

*Jacobo Salvador MICÓ FAUS*

*Coordinator of the Terrorism and Armed Conflicts Area of Sec2crime*

*E-mail: jacoboz388@gmail.com*

*Sergio ALMARAZ SÁNCHEZ*

*Analyst. Collaborator of the Terrorism and Armed Conflict Area of Sec2Crime*

*E-mail: almarazsanchezsergio@gmail.com*

*Pino PENILLA MARQUÍNEZ*

*Cyber Intelligence Analyst. Coordinator of the Sec2crime National Defense Area*

*E-mail: pinopenilla@gmail.com*

## *Spanish Armed Forces in the fight against terrorism*

### **Abstract**

Since the spreading of the terrorist phenomenon and its mutation at global level, the international community has made a commitment to the fight against terrorism, identifying it as a priority attention threat. The joint efforts of States and international security and defense organizations have resulted in the approval of multiple strategic and operational measures aimed at countering the terrorist phenomenon. Spain maintains an active and supportive commitment to the fight against terrorism as a member State of international security institutions and through its participation in international missions. To this end, the Spanish Armed Forces play a fundamental role as guarantors of National Defense. On the one hand, in the different countries where they deploy their troops to counter terrorism and, on the other hand, on national territory, in coordination with the State Security Forces and Corps.

### **Keywords**

Terrorism, Armed Forces, defense, security, missions, Spain, NATO, European Union.

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## Introduction. Spanish Armed Forces: fighting terrorism as a priority line of action

Terrorism is a complex and dynamic phenomenon that greatly hinders international cooperation due to its constant changes. Thus, the lack of regulatory heterogeneity caused by states themselves —which sometimes refuse to sign global counter-terrorism cooperation conventions, either because of inability, disagreements or priorities, to agree on which acts, individuals and organisations should be described as terrorist — has prevented a precise definition of what terrorism is<sup>1</sup>.

However, although the international community has not adopted a common definition of terrorism, certain basic acts and elements are defined. These were first taken up in 1994 when the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in its resolution 49/60. It was later updated by the Security Council in its resolution 1566 (2004): ‘acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, with the purpose to... intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organisation to do or to abstain from doing any act<sup>2</sup>’.

The impact of the terrorist phenomenon and its constant evolution has thus required, and continues to require, the international community and the Spanish state to conduct a periodic review and parallel transformation.

To this end, in recent decades, there has been a drive to further strengthen international cooperation through leading security and defence organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the European Union, the United Nations, and other bilateral agreements between countries.

Today, the terrorist phenomenon represents one of the main challenges for State Security and Defence. For this reason, the Spanish Armed Forces play a fundamental role both in defending Spanish society and in the security of other states, which in turn guarantees national security.

The Spanish Armed Forces have the constitutional right and duty to defend Spanish society. Their organisation and main mission are regulated by Organic Law 5/2005 on National Defence, which considers the Armed Forces as an essential element of national defence and a ‘*single entity*’ made up of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

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1 Sánchez-Gil, L.M. (2011). *Repensando el concepto de ciberterrorismo [Rethinking the concept of terrorism]*. Madrid, IEEE.

2 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2008). *Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism*, no. 32, Geneva.

3 Spain (2005). Organic Law 5/2005, of 17 November, on National Defence. *Official State Gazette*, Madrid.

Article 15 of the Organic Law 5/2005 on National Defence attributes to the Armed Forces the mission of *'guaranteeing the sovereignty and independence of Spain, defending its territorial integrity and the constitutional order'*.<sup>4</sup> To this end, they contribute militarily to the defence of Spain and its allies.

In its operations, the Spanish armed forces are authorised to respond to terrorist attacks that threaten the security of society and that occur in recognised global common spaces: land, sea, air and cyberspace.

Jihadist terrorism has become so dangerous for the international community that states such as Spain have been jointly participating in supranational organisations for years, combining political, police, legal and military efforts.

With its participation in both international missions and discussion forums and international organisations, Spain show that it is a reliable, secure and committed partner in the defence of the interests of the international community. Beyond guaranteeing security on national territory, Spain has at the same time achieved a privileged position in international security decision-making. This participation is therefore not only a necessity for national defence, but also an opportunity for Spain to actively contribute to global security and the fight against terrorism.

### **International fight against terrorism. Developments in international missions and terrorist alert levels**

In 2021, the Spanish Armed Forces will continue the fight against terrorism by participating in stabilisation and peacekeeping missions beyond national borders<sup>5</sup>.

The degree of international engagement, mainly with the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, means that the efforts expected for 2021 will follow the same line of action as in the last four years.

Therefore, taking into account ad hoc adjustments due to temporary command of international forces, security and the health crisis, the Armed Forces' efforts will remain similar to recent years. Its budget will remain around 1.176 billion, exceeding the 966 million budgeted in 2019 and matching the 1.18 billion budgeted in 2020<sup>6</sup>.

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4 Spain (2005). Organic Law 5/2005, of 17 November, on National Defence. *Official State Gazette*, Madrid.

5 Infodefensa (2020). España destinará 1.176 millones en 2021 a misiones en el exterior de las Fuerzas Armadas. *Infodefensa* [online]. Madrid, Information & Design Solution S.L. [Accessed: 12 February 2021]. Available at: <https://www.infodefensa.com/es/2020/12/23/noticia-espana-destinara-millones-misiones-exterior-fuerzas-armadas.html>

6 Infodefensa (2020). Spain earmarked 996 million euros for missions abroad in 2019. *Infodefensa* [online]. Madrid, Information & Design Solution S.L. [Accessed: 12 February 2021]. Available at:

Meanwhile, deployment will involve approximately 2,900 military and civil guards on 4 of the 7 continents<sup>7</sup>.

*Annual comparison of resources used from 2018 to 2021*

In 2018, the Armed Forces took part in 20 international missions in response to Spain’s global commitments to NATO, a deployment of 3,117 troops with 930 assigned to EU missions, 890 to NATO missions, 616 to UN missions, 480 to Coalition against Daesh, 104 to National Missions and 87 to Corporate Security.

In 2019, the Armed Forces cooperated in 15 international missions, again in response to the global agreements between Spain and the aforementioned international organisations. The number of deployed troops was reduced to 2,510, with 686 deployed to EU Missions, 554 to NATO Missions, 615 to UN Missions, 551 to Coalition against Daesh and 104 to National Missions.

In 2020, the Armed Forces took part in 14 international missions, once again fulfilling their international obligations and duties. The number of deployed troops stood at 2,325, with 495 deployed to EU missions, 891 to NATO missions, 615 to UN missions, 274 to Iraq Support (International Coalition and NATO)<sup>8</sup> and 50 to National Missions<sup>9</sup>.

FAS- INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS 2018-2021

Year	No. missions	No. troops	EU	NATO	UN	SUPPORT FOR IRAQ (Coalition and NATO)	National missions
2018	20	3,117	930	890	616	480	104
2019	15	2,510	686	554	615	551	104
2020	14	2,325	495	891	615	274	50
2021	17	2,900					

<https://www.infodefensa.com/es/2020/06/08/noticia-defensa-destino-millones-euros-misionesen-exterior.html>

7 Government of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad* [online] Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 10 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/#:~:text=Like%20that%20occur%20in%20civilians%20deployed%20on%20four%20continents](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/#:~:text=Like%20that%20occur%20in%20civilians%20deployed%20on%20four%20continents)

8 Government of Spain (s.f.). *Office of the Presidency of the Government: NATO Heads of State and Government agree on NATO’s entry into the coalition against Daesh* [online]. [Accessed: 10 February 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/actualidad/sala-prensa/jefes-estado-gobierno-otan-acuerdan-entrada-alianza-coalici%C3%B3n-contra-daesh>

9 Government of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Infographic Missions abroad (2 July 2020)* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence.

