

## CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPLICATIONS OF TERRORISM IN THE SPORTS MOVEMENT

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### ABSTRACT:

*REGARDED AS A CHARACTERISTIC OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR, THE SPORTS MOVEMENT HAS BECOME A COMPLEX SOCIAL PHENOMENON IN THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, WITH SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND EVEN SECURITY IMPLICATIONS. THE MEDIA POTENTIAL OF SPORTS COMPETITIONS, AMPLIFIED BY THE INTEREST OF PUBLIC OPINION FOR SPORTS IN GENERAL, AND BY THE TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTIONS OF THE MEDIA IN THE LAST DECADES, HAS BEEN SPECULATED BY TERRORIST ENTITIES, WHO HAVE MADE THEIR PRESENCE FELT AT THE MAJOR COMPETITIONS, INSTRUMENTING A DIVERSE RANGE OF TERRORIST ACTS, THROUGH WHICH THEY SOUGHT TO ACHIEVE THEIR OWN GOALS, WHICH SUBSTANTIATE AND LEGITIMIZE, IN THEIR OPINION, THEIR VERY EXISTENCE.*

*THE AUTHOR PRESENTS A DIVERSE CASE HISTORY IN THE FIELD, ENCOUNTERED AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, HIGHLIGHTING THE MOTIVATION FOR COMMITTING TERRORIST ACTS, THE MODE OF OPERATION, THE TYPOLOGY OF THE TERRORIST, THE PREMISES OF COMMITTING TERRORIST ACTIONS, THEIR CONSEQUENCES IN THE SECURITY PLAN, AND LAST, BUT NOT LEAST, THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN BY AUTHORITIES OR THOSE REQUIRED IN THE FUTURE TO LIMIT THE CONSEQUENCES IN CASE OF THEIR OCCURRENCE.*

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**KEYWORDS:** SPORTS MOVEMENT, COMPETITION, TERRORISM, RADICALIZATION, SECURITY, PREVENTION, COOPERATION

### 1. THE SPORTS MOVEMENT IN SOCIETY

Physical education has been a feature of human behavior since ancient times<sup>2</sup> and until now, being at the same time a central element of the concept of education, integrated into the principle that defined the inextricable connection between body and spirit, generically entitled

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<sup>2</sup> In Ancient Egypt, the importance given to physical education is highlighted by the numerous artistic representations, among which the beauty of the human body and the expressiveness of the muscular strength are emphasized with great accuracy.

Ancient Greece has undergone an exceptional development of physical education, items of evidence being the numerous bas-reliefs in which scenes of battle are represented, or literary documents such as the Homeric Poems or the Legend of the Argonauts.

In the Roman Empire, by excellence with a vocation as a conqueror, the physical exercises enjoyed the attention only insofar as they could contribute to the development of the physical and moral qualities of the soldiers who formed the impressive imperial military apparatus.

"mens sana in corpore sano", which had to contribute to the attainment of the ideal of the old Athenians, "kalos kai agatos", meaning "handsome and brave man".<sup>3</sup>

Throughout history there have appeared and developed, as a distinct line of the sports movement, the "agonistic" represented by a diverse range of sports games, which stimulate competition, and highlight the physical qualities, ambition, effort and the dedication of participants. Competition requires work, sacrifice, self-reliance, will and passion, it often becomes a "story" about self-improvement of human performance, but also about tolerance, humanity and fair play.

Physical education and sport, the sports movement in general, has become in the last century a social phenomenon of exceptional complexity, which encompasses social, cultural, economic and even political and security values<sup>4</sup>, whose meanings cannot be fully understood unless their interrelation is taken into account. The importance of the sports movement has determined more and more segments of the social life, from opinion makers to state decision-makers<sup>5</sup>, to pay special attention to the phenomenon, thus trying to maximize the image capital which was acquired by associating it with the competition as a whole or with the winners of the races, true heroes in the collective mind.

Sport is a true "religion" of our day, if we "take into consideration the vocabulary associated with both concepts: faith, devotion, worship, ritual, dedication, sacrifice, commitment, spirit, prayer, suffering, festival and celebration"<sup>6</sup>, or if we make an analogy between some characteristic terms: sports arenas are considered as places of worship, sports superstars are assimilated to the gods of religions, emperors or kings; sports trophies are regarded as religious icons, exponential sportsmen who have lost their lives are considered as saints; owners of sports clubs are assimilated to the high religious prelates, reporters and journalists are taken as scribes of religious traditions.<sup>7</sup>

Sports competitions have also become actual "tools" for promoting or influencing the political decision, in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, marked by dynamic and unpredictable international developments.<sup>8</sup>

In the context of altering the security equation at regional or global level, both during the "Cold War" and later, caused by various problems of economic, political, ethnic or religious nature<sup>9</sup>, and against the background of the increasing role of the sports movement in society,

<sup>3</sup>Cojocaru.A. M., *History of Physical Education and Sport*, ("Romania de Maine" Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Flavius Cristian Mărcău and Mihaela Andreea Ciorei, "The vision about international security at the beginning of the XXI century", *European Scientific Journal*, April 2013 edition vol.9, No.11, 301-311

