# Methods of Preventing and Combatting Terrorism in the MENA Region and in the West

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# Methods of Preventing and Combatting Terrorism in the MENA Region and in the West

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# *Foreword*

# Agree to Disagree? International Efforts in Preventing and Combatting Terrorism

*Anja Wehler-Schoeck*
*Resident Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Jordan & Iraq*

Terrorism is by no means a new phenomenon. History shows that terrorism has long occurred in an abundance of political, cultural, ethnic and religious contexts. In the past few years, though, terrorist attacks with an Islamist background have surged. Recent attacks, including those in several Western capitals, have brought the perceived threat levels in many countries to a new high. Quantitative research on the subject, like the *Global Terrorism Database*[1] and the *RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents*[2], documents a steady acceleration of the number of terrorist attacks since the 9/11 events in 2001 and more particularly since the start of the 2003 Iraq War. Moreover, since 9/11 there has been a noticeable shift in the location of terrorist attacks, with most now occurring in countries with a Muslim majority.

While there is convergence on these overall trends, the discrepancies in research on the details of the matter, however, point to a caveat in the discussion of this issue: the challenge of defining what precisely constitutes an act of terrorism and who is considered a terrorist. A number of countries have compiled their own lists of terrorist organizations, many of which differ greatly from each other, indicating precisely the difficulty in achieving international consensus on this. The futile attempts by the international community in late 2015 to compile a list of terrorist groups active in Syria – which would determine if a group were either a target or a welcome guest at the negotiation table – can serve as illustration.[3] And it is by no means a minor obstacle. Does it not rather raise the fundamental question of whether there can ever be international consensus on combatting terrorism? Or will this always be a field where hidden agendas and covert loyalties come to play?

Around the globe, much thought is currently being put into devising new methods of both combatting existing terrorist threats and preventing rising radicalization and violent extremism. Unsurprisingly, the approaches that are deemed most adequate vary considerably from one country to the next, ranging from more security-focused methods to ones relying on socioeconomic or ideological factors, for example. In some countries the fight against terrorism has served as a pretext to delay democratic reforms, to restrict the media and civil society and to crack down on political opponents. Yet, a strong civil society, for example, can serve as a key asset in preventing radicalization, by educating and engaging citizens, and providing opportunities and perspectives to youth.

[1] The Global Terrorism Database, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/.
[2] The RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents, http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism-incidents.html.
[3] "Syrian terrorist list produces 163 names and no agreement." Reuters, 17 February 2016. http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-terrorist-idUSKCN0VQ25E

Effective measures to prevent radicalization can only be developed with a close ear to the ground – not at desks hundreds of miles away.

With this publication, FES wishes to further an open exchange on the topic and to contribute to it by presenting different views on the matter from several countries in the MENA region as well as from Europe, Russia and the US. The majority of the papers compiled in this publication were presented at an international conference held in Jordan in June 2016 entitled "Methods of Preventing and Combatting Terrorism in the MENA Region and the West" organized by FES Amman.

Through its line of work on Political Islam and extremism, FES Amman has closely followed these trends for many years with the aim of publishing in-depth analysis by local experts from the MENA region and fostering an open and educated discourse on these issues.

We wish you an insightful read and look forward to your continued interest in the activities and publications of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Please visit our website at www.fes-jordan.org to learn more about our work.

# Counter-Terrorism Efforts: The Dialectic of Inputs and Outputs

*Mohammad Abu Rumman*

The concept of terrorism has been used for a long time, and relates to different forms and types of activities and groups that have carried out actions considered to be terrorist, such as hijacking aircraft, taking hostages, and staging armed attacks on certain areas. However, different definitions of terrorism exist, firstly at the regional and international levels, and secondly on lists that categorize terrorist groups.

Although several networks of groups are categorized as terrorist, the mode that has preoccupied the world and most Arab and western countries is represented by the networks of *al-Qaeda* and the so-called "Islamic State". The latter represents the new generation of "Islamic terrorist" and is widespread to an extent that has allowed it to establish a caliphate in Iraq and Syria, and satellite emirates in more than one spot around the world. Moreover, its cells have been able to carry out attacks against several targets in Europe, Australia, Africa, and Asia. The group has come to represent a basic threat to many countries at local, regional and international levels. Hence various approaches and strategies to confront it are being employed, and that is what this background paper will discuss.

## 1. Who Is a Terrorist? How Are Terrorist Organizations Categorized?

Before discussing the directions, strategies and approaches used to confront terrorism internationally, regionally and locally, it is necessary to devote some attention to the definition of terrorism and the categorization of terrorist groups.

Paradoxically, although the issue of terrorism has become a major variable in international relations for almost fifteen years, and although it is widely discussed along with counter-terrorism strategies, full agreement among countries on a specific definition of terrorism and on the categorization of terrorist groups does not exist. Rather, there is a varied range of definitions of terrorism, and differences exist in categorizing terrorist groups.

The Arab Convention, for example, defines terrorism as "any act or threat of violence, whatever its motives or purposes, that occurs for the advancement of an individual or collective criminal agenda, causing terror among people, causing fear by harming them, or placing their lives, liberty or security in danger, or aiming to cause damage to the environment or to public or private installations or property or to occupy or to seize them, or aiming to jeopardize a national resource."