In 2021, the Armed Forces will participate in 17 international missions and deployment is not expected to exceed 2,900 troops.

Spain will continue to deploy military staff in the context of the European Union in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and on the African continent, with operations in countries such as Mali, Somalia and the Central African Republic, and in the Indian Ocean with Operation Atalanta. In addition to the deployment of EU Rapid Response troops who, together with France, are working in the Sahel.

Under the UN framework, Spanish military staff work in the mission in Lebanon and Iraq (together with the International Coalition and the NATO mission in this country).

As part of NATO, they will assist in the peace, deterrence and defence processes in Iraq, Afghanistan, Romania, Latvia and Turkey. They will also form part of the standing naval forces in the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

The main operational variants will be in the Afghanistan and Iraq missions, where troops will be reduced while being working on the EUTM Mali mission<sup>10</sup>. In conclusion, as a sign of perseverance and commitment, the Spanish Armed Forces will maintain their presence following the same line of operations as in recent years.

### *Annual comparison of terrorist alert level from 2018 to 2021*

The international community's experience in the fight against terrorism has been reflected in the deployment of various missions and the adoption of international public policy documents. States have combined efforts to define the scope of the terrorist phenomenon and to combat it jointly.

The table below aims to analyse the impact of the terrorist threat and its evolution in various European countries<sup>11</sup>, some of them members of the European Union and others belonging to the Atlantic Alliance.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> Government of Spain (2019). *Office of the Presidency of the Government: Europe anti-terrorist alert levels* [online]. Madrid, National Security Department. [Accessed: 15 February 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/actualidad/infografias/europa-niveles-alerta-antiterrorista>

## TERRORIST ALERT LEVELS 2018-2021

NATO countries	EU countries	2018	2019	2020	2021
Germany	Germany <sup>12</sup>	High	High	High	High
Belgium	Belgium	2 of 4	2 of 4	2 of 4	2 of 4
Croatia	Croatia	3 of 4	3 of 4	-	-
Denmark	Denmark	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5
Spain	Spain	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5
	Finland	2 of 4	2 of 4	2 of 4	2 of 4
France	France	2 of 3	2 of 3	3 of 3	3 of 3
Italy	Italy	2 of 3	2 of 3	2 of 3	2 of 3
Norway		3 of 5	3 of 5	3 of 5	3 of 5
Netherlands	Netherlands	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5
United Kingdom		4 of 5	4 of 5	4 of 5	3 of 5
Sweden		3 of 5	3 of 5	3 of 5	3 of 5

In view of the data shown in the table, the only changes in alert levels in the countries listed are in France and the United Kingdom.

### *Missions abroad*

#### *Support to Iraq - Inherent Resolve - NATO Mission-Iraq*

The main objective of the *Inherent Resolve* Iraq support mission is to train and advise the Iraqi army on counter-terrorism issues in order to address the expansion and consolidation of Daesh in Syria and Iraq. The Spanish Armed Forces are carrying out their mission on Iraqi territory as part of the International Coalition against Daesh.

Since October 2018, NATO has also been leading the *NATO Mission-IRAK*<sup>13</sup> (NMI), which mainly aims to advise the Iraqi government on national security and defence issues.

#### Description of the mission

- Operation *Inherent Resolve* is a joint effort of the 60-state international coalition against Jihadism led by the United States. The mission encompasses different activities:
  - Iraqi Army training.
  - Targeted bombing of Jihadist enclaves in northern Iraq.

<sup>12</sup> German terrorist alert levels are not graduated.

<sup>13</sup> Allied Joint Force Command Naples (2021). *NATO Mission Iraq* [online]. Italy. [Accessed: 23 February 2021]. Available at: <https://jfcnaples.nato.int/nmi>

- Operation *NATO Mission-IRAQ* is being conducted with the resources of Alliance Member States. Its main tasks are:
  - Advising government institutions on national security and defence. These institutions are the Ministry of Defence, the Office of the National Security Adviser and Iraq's military education institutions.
  - Strengthening Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi Armed Forces.
  - Strengthening military training institutions and academies.
  - Promoting more 'sustainable, transparent, inclusive and effective<sup>14</sup>' national security structures and military education institutions «.
- Timeline: In 2014, the Iraqi government requested UN assistance to combat the spread of Daesh in the region. By June of that year, Daesh had seized several cities, including Mosul and Samarra.

The international coalition to fight Daesh Jihadist terrorism originated at the NATO summit in Wales in September 2014. It was formalised following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2170/2014. From the outset, the mission was supported by other international organisations such as the UN and the European Union. In October 2014, Spain joined the mission after the Spanish government authorised the participation of the Spanish Armed Forces in the mission.

The resolution focuses on five areas of action: '*Military operation, preventing the flow of foreign fighters, cutting off sources of funding, humanitarian aid and delegitimising the Jihadist ideology of Daesh<sup>15</sup>*'.

- Spain is currently continuing its mission to train and educate the Iraqi army with 150 soldiers deployed. It also remains in the *Inherent Resolve* Coalition with Special Operations teams and the Army's *Task Force Toro<sup>16</sup>* helicopter unit, deployed at the Al Asad airbase, whose mission is to airlift personnel and equipment from Coalition countries.

Spanish Armed Forces activity also continues in Iraq as part of '*NATO Mission-Iraq*', providing support to allied countries to help guarantee the security

14 Government of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 22 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/apoyo-a-irak.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/apoyo-a-irak.html)

15 *Ibidem*

16 National Security Department (2020). *Ministry of the Presidency of the Government: Spanish Armed Forces: end of deployment in the 'Inherent Resolve' training mission in Iraq* [online]. Madrid. [Accessed: 23 February 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/actualidad/sala-prensa/fuerzas-armadas-esp%C3%B1a-fin-del-despliegue-misi%C3%B3n-adiestramiento-%E2%80%98inherent>

of the Iraqi population in the face of the terrorist threat. Spain has deployed 7 military personnel.

### *EUNAVFOR ATALANTA*

The main objective of European Union mission ‘*European Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) - Operation Atalanta*’ is the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean. Its primary mission is thus to protect maritime traffic in the western Indian Ocean from the threat of piracy. As part of its mission, the operation also has the following objectives:

- Protect World Food Programme (WFP), African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other vulnerable vessels.
- Deter, prevent and repress piracy and armed robbery at sea.
- Monitor fishing activities off the coast of Somalia.
- Support other EU missions and international organisations working to strengthen maritime security and capacity in the region<sup>17</sup>.

