

## **Global Journalist: Can We Contain Terrorism?**

**Abstract:** This May 22, 2003 program featured host Stuart Loory speaking with three international journalists about terrorism, and the global spread and influence of Al Qaeda.

**Host:** Stuart Loory

### **Guests:**

- [Khaled al-Maeena](#) @KhaledAlmaeena
- Nzaggi Bashir (Bashir Nzaggi)
- [Jay Bushinsky](#)
- David Aquambah

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**Mentioned:** terrorism, terrorists, al Qaeda, governments, Kenya, Morocco, terrorist organization, Casablanca, Saudi Arabia, Nairobi, Saudi, country, United States, United Nations, Iraq

**Runtime:** 28:30

### **Stuart Loory 00:00**

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says that Mid-Missourians, indeed most Americans, are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism, coming to you today from York, England. The war in Afghanistan has long-ended and that in Iraq fought quickly is over as well. But international terrorism continues. In Morocco, there were bombings in Casablanca in a Jewish community center, a Spanish Cultural Center, and a tourist hotel. At the same time, Saudi Arabia, there were a series of suicide bombings in Riyadh and 25, it may be 34 people were killed. British Airways cancelled all flights to Kenya last week because of reports of impending terrorism. And in Israel and on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, an attempt to bring together the two warring sides was blasted by a new wave of suicide bombings. Terrorism seems unfazed by military successes against it. And that brings into question the successes of efforts to control terrorists. Here to discuss this today are Khaled al Maeena, Editor-in-Chief of Arab news in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Nzaggi Bashir, Chief News Editor of the newspaper Liberation in Casablanca, Morocco. Jay Bushinsky, the dean of Western correspondents in Israel and a broadcaster for WINS radio in New York. He is in Tel Aviv. And David (Aquambah?), news editor of the East African Standard in Nairobi, Kenya. Welcome to all of you. And gentlemen, what I would like to do is start by asking each of you whether or not you think that terrorism is winning its war against those people who are trying to control it. How about starting with Nzaggi Bashir in Casablanca.

### **Nzaggi Bashir 00:00**

I much agree with this idea. I think that tourism is now going back and some sections operation that many knows have an effect about going to Texas. So I think in the world meaning terrorism is failing now.

**David Aquambah** 00:00

I think generally that means getting some some footing in, especially the way that Americans and Britains have behaved after the Kenyan government. Pushed on to that. There was a trip to Kenya and the first thing they did is advise the nationals not to come to Nairobi. The British Airways withdrew their flights to Nairobi to and from Nairobi. And it sends the wrong signal to I think, to terror groups. That they are, they're making life very difficult for the Americans and Britains. So in a way, it looks like terrorism is getting a footing and winning.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

So, so you think that the terrorists are are having an impact? Even though recently, there has been no active terrorism in Kenya?

**David Aquambah** 00:00

Yes, I think the last incidental terrorism in Nairobi, in Kenya was in November of 2002. And, and the most and I think the most devastating was the one of August 1998. And given that scenario. I think it was most unwise for both Britain and the United States to, to advise the nationals not to come to Nairobi.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Yeah. As you know, there were going to be hundreds of journalists coming to Nairobi in a couple of weeks to attend a Congress of the International Press Institute and that meeting has now been canceled. What, what has been the impact of that in your country?

**David Aquambah** 00:00

For us, as a nation, tourism plays a very crucial role and advisory by the Americans and the British that Kenya is safe -- the first thing it did was first to destroy the tourism sector for for Kenya. And secondly, the IPI conference was one of those key conferences that Kenya was hoping to host. And that was going to be a showcase for tourism in Kenya, and Kenya as a safe destination. So the cancellation of that conference has been devastating blow to Kenya.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Khaled al-Maeena, Saudi Arabia. It is in the heart of the African world, and sorry, in the heart of the Arab world, I should say. And yet it is a great sufferer from terrorist activities. What is being done to try to control that in your country?

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Well, what I think what has happened In the past week after the Riyadh incident was that extra security precautions have taken place. This is the first time that such an act of this nature, of killing people, happened on the whole. This is a country where statistically, the crime rate is the lowest in the world. There are no armed robberies, no murders and killings. And to have this

thrust upon us cause anxiety and by and large, the government has seen to it that extra precautions, roadblocks in some ways, more checkups taking place. Other than that life goes on normal, People are going about and despite what's been read about in the American press, I mean people are going about their daily lives.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

34 people being killed is not an insignificant number. It is, it is really hard to believe that life can go on in a normal way. I don't imagine that it does within the expatriate community there.