The third paragraph of the convention defines terrorist crimes as "any offense or attempted offense committed in furtherance of a terrorist objective in any of the Contracting States, or against their nationals, property or interests, that is punishable by their domestic law" as well as incitement to terrorist crimes, praising them, publishing or printing or preparing printed or recorded materials

for distribution or to show to others for the purpose of encouraging the committal of such crimes.

The European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism issued by the Council of Europe considers the following 6 actions as terrorist crimes:

- the hijacking of aircraft
- acts of violence and sabotage
- actions against persons enjoying special and diplomatic protection
- the use of bombs, dynamite, missiles and booby-trapped letters to endanger human life
- the taking of hostages, kidnapping, illegal detention of individuals and serious crimes including attacks that endanger life, physical safety and liberty
- taking part in the above crimes

The agreement of the Member States of the Organization of American States (1971) defines terrorist crimes as such of kidnapping and murder committed against persons to whom the state offers special protection under international law.

UN resolutions define terrorism as "those actions that endanger the lives of innocent people, or threaten basic freedoms, or violate human liberty." UN experts have defined it as "a strategy of violence that is internationally forbidden, is motivated by ideology and aims to create violence within society with the purpose of seizing power or undermining it."

At the Islamic level, the Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence defines terrorism as aggression by an individual, group or state against the human being (the individual, religion, property, honor, the mind) by means of intimidation, harm, torture, and unjustified killing.[4]

Despite the existence of several differing definitions of terrorism, as we have seen, there is concurrence among most legal, international and political definitions that terrorism:

First, is the use of violence or the threat of it.

Second, that it aims to achieve illegitimate political objectives.

Third, that it is illegal.

Fourth, that internal terrorism exists, and that it violates internal law.

[4] See Mahmoud Said Qirat, "Terrorism: A study in national counterterrorism programs and strategies". Research paper, Nayef Arab University for Security Sciences, pp. 62-64. Also Mohammad Muhyeddein Awad, "The reality of terrorism and its directions". Counterterrorism Seminar, Riyadh, 31 May 1999 to 2 June 1999, pp. 12-20.

> Fifth, in the case of external terrorism, it is linked to operations against the interests of other countries and it violates international law.
>
> Sixth, that terrorist action is not limited to direct action, such as kidnapping, killing and bombing. It also includes planning, arranging, incitement, praise and promotion.

The US State Department has a pragmatic, simple procedural definition that it uses to draw up its list of terrorist organizations. To be added to the list, an organization must be foreign, must engage in terrorist activity or have the capability of doing so, and such activity must threaten the security of US citizens or US national security.[5]

The "security" criterion in relation to the interests and security of states dominates the categorization and definition of most terrorist states and organizations.

The issue of terrorist groups is one of the main preoccupations of states, because since the events of September 11 through to the unprecedented activity of the cells and organizations linked to the so-called "Islamic State", it poses a significant threat to global security and stability. Such activity has affected every continent and every part of the world, either through solidarity amongst "Islamic State" groups and cells, or more accurately, because of their competition with the activities of the local and regional groups and cells linked to *al-Qaeda*.

To confront the spread and expansion of terrorist groups, countries around the world have been issuing lists of what they consider to be terrorist and extremist groups, on which they impose sanctions. In 2014, the UAE issued a list of 83 organizations including parties, groups, Jihadi organizations, aid organizations, and institutions that have declared cultural characters. They also grouped Shiite and Sunni parties and organizations, and several well-known west European and US organizations, in addition to *Hezbollah* and all its branches, the *al-Umma* party in the Gulf with *al-Qaeda*, *Jabhat al-Nusra*, "Islamic State" branches, the Taliban, Pakistani Jihadi organizations such as *Askar Teiba* and *Jaysh Mohammad* as well as Syrian groups fighting the regime, such as *Ahrar al-Sham*, the Green Brigade and others.[6]

Saudi Arabia drew up a shorter, more specific list of terrorist organizations, including *al-Qaeda* and its branches, *Jabhat al-Nusra*, *Hezbollah*, the "Islamic State", the Houthis and the Muslim Brotherhood. However, unlike the UAE list, the Saudi list does not include other Syrian Jihadi organizations.[7]

The US list includes states, organizations and individuals linked to terrorism. It is a list that is periodically issued by the US State Department, adding some organizations and removing others. It currently includes 40 organizations, the best known of which are: *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* in Egypt, *Hamas*, the Pakistani *al-Mujahideen* movement, *Hezbollah*, the Palestinian *al-Jihad* movement, the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, *Jaysh Mohammad* (Kashmir), *Shuhadaa al-Aqsa*

[5] https://www.state.gov/j/ct/

[6] "UAE lists 83 organizations on terrorist list." Reuters, 15 November 2014.

[7] "Saudi Arabia issues terrorist list starting with Muslim Brotherhood and Nusra." Asharq Alawsat newspaper, 9 March 2014.

*Brigades* (Palestinian National Liberation Movement), *Usbat al-Ansar* (*Ein al-Hilweh* camp in Lebanon), *al-Qaeda* branches (the Maghreb, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and *Martyr Abdullah Azzam Brigades*), *Islamic Jihad* in Bangladesh, *al-Shabab al-Islamiya* movement in Somalia, *Hezbollah Brigades*, the *Haqqani Network*, *Ansar al-Dein* movement in Mali, the *Libyan Fighting Group*, the "Islamic State", *Jabhat al-Nusra*, *Sham al-Islam* movement, *Jaysh al-Mujahideen wa al-Ansar* in Syria and others.[8]

It can be seen that the definition of terrorist organizations is subject to the perspectives of different states with regard to their interests and national security. Hence, although a loose definition of terrorism exists, describing it as the illegitimate use of force to further an illegitimate political agenda, the categorization of such organizations and the implementation of theoretical criteria in relation to them differs according to the political and security agenda of each state.