### Description of the mission

- The EU Naval Force patrols between the areas of the Gulf of Aden, between the Horn of Africa region and Yemen, and the Indian Ocean and the Seychelles, an archipelago in East Africa. At present, resources involved in this operation are reduced to the Amphibious Assault Ship *Castilla* (L-52) and the maritime patrol aircraft *P-3 Orion*<sup>18</sup>.
- Timeline: In 2008, the UN Security Council passed Resolutions 1814, 1816 and 1838 concerning the situation in Somalia, due to increased piracy in the Indian Ocean, with the aim of protecting maritime traffic. Somali piracy had become a priority threat due to the number of ships crossing the Gulf of Aden each year. According to official figures, in 2008 alone there were 134 attacks and 40 vessels hijacked, including Spanish fishing boat *Playa de Bakio*<sup>19</sup>.
- In November 2008, the EU Council approved the creation of a naval air force, supported by UN Security Council Resolution 1816, and within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy, giving rise to Operation Atalanta in December 2008. It was not until January 2009 that the Spanish government approved the participation and dispatch of the first contingent to Djibouti.

<sup>17</sup> European Union (2012). *EU Naval Force – Somalia. Operation ATALANTA* [online]. Available at: <https://eunavfor.eu>

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 23 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/atalanta.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/atalanta.html)

- Somali piracy is not the only security threat. The presence of the terrorist group Al-Shabbaab and piracy practices linked to the financing of its activities<sup>20</sup> also highlight the relevance of the Atalanta mission in the region to guarantee security in the area.
- Spain has been participating in Operation Atalanta since January 2009 with the deployment of 50 military personnel and a P-3 *Orion* aircraft that form part of the *Orion* detachment in Djibouti. It also provides two vessels during inter-monsoon periods and one during the monsoon periods. Spain is currently the largest contributor to Operation Atalanta.
- In March 2019, Spain assumed command of Operation Atalanta led from the EU Headquarters at the Rota Naval Base (Cádiz). The operation is currently commanded by Vice Admiral Eugenio Díaz del Río.

### *Operation Sea Guardian*

NATO's maritime operation Sea Guardian is primarily aimed at researching and understanding the maritime environment in order to deter and combat terrorist organisations and to counter any threats that may emerge in this common global space. Specifically, the scope of the mission extends to the international waters of the Mediterranean Sea and the approaches to the Strait of Gibraltar.

#### Description of the mission

- Operation Sea Guardian is a maritime security operation whose main objective is to deepen knowledge of the maritime environment by combining various techniques and networks; and ensuring a reliable exchange of information between allied countries and international organisations related to the maritime environment. The main tasks of the operation, contained in the NATO Maritime Security Concept of Operations<sup>21</sup>, are:
  - Maritime support for the fight against terrorism.
  - Supporting knowledge of the maritime environment.
  - Contribution to regional maritime security capacity building<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Arcos Sánchez, A. (2014). El terrorismo de Al Shabab en Somalia [Al Shabab terrorism in Somalia] [online]. Madrid. [Accessed: 24 February 2021] Available at: <https://armada.defensa.gob.es/archivo/rgm/2014/05/cap04.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> NATO (2021). Missions: *Operation Sea Guardian* [online]. Northwood, Maritime Allied Command. Available at: <https://mc.nato.int/missions/operation-sea-guardian>

<sup>22</sup> Government of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 25 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/otan-sea-guardian.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/otan-sea-guardian.html)

- Subject to NATO approval, four additional permanent tasks may be carried out:
  - Upholding Freedom of Navigation.
  - Maritime Interdiction.
  - Combating the proliferation of Weapons of Maritime Destruction.
  - Protecting Critical Infrastructure<sup>23</sup>.
- The scope of Operation Sea Guardian is slightly wider than that of its predecessor, Operation Active Endeavour, as it includes the approaches to the Strait of Gibraltar, as well as the international waters of the Mediterranean Sea.
- Command: the operation is directed from NATO's Maritime Headquarters in Northwood, United Kingdom.
- Timeline: Operation Sea Guardian is a continuation of NATO's Operation Active Endeavour (OAE), a naval operation approved in 2001 following the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, which prompted the invocation of NATO's Article 5<sup>24</sup> *Collective Defence* for the first time in NATO history.

In July 2015, the North Atlantic Council approved the replacement of OAE with Operation Sea Guardian, a '*Non-Article 5*' mission<sup>25</sup>. November 2016 marked the start of the current mission and, with it, Spain's participation.

- Spain contributes the following resources to the operation<sup>26</sup>:
  - An Air Force Maritime Patrol aircraft.
  - A Spanish Navy submarine.
  - An offshore patrol boat ready for deployment.
  - A command ship with a staff available to command the operation.
  - Permanent diplomatic clearance to dock at Spanish naval bases.
  - Any military unit that transits the Sea Guardian's area of operations at any time becomes an associated support cooperating unit.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> NATO. Missions: *Operation Sea Guardian... Op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> A 'Non-Article 5' mission is referred to when mission approval is not covered by the principle of Collective Defence, enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's founding treaty.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 27 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/otan-sea-guardian.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/otan-sea-guardian.html)

*NATO Operation Active Fence - Turkey*

The main objective of the mission is to defend Turkey against ballistic missile attacks from Syria<sup>27</sup>. Spain remains interested in fortifying NATO's increased attention to the south in the face of unusual threats such as terrorism.

*Description of the mission*

- A collective and purely defensive mission.
- Timeline: the mission began in 2012, with Spain joining in 2015 — the first time Spain would deploy a ballistic missile defence system abroad — and has been extended to the present day.
- The mission is related to counter-terrorism because of its background and present risks. The use of Scud-D or Scud-C missiles<sup>28</sup> employed by the Bashar el-Assad regime against the rebels, as well as the risks of the Daesh terrorist organisation taking control of them, forced the Turkish government to ask NATO for protection.
- The system is coordinated in Germany by Aircom, NATO's air force allied command, which consolidates and distributes radar information from the Ballistic Missile Defence Operations Centre at Ramstein Air Command. Currently, 149 Spanish military personnel are deployed (a maximum of 150 and personnel rotation every 6 months) at the Incirlik air base (city of Adana).
- Weapon system. There were initially 5 Patriot batteries (PAC-2 model) operated by Germany, the Netherlands and the United States. In 2015, the US withdrew its detachment in the area by contributing to Turkey's air defence from its destroyers in the Mediterranean. In turn, the Netherlands withdrew its two batteries, replaced by Spain. The Spanish battery, deployed in Turkey, is composed of five launchers and a reserve, together with command and control components. The system is capable of dealing with all types of attack, from short-range to long-range and from very low to very high altitude. To do so, it uses MIM-104C guided missiles that destroy a variety of targets in an estimated 3-5 minutes.
- Achievements. By working as an active and committed NATO partner, Spain is helping to reduce the force's vulnerability to terrorist attack, which in turn helps to protect Adana's entire population of between 1.7 and 2 million.

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27 Government of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad, Support to Turkey* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 22 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/ayudaturquia.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/ayudaturquia.html)

28 ABC Blogs (2020). NATO. España renueva otros seis meses su misión OTAN de misiles Patriot en Turquía [Spain renews its NATO Patriot missile mission in Turkey for another six months] [online]. [Accessed: 21 February 2021]. Available at: <https://abcblogs.abc.es/tierra-mar-aire/otan/espana-misiles-turquia.html>

*NATO Operation Resolute Support (RSM) - Afghanistan*

The main objective of the mission is to assist, train and advise Afghan institutions. For more than 18 years, Spain has helped fight the insurgency and contributed to restoring the country.