<sup>5</sup>1. See the case of Adolf Hitler who, out of a desire to praise the Nazi regime, associated his own image, and the image of the regime he was leading, to the 1936 edition of the Olympic Games in Munich, stating "The Nazi Party will pay for the whole organization of the Olympics. We will organize the most spectacular Olympics that have ever been". 2. The association of the image of President Vladimir Putin with the sports phenomenon is notorious and has been the subject of numerous media approaches. See <https://www.rfi.ro/special-paris-61674-descriptarea-unei-imagine-putin-pre-edintele-sport/> In an article published in *Le Point*, the philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy considers Putin's message, beyond the passion for sports, to be as political as possible: he really wants to tell the world "attention, I am healthy and robust, I have a perfect physical form and the regime I incarnate is just like me, robust and made just to last."

<sup>6</sup>Daniel L. Wann, Merrill J. Melnick, Gordon W. Russell, Dale G. Pease, *Sport Fans: The Psychology and Social Impact of Spectators*, (Routledge, London, 2001), 198-200.

<sup>7</sup><https://ziarullumina.ro/societate/stiinta-si-tehnologie/sportul-forma-populara-de-religie-71928.html>

<sup>8</sup>See the mutual sabotage, by non-participation, by the US, and, respectively, the USSR (and other countries in the communist block), of the Olympic Games in Moscow (1980) and Los Angeles (1984).

<sup>9</sup> Flavius Cristian Mărcău, „Central and Eastern Europe – necessary stages of democracy construction”, *Research and Science Today*, No. 2(8)/2014, November 2014, 93-102

the major sports competitions have offered, in the last half century, opportune moments for fundamentalists and warriors, terrorists of our times, to direct their plans and criminal attacks, as a form of expressing their anger, revenge and vindictive feelings, against innocent people involved in the sports movement, competitors, members of the sports delegations or mere spectators in the stands.

## 2. TERRORISM-SOCIAL THREAT

The evolution of society has been marked in the last half century by terrorism<sup>10</sup>, a threat that originated in distant history, but which has imprinted in a completely particular way on humanity with the emergence of globalization, the phenomenon of the sports movement not being avoided<sup>11</sup>.

An eloquent definition of the terrorist phenomenon is that formulated by Quintiliano Saldana: "the method of mastering the masses and paralyzing the action of its members - through the means of psychological constraint and criminal intimidation - the result is a state of violence caused by means of isolation, a succession of acts of violence, executed in order to inspire terror in a certain environment, and even through its internationalization."<sup>12</sup>

Regardless of how to approach the terrorist phenomenon<sup>13</sup>, academic, institutional or public rhetoric, the common denominator of the elements found in the definition of a "terrorist act" are: the use of threat, force and violence to create the feeling of panic and fear among the target audience; the lack of a direct causal link, in most situations, between the victims of the terrorist act and what the terrorists consider to be an injustice they claim; rigorous planning of actions to maximize the chance of success; the existence of political motivations that underpin and legitimize in the view of terrorists the act taken<sup>14</sup>.

The goals pursued by terrorists may be material in nature (obtaining money or other material benefits and advantages), may have an ideological sub-layer (religious fanaticism, struggle for liberation and emancipation, undermining state authority for the purpose of gaining political power), or may be determined by vindictive feelings that aim at the revenge and punishment of certain individuals or collective entities, all of them circumscribed to an approach subsumed to a political interest, this being in fact the essential element that separates and individualizes terrorist acts from other criminal acts<sup>15</sup>.

The explanation of the term "terrorism" must necessarily start from "the fundamental elements of definition, respectively: the means used (violent actions most often directed at the unemployed population), the method used (kidnappings, sabotage, attacks, criminal acts, induction of the state of panic), the target (mainly non-combatant civilians or important personalities from a political or social point of view), the aim pursued (to produce a major change in the political spectrum), the participants (individuals or groups who declare

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<sup>10</sup>The term has a military connotation: terror, terroris means fear, , provoked premeditated, by threat or intimidation.

<sup>11</sup> Flavius Cristian Mărcău and Mihaela Andreea Ciorei, "The role of intelligence in the fight against terror", *European Scientific Journal*, January 2013 edition vol.9, No.2, 1-11

<sup>12</sup>Bodunescu, I., *Global Terrorism-Phenomenon*, (Tipoalex Publishing House, Alexandria, 2002), 52.