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

There is no difference between the expatriate community or the Saudi community. Well, because Saudis died, in fact, the number of locals who died along with the Asians and Africans was more. But, I mean, there are many expats and if you talk to them. They're leading normal lives, especially those who live outside compounds. I mean, and unfortunately, this happened. But life has to go on, we just cannot go on. And if we have the siege mentality that exists elsewhere, I think we as a nation, that is an economic powerhouse in this region, would then will be suffering a lot. I mean, there... of course, there is sadness, there's anxiety, and we all feel sorry about the loss of life. And remember, out of the 34, nine were the perpetrators of this evil act. And the protesting is expatriate or Saudi, we are all living here in Saudi Arabia.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

And Jay Bushinsky. The terrorism goes on in Israel, almost without stop. And as a matter of fact, it has gotten worse, as there have been attempts to, once again get peace talks going in, in your country and in Palestine. Is there a connection between the renewal and international terrorism? And is Al Qaeda involved in anyway?

**Jay Bushinsky** 00:00

It could be that there's a connection. There are those who believe that every time a serious peace initiative gets underway, there will be terrorists who will do their best to torpedo it. That's the way it looked this time around. There were a total of six suicide bombings, all of them very shortly after the visit of Secretary of State Colin Powell, who came here for the specific purpose of bringing the two sides together. And in fact, who held talks with the two prime ministers involved, namely Ariel Sharon and Mahmoud Abbas. But I would say that from the standpoint, from a global standpoint, I think the time has come for us, especially as journalists, to stop trying to rationalize terrorism. Stop looking for interesting motivations or, or excuses for it or apology. Just look at terrorism for what it really is criminal behavior, otherwise, there's no hope. Terrorism is an enemy to international order and civilization and it has to be treated accordingly.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Nzaggi Bashir, what do you think about what Jay just said?

**Nzaggi Bashir** 00:00

I think that's most important now is public opinion. People aware of the danger of terrorism. That will make another powerful tension to this struggle against terrorism. And, for instance, in our

country in Morocco. Now, after the bombing attacks in Casablanca, people here is largely convinced that they have to struggle with this. And this struggle is not just international (???) . But it's just something that's concerned Moroccan people here. Is a new attitude, and is really, really interesting position of our country now. Another about the global, international terrorist activity. I think that's for Morocco. Since the September 11th, it was very close to the light of us, hey, in this in this struggle. There is a general notion, but there are some local region too for this alliance. You know, Morocco has closer (????) yet. And there are some thousands of (????) what they call the Jihad in Afghanistan against Soviet Union. After that they went to Bosnia, to Chechnya and other regions. Some of them are in touch with the Algerian terrorists and with the people of al Qaeda, and, you know, those groups...

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

David (Aquambah?), what do you think about the idea that terrorists are simply and only criminals and should be treated that way and not with any attempt to justify what they are doing?

**David Aquambah** 00:00

Yeah, I think I believe that opinion. Given the extent of the damage and the casualties that they inflict on not just innocent people. I think also an infrastructure, I think they should just be treated as common criminals. And not any other way. I agree entirely with Bashir.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

And Mr. al-Maeena, in Saudi Arabia. Do you agree with what Jay is just said?

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Well, I think yes. But I think also, I mean, we talked about justifying as being a positive, but I think terrorism in different areas is different. I do believe al Qaeda is a terrorist organization. I believe there are other organizations that are terrorists, but I also believe that occupation and repression are terrorism by itself. So we have to look at it with a common denominator in a way, but at times, you have to see the root causes of terrorism also.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Jay, the the whole idea of terrorism, I think it's a criminal activity is, is beyond dispute. But on the other hand, it is not only journalists who try to find some justification and as a matter of fact, I think it is primarily governments and, and other political organizations that try to find the justification and lead journalists to think that way.

**Jay Bushinsky** 00:00

Well, it isn't just a question of justification. I think it's a question of roots. That is to say, the origins of terrorism and you, Stuart Loory, as an expert in Russian history, and the Russian Empire as well as the Soviet Union, you know very well that terrorism was initiated in Czarist Russia, and was developed into a political theory. It's a way of accomplishing a goal through the use of force of a certain kind. Not conventional military force, but shall we call it startling, frightening military force which is used indiscriminately. And that's the whole point. Terrorists do

not differentiate between the victims who may be created by their operations. And for that reason alone, I say it has to be considered a criminal activity.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Well, when you say criminal activity, then then of course, you're also I think, justifying actions against governments that are practicing terrorism. When you talk about what was going on in Imperial Russian and in, in a communist dominated Soviet Union. The terrorists were the government in both....