**Description of the mission**

- Support and assistance mission.
- Timeline: Spain began its activity in Afghanistan with Operation Enduring Freedom, although it was in 2001, with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), that it made its greatest contribution. ISAF ended in 2014 and NATO's Resolute Support mission was launched.
- The mission is related to counter-terrorism because of its origins. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the Twin Towers by the Al-Qaida terrorist organisation prompted the NATO Security Council — for the first time in its history — to invoke Article 5 of the Treaty in support of NATO's Operation Enduring Freedom.
- Efforts: Since it began, Spain has contributed in Afghanistan by '*carrying out 28,000 patrols, crossing 3 million kilometres and deactivating explosives in more than 1,400 missions*<sup>29</sup>'. During the process of pacification and development of the Asian country, 102 Spanish soldiers died, 64 of them in the Yak42 plane crash<sup>30</sup>.
- The mission: during Operation Enduring Freedom, Spain provided helicopters, ships, airlift and medical support. Subsequently, with the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force), Spain focused on the rehabilitation of the province of Qala-i-Naw and the implementation of the field hospital (Role 2E) in Herat. In addition to its first actions in Kabul, where the first 350 military personnel were deployed.

Currently, through the Resolute Support mission, the Spanish military deployed in Afghanistan (27) contribute from their headquarters in Kabul to training and assisting Afghan forces. Furthermore, since 2018, one of the additional capabilities that Spain has contributed is the deployment of its Special

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29 Government Of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: Missions abroad, Resolute Support, Afghanistan* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 20 February 2021]. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/afganistan.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/afganistan.html)

30 Expósito, J.L. (2019). Los grandes contingentes [Large contingents]. *Revista Española de Defensa (Spanish Defence Review)* [online]. May, p. 3. [Accessed: 19 February 2017]. Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/gabinete/red/2019/05/p-60-63-red-361-30-anyos-misiones.pdf>

Operations Force (FOE in Spanish), through which it has trained and advised Afghan special operations forces<sup>31</sup>.

- Achievements: to sum up the mission, Spain has provided Afghanistan with ‘*more security and better infrastructure for citizens*’.

### *EUTM-Mali*

The main objective of the mission is to provide military training in southern Mali to Malians army infantry units in order to create an autonomous force that can defend the country against the Jihadist threat. The mission is the military pillar of European Union strategy in the region, which aims to advance the country’s political, humanitarian, security and defence capabilities.

The main tasks of the Spanish contingent in Mali are therefore<sup>32</sup>:

- Force training without direct participation in combat operations.
- Advising on chains of command and control.
- Recommendations on international humanitarian law.
- Supporting G5 Sahel to improve operability and cooperation with other armies in the region that are part of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Advising the G5 Sahel Joint Force Headquarters.
- Contributing to improving the Military Education System.

### Description of the mission

- EUTM-Mali is led by a Spanish brigadier general as of 12 January 2021, who is in command of 700 military personnel from 28 European countries<sup>33</sup>.
- The Spanish contingent is currently made up of 180 military personnel due to anti-Covid measures, although its maximum projection is 280 troops; Spain is the main contributor with 24% of the units. The bulk of the troops are located in Koulikoro (157 military personnel), as this is where training and education takes place.
- The contingent is currently made up of the 11th Brigade ‘Extremadura’ and troops from Marine Infantry Brigade ‘Tercio de Armada’.

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31 Somonte, R. (2018). *Visita al contingente español en Afganistán* [Visit to the Spanish contingent in Afghanistan]. *Revista Española de Defensa (Spanish Defence Review)* [online]. December, p. 2.

32 Defence Staff (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Operations abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 21 February 2021]. Available at: <https://emad.defensa.gob.es/operaciones/operaciones-en-el-exterior/43-UE-EUTM-Mali/>

33 *Ibidem*

- Timeline: Following the 2012 coup d'état (by the Tuaregs and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad) that led to the independence of the north of the country, in January 2013, the Malian government requested assistance from France and Operation Serval was launched. In view of the insecurity and the Malian government's request for assistance, Council Decision 2013/34/CFSP of 13 January 2013 was adopted, developing the structure and objectives of EUTM-Mali. Thus, the mission was launched both by UN Resolutions and EU Decisions, due to the risk of the humanitarian and security crisis in Mali spreading to the entire Sahel region, while at the same time posing a danger to Europe. In January 2013, the EU Council approved the training mission (which had been expressly requested by the Malian government) and in February the first Spanish soldiers arrived.

Operation EUTM-Mali led by Spain is thus contributing to the political stabilisation of the country, helping to re-establish the government's sovereignty over the northern territories and improving operations with the G5 Sahel Joint Force to strengthen security in the region.

### *EUTM-Somalia*

The main objective of the European Union mission in Somalia (EUTM-Somalia) is to train the Somali army so that it is fully capable of combating both terrorism and piracy. Thus, from the ground, it complements Operation Atalanta in order to guarantee security in the region for the benefit of both the Somali people and the international community.

The mission is based on 3 pillars<sup>34</sup>:

- Training
- Tutoring
- Strategic advice

### *Description of the mission*

- Spain is currently contributing 19 military personnel to the mission deployed in Mogadishu, serving alongside troops from 10 other EU countries and Serbia. The Spanish contingent is mainly involved in training light infantry

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<sup>34</sup> Council Of The European Union (2020). *Press releases* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 21 February 2021]. Available at:

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2020/12/23/operation-atalanta-eutm-somalia-and-eucap-somalia-mandates-extended-for-two-more-years/>

units, combat engineers and command units<sup>35</sup> in order to combat terrorist groups operating in the region, such as Al-Shabbaab.

- The mission's approach is to move progressively from direct tactical training to training Somali officers to take over the instruction of their troops.
- Timeline<sup>36</sup>: since the European Union launched the mission on 25 January 2010 (under UN Security Council Resolution 1872 of May 2009), Spain demonstrated its commitment by being the first country to assume command of the mission, initially led from Uganda. On 22 April of the same year, Congress authorised the dispatch of Spanish troops and on 4 May, the mission began operations led by the Spanish Armed Forces.
- The need to deploy an international mission in the area stemmed from the fact that, in 2010, Somalia was a failed state in which organised crime, terrorism and piracy operated with impunity. The absence of security forces or strong state structures also made the country a haven for pirate groups raiding ships in the Indian Ocean, which the EU had been fighting for years in Operation Atalanta.

EUTM-Somalia has therefore emerged as a land-based reinforcement to complement Atalanta's naval operations, seeking to train Somali army personnel to take charge of their country's security.

## The Armed Forces as guarantors of National Defence

In a globalised and interconnected world, emerging threats and risks have global repercussions that challenge the entire international community. An example of this is the emergence of Jihadist terrorism worldwide or global warming. This is why ensuring security abroad is essential to protect national territory.

The commitment and work of the Armed Forces translates into developing missions abroad and, as guarantors of national defence, into support for the Public Administration and the State Security Bodies.

### *Cooperation between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies*

The Armed Forces and State Security Bodies collaborate to guarantee security and defend the rule of law both within and beyond national borders. Therefore, at

35 Defence Staff (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Operations abroad* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 24 February 2021]. Available at: <https://emad.defensa.gob.es/operaciones/operaciones-en-el-exterior/44-EUTM-Somalia/>

36 Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (2018). *Analysis of the situation in Somalia*. Madrid, Ministry of Defence, CESEDEN.

national level, the Ministries of Defence and Interior collaborate actively, in solidarity and effectively, through joint activities and operations; they also draft strategic and operational documents in order to address risks and threats to national security.