<sup>13</sup>Danila, O., Neagoe, V., *Terrorism, a psychological approach*, (Military Ed., Bucharest, 2011), 20;

<sup>14</sup> Flavius Cristian Mărcău and Mihaela Andreea Ciorei, "The role of intelligence in the fight against terror", 1-11

<sup>15</sup> Flavius Cristian Mărcău and Mihaela Andreea Ciorei, "The role of intelligence in the fight against terror", 1-11

themselves without state membership, although some experts consider that certain recent terrorist acts were committed by exponents of the "terrorist states" and even on their behalf).<sup>16</sup>

The question thus arises: what does a modern terrorist look like and what motivates him to commit the abominable terrorist act? We will try to answer by saying that they are individuals definitely motivated by ideologies of different values, more than just personal motives; they are isolated and extinguished, often "lonely wolves", with obvious tendencies towards violence, which consider themselves unfulfilled on a personal level and seek a meaning in life; they are often involved in other forms of organized crime, from drug trafficking, street crime, migration and person trafficking, to cybercrime, arms trafficking and explosive substances trafficking, all of which provide them with the necessary funds to commit the terrorist act; they are using a low technology, often not specific to the armory of the traditional fighter, executed at command or at random, as a form of expression of terror.

### **3. TERRORISM IN THE SPORTS MOVEMENT**

The experience of the last half-century shows that terrorism has used sports events as targets, due to its exceptional imaging capabilities and the ease of transmission, diversity and spread of the message in the context of public opinion for the sports competition. We will continue to present the most eloquent preoccupations of terrorist entities, individual or collective, of putting into practice such actions during the development of major sports competitions, some countered by the competent authorities and others unfortunately materialized, trying to highlight the context of their development, the mode of operation, the motivation for the action, the profile of the terrorist entity involved and the adverse consequences in the security plan.

#### **a. Terrorist attacks at the Munich Olympics, 1972**

The roots of the terrorist attacks from this great sports competition are found in the historical Israeli-Palestinian conflict, generated in 1948, with the founding of the state of Israel on a territory claimed by Palestinians, and amplified by the six-day war of June 1967, after which Israel occupied militarily important territories in the Gaza Strip, Golan Plateau, Sinai, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, simultaneous with the deployment of important colonies of Jewish citizens in the territories historically inhabited by Palestinians.

The revivalist sentiments of the Palestinians, amid the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, led to the conduction of terrorist acts by the terrorist group Black September<sup>17</sup>, whose mode of operation consisted of taking hostages and killing by shooting, against the Israeli sports delegation, that took part in September 1972 at the Olympic Games in Munich.<sup>18</sup> The disastrous consequences of the terrorist attack<sup>19</sup> were possible as a result of a number of factors, including: the refusal of Israeli government authorities to conduct negotiations with the terrorist group and to respond to its claims<sup>20</sup>; the interdiction by the German authorities to intervene at

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<sup>16</sup>Peptan, C., Terrorism - security threat in the context of globalization, „Constantin Brancusi” University Targu-Jiu, International Scientific Conference “Education, Justice, Administration” -Targu Jiu, April 20, 2019;

<sup>17</sup>Eight fighters were involved in the terrorist acts, recruited from Palestinian camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon;

<sup>18</sup>The competition represented a record of participation so far, being registered in competitions 7173 athletes, of which 1059 women, from 121 countries, which represented a good opportunity for the terrorist organization to publicize its actions at global level.

<sup>19</sup>In addition to the execution of the 11 members of the Israeli sports delegation, a German policeman and five Palestinians, members of the terrorist group, were killed in the rescue operations. In sport, the terrorist action led to the suspension of the entire competition for a period of two days.

<sup>20</sup>The terrorist group demanded the release of 234 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons in exchange for the release of the members of the Israeli delegation.

the scene of the attacks of the Israeli specialized forces, the deficiencies in the organization of the security detail of the Israeli delegation during the competition<sup>21</sup>; the defective intervention of the German police forces<sup>22</sup> in the operations of rescue and release of the hostages, in the context in which they did not have specialized troops for such situations.

In response to these terrorist acts, on September 9, 1972, the Israeli air forces launched an extensive bombing operation on the basis of the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine from Syria and Lebanon, concurrently with the start of the secret operation by Mossad generically called "The Wrath of God", whose purpose was to eliminate the moral perpetrators of the Munich massacre, all of which led to the alteration of the Middle East security equation and the perpetuation of a state of uncertainty that would persist in the region for several decades.

### **b. Terrorist attacks at the Atlanta Olympics, 1996**

The competition took place in a geopolitical context marked by the end of the "Cold War" and by the efforts to regulate internationally the old conflicts between the two centers of power that have made their mark on the history of the last half century. It also marked a century since the Olympic Games became the most important international sports competition.

Benefiting from an exceptional sports infrastructure and a tailor-made sports marketing, "Centenary Games" was the most modern edition in the entire history of Olympism until then, which used the most revolutionary technological innovations to optimize the functionality of the sports arenas and improve sports performance. The irony of the fate was that just the sports marketing<sup>23</sup> facilities offered the favoring factor for the implementation of a terrorist act, resulting in the loss of three people's lives and the injury of a hundred others. The author, Eric Rudolph, a far-right activist, former explosives expert in the US military, was marked by profound ideological motivations, considering that "the Olympics promotes the values of socialism".