**Jay Bushinsky** 00:00

It's, it's hard for me to go along with that, even though you know, I have somewhat less familiarity with Russia than you do. But I tend to differentiate between governments practicing terrorism, although you could easily, as Mr. Bush, the President of the United States would say, classify former president Saddam Hussein as a terrorist and say that Iraq practiced state terrorism. But I think that's refining it too much. Terrorism, in my opinion is an illegal means to an end, whatever the end may be, and we have to differentiate between that because all what they're saying is that the end, their end, their goal, justifies the means. I don't go along with that.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Yeah, one of the, one of the things that the United States did, in taking on Iraq, was saying the government of Saddam Hussein was a terrorist organization. It was producing weapons of mass destruction. It was terrorizing its own people. And that was justified to to fight a war against Iraq. Is, is that a, justifiable thing?

**Jay Bushinsky** 00:00

Well, if you want to go against the actions that were committed yes. Against governments, I would say it's much too risky. And I think what the United States did was to go in and put a stop to those actions. And the people who discovered the mass burial ground of Iraqi civilians who were killed because they were suspected of being, being opponents of the regime after the 1991 events and the rebellion which followed the war in in Kuwait. I think that that would demonstrate acts of terrorism and that's what the United States went in to stop.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Okay, we have to take a break now. This is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory and we'll be right back. Welcome back to Global Journalist. You may listen to this program again, ask questions, or make comments by going to [www.globaljournalist.org](http://www.globaljournalist.org) or in mid-Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. We have just heard Jay Bushinsky talking about differentiation between taking actions against terrorists and terrorist organizations, and taking actions against governments that may be practicing terrorism. Mr. al-Maeena?, how do you feel about that?

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Can I, can you repeat the question so I can get it.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Okay. Our colleague Jay Bushinsky feels that there is a difference between taking action against terrorists and non-governmental terrorist organizations. He feels that they are criminal, but he feels that there could be some restraint -- if I'm not overstating that -- in taking action against governments that practice terrorism. Do you have a reaction to that?

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Yes, it depends who is pointing the finger at who. The question is the United States pointed out and said there are several rogue nations. Now there are many countries in America and in Asia who look at the United Nations with a little bit of suspicion. So it's just the pot calling the kettle black. I do agree that certain organizations and I agree with Jay, should be viewed as a terrorist organization. But then who is going to -- who's going to decide who's a terrorist and who's not a terrorist? But it's a bit difficult to portray governments and then take action, as happened in Iraq because it created a lot of confusion and anxiety in the region. So I would tend to agree with him.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

And, David (Aquambah?). In Africa, there are a lot of governments that would be considered terrorist. The, the outstanding candidate these days, at least as far as the Western world is concerned, is Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, but there is also the Sudanese government, which is a terrorist organization as far as anybody can see. Or in other places in the Horn of Africa. How do you feel about what Jay has just said?

**David Aquambah** 00:00

Well, I think that, that's, that's his point. His valid point is that. But I wanted to draw back the discussion and look at the apartheid South Africa. And from there, we can progressively see how we can look at various countries in terms of terrorism. And when we look at the, the three independent South Africa and apartheid, I think the whole world was united that apartheid was the wrong thing. And, and I think they worked good together and apartheid went. Thereafter, there's been significant growth in terms of democracy in Africa. And it's, I think it's almost the entire, entire Sub Saharan Africa. Look at Nigeria, there is democracy back there. Look at Kenya, there is a new democracy in place. There has not, has not been touched by, by the wind of democracy that has been sweeping through, throughout Africa. And I think Zimbabwe may not survive for too long. I think Mugabe is recently clinging on, on straws, and he's swimming again, against the current. And he'll definitely be out of the way very soon. So in terms of (???) that would classify as terrorists, I think, in a way Sudan, which has very close ties to al Qaeda network, I think it would rank alone among...

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Yeah. Jay, if I can just say so, I think I understand where you're coming from very well, to deal with individual terrorists and non governmental terrorist organizations should be pretty straightforward and should be pretty easy to do. But when you start dealing with governments, then you really have serious problems because obviously, it is difficult for any one government or any group of governments to take on any other countries.