### *Defence-Interior inter-ministerial collaboration*

At executive level, inter-ministerial collaboration in the field of security and defence is carried out through various bodies created to promote and foster coordination and cooperation in security matters. The National Security Council<sup>37</sup> is the body responsible for advising the President on the direction of the National Security System and National Security policy. It is also responsible for developing the National Security Strategy, with an update approved in December 2017.

The National Defence Council<sup>38</sup> advises the President on national defence matters. This body is made up of the President, Vice-President and the Ministers of Defence and the Interior, among others. According to Organic Law 5/2005 on National Defence<sup>39</sup>, National Defence Council duties include assisting the Government in managing crises and armed conflicts affecting National Defence.

In turn, the National Security Strategy<sup>40</sup> highlights the importance of promoting a ‘*common positioning*’ of all bodies responsible for security, as well as ‘*strengthening synergies and aligning state resources*’.

### *Collaboration between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies*

In recent decades, cooperation between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies has taken the form of various initiatives related to diplomacy, security and defence. According to the latest National Defence Directive, approved in June 2020, the Armed Forces are responsible for ensuring effective defence with the support of civil

37 Government Of Spain (2021). *Office of the Presidency of the Government: National Security Council* [online]. Madrid, National Security Department. [Accessed: 16 March 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/sistema-seguridad-nacional/consejo-seguridad-nacional#collapseFour>

38 Government Of Spain (2021). *Ministry of Defence: National Defence Council* [online]. Madrid, Spanish Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 16 March 2021]. Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/defensa/consejodefensa/index.html>

39 Spain (2005). Organic Law 5/2005, of 17 November, on National Defence. *Official State Gazette*, Madrid.

40 Government Of Spain (2017). *Presidency of the Government: National Security Strategy* [online]. Madrid, Presidency of the Government.

society and ‘*complemented by other State security instruments*<sup>41</sup>’, for example, the National Police Force and the Civil Guard, under the aegis of the Ministry of the Interior.

A clear example of Armed Forces-State Security Body coordination was Operation Balmis, launched throughout the country with the deployment of more than 2,500 troops belonging to the three armies, the Military Emergency Unit and the Royal Guard to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis.

The Armed Forces are involved in permanent missions<sup>42</sup> that highlight their commitment to citizens, their role as guarantors of national defence, and their support for State Security Bodies. These missions are complemented by support provided in situations considered ‘*of risk or disaster*’ to civilian authorities, in civil protection missions or relief to the civilian population.

In coordination with State Security Bodies, some of the specific Armed Forces permanent missions are:

- The Army performs tasks related to border protection and environmental protection. It also supports the health sector and helps in the fight against natural disasters<sup>43</sup>.
- The Spanish Navy actively collaborates with the Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO), part of the Ministry of the Interior, in the control of illicit trafficking. It also protects borders and monitors illegal immigration and mafias<sup>44</sup>.
- The Air Force carries out various missions in support of State Security Bodies in counter-terrorism matters. It also carries out fire-fighting operations and customs surveillance.
- The Military Emergency Unit is considered ‘a tool of State Action’ with the mission of complementing emergency services of the State and, in turn, other administrations such as the Autonomous Regions<sup>45</sup>.

In the field of counter-terrorism, coordination and efforts to combat terrorism have taken the form of strategic and operational documents such as the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the National Strategic Plan to Combat Violent Radicalisation (PEN-LCRV).

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41 Government Of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: National Defence Directive* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of Defence

42 Government Of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: permanent missions* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 16 March 2021]. Available at: <https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/espanna/>

43 *Ibidem*.

44 *Ibidem*.

45 Government Of Spain (2020). *Ministry of Defence: Military Emergency Unit* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of Defence. [Accessed: 16 March 2021]. Available at: [https://ume.defensa.gob.es/CONOCENOS/Bienvenida\\_del\\_General/](https://ume.defensa.gob.es/CONOCENOS/Bienvenida_del_General/)

### *National Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2019-2022)*

This document expresses the willingness of the Ministries of Interior and Defence and the National Security Department to combat the terrorist threat in a coordinated, cooperative and unified manner.

The strategy, which covers the period 2019-2022, has been drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior's Centre for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organised Crime (CITCO). It replaces the 2012 Comprehensive International Counter-Terrorism and Radicalisation Strategy (EICTIR).

The document identifies terrorism as '*one of the main threats facing our country*<sup>46</sup>', focusing both on the danger posed by potential attacks and the propaganda and narrative terrorist groups use on social media.

With the threat of Jihadist terrorism as a backdrop, State Security Bodies on the one hand, and the Spanish Armed Forces on the other, have the mission of: preventing and stopping attacks on national territory for the former, and deterring and carrying out an international projection of force for the latter. Both actors are of vital importance for an effective response to terrorism since, in order to achieve a secure state, the international environment must also be secure.

#### *Context*

Although the text focuses on issues such as the threat of returning Jihadists, the financing of terrorism and radicalisation in prisons, the importance of Armed Forces participation lies in the fact that in order to limit the impact of foreign terrorist groups in Spain, neighbouring countries must have strong and competent security forces capable of taking responsibility for the stability of their territories.

Thus, the main objective of the Armed Forces is to safeguard the integrity of Spain, and this involves acting abroad, cooperating with other nations to prevent terrorist groups from attacking Spain<sup>47</sup>. By minimising terrorist activity in other countries by training their Armed Forces and Security Bodies, it is possible to reduce the capacity to act and potential impact that terrorist activity these groups could have in our country.

For this reason, the contribution of the Armed Forces to the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy is one of the essential pillars in terms of operational action at national and international level<sup>48</sup>.

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46 Government Of Spain (2019). *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of the Interior.

47 Government Of Spain. *Ministry of Defence: EUTM-Mali Missions abroad* [online]. Madrid. Available at: [https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en\\_exterior/actuales/listado/eutm-mali.html](https://www.defensa.gob.es/misiones/en_exterior/actuales/listado/eutm-mali.html)

48 GESI. International Security Studies Group. *El empleo de las fuerzas armadas en la lucha contra el terrorismo* [The use of armed forces in the fight against terrorism] [online]. Available at: <http://www.seguridadinternacional>.