Efforts to combat terrorism are varied, as we shall see below, and they have often become intertwined with combatting religious extremism on the grounds that religious extremism – that is, a hardline interpretation of the teachings of Islam – could lead those who espouse it to resort to violence to achieve their goals forcibly and illegitimately. Religious extremism has therefore been considered as a basic phase of terrorism, and many local, regional and international efforts have been devoted to countering religious extremism by disseminating moderate concepts and interpretations of Islam, as we will subsequently discuss.

In the light of the above, questions arise regarding the strategies, concepts and trends that govern the methods used by several countries to confront this unprecedented phenomenon.

## 2. The Historical Development of Hardline Islamic Groups

The development of hardline Islamic groups surged significantly over the past twenty-five years, with the emergence of *al-Qaeda* and armed Islamic groups in more dangerous forms than before and the increase in the number of terrorist operations in the Arab countries, particularly in the 1990s.Towards the end of the 1990s, the concept of the "globalization of Jihad" emerged, with the announcement by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri in 1998 of the formation of the global front to resist Zionism and the crusader trend. In other words, *al-Qaeda* switched its priorities from fighting the nearby enemy (the Arab regimes) to fighting the "remote enemy" (the US and western interests). This resulted in several major attacks against the US carried out by elements loyal to *al-Qaeda* in Yemen and Africa.

However, the September 11 attacks in the US, planned and carried out by al-Qaeda under the direct supervision of Osama bin Laden himself, were a turning point. This propelled the various efforts to combat terrorism into a phase of declared global war against terrorism, and the US subsequently waged two global wars on the pretext of confronting terrorism in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

[8] https://www.state.gov/

Those two wars, which the Neoconservatives declared as victories, led to two main consequences: The first was the transformation of *al-Qaeda*'s leadership from a strict centralized mode to a decentralized mode under which branches and various groups were given wide authorization to plan and implement their activities. The result was that *al-Qaeda* turned into several branch organizations, and new leaders emerged in Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and subsequently in Iraq.

The second consequence was the emergence of Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi's group in Iraq. Although that group officially joined *al-Qaeda* in 2004, it was different from it from the very beginning in several respects. The main difference was its ideological structure, which was tougher and more hardline. Other differences included viciousness in fighting enemies, the use of *takfir* (declaring others as non-believers), the group's position on Shias, extensive use of suicide attacks and sanctioning the killing of civilians. Those differences initially emerged between al-Zarqawi and his clerical mentor, al-Maqdisi, but they subsequently became more prominent in 2014 when a major rift occurred between *al-Qaeda* and the "Islamic State in Iraq", or *al-Qaeda in Iraq*, which broke away from the mother organization and later became known as "Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham." The Islamic caliphate was subsequently declared, and all Jihadi groups from around the world were asked to join it.[9]

The clear emergence of the "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria and the subsequent appearance of groups declaring themselves loyal to it in various parts of the world coincided with the phenomenon of "lone wolves". The latter developed into major cells that carried out attacks which shook Europe, Africa, Asia and the Arab countries. These developments were an unprecedented transformation in the history of terrorism and of hardline religious movements.[10]

The "Islamic State" was part of a new era throughout the Arab region, which was characterized by the Arab Spring, the onslaught on it, the counter-revolution sponsored by some official Arab regimes and the outbreak of internal conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen. Such conflicts had already broken out in Somalia. All those developments were considered as symptoms and signs of the collapse

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[9] Mohammad Abu Rumman, "From al-Qaeda to al-Qaedas: revenues and taxes." Jordanian newspaper al-Ghad, 28 May 2007.

[10] Ahmad al-Suba'ee, "Lone wolves: the coming terror of Islamic State". al-Jazeera, 25 March, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2015/3/25/-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B0%D8%A6%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%B1%D8%B9%D8%A8-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%85. Shamseddein al-Naqaz, "Has the Islamic State actually destroyed the Sykes-Picot borders?" Noon Post news website, 31 October 2015, http://www.noonpost.net/%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%A3%D9%86%D9%87%D9%89-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AD%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%8A%D9%83%D8%B3-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%83%D9%88-%D9%81%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%8B%D8%A7%D8%9F
Tareq Othman, "Da'esh Paradoxes: the political hopes that came to nothing." al-Jazeera Center for Studies, Doha, 23 November 2014,http://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/files/isil/2014/11/201411238819725981.html

of the authoritarian national Arab states that had emerged in their present form following the Second World War and of the collapse of the Arab regional order as other active regional states such as Turkey and Iran gained the ascendancy. Some analysts add another development, namely the US retreat from the region following the US setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, or what some refer to as the Obama doctrine, or the Obama complex.[11]

The challenge posed by the "Islamic State" went beyond any previous challenge both quantitatively and qualitatively at more than one level. The first was the establishment of the caliphate and of an alleged Islamic state, both of which are highly symbolic and draw on the discourse of the Islamic tradition; and seizing control of territory, where an authority was set up, and remaining in complete control of it for almost two years. The second has been the degree of savagery in the group's ideology, its military operations and the manner in which it has dealt with its various adversaries. The third is its ability to recruit and attract in a manner that has surpassed all previous terrorist movements, both in the Arab and Western worlds. The group has been able to attract west Europeans and westerners of Arab and Muslim origin as well as some converts. It has also been able to attract women and young people. It has found it easy to kill and carry out bombings in public places, or so-called soft targets, as was the case in Paris, Brussels, a tourist beach resort in Tunis and even in Shiite mosques in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

*The Three-Dimensional Danger Posed by the "Islamic State" (D3)*[12]

The first dimension is the state that the "Islamic State" has established in Iraq and Syria, which includes a large geographic area and rules millions of people, although it has begun to recede in the last few months.