The reactions of the international community to the criminal act were prompt, context in which President Bill Clinton publicly condemned the "evil act of terrorism" and gave assurances that the United States would take all measures to identify the author and to refer it to justice.<sup>24</sup>

### **c. The Sri Lankan Marathon terrorist attack, 2008**

The Sri Lankan Marathon, on September 6, 2008, organized on the occasion of the celebration of the New Year of Tamil, was marked by a bloody suicide terrorist attack that took place during the opening ceremony, resulting in the death of 11 people and the serious injury of 90 others. The victims of the attack were government personalities (Jeyaraj Fernandopulle, Minister of Highways and Roads Development), sports personalities (Olympic marathon

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<sup>21</sup>The report of the commission of inquiry constituted by the Israeli authorities shows a "lack of clarity, problems and contradictory procedures", responsible being considered the head of security at the Israeli embassy in Germany. (<https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/atentatul-care-a-schimbata-lumea-munchen-1972>).

<sup>22</sup>Former Mossad chief Zvi Zamir claimed that "the Germans did not make the least effort to save lives, they did not take the least risk to save people, (...) they did everything end this story, at any cost, so as not to disturb the Olympic Games (...) there is no follow-up plan and no means to improvise an alternative plan". (<https://www.historia.ro/sectiune/general/articol/atentatul-care-a-schimbata-lumea-munchen-1972>).

<sup>23</sup>Inside the Centennial Olympic Park, the entertainment venue in the vicinity of the sports arenas, a homemade explosive device concealed in a military backpack was detonated.

<sup>24</sup>Being involved in three other attacks on the territory of the state of Alabama, with the same mode of operation, the author was identified, and after being on the FBI's list of most wanted fugitives for five years, he was arrested and convicted in 2005 to four consecutive life sentences, without the possibility of parole.

runner Kuruppu Karunaratne, and athletics team coach, Lakshman de Alwis) or mere citizens present as spectators.

The attack was claimed by the Tamil Tiger rebel group<sup>25</sup>, considered to be the bloodiest terrorist organization in the world, given the number of casualties, which exceeds that of other terrorist organizations much better known on a global scale. It occurred amid escalating divergences between government authorities and representatives of the rebel group during the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009), which resulted in tens of thousands of casualties<sup>26</sup>, throughout the country, among which were also high Sri Lankan officials. The favorite environment of action of the terrorist group was represented by the crowded locations, with high population density, such as sports competitions, religious institutions, public transport, government institutions or military bases.

The reaction of the Sri Lankan authorities to the terrorist act since the 2008 marathon, as well as to the entire spectrum of acts of violence in which the Taliban Tiger group was involved, was prompt, with political analysts considering that the group was destroyed, to this concurring the internal struggles for power that took place after the death of the group's historical leader in 2009.<sup>27</sup>

#### **d. The Boston Marathon terrorist attack, 2013**

Considered to be the worst terrorist act in the US after September 11, 2001, the Boston bombing of April 15, 2013, was accomplished by detonating two homemade bombs<sup>28</sup> near the finish line of the sports competition. According to official data, three people were killed in the attack, another 260 being injured.

The perpetrators of the terrorist act were brothers Djokar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev<sup>29</sup>, two young people of Chechen origin whose families had emigrated to the United States in 2002, who, under the motivation of their Islamist faith, adhered to the ideology propagated by the Al-Qaeda group. The two have carried out the terrorist act in retaliation for the US intervention in some Middle Eastern countries under the guise of fighting terrorism.<sup>30</sup>

The media impact of the attack has created an emulation at international level, both in terms of countering the terrorist phenomenon, as well as in relation to the security measures that must be adopted to prevent similar situations in future sports competitions.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Terrorist grouping of ethnic and cultural nature, acting in Sri Lanka and militating by violent means to create an independent state, on ethnic criteria, of the Tamil group within the island-state of Sri Lanka.

<sup>26</sup>As a way of operating by the terrorist group, the suicide attacks with explosive material, the use of women in terrorist acts, the bomb attacks, being the first group to use fighter jets in the attacks.

<sup>27</sup>[obiectivbr.ro/content/ministrul-transporturilor-ucis-intr-un-atentat-cu-bomba-sri-lanka](http://obiectivbr.ro/content/ministrul-transporturilor-ucis-intr-un-atentat-cu-bomba-sri-lanka)

<sup>28</sup>The homemade bombs, disguised in tourist backpacks, were made from pressure vessels, in which nails and segments of metal bodies were introduced, to amplify the impact of the explosive wave and their effect.

<sup>29</sup>Tamerlan Tsarnaev lost his life in an exchange of fire with the police, his brother Djokar being detained, investigated and subsequently convicted by the federal jury to the death penalty by lethal injection.

<sup>30</sup><https://adevarul.ro/international/statele-unite/Tarnaev-condamnat-moarte-atentatul-boston>: Carmen Otiz, the case prosecutor, stated: "Djohar Tarnaev will pay with his life for his crimes. The defendant said that he is acting on behalf of all Muslims, but this is a lie, it was not a religious crime and does not reflect true Muslim beliefs. It was a political crime meant to intimidate and coerce the United States. "

<sup>31</sup>President Barack Obama, while investigating the case, told the American nation: "I assure you that we will find out who did it. Any responsible individual or group will feel the full weight of justice." Russian Sports Minister Vitali Mutko said that "For Russia, which is preparing for a major sporting event, the Sochi Winter Olympics, (...) the ones that have happened (...) are a warning that we are taking very seriously." (<https://www.dw.com/en/team-after-the-bombing>).