*Goals*

The Strategy is based on 4 well-defined pillars: Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Prepare response. To achieve this, cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior is essential because the main terrorist groups posing a threat to Spain operate from abroad<sup>49</sup>, in unstable countries where the presence of State Security Bodies has become essential to maintain the security of any police or civilian operation:

1. Prevention is implemented both on national territory and in third countries. As noted above, by strengthening the security forces of other countries prone to harbouring terrorist groups such as Mali, Somalia, Iraq or Afghanistan, we prevent those groups from operating in Spain.
2. By protecting the borders and communities of these insecure countries, we protect our own community. By bringing stability through international missions, the possible radicalisation of individuals in these countries and, therefore, sending Jihadist propaganda and narratives to Spanish territory is anticipated<sup>50</sup>. By reducing the vulnerability of societies abroad, we reduce our own vulnerability. State Security Bodies and the Armed Forces also cooperate in protecting national and European critical infrastructures in Spain, key elements for the proper functioning of our society (the Armed Forces would intervene at alert level 5)<sup>51</sup>.
3. In terms of pursuit, information gathered on the ground by the Armed Forces during their missions is essential for State Security Bodies to develop intelligence. This information makes it possible to identify potential terrorist targets in Spain or to Spanish citizens (or residents in Spain) displaced to combat zones who may return, to investigate their financing networks, weapons, training, etc., making it possible to establish operations and arrest criminals, as well as to dismantle the aid and logistics they receive from abroad.
4. Preparing a response would be the '*last frontier*' in guiding actions to reduce the consequences of a possible attack, i.e. when the previous elements have failed. At this point, State Security Bodies and the Armed Forces would act jointly in the event of a major terrorist attack requiring an increase of the anti-terrorist alert to level 5<sup>52</sup>. All necessary resources would be used against a threat to the integrity of the state.

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[es/?q=es/content/el-empleo-de-las-fuerzas-armadas-en-la-lucha-contra-el-terrorismo](https://www.interior.gob.es/content/el-empleo-de-las-fuerzas-armadas-en-la-lucha-contra-el-terrorismo)

49 Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy...* *Op. cit.*

50 Real Instituto El Cano. De Mali en peor [From Mali to worse]. *Seguridad y Defensa* [online]. Madrid. Available at: <https://blog.realinstitutoelcano.org/el-sahel-de-mali-en-peor/>

51 Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: Anti-Terrorist Alert Level* [online]. Madrid. Available at: <http://www.interior.gob.es/prensa/nivel-alerta-antiterrorista>

52 *Ibidem.*

### *Features*

This is a strategy with a comprehensive vision of the terrorist phenomenon, addressing the problem of violent extremism and seeking to defend society against the radicalisation and violent ideologies that lead to terrorism.

The document also covers terrorism as a global phenomenon, with international terrorist networks operating from multiple countries. As proof of this, Jihadist terrorism poses the greatest threat to our security today. Thus, of all terrorist-related arrests made since 2012, 70 % were related to Jihadism, 20 % to ETA and the remaining 10 % to other terrorist organisations<sup>53</sup>.

The decline of Daesh in Syria and Iraq marks a turning point. This is because, in the face of the caliphate's territorial loss, the strategy was geared towards increasing attacks in the countries of origin rather than seeking to displace fighters to conflict zones<sup>54</sup>.

### *Collaboration and mission*

The document emphasises the collaboration of all national institutions and international coalitions of which Spain is a member, including the Armed Forces and their international action.

The mission is to defend the values, freedoms and rights of Spaniards and their interests both in Spain and abroad. The goal to achieve this is to neutralise the terrorist threat, minimising the vulnerability of citizens and curbing the radicalisation of violent extremism<sup>55</sup>.

### *Pillars and lines of action*

The Strategy is divided into 4 fundamental pillars (Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Prepare response) developed by various lines of action, while each pillar has 3 areas of action: internal, external and global common spaces.

Cooperation between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies will mainly take place in the external sphere since, the fight against terrorism acquires a comprehensive approach through Armed Forces international missions.

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<sup>53</sup> Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy... Op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> ATALAYAR. Daesh vuelve a aumentar su amenaza en Siria e Irak, según la ONU [Daesh is once again increasing its threat in Syria and Iraq, according to the UN] [online]. Available at: <https://atalayar.com/content/daesh-vuelve-aumentar-su-amenaza-en-siria-e-irak-seg%C3%BAn-la-onu>

<sup>55</sup> Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy... Op.cit.*

- In the Prevent pillar, Spain promotes collaboration with NATO allies, the Council of Europe, the EU and the UN, increasing collaboration with police and intelligence services with these countries, given the evidence of the increasingly extensive international logistical and financial network that sustains terrorist activities.

This collaboration has resulted in the arrest of more than 100 people in 12 different countries, where the fight against Jihadist terrorism accounts for 60% of all operations<sup>56</sup>. This cooperation aims to identify factors that contribute to violent extremism and terrorism.

- The Protect pillar seeks to identify potential threats at national and international level. At national level, giving special importance to the protection of critical infrastructures by State Security Bodies and the Armed Forces where appropriate, and at international level, protecting Spanish citizens, institutions and interests in high-risk areas of great importance such as the Sahel or the Middle East (countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Central African Republic or Mali).

On this point, the document makes special reference to the '*exchange of information with Armed Forces on areas of deployment or with official representation abroad*<sup>57</sup>'. It also seeks to combat the proliferation of international trafficking in CBRN, weapons and explosives. Armed Forces-State Security Body coordination is essential in this regard since illegal arms can flow both from European countries to conflict zones, where they can be used in attacks against Spanish troops abroad, and from conflict zones to the national territory (taking advantage of lax regulations in neighbouring countries), given the possibility of being used by cells in our territory against the civilian population.

Virtual protection is also worthy of mention as the Armed Forces, through the Joint Cyberspace Command, monitor and defend against any cybernetic attack on Spanish sovereignty, including terrorist actions that could affect both troops and society in general.

- In the Pursuit pillar, it is worth highlighting CITCO's role as a link between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies as it is the centre that combines the intelligence provided by military and police units, enabling a constant flow of information and better coordination of anti-terrorist operations<sup>58</sup>. This communication makes it possible to carry out prospective work in order to foresee possible threats at national and international level, analysing the situa-

56 *Ibidem*.

57 *Ibidem*.

58 Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: Counter-Terrorism and Organised Crime Intelligence Centre* [online]. Available at: [http://www.interior.gob.es/prensa/noticias/-/asset\\_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/2624738](http://www.interior.gob.es/prensa/noticias/-/asset_publisher/GHU8Ap6ztgsg/content/id/2624738)

tion of countries in conflict where potentially dangerous terrorist groups are based, facilitating their neutralisation before they can attack Spanish interests.

The aim is therefore to strengthen bilateral instruments with other states to investigate and arrest terrorist elements, as well as multilateral instruments to carry out operations at NATO level (cooperating with other armies and security forces in countries such as Iraq or Afghanistan), at EU level through Europol and Eurojust, and at international level through Interpol.

This not only facilitates the investigation of terrorism as a crime, but also increases the security of third countries through training missions to improve their counter-terrorism capabilities and create a secure environment for Spain, because if its neighbours are stable, our borders will be more secure.

- Finally, the Prepare response pillar seeks to counter the effect of a terrorist action, minimising consequences and seeking to restore normality. Accordingly, by coordinating with allies in the state's external action, it aims to reduce the vulnerability to terrorist acts of citizens, companies and national interests abroad.

One of the main tools in this area where cooperation between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence can be observed is<sup>59</sup>:

*'Strengthen international cooperation, especially in the EU area and in the Mediterranean (area where police-military coordination operations in the fight against arms trafficking, among others, are carried out)*<sup>60</sup>.

Additionally, the National Counter-Terrorism Strategy presents the Specialised Counter-Terrorism Committee (a National Security Council support body) as a point of contact between the Ministry of Defence on the one hand, and the National Police Force General Information Commissioner Office and the Civil Guard Information Headquarters on the other. The latter represent the Ministry of the Interior and are the State Security Bodies responsible for the fight against terrorism at national and international level<sup>61</sup>.