The second dimension is the areas and cells in several regions of the world that are part of the organization. The organization announced that satellite states had been established in Sinai (*Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis*), Libya, Saudi Arabia (*Najd State*), Central Africa (*Boko Haram*) and the Caucuses, and other groups in various parts of the world had already pledged their allegiance.

The third dimension, which is the ideological aspect, is the most significant and dangerous. The group represents a system of thought and a trend that is spreading, and that has supporters in over 80 countries. Its supporters either hastily move to the promised land of the caliphate, or carry out terrorist acts that serve the group's agenda and are in harmony with its objectives and ideas.

We consider the ideological aspect to be the most dangerous, because pinning it down and blocking it is almost impossible, and because this certainly cannot be done through conventional security methods or military action. Nevertheless, some countries have attempted to wage electronic warfare on the group, because

[11] Ghayath Naisee, "The Islamic State and the counter-revolution." International Socialism, issue 147, 6 July 2015. And: Jeffrey Goldberg, The Obama Doctrine, The Atlantic, April 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/

[12] Joseph S. Nye, "How to Fight the Islamic State", Project Syndicate, 8 September 2015, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/how-to-fight-the-islamic-state-by-joseph-s--nye-2015-09?barrier=true

of its wide-ranging capability of using the internet to spread its propaganda and enhance its recruitment ability. There are tens of thousands of electronic accounts that support the "Islamic State" on Twitter and Facebook, and websites that publish the films it produces.[13]

Given all the above details and indicators, the "Islamic State" can be considered to be the zenith of extremist religious movements in terms of significance, influence and geographical spread across the world. The lands that have fallen under the control of groups linked to the "Islamic State" and the large and "high-quality" operations carried out by its followers in recent years alone are ample evidence of this.

## 3. Mapping Efforts to Confront Terrorism

Efforts to combat terrorism can be categorized according to the three main levels at which they are occurring: the first is the local level, the second is the regional level and the third is the international level.

At the international and regional levels, the focus of those efforts has shifted from terrorist groups, movements and trends that predated *al-Qaeda* to *al-Qaeda* and then to the "Islamic State". As far as the Arab and Islamic worlds were concerned, before the shift, some local Jihadi groups were considered to be terrorists. Previously, leftist and local revolutionary groups had been considered as terrorist by their governments. However, with *al-Qaeda*, and subsequently with the "Islamic State", the Jihadi groups moved from local to regional frameworks. This was followed by the "globalization of Jihad", which in turn resulted in the emergence of several international efforts and to a similar globalization of the fight against such groups. This globalization emerged as a clear trend when the US, during the era of the Neoconservatives, declared its "global war on terrorism", and US President George Bush set up an international coalition, which was joined by tens of countries from around the world, to confront *al-Qaeda* following the events of September 11.[14]

The US waged a global war in Afghanistan after the events of September 11 with the help of its international alliance, and it wiped out *al-Qaeda*'s stronghold. After the "Islamic State" gained ascendancy in Iraq and Syria, US President Barack Obama formed a new international coalition to confront terrorism in the shape of the "Islamic State", and declared war on the organization in 2014. Several countries from around the world participated in bombing the organization's strongholds in Syria, and the US helped the Iraqi government to confront it in Iraq. In 2015, Saudi Arabia announced the formation of an Islamic coalition to fight terrorism.

The security aspect of efforts to combat terrorism was strengthened internationally and regionally by meetings amongst European countries and international coordination that included the exchange of security-related

[13] Jonathan Powell, "Bombing ISIS Is Not Enough - We'll Need to Talk to Them, Too." The Guardian, 1 December 2015.
[14] Saleh Yasser, "Some aspects of change in US strategic thinking after 11 September 2001." alhewar al-mutamaden website, 12 September 2007, http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=%20108854

intelligence, the signing of agreements, the holding of meetings and the establishment of committees. The most prominent of those committees was the one formed by the UN Security Council following the events of September 11 in line with resolutions taken by the council to freeze assets and criminalize financing and helping terrorists under the laws of UN member states, to prohibit giving safe havens to terrorist groups, to exchange security-related intelligence and to work to prevent those groups from receiving material or moral support from any quarter whatsoever.[15]

International resolutions and various efforts to follow up on international and regional cooperation to confront terrorism intensified following the emergence of the "Islamic State". International and regional committees were formed to work on confronting the organization; to tackle the phenomenon of those infiltrating into the areas under its control; to monitor its sources of financing and to block its revenues from oil, the black market and other financial and commercial activities carried out by the organization and by *al-Qaeda*. These resolutions included 2133, 2160, 2161, 2170, 2180, which were issued in 2014.[16] Resolutions issued in 2015 included 2249, 2253, and 2255.[17]

The gist of the above resolutions is to combat the groups linked to the "Islamic State" and *al-Qaeda* using the above-mentioned means, international and regional coordination of security cooperation, depriving the two groups of safe havens, preventing the flow of foreign fighters to them and blocking their financing from various sources.