#### **e. Terrorist threats at the Winter Olympics from Sochi, 2014**

The sports competition represented an exceptional event<sup>32</sup> for the Russian Federation, whose influence was in a clear decline at geostrategic level, by which it wanted to show to the whole world the unimaginable resources and the magnitude of the "great Russia".

Being the first edition of this type of competition hosted by the Russian Federation and, at the same time, the most important international sports competition in Russia after the break-up of the former USSR, the Sochi Winter Olympics channeled all possible efforts<sup>33</sup> to put the Russian Federation on the map of the most important world powers.

The event also attracted the attention of representatives of terrorist groups with local representation<sup>34</sup>, who speculated the media impact of the competition, in order to transmit their messages internationally. In this context, both the authorities of the Russian Federation, as well as internationally, have adopted measures to prevent the occurrence of terrorist acts during the Olympic Games.

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, was personally involved in the internal adoption of exceptional security measures (including the involvement of the Russian ground forces and about 37,000 policemen), guaranteeing both to the participants in the great competition and to the entire international community that this event will not be overshadowed by terrorist attacks<sup>35</sup>, similar points of view being expressed by the head of the organizing committee of the Olympic Games in Sochi, Dmitry Cernisenko.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, President Barack Obama urged his collaborators on national security issues to "continue to work closely with the Russian Government and other partners to make the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games safe and successful," they ensured him "that they have taken all necessary measures to ensure the security of Americans" who will participate or attend the competition.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>It represented a record of participants, with about 3000 athletes from almost 90 countries and about 13000 journalists, being watched by over three billion spectators.

<sup>33</sup>The total expenses incurred for the organization of the competition (construction of new arenas, modernization of the infrastructure for telecommunications, transport and distribution of energy, etc.) amounted to approximately 37 billion euros.

<sup>34</sup>Doku Umarov, the self-titled leader of the "Caucasus Emirate", in a video message broadcast in 2013 on an Islamist site, claimed that the Olympic Games in Sochi represents "a satanic dance performed on the remains of the numerous Muslims who rest in the land located by along the Black Sea ", they must be prevented by demonstrations of force against the federal authorities, because they violate the norms of Islam. ([www.news.tvr.ro/juleas-olimpice-de-iarna-2014-de-la-soci-amenintate-deschis-cu-atentate-teroriste](http://www.news.tvr.ro/juleas-olimpice-de-iarna-2014-de-la-soci-amenintate-deschis-cu-atentate-teroriste)).

The terrorist group Vilayat Dagestan (who advocated for the establishment of an independent Islamic state in the North Caucasus) posted a threatening video on its own site, transmitting to President Vladimir Putin: "If the Olympic Games are to be held, we will give you a gift for the blood of innocent Muslims that has been shed in every corner of the world: in Afghanistan, in Somalia, in Syria" ([www.ziare.com/international/rusia/teroristii-fac-un-ununt-terifiant-pregatesc-o-surpriza-for-games-olimpice-](http://www.ziare.com/international/rusia/teroristii-fac-un-ununt-terifiant-pregatesc-o-surpriza-for-games-olimpice-)). It is also worth noting that Hungary and Slovenia received letters with terrorist threats before the Olympic Games in Sochi, recommending them not to participate in this competition.

<sup>35</sup>"Our task as organizers is to ensure the safety of the participants and the spectators at this sports holiday and we are doing everything in this regard" (...) "If we let ourselves be weak, if we show fear, then we will help the terrorists to reach their goals," Putin said. ([www.ziare.com/international/rusia/rusia-jocurile-olimpice-de-la-soci-vor-fi-cele-mai-sigure-din-istorie](http://www.ziare.com/international/rusia/rusia-jocurile-olimpice-de-la-soci-vor-fi-cele-mai-sigure-din-istorie))

<sup>36</sup>"Those who come to the Olympic Games in Sochi should know this: We will ensure their safety. The security system was designed together with world experts in the field. It is in accordance with the security requirements of an event of such magnitude and has often been tested in similar competitions", ([www.ziare.com/international/rusia/rusia-games-olympics-of-the-soccer-May-Fi-the-safe-from-history](http://www.ziare.com/international/rusia/rusia-games-olympics-of-the-soccer-May-Fi-the-safe-from-history)).