**Jay Bushinsky** 00:00

That's right. I did not suggest taking on governments because they are suspected of being involved in terrorism or responsible for terrorism. However, if the United Nations were to rule in, by its procedures in the Security Council, that a given government was in effect a terrorist organization, well then that government has disqualified itself. But we have to remember, when we talk about governments, we're talking about governments that belong to United Nations. I can't see how other governments could very easily determine that their counterparts are terrorists. So therefore, I think we have to restrict ourselves to what you called non-governmental organizations, such as Al Qaeda, which engage in terrorism and we have to act against terrorism because it's unacceptable.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

We haven't talked specifically yet about Al Qaeda and I would like to do that. Mr. al-Maeena, tell us a little bit from a Saudi point of view just how organized Al Qaeda is? Is it a worldwide, highly organized organization?

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

I don't think so. The Al Qaeda organization was nurtured and born and bred in the hills of Afghanistan. They have some brains but I don't think so that that Al Qaeda has spread the world over. The big concern that it is, I think it's fragmented now. What I also believe that many of these terrorist actors are being, are taking place are copycats. Personally I think that. But it's very easy to now finger point at anything that smacks of terror to be Al Qaeda. And somebody was telling me yesterday, if the lights go down in Mississippi, they're going to blame al Qaeda. So... hello?

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Yeah, I'm -- we're here.

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Yeah. Yeah. So I don't think that Al Qaeda is that horror organization that we should be afraid of. If there is, as Jay said, a United Nations, a concerted effort by the United Nations to sort of focus on terror. I'm sure they can eliminate the Al Qaeda terror network.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

What role can Saudi Arabia play in helping to eliminate al Qaeda? There is a widespread belief that a lot of money is coming from Osama bin Laden and this is money that was made in Saudi Arabia.

**Khaled al-Maeena** 00:00

Well I mean, now Osama bin Laden is now becoming the chief whipping boy. As I said, if anything happens -- if there's a traffic accident in Tacoma, Washington, they're going to blame Osama. And it is not a question of money, his money has dried out. There may, there may be people giving money, but it's not coming through government sources. I mean, the problem is that there are many papers into, in America who created this myth of Osama bin Laden. This

week's Time magazine has got about 75 Osamas on its cover. I don't think so that Osama bin Laden is, I think we got to go to the root cause. Every one of the members of the United Nation or a task force be set up, to look into this and to see and defeat Al Qaeda. But I don't think so that al Qaeda is that organization that we should all be afraid of.

**Stuart Loory** 00:00

Mr. Bashir, how do you feel about that? Is Al Qaeda feared in Morocco, and should it be feared?

**Nzaggi Bashir** 25:40

I think, yes. It is a stretch here, not as a structured group. But I think that Al Qaeda has many links with a few other groups who are acting equally in Morocco. And reacting to this question of terrorism. I think that's the most important event in Morocco or other countries that, this problem of terrorism has a criminal side, but has also the sources of the origins. That's not deep seated.

**Stuart Loory** 26:23

Okay, I'm sorry but we're running out of time, and we have just a little bit left. David (Aquambah?), can you please react also to the idea that Al Qaeda, Al Qaeda is a myth?

**David Aquambah** 26:36

For us, for us in Africa, you know, especially in Sub Saharan Africa, terrorism is a completely new phenomenon which we have been coming to terms with. And I want to believe that Al Qaeda may not be that organized. I think you'd find that it's small groups of people who think that today they have the support of Osama bin Laden and and Al Qaeda network who are doing their small bits everywhere and letting Osama bin Laden take credit for it. In a way, you might think it, it orders from one person but it's not. I think it's people, small groups doing their own thing and they're letting one person credit for it.

**Stuart Loory** 27:23

Okay Mr. (Aquambah), I'm sorry, but we are out of time. Our guest today have been David (Aquambah?) of the East African Standard in Nairobi, Kenya. Jay Bushinsky of WINS radio in Tel Aviv, Israel. Nzaggi Bashir of Liberation in Casablanca, Morocco. And Khalid al-Mayeena of Arab News in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Our producer is Pat Akers. I should say our director is Pat Akers, and our producers Sarah (Catan?) and (Yusef Calyango). I'm Stuart Loory. Global Journalist will be back next week.