Agreements were signed and international and regional strategies were adopted to confront *al-Qaeda*, and subsequently the "Islamic State". These included the United Nations global counter-terrorism strategy of 2006, and the counter-terrorism agreement among the Arab Gulf States of 2004.

At the local level, that is, within various states, counter-terrorism efforts, specifically against *al-Qaeda* networks and the "Islamic State", have occurred at several levels and employed various means. States have updated their laws and regulations to pursue these organizations and keep up with the way in which their operations have developed. For example, the US enacted a national defense law known as the Patriot Act immediately after the September 11 attacks, giving the security agencies wide powers to spy on, investigate and monitor those groups inside the US. Similar German laws followed, and France introduced legislative amendments following the recent attacks in Paris. Arab countries, such as Egypt and Jordan, as well as other countries around the world did likewise.[18]

Many countries developed legislative and concrete counter-terrorism methods, and they have compiled lists of terrorists and terrorist groups. Other countries

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[15] See information on the committee and its activities: http://www.un.org/ar/sc/ctc/

[16] http://www.un.org/ar/sc/documents/resolutions/2014.shtml

[17] http://www.un.org/ar/sc/documents/resolutions/2015.shtml

[18] See "The USA Patriot Act: Preserving Life and Liberty" on the US Department of Justice website: https://www.justice.gov/archive/ll/highlights.htm
"French Parliament Votes in Favor of Counterterrorism Draft Law" report in al-Rai al-Yom, 8 March 2016. Human Rights Watch, "Jordan: Terrorism Amendments Threaten Rights." https://www.hrw.org/ar/news/2014/05/17/253736

have criminalized supporting *al-Qaeda*, the "Islamic State" and *Jabhat al-Nusra* financially or even morally by joining them, or by promoting them electronically or through other means. To that end, the work of counter-terrorism agencies was developed to include and monitor the electronic sphere locally, regionally and internationally. Thousands of electronic accounts used by supporters of those groups were shut down, and the electronic battle between those agencies and the supporters of those groups turned into something of a cat and mouse game.

Local counter-terrorism efforts fall into two categories:

The first comprises the above-mentioned so-called hard methods, such as laws, imprisonment, military strikes, international, regional and local resolutions, pursuing and monitoring terrorist groups and their supporters and constraining their financial, military and human resources.

The second type comprises soft methods. Many countries have attempted to develop strategies that focus on the cultural and educational aspects; or on tackling the ideological aspect; or on attempting to alter the ideas, beliefs and opinions of those influenced by *al-Qaeda* and the "Islamic State", or on establishing programs to rehabilitate those returning after having joined those two groups or those who attempted to join them and failed.

In the context of such soft approaches, Jordan, for example, issued the 2005 Amman Message to promote dialogue among religions and sects following the hotel bombings in Amman planned and carried out by the "Islamic State" when it was part of *al-Qaeda*'s global network and was led by Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi. The Jordanian authorities promoted the 2005 Amman Message inside and outside Jordan as an interpretation of religion that differs from *al-Qaeda*'s ideology.[19]

In Saudi Arabia, the Mohammad bin Naif Center for Counseling and Care was established, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the "Sakina" campaign to confront *al-Qaeda* and the "Islamic State" and refute their ideological discourse using *Shari'a*, jurisprudence and religion with the help of scholars specialized in *Shari'a* and various social and psychological fields. Those affected as well as those who are wanted or have been sentenced are given the opportunity to revise their thinking. Those who show signs of a shift in thinking are given practical and financial help upon being conditionally released.[20]

The Hedayah Center was established in the UAE in 2012. It is an offshoot of the International Forum to Combat Extremism in New York. The center, based in Abu Dhabi, aims to intensify the scholarly and intellectual efforts of specialists to understand extremism and map out a strategy to confront it.[21]

A program named the "Aarhus Model" (because it is connected to the city of Aarhus) was launched to rehabilitate foreign fighters. Its work is linked to a so-called data house, which reaches out to families that fear that their children

[19] http://www.ammanmessage.com/
[20] www.mncc.org.sa/
[21] See information on the center: http://www.hedayah.ae/about-hedayah/history/

might be affected by extremist thinking and could try to travel to Iraq and Syria. Specialized staff receives their calls and deal with cases.[22]

In the UK, the Masar program was launched following the London bombings of 7 July 2005 with the aim of identifying individuals affected by extremist thinking, and guiding them away from that path. According to statistics, some 1839 children aged 15 and younger were referred to the program between 2012 and 2015 over fears they had been exposed to extremist ideas.

The British government enacted legislation that makes it obligatory for schools, prisons, health services and local authorities to monitor individuals who might be prone to extremism and hardline thinking under the "duty of prevention" so that their pathways can be altered.[23]

Another example within this context is the Rome Memorandum (which was the outcome of a series of meetings held in 2011 and 2012) on good practice in rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist criminals. It has become a reference for countries seeking to rehabilitate and integrate returning fighters, or those who have fallen under the influence of extremist thinking.

## 4. The "Islamic State's" Narrative: The Missing Link in Counter-Terrorism

The various approaches and trends at the international, regional and local levels that include hard measures (military, security, legislative, arrests, drone attacks, etc.) and soft measures (ideological criticism, rehabilitation programs, care, the reintegration of returning fighters) all revolve around "outputs" and "results", and ignore or overlook the conditions and "inputs" that have led to the ascendancy of the "Islamic State", *al-Qaeda* and other such groups.