<sup>37</sup>[www.mediafax.ro/externe/sua-au-luat-toate-masurile-necesare-pentru-a-asigura-securitatea-cetatenilor-sai-la-jocurile-olimpice-](http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/sua-au-luat-toate-masurile-necesare-pentru-a-asigura-securitatea-cetatenilor-sai-la-jocurile-olimpice-)

Adopting such measures has prevented the occurrence of terrorist threats during the course of the sports competition, which is considered one of the most successful Olympic sports competitions, the president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, saying "it is amazing what happened (...) the reaction of athletes, national committees, federations, sponsors has been overwhelmingly positive".<sup>38</sup>

#### **f. The terrorist attack in Paris, November 2015**

France, a country with a rich colonial history, characterized by secular values, freedoms, libertine lifestyle and perpetual demographic tensions, adept at interventionist policies on Muslim militants from different areas of the world<sup>39</sup>, has represented in the last decade the main target of the terrorists acting on behalf of the Islamic State terrorist group.

The concentrated attack from several places in the French capital<sup>40</sup>, on November 13, 2015, represented the climax of these criminal acts that resulted in the death of over 130 people and the serious injury of about 352. Among the places targeted by the attackers was the *Stade de France*<sup>41</sup>, where the football match between the national teams of France and Germany was being played, an event attended by French President Francois Hollande and other senior German officials.

The terrorist attacks were claimed by the Islamic State group, which listed Paris as "the capital of prostitution and vice", while also claiming that France and "all nations following its path" are "at the top of the list of Islamic State targets". The attackers also said that "this is for the harm caused by Hollande to Muslims around the world."<sup>42</sup>

French officials said the group of attackers consisted of about eight people, divided into three teams synchronized in their actions, armed with Kalasnikov rifles, grenades and other explosive devices meant to produce as many victims as possible.

The reactions of the French authorities both during and after the attacks were firm<sup>43</sup>, leading to limiting the consequences of the criminal acts, to identifying their perpetrators, but also to continuing the fight against the terrorist phenomenon.<sup>44</sup>

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The United States adopted the decision to dislodge in the Black Sea, during the competition, two military ships, equipped with helicopters, for the evacuation of American citizens in cases of need, or emergency situations. At the same time, approximately 25 US agents specialized in counter-terrorism operations were sent to Soci.

<sup>38</sup>[www.gsp.ro/sporturi/jocurile-olimpice-de-la-soci-2014/10-concluzii-dupa-jocurile-olimpice-de-iarna-de-la-soci](http://www.gsp.ro/sporturi/jocurile-olimpice-de-la-soci-2014/10-concluzii-dupa-jocurile-olimpice-de-iarna-de-la-soci).

<sup>39</sup>See the affiliation to the international western coalition against the targets of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq or participating in fighting against the extremists of the Islamic State on the African continent.

<sup>40</sup>Most of the casualties occurred in the Bataclan theater (over 100 dead), at La Belle Equipe restaurant (19 people killed and another 14 people seriously injured), at the terrace of the Italian restaurant La Casa Nostra (5 people killed and 8 others seriously injured), Le Petit Cambodge restaurant (11 people were killed) and Comptoir Voltaire cafe, near Bataclan theater (15 people were injured). See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attentatele\\_teroriste\\_de\\_la\\_Paris\\_din\\_noiembrie\\_2015](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attentatele_teroriste_de_la_Paris_din_noiembrie_2015).

<sup>41</sup>It was the target of three suicide bombings, in which five people died. Exceptional measures taken by the authorities, both before and during the evacuation of the stadium, prevented the perpetration of other criminal acts by terrorists.

<sup>42</sup>[www.businessinsider.com/paris-attacks-why-terrorists-target-france-2015-11](http://www.businessinsider.com/paris-attacks-why-terrorists-target-france-2015-11).

<sup>43</sup>One of the terrorists tried to enter the Stade de France stadium, where there were about 80,000 spectators, 15 minutes after the start of the match, but was stopped by law enforcement for verification, as it raised suspicions about having an explosive device. In this context, the terrorist evaded control, fled and detonated his belt on a street near the stadium. The vigilance of law enforcement forces prevented a criminal act that could have resulted in an impressive number of victims.

<sup>44</sup>French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said, according to TF1, that France is at war with the terrorist group Islamic State, saying that "we are facing an organized war with an Islamist army (...) we will strike the enemy; we will

### **g. Terrorist threats at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, 2016**

Although not involved in conflicts in the Middle East or in other geographical areas characterized by terrorist issues, Brazil has not escaped the threats of the Islamic State to transform it into a possible target of such attacks, rather by the desire for excessive media coverage of the so-called values proclaimed by this terrorist group with a global scope of action.

The fears of the Brazilian officials were based on the threats of Maxime Hauchard, a French citizen involved in the recruitment of Islamic State supporters, made after the November 2015 attacks in Paris: "Brazil, you are next!" On the other hand, Brazil faces serious problems caused by the rising crime rate, police protests and the political and economic crisis, all of which emphasize the instability of the security equation.

Brazilian authorities<sup>45</sup> resorted to the support of about 85,000 soldiers, policemen and other security forces, and benefited from the support of counter-terrorism services in the US, Belgium and France, whose specialists were present at the most sensitive points to prevent possible terrorist threats.