This Strategy stands as a *'cornerstone'* to articulate Spain's actions against terrorism, with a view to safeguarding National Security and Spanish interests within and beyond our borders.

The fight against terrorism is thus considered a coordinated task between State Security Bodies and the Armed Forces, each in its own sphere of action, in order to achieve the four pillars of this Strategy. A global struggle that requires support and

<sup>59</sup> Government of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy... Op. cit.*

<sup>60</sup> Government of Spain. *Ministry of Defence: Operation Sea Guardian. Missions abroad... Op.cit.*

<sup>61</sup> Government of Spain. *National Security Department. Specialised Counter-Terrorism Committee* [online]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/comit%C3%A9-especializado-contraterrorismo#collapseTwo>

cooperation with allied countries through international organisations such as the EU, NATO, UN, OSCE and other organisations or coalitions in which Spain participates.

With this document, Spain reiterates its anti-terrorist commitment to ‘make use of all the means of the rule of law to achieve its defeat<sup>62</sup>’ through the coordinated action of the State Security Bodies, Armed Forces and Intelligence Services.

### *National Strategic Plan to Combat Violent Radicalisation (PEN-LCRV)*

The role of the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence has taken on vital importance in the 2015 PEN-LCRV. The Plan focuses on the former National Security Strategy of 2013, renewed in 2017 and due to be updated in 2021.

In addition to the future NSS 2021, the Ministry of the Interior is expected to reach its commitment to develop a new ‘*National Strategic Plan to Prevent and Combat Violent Radicalisation*<sup>63</sup>. A concept also covered in the 2019 Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which establishes among its ‘*priority axes*’ the revision, updating and development of PEN-LCRV<sup>64</sup>.

However, in view of the possible changes to come, the last six years have also demonstrated the importance of the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces in the fight against violent Jihadist radicalisation, objectives that were already set out when drafting the PEN-LCRV.

### *Context*

Without prejudice to how PEN-LCRV focuses on all kinds of radicalisation, current and future threats to work on come from Jihadist terrorism. Coordination between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence thus acquires relevance since the Armed Forces are deployed in 11 counter-terrorism missions.

The Armed Forces therefore contribute to the implementation of the European Union Internal Security Strategy<sup>65</sup>, the National Security Strategy and the Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

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62 Government Of Spain. *Ministry of the Interior: National Counter-Terrorism Strategy... Op. cit.*

63 National Security Strategy (2020). *National - Combating terrorism/organised crime* [online]. Madrid, National Security Department. [Accessed: 28 March 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/en/actualidad/seguridad-nacional-ultima-hora/nacional-%E2%80%93-lucha-contra-terrorismocrimen-organizado>

64 Government Of Spain (2019). *Office of the Presidency of the Government: National Security Department. National Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2019* [online]. Madrid, National Security Department. [Accessed: 12 March 2021]. Available at: <https://www.dsn.gob.es/es/documento/estrategia-nacional-contra-terrorismo-2019>

65 AWARE. *From Europe* [online]. [Accessed: 08 March 2021]. Available at: <https://euaware.eu/desde-europa/>

## Goals

Among the various objectives of the Strategy, cooperation between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces abroad is indispensable for three reasons:

- The phenomenon of violent radicalisation is a national necessity that crosses borders.
- It is indispensable to comply with EU Guidelines on Combating Radicalisation and Violent Extremism. These guidelines warn that:

*‘Combatants should continue to return to their families and recall that the efforts made at European level must be matched by the implementation of all EU activities abroad: (North Africa, Western Balkans, Turkey)’<sup>66</sup>.*

- PEN-LCRV is comprehensive and therefore involves and obliges all ministries involved in the coordination of public security<sup>67</sup>.

## Features

The four main characteristics of PEN-LCRV are that it is a *‘strategic, national, efficient and coherent’* Plan .

However, defining it as *‘national’* does not imply reducing it only to the domestic sphere since, as the Plan itself explains, it encompasses *‘all areas of interest to Spain’<sup>68</sup>* and nowadays the boundaries between external and internal security have become blurred.

Security today cannot be compartmentalised, threats and risks feed off each other and transcend our borders. It is not just domestic or national. In addition to regional and home-grown threats, Spain faces global threats. An effective security strategy must be capable of regional, national, European and global responses<sup>69</sup>.

## Plan and ‘Where’

The Plan is a strategic document and therefore has a structure that decrees *‘where, how and when’*.

66 *Ibidem*.

67 Government Of Spain (2013). *Ministry of the Interior: National Strategic Plan to Combat Violent Radicalisation* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of the Interior. [Accessed: 09 March 2021]. Available at: <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/plan-estrategico-nacional-de-lucha-contr-la-radicalizacion-violenta/plan-estrategico-nacional/caracteristicas-del-plan>

68 *Ibidem*.

69 Government of Spain (2011). *Spanish Security Strategy. Everyone’s responsibility*. Madrid, Government of Spain. Available at: <http://www.lamoncloa.gob.es> and the Catalogue of Publications of the General State Administration <http://publicacionesoficiales.boe.es>

The ‘*where*’ distinguishes 3 areas of action, with the ‘*external*’ area being where the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces play the most important role.

*‘Outside national territory. The national coordination structure will be aware of the State’s external action on the phenomenon of radicalisation and violent extremism and will provide proposals to the government, depending on the action to be taken. Coordination of the proposed measures will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, and implementation of each department concerned, highlighting the role played by the Armed Forces abroad [Interests and area of influence]’<sup>70</sup>.*

### *How and when*

The Plan also sets out ‘*three functional areas*’ (before, during and after) on which specific actions should be carried out: ‘*prevention, action and monitoring*’.

As for the *how*, note that the Spanish security strategy has tools to defend both exclusively national interests — in this case those of PEN-CLRV — and those shared with our partners and allies in the EU, NATO, OSCE and other organisations. The most important tools to be put into joint use are the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies<sup>71</sup>.

Thus, although PEN-LCRV has established the internal sphere as a priority, taking the local geographic area as the main scenario and focusing action on local groups and State Security Bodies, in the external domain, the Plan grants coordination to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Coordination.

The Plan therefore provides that the national coordination structure will be aware of the State’s external efforts in all matters affecting the phenomenon of radicalisation and violent extremism. However, in addition to important information work, the Armed Forces may be called upon to act in all three functional areas:

- Prevent (attendance and participation in international fora).
- Monitor (support, training or collaboration with other countries).
- Act (dispatching armed forces or State Security Bodies in risk scenarios).

### *Structure*

The Plan establishes a single national inter-ministerial structure comprising members from 12 ministries, including the Ministry of Defence. Coordination is led by the Ministry of the Interior, implementing and developing the Plan in its entirety.

<sup>70</sup> Government Of Spain (2013). *Ministry of the Interior: National Strategic Plan to Combat Violent Radicalisation* [online]. Madrid, Ministry of the Interior 2013... *Op. cit.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibidem.*

Such requirements highlight how coordination between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defence, as well as Security Bodies and the Armed Forces, is a key enabler for the successful development of PEN-LCRV.

## Future challenges

April 2019 marked 70 years since the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg recalled its creation by declaring that NATO is the only place where Europe and North America *discuss, decide and act* together on security and defence issue. He also made it clear that all member countries remain united *one for all and all for one*<sup>72</sup>.