There is an increasing understanding by US and western political elites that an organization like the "Islamic State" is mainly the outcome of political or social circumstances, and that it is linked to fundamental problems such as feelings of alienation and marginalization, weak integration channels, the search for identity, and reactions to various causes and factors. However, such an understanding has not been fully translated into counter-terrorism efforts, or it has remained part of a limited theoretical domain. In the meantime, everyone has jumped onto the bandwagon of dealing with the "Islamic State" from a results-driven perspective without thinking of conditions and causes.

Paradoxically, the "Islamic State" and the new generation of Jihadis have become more advanced in their thinking and in their recruitment instruments and security and military techniques than European, western and Arab states. Hence, we see that very young men participated in carrying out the Paris attacks. They then managed to mount attacks in Brussels, after finding the security gaps that they needed and evading security cordons. Abdul Hamid Abaoud was able to

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[22] Washington Institute for Near Eastern Studies, "Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters, workshop on 23 February 2015: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/view/rehabilitation-and-reintegration-of-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters

[23] "Britain: 415 children referred for deradicalization", 21 January 2016, BBC Arabic, http://www.bbc.com/arabic/worldnews/2016/01/160121_400_children_referred_for_deradicalisation

evade security several times as he moved between European countries. He went to Syria and returned, even though he was wanted by western security services. The same can be said of Salah Abdul Salam and others.

The organization was also able to find security loopholes at Sharm al-Sheikh airport, leading to the downing of a Russian airliner. Similarly, it was able to exploit inadequate security at Brussels airport to carry out its operation. It also studied its soft targets in Burkina Faso.

There have been many programs to combat the "Islamic State", and a great deal of propaganda against it and its savage image. The group itself does not deny that savage image, and actually publishes films, pictures and a bloody discourse that strengthen that image. However, all the programs and propaganda to combat the "Islamic State" have not reduced its ability to recruit, promote itself and attract supporters and followers in many countries.

Focusing on the military, security and ideological aspects to criticize and weaken the "Islamic State", on the cultural approach that tries to develop educational curricula in the Arab and Islamic worlds and on the improvement of moderate religious discourse can all be beneficial and significant in countering the "Islamic State". However, if such measures are not accompanied by efforts to eliminate the conditions and causes that have led to its emergence and to dismantle them in various countries and societies, any successes that are achieved will remain partial, limited or short-lived, and in some cases those measures might backfire. This occurs when anti-terrorism laws in the Arab world become a means that the authorities use to confiscate public and political freedoms and take revenge on their adversaries, and when prisons, detention centers and instruments of torture become another cause for extremism, terrorism and the desire for revenge.[24]

Research by sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists has begun to draw on other concepts and new clues to explain extremism, terrorism and the reasons for the emergence of the "Islamic State". For example, such research refutes the hypothesis that those who belong to such groups were originally criminals and nihilists before joining. Some studies deny that this is so in many cases, and hold that we must search for other causes and factors that explain why a percentage of young people who belong to that school of thought undergo a transformation from a state of being idealistic dreamers to a state of extremism, terrorism and practicing murder and suicide attacks.[25]

Some studies refer to the importance of introducing the concept of "brain washing" when dealing with those who belong to that trend, particularly given The "Islamic State's" well-developed ability to recruit, promote itself and reach categories of people that were not previously accessible to similar groups.[26]

Hence, it is necessary when planning counter-terrorism efforts and strategies to go back to the initial question, which relates to the "Da'esh narrative", not only in

[24] Mohammad Abu Rumman, "Da'esh: Why the other narrative has succeeded." al-Arabi al-Jadeed newspaper, 23 November 2015.
[25] Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Religion, Brotherhood, and the (Un)Making of Terrorists*. Translated by Taher Labasi, Jadawel Publishing House, Beirut, 2015, pp. 7-10
[26] Mohammad Abu Rumman, "Where is the exit point?" Jordanian newspaper al-Ghad, 21 June 2015.

order to critique it on religious and jurisprudence grounds and to respond to it, as some specialized centers are doing. That narrative must also be understood, deconstructed and analyzed in order to comprehend its strengths and weaknesses and to try to change actual objective circumstances that are based on it.

Examples of the questions we should be asking are: Why did Abdul Hamid Abaoud and Ibrahim and Hasnaa Boulahsan, who had not been religious in previous years, become faithful followers of the "Islamic State"? Was this simply because of the group's media message on Jihadi websites, or was it the French language that the messages used? Or did certain conditions make them ready candidates for such a basic radical transformation?

A practical rather than a theoretical critique is needed to dismantle the narrative of the "Islamic State". The Sunni crisis in Iraq and Syria is one of the most important factors that led to the group's ascendancy. The creation of political prospects will defuse a significant part of that narrative, and arguments of counter-revolution and the failure of democratic transformation are excuses used by the proponents of theorizing. Approving a democratic system and pluralism, the alternation of power and allowing moderate Islamists to participate will undermine an important part of the "Islamic State's" narrative. Corruption, unemployment and government repression are key elements that the "Islamic State" depends upon. Good governance, a fair judicial system and a free press weaken the group's argument. The establishment of an Islamic government is a symbol that the group exploits. Hence, offering an independent Islamic discourse and a modern vision of government that is in line with *Shari'a*, citizenship and democracy and is advocated by independent scholars will weaken the "Islamic State's" logic, and so on!