The joint efforts of all parties involved have led to the elimination of the problematic aspects for the stability of the security equation during the competition and the prevention of possible terrorist attacks.<sup>46</sup>

### **h. The European Football Championship 2020**

Celebrating 60 years since the establishment of the competition, the 2020 edition will unfold in a unique formula regarding the organization, hosts will be 12 European cities<sup>47</sup>, so we can rightly say that the map of Europe will overlap to a certain extent with the competition map. The Europe of the present, from east to west or from south to north, faces more burning problems than ever: a Brexit that marks the European construction and fuels the idea of regionalization and segregation on ethnic criteria; the crisis of migrants from Asian countries to western European countries, which has potentiated phenomena associated with cross-border organized crime; terrorist threats and attacks, which have shaken the stability of the continent, whose authors question the legitimacy of the participation of European countries in the international coalition against terrorism; the demographic problems of the old continent that question the future of Europe; political instability in various regions, generating sources of danger to the security equation of the continent; the economic problems of some European countries which, in the absence of proper management, can generate a new crisis at European level.

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destroy it both in France and in Europe. We will follow the perpetrators of the attack. We will respond to the attack in order to destroy the DAES terrorist organization. And we will win this war. "

<sup>45</sup> Leonardo Picciani, Brazilian Minister of Sports: "The Government has adopted all the measures recommended by the international security protocols ... The Government is absolutely convinced that the Olympic Games will be held safely"

(<https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-21175138Minister-sports-in-brazil-notunderestimatedthreats,terrorist-games-Olympic-rio-will-run-siguranta.htm>).

In the preventive plan, a campaign for the distribution of leaflets, posters and brochures was launched in which the public is informed about how to detect the persons who could be involved in suspected terrorist activities which, according to Mauro Sinott, the commander of the Brazilian anti-terrorist forces, could reduce the risk of the emergence of problematic aspects.

<sup>46</sup>International news agencies have reported that Brazilian federal police has foiled plans for a terrorist act devised by members of a local group that had ties to the Islamic State.

<sup>47</sup>London, Munich, Rome, Budapest, Amsterdam, Bucharest, Baku, Dublin, St. Petersburg, Bilbao, Glasgow, Copenhagen.

For the vast majority of countries involved in organizing the competition, EURO 2020 will represent great opportunities for promoting sports, developing sports infrastructure and, last but not least, promoting them as tourist destinations, so that effective measures will be adopted to ensure the best conditions for conducting football events, from all points of view of safety and security, as well as the mobility of participants (sportsmen or tourists) or leisure.

All these opportunities or problematic aspects<sup>48</sup> that the organizers will face, can be exploited by the vectors carrying the threats to the security of the European states, or even the security of the continent, all the more so as for many of the host cities of the sports competition organizing such event is a pioneering issue.<sup>49</sup>

Preventing these possible actions will be made possible through the combined efforts of the competition organizers and government authorities in the host countries of sporting events, an essential role returning to the structures empowered to ensure the public order and the safety of the citizens, including the intelligence structures specialized in preventing and combating acts of terrorism, the cooperation between them being vital considering the scope of the competition and its area of development.<sup>50</sup>

### **i. Qatar Football World Championship, 2022**

The decision of the International Football Association Federation (FIFA) to designate Qatar<sup>51</sup> as the host of the 2022 edition, has generated lively controversy<sup>52</sup> in the political and sports environments<sup>53</sup>, considering that the pecuniary interests are above the logic of the sports management that must stimulate performance and fair play, and concerns to ensure optimum safety and security conditions for participants, whether they are members of sports delegations or mere spectators of the competitions.

The financial effort of Qatar, one of the richest countries in the world due to the oil reserves held, will amount to approximately \$ 220 billion, which will be invested in the development of a sports infrastructure appropriate to the requirements of the international

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<sup>48</sup>According to Pabla Gomes, a member of the Council of Europe's Division for Sports Conventions, the main threats that the EURO 2020 hosts will face will be terrorism, extremism and violent behavior, doubled by the use of pyrotechnic materials.

<sup>49</sup>Eight cities have never hosted a European football championship so far: Baku, Saint Petersburg, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Dublin, Bilbao, Budapest and Glasgow.

<sup>50</sup>In the context of Romania holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Romania hosted the meeting of the "Pan-European Group of experts in the field of ensuring public order at sporting events", on the working agenda there were aspects related to the establishment of the International Police Cooperation Center hosted at the Europol headquarters in The Hague (Netherlands) during EURO 2020.

([www.comunicare.jandarmeriaromana.ro/42-de-experti-internationali-in-gestionarea-evenimentelor-sportive-voor-discuta-la-cluj-napoca-despre-masurile-de-securitate-de-la-euro-2020-and-world-cup-2022/](http://www.comunicare.jandarmeriaromana.ro/42-de-experti-internationali-in-gestionarea-evenimentelor-sportive-voor-discuta-la-cluj-napoca-despre-masurile-de-securitate-de-la-euro-2020-and-world-cup-2022/))

<sup>51</sup>Located in the Middle East, considered by political analysts as the "hottest region in the world", with the greatest potential to affect the regional and even global security equation, due to poor governance of most states, significant deficiencies in economic development, failure to connect education segments and social services to the current demographic growth, confessional differences and inter-ethnic conflicts determined by the existence of a traditional Islam.