The current security and defence landscape, characterised by a complex and changing world, highlights the relevance of national and international cooperation and coordination. On national territory, through the coordination of different public administration bodies, the private sector and civil society. At international level, by promoting active cooperation among the states of the international community and the adoption of new strategies to combat risks and threats to global security and well-being.

This paper aims to highlight a number of forward-looking areas of action through which cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism could be improved.

### *National level: Armed Forces and State Security Body cooperation*

At national level, the challenges facing Spain are not few, as stated in the 2017 National Security Strategy. To meet current and emerging challenges, it is essential to foster cooperation between the Armed Forces and State Security Bodies on national territory and across borders. Domestic presence of the Spanish army would complement and facilitate the work of the National Police, the Civil Guard and local police forces, mainly in the fight against terrorism, citizen security and migratory flows.

At executive level, it is clear that a permanent flow of information between the Ministries of Defence and the Interior through multidisciplinary working groups and bodies such as CITCO, the National Security Council and the National Defence Council must continue. In the field of counter-terrorism, it would be interesting to approve the creation of a body that would focus its efforts on combating the expansion, radicalisation and recruitment of new terrorists, in line with the strategic documents mentioned in this paper.

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72 *La Vanguardia* (2019). Live: NATO Secretary General's press conference [online]. London. Available at:

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/internacional/20191204/472056548441/conferencia-prensa-otan-londres-jens-stoltenberg-directo-video-seo-lv.html>

In addition to collaboration within our borders, the presence of State Security Bodies and their experience in the fight against terrorism would add great value to international missions to combat terrorism, providing advice and support to the Spanish Armed Forces and the armies of allied countries.

### *International level: involvement of the International Community*

International Community States have constantly had to combine efforts to address security threats throughout history. Time has shown that countries are stronger when they work together towards common goals. Therefore, in view of the future and the possible risks that may emerge, it is essential to promote common ground among the international community in order to adopt new forms of cooperation and strategies to combat threats to global security, including terrorism. Strategies capable of responding to current and future needs and risks.

The emergence of new global common spaces such as cyberspace has led to the development of hybrid threats, characterised by combining conventional and novel elements that have taken advantage of the consolidation of new information and communication technologies. Terrorist groups have adapted their expansion strategies to cyberspace by exploiting advantages such as low cost, speed and anonymity. For this reason, the international community and international organisations must join forces to adopt new resolutions on cybersecurity.

Recent successive cyber-attacks by states, cyber-criminals and terrorist organisations highlight the need for new international missions with cyberspace as their sole sphere of action. The creation of a Spanish cyber army under NATO will be key to dealing with future threats.

### *Shift from the Middle East to the Sahel*

The Sahel region is currently the main security concern for Mediterranean countries and, therefore, for Spain. Jihadist terrorism, organised crime, clandestine immigration networks and human trafficking, on the one hand, and the demographic, climate and economic crises ravaging the region on the other, make it a focus of major interest for our country.

Since 2020, Spain's foreign policy has been shifting: having met the military objectives set in the Middle East (Iraq and Afghanistan), troop deployments are being reduced in order to increase them in missions in the Sahel. The geographical proximity of this area and the great impact events there have on Spain's national security only underscore the need to increase Spain's military presence and, therefore, its international engagement in the Sahel countries.

Other EU countries such as France have been calling for increased EU efforts in the region for years. This request is justified by events such as the elimination in Mali

of Al Qaeda's North African leader, Abdelmalek Drukdel, in June 2020, showing the effectiveness of preventive efforts both domestically and in Europe.

In June 2020, Pedro Sánchez reiterated Spain's commitment to this region at the Sahel Summit (Mauritania). The President of Spain announced that, in addition to increasing the number of troops assigned to the EUTM-Mali mission (up to 530 troops, as the mission's mandate now includes training armed forces from all G5 Sahel countries), experts from the Civil Guard's Special Training Centre in Logroño will train the gendarmerie of G5 Sahel countries.

Increased presence in the Sahel will imply reducing capabilities in missions such as Afghanistan, a theatre of operations where the agreement between the Kabul government and the Taliban and the progressive withdrawal of the US reduces the need for Spanish deployment.

Spain currently provides almost 25 per cent of military troops for EU missions in Africa, and is one of the main drivers of stabilisation on the continent, along with France. Spain's military presence is vital not only in protecting national borders, but also those of all EU countries.

Working to reduce the presence of terrorist groups in the Sahel will contribute to controlling instability in the region by enabling local government institutions to establish a rule of law model in their respective territories, thus allowing criminal and terrorist networks to be efficiently pursued before they operate in Spain.

Thus, increased military deployment in the Sahel in the coming years, to the detriment of missions in the Middle East, indicates that the main threats to Spain's security are to be found in Africa.

### *Increasing police missions*

However, increasing military presence is not everything. As we have seen, the Sahel countries are a refuge for Jihadist groups, an area of operations for criminal organisations dedicated to drug trafficking and smuggling, as well as the main migratory route from countries such as Senegal and Mauritania to Spain.

The Sahel faces problems that cannot be solved with military resources. Armed groups operating in the region are engaged in drug trafficking, Jihadist radicalisation and support for secessionism (such as the 2012 and 2020 coups in Mali), problems that require an approach beyond conventional military force. Therefore, increasing police cooperation with these countries and the presence of State Security Body members in international missions is vital to ensure complete stabilisation for the region.

While military intervention and training local armed forces is necessary in the first phase to create a secure environment and combat problems such as the direct threat from terrorist groups, once this threat is significantly reduced, preventive policing is paramount.

Once the Jihadists' military strength has been neutralised, police forces have considerable advantages. In addition to the extensive experience of both the National Police and Civil Guard in counter-terrorism, their action in a foreign country allows them to train and cooperate with local police to pursue cells that are still operating on the ground. This is important because conventional armed forces do not have the means or expertise to investigate and prevent terrorist acts against civilians, or to neutralise criminal organisations that finance terrorist activity or supply them with weapons. Moreover, in the eyes of local public opinion, the presence of a foreign contingent of troops could be seen as an '*occupying force*', a situation that does not occur with the police and state security bodies do not have the war component that characterises an army.

Currently, the National Police and the Civil Guard (with its dual police-military aspect) participate in missions in the Sahel region, specifically: UN missions in countries such as Central Africa, Sierra Leone, and EU missions in Niger and Mali. Missions involved members of State Security Bodies are based on advising and training local security forces in order to provide them with self-management tools. This is an extremely important task because these countries generally have little expertise in the pursuit and prevention of crime.

For example, officers in Mali participate in the EU's GARSI project, which aims to improve security in areas where there is little state presence (which is common, hindered by desert geography and poor communication infrastructure). Other missions such as EUCAP Sahel Niger and EUCAP Sahel Mali collaborate in training the police and judicial sector.

Individually, the Civil Guard leads the GARSI Sahel mission to train Rapid Action Groups for surveillance and intervention in the Sahel; and the National Police leads the ECI Niger project (Joint Investigation Team) in the fight against criminal networks linked to illegal immigration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The Spanish Armed Forces and State Security Bodies must continue to cooperate to fight insecurity beyond our borders, not only to combat terrorism in third countries, but also to guarantee the national security of Spain and its interests.

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