Returning to square one regarding the war on terror, the question is: One year after declaring war on the "Islamic State", and more than 14 years after the September 11 events, what went wrong with those strategies and confrontations, given that the "Islamic State's" thinking is spreading and the number of its supporters around the world is increasing?

The answer is that existing strategies tackle outputs not inputs, and results not conditions. If we were to suppose, for the sake of argument, that air strikes were to wipe out Raqqa and thousands of the "Islamic State's" members in Syria and Iraq, in line with current demands by western security experts, would that end the problem, or would it complicate it, resulting in the birth of something that is harsher and more strident and nihilistic than the culture of the "Islamic State"?

# Approaches to the War on Terrorism: Examples of Efforts to Eradicate Extremism

*Hassan Abu Hanieh*

For decades, most experts have cast doubt on the benefit of limiting efforts to confront the phenomenon of "terrorism" to military and security approaches, because that phenomenon stems from complex and multi-faceted objective political, economic and social causes, conditions and circumstances. Moreover, its forms and manifestations depend on prevailing ideological and cultural structures. The military approach known as "the war on terror" adopted by the United States following *al-Qaeda*'s attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 has proven to be ineffective in achieving its declared objective of destroying *al-Qaeda* and allied Jihadi movements.

That military and security approach revealed a massive flaw and resulted in speedy failure. Military campaigns have not deprived the supposed terrorists of their safe havens, nor have they blockaded them and dried up their sources of finance, nor have they wiped out their ideological discourse. Moreover, such campaigns failed to undermine the media and electronic propaganda of those supposed terrorists. The international military campaign against the Taliban and *al-Qaeda* in Afghanistan that was launched in 2001 ended after more than 14 years and yielded only modest results. The Taliban, its allied Jihadi groups and *al-Qaeda* still enjoy safe havens, and the Afghan government appears incapable of halting Taliban's expansion. In Iraq, the 2003 US occupation did not result in pushing back supposed *al-Qaeda* terrorism. To the contrary, the occupation contributed to a new incarnation of *al-Qaeda*[27] and the development of a global Jihadi movement in the shape of the "Islamic State", which has taken control of large areas.

The inadequacy of the military and security war against terrorism is clear. The US was able to significantly weaken the central *al-Qaeda* organization in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and to kill *al-Qaeda* leader Osama bin Laden and most of the organization's important leaders, such as Abu Yazid al-Masri, Abu Hafs al-Masri, Abu al-Laith al-Libi, Abu Yahya al-Libi and Attiyah Abdul Rahman. The US was also able to hunt down major leaders of regional branches, such as head of the Iraqi branch Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqawi; *al-Qaeda* leader in the Arabian Peninsula Abu Basir al-Waheishi and his deputy Sufian al-Shihri; *al-Qaeda*'s Yemeni theorist Anwar al-Awlaqi; Mukhtar Abu al-Zubair, leader of the Somali branch known as *al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen* and others. They were able to arrest several leaders, such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Ramzi bin Shaibah, Abu Zubaida, Abu al-Faraj al-Libi, Suleiman Abu Gaith, Abu Anas al-Libi and others. They were all sent to the Guantanamo detention facility.[28] However, such success seems

[27] Several books and studies have appeared refuting the lie that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was sponsoring terrorism. That lie was used to justify the US invasion of Iraq. See a sample of those writings in: Bob Woodward, *Plan of Attack*. Translated into Arabic by Fadhil Jatkar, Al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004.

[28] Guantanamo detention camp is one of the most famous prisons in the world. Its inmates include detainees and prisoners who have not been charged, and it has been criticized by all

limited, because global Jihadism has developed and been able to expand its recruitment, develop its structures, remain steadfast and increase its reach.

The military and security policies of the war on terror contributed to the creation of a new, more dangerous Jihadi generation that has become more widespread since the events of September 11. That form of Jihadism has gained control of large areas in several locations, including Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Sinai, Afghanistan, Sub-Sahara Africa and the Sahel. Jihadism has also split into two dangerous branches. The first, under the leadership of Ayman al-Zawahiri, adheres to *al-Qaeda*'s traditional agenda. The second is led by the renegade Iraqi branch known as the "Islamic State" led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Moreover, Jihadi ideological discourse has become more attractive.

## Concrete Approaches: The Paradigm of War and Criminal Justice

Following the September 11 attacks, the military approach dominated the perspectives that governed combatting terrorism. That approach is based on the use of force and its legitimization, support for unilateral action by those capable of it and substituting the principle of deterrence and containment with the principle of pre-emptive defense. By comparison, prior to the events of September 11, legal approaches had dominated efforts to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism. That approach emphasizes the importance of understanding the fundamental causes for terrorism, the military option is a last resort, and deterrence and containment become the preferred strategy. Hence, two patterns dominated efforts to combat terrorism: the pattern of criminal justice and the pattern of war. Both depend on a monopolization by the state of the use of violence. Under the criminal justice pattern, the police bear the principal responsibility together with the courts and the prison system. Under the war pattern, the army bears the main responsibility.

