The Legal Concept of Terrorism and its Implication under International Law and Municipal Law

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Prior to the deadly 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in the United States, history had not been a stranger to the danger of terrorist attacks. In fact, terrorism spans the entire globe. It is only after the shock of 9/11 that the world, in particular the United States, decided to combat terrorist attacks. In fact, the United Nations recognized that combating terrorism is a collective responsibility of the international community.

While terrorism is a real problem and threat to the international community, it should be taken into consideration that there is no definition of terrorism common to all jurisdictions. It is a pervasive legal concept; some jurisdictions would treat is a mere criminal act, which may become problematic in certain instances. This lack of consensus on what constitutes terrorism may be an indication that it is, in fact, an act with an inescapable political nature.

The United Nations' adoption of a global strategy paves the way for combating terrorism, which hinges upon international cooperation is still dependent on domestic laws for implementation. For the compliance of domestic implementation with the global strategy against terrorism, it is important for the international community to come up with a common definition for acts of terrorism.