<sup>52</sup>The comments were determined by the lack of the infrastructure related to the competition, the lack of tradition in the region of this sport discipline, the atmosphere and the inadequate climate for the optimal performance of the competition and the specific manifestations of the sports supporters. International media reported that Qatar was designated as the host country of the competition despite the candidacy of Australia, the US, Japan and South Korea, suspected corruption in the nomination process, culminating in the retention of former FIFA president Michel Platini.

<sup>53</sup>Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter acknowledged the mistake of naming Qatar as the organizing country of the competition, saying: "It was a big mistake. We didn't have to do that. But you know, people make mistakes in their lives." ([www.ziare.com/FIFA/Sepp-Blatter/FIFAboss-a-big-recognizes-error-not-have-to-do-that](http://www.ziare.com/FIFA/Sepp-Blatter/FIFAboss-a-big-recognizes-error-not-have-to-do-that/))

federation, transport infrastructure and telecommunications, but also for the recreation and entertainment necessities of the participants.

The lack of tradition of such competition, the imposition that most authorities in the region maintain a specific way of life according to Islamic laws, animosities and splits between some states in the Middle East<sup>54</sup>, and last but not least, the presence in the region of the most important "bases" of terrorist groups, amplify the danger of terrorist acts unfolding during the World Football Championship, there are even public threats in this regard.<sup>55</sup>

The prevention of such attacks lies in the responsibility of the host state of the competition<sup>56</sup>, but also of FIFA<sup>57</sup> and the entire international community, which must show their willingness to cooperate and support each other.<sup>58</sup>

The accents of altering the security equation in the Middle East region, determined by the historical divergences in the region, doubled by the recent international media coverage of the involvement of senior FIFA officials in corruption acts in the nomination of Qatar as the host of the 2022 World Football Championship, could determine the board of the organization to adopt the measure of changing the host of the competition, the most driven destination being England, and it is a country marked by the problems of a still unresolved Brexit and by serious economic and social problems, but with a cult for football; being the place where it was invented.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

An incursion through the history of the most important sporting competitions of the last half century highlights their importance for the society as a whole, the huge efforts of the organizers to ensure optimal conditions, but also some problematic aspects generated by the involvement of terrorist entities, individual or collective, in putting into practice some attacks, by which to mark their presence as "actors of evil" at societal level, but also to publicize their message, in a favorable imaginary context determined by the interest expressed globally for the sport movement in general.

Clearly, one can come to the conclusion that, in almost all the cases studied, terrorist acts are based on an ideological sub-layer, whether it is religious fanaticism, the struggle for liberation and emancipation, or undermining state authorities in order to impose political objectives.

They were committed both by collective entities (well-known terrorist groups) or their franchises, between which there were close interconnections that could ensure the success of the actions carried out, as well as individual entities, individuals who are adept at extremist ideologies from various sources, often. "Lone wolves", for whom the implementation of the

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<sup>54</sup>Accused of supporting terrorism and Iran's political agenda, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain have recently severed ties with Qatar, also calling for FIFA to withdraw Qatar's right to organize the competition.

<sup>55</sup>In 2014, ISIS requested, through a message posted on the group's social networks, the high FIFA official, Sepp Blatter, to take the steps to move the sports competition from Qatar (the country which in the opinion of the group would be part of the near future from Islamic caliphate), otherwise threatening to bomb the stadiums where the sports competitions will take place with Scud rockets. Even if the terrorist group is no longer enjoying the glory period of 2014-2015, the threat must be taken into consideration.

<sup>56</sup>authorities are monitoring developments in the Syrian and Iraqi crisis, their effects on the region, to prevent and eliminate the spread of insecurity in the vicinity of Qatar.

<sup>57</sup>FIFA has stated on several occasions that it was "in regular contact" with the organizing committee of the competition in Qatar, on "issues related to the 2022 World Cup".

<sup>58</sup>Qatar has signed an agreement with Interpol aimed at preparing the event from a security point of view, by a group of security experts.

terrorist act was often the supreme goal in a life marked by existential problems and major behavioral deviations.

The major media impact pursued by the authors, during the period of terrorist action in the major sports competitions, is ensured by the quickness of transmitting information throughout the world, given the interest in sports and marketing related to this contemporary social phenomenon, and not least the psychological impact of the abominable criminal acts, whether it is hostage-taking, bombing or improvised homemade devices, suicidal acts or shootings with conventional weapons.

Preventing and countering such terrorist acts during the course of the great sports competitions represents a very complex mission, which belongs to both the international sports bodies under the aegis of which the competitions are held, as well as to the national authorities of the host countries, and even to the international ones with a vocation in ensuring global peace and security, whose overall interests must be in line with the interests of human security.

The goal of increasing the popularity of sport, and of the sport movement in general, in all regions of the world, must take into account both the local tradition and the interest of ensuring the stability of the security equation, in a geopolitical context marked by rapid and unpredictable evolutions.

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