The rules of engagement that apply when implementing the criminal justice pattern include a minimal use of force, whereas implementation of the war pattern entails the maximum use of force. Both patterns are subject to strict limits regarding who may be subjected to violence, thus bestowing legitimacy on state practices. Despite the importance of the criminal justice approach, it is slow and not highly effective. The war pattern is effective, speedy and suited to dealing with the type of new threats that have emerged, such as decentralized

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human rights organizations because it has become notorious for using the harshest forms of torture. Amnesty International considers that the Guantanamo detention center represents the "barbarity of this era" and that the haphazard campaign of arrests carried out by the US is a blatant legal challenge to the whole world. However, the greater catastrophe is the inability to make a decision to shut it down, despite the many promises that US President Barrack Obama has made to do so since he came to the White House in 2009. However, those promises have not been fulfilled. Work to establish the Guantanamo detention center began following the attacks of September 11, 2001 when former US President George Bush was in office. It was opened in January 2002 at a US coastal military base in southern Cuba within the framework of a rental contract dating back to 1903. The inmates of the detention center were classified as "enemy combatants", and it quickly turned into a symbol of the so-called "war on terror". There are currently around 116 prisoners in Guantanamo out of an original 779. They have not been charged or tried. They include five persons accused of being responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001, and they have been referred to the military judicial system and face execution.

terrorist networks that are based on ideological motives and are undeterred by conventional criminal justice. However, the war pattern entails a high risk of consequences that will exacerbate violent actions, undermine the legitimacy of the ruling regimes that resort to it, cause those regimes to behave undemocratically and create an atmosphere that the advocates of terrorist movements can exploit for purposes of recruitment and attracting sympathizers.[29]

The flaws in the war on terror are not confined to the patterns of war and of criminal justice. The absence of a precise definition of "terrorism" has contributed to state of semantic confusion and a lack of credibility, and has thus become a weapon used by the authorities of dictatorial states to confront political adversaries, or supposed enemies. The term "terrorism" is being used by feuding parties for political purposes, and has turned into an individual, subjective concept. Terrorism, according to Joseph Massad, "is not a supposed name; rather, it is always an imposed name. The categorizing concept that transforms it from a practice into an identity is a specific concept that is not characterized by generalization. Whereas a state authority describes some practices as terrorism and refers to those who commit them as 'terrorists', all those who are described as terrorists reject that description, which is imposed on them by the state."[30] The strategy of nomenclature in this context, according to Jacques Derrida, is not haphazard, but an integral part of the strategy of control and hegemony in the game of power. Derrida holds that the dominating powers are those that are able, under certain circumstances, to impose names and then impose the interpretations that suit them on those names, hence legitimizing that nomenclature, and even codifying it on the national and international arenas. After a long and complex history, the United States succeeded in bringing about an agreement amongst the governments of South America to officially designate as terrorist all organized political movements resisting ruling regimes or regimes that were actually imposed on government.[31]

Most states have adopted a pattern of strict criminalization to confront possible threats, using policies of "pursuit and judicial prosecution" that encompass everyone without discrimination. In most of Western Europe, governments have introduced more repressive laws relating to terrorism to confront extremism and deal with the possible threat posed by the return of foreign fighters. Such laws include strengthening the powers of the public prosecutor, widening the scope of measures for extraditing individuals to their original countries, the cancellation of travel documents, increasing the surveillance powers of intelligence services and criminalizing travel to areas of conflict abroad. Recently adopted measures in the UK, Holland, Germany, Austria, France and other countries include dealing with foreign fighters as a security issue, whether this relates to travelling abroad or returning to the country. Measures have also included the banning of groups and organizations suspected of helping to

[29] For further details, see Ronald Crelinsten, *Counterterrorism*. Translated by Ahmad al-Tijani, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, UAE, 2011.
[30] See Joseph Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*. Dar al-Adaab, Beirut, 2009, p. 11.
[31] See Jacques Derrida, *What Happened on 11 September*. Translated by Safa Fathi, Toubkal Publishing, Casablanca, 2006, p. 64.

facilitate the recruitment of fighters.[32] The electronic monitoring of communications for security purposes has increased and become more efficient. However, while repressive strategies can prevent terrorist operations, according to Charles Lister, they can result in a backlash by feeding into resentment, creating new grievances and facilitating attraction to new or revived causes. Moreover, the war on terrorism has resulted in an erosion in the rule of law and civil liberties, reducing the trust that citizens have in their governments.[33]

In the Arab World, most countries have altered laws on "terrorism" so that they more strongly criminalize returning fighters, and the term "terrorism" has come to include political movements and groups. Some countries have issued lists of terrorist groups that include a large unclassified collection, foremost of which is the Muslim Brotherhood. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was classified as a terrorist group on 25 December 2013,[34] and Saudi Arabia added the movement to its list of terrorist organizations on 7 March 2014,[35] followed by the UAE, which placed the group on its list of terrorist groups on 15 November 2014.[36]

## Soft Approaches: The Guidance and Reintegration Pattern

Since the "Islamic State" took control of Mosul in June 2014, the dangers of local, regional and international terrorism increased, because the objectives of the Jihadi groups classified as terrorism movements were no longer limited to confronting "either the near or the far enemy." Those objectives are now based on integrating those dimensions, waging local wars in several countries, particularly Iraq and Syria, and carrying out external attacks like those seen in Paris on 13 November 2015, in Brussels on 22 March 2016 and in other countries. This has increased the danger posed by foreign fighters, of whom over 30,000 have been recruited, according to UN statistics.[37] Moreover, "Islamic State" continues to attract waves of young people, in what is the biggest voluntary enlistment of fighters since the global Jihadi phenomenon took shape in its two main strongholds of Afghanistan and Iraq.[38]

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[32] The authorities in Europe banned Islamic organizations suspected of facilitating travel to Syria and Iