terrorism in *Peoples Union for Civil Liberties & Anor vs. Union of India* Writ Petition (Civil) 389 of 2002:

> Terrorism has become the more worrying feature of the contemporary life. Though violent behaviour is not new, the present day ‘terrorism’ in its full incarnation poses extraordinary challenges to civilised world. The basic edifices of modern State, like democracy, state security, rule of law, sovereignty and integrity, basic human rights etc. are under the attack of terrorism. Though the phenomenon of terrorism is complex, a ‘terrorist act’ is easily identifiable when it does occur. The core meaning of the term is clear even if its exact frontiers are not. [...] To face terrorism we need new approaches, techniques, weapons, expertise and of course new laws.

Yet, alive to the inextricable links between democracy and rule of law, the Supreme Court of India further observes:

> The protection and promotion of human rights under the rule of law is essential in the prevention of terrorism. [...] If human rights are violated in the process of combating terrorism, it will be self-defeating. Terrorism often thrives where human rights are violated, which adds to the need to strengthen action to combat violations of human rights. The lack of hope for justice provides breeding grounds for terrorism. Terrorism itself should also be understood as an assault on basic rights. In all cases, the fight against terrorism must be respectful to the human rights.”


In the search for the best practice in addressing the threat of terrorism to African democracy and rule of law, Strathmore Law School, on 4-5 August 2015, hosted its 2nd Annual Law
Conference on the theme “Terrorism and challenges to emerging democracies in Africa”. The Conference explored the topic under four thematic areas:

i. The interrelation between terrorism and organised crime;

ii. Terrorism and human rights;

iii. The economic impact and social cost of terrorism;

iv. Fighting terrorism: the way forward.

As is our crystallising tradition, the editors of Strathmore Law Journal are now inviting papers on the above theme, to be published in the second issue of the Strathmore Law Journal in June 2016, in addition to those papers presented at the 2015 conference. In line with its mission to proactively promote the scholarly discussion of the law in Africa and African law, Strathmore Law Journal invites scholarly reflections on the linkages between terrorism and counter-terrorism, and Africa’s fledgling democracies. Among the suggested subthemes include:

- The legal history of the criminalisation of terrorism in African municipal, regional and continental law
- The legal history of counter-terrorism efforts, their judicial regulation and effects on human rights
- The socio-legal aspects of terrorism and counter-terrorism on minority religious, ethnic or other groups
- The effects of terrorism and counter-terrorism on academic freedom
- Terrorism in the context of contested political claims and violence thereof and the efficacy or otherwise of political dialogue with designated terrorist organisations
- The effects of terrorism and counter-terrorism on African inter-state relations and public international law practice in Africa
- The role of municipal and regional or supranational political or judicial institutions in establishing and maintain the balance between rule of law and effective counter-terrorism.

Strathmore Law Journal in particular welcomes contributions that critically appraise not only contemporaneous terrorism but its treatment from colonial times to date, and case studies of African countries across our problematic linguistic divide.

**Submission guidelines**

The SLJ accepts three types of submissions:

Full articles, which must be between 7000 and 10,000 words, inclusive of footnotes.
Book reviews, which must be between 2000 and 3000 words.

Recent developments, which must be between 2000 and 3000 words.

Deadline for submission is **31 December 2015**, and must conform to our style guide and submission instructions. Please visit our Journal page at [www.press.strathmore.edu](http://www.press.strathmore.edu)

Submissions discussing the situations in other regions of Africa beyond East Africa are encouraged.

**About the journal**

*Strathmore Law Journal* is the open access, peer reviewed annual periodical of Strathmore University Law School. The SLJ publishes scholarly contributions on topical aspects of African law and the law in Africa. The SLJ aims at encouraging excellence on research and scholarship on legal issues affecting the African continent.

The *Strathmore Law Journal* is published annually in Nairobi by Strathmore University Press in the month of June. Our inaugural issue can be accessed at [www.press.strathmore.edu](http://www.press.strathmore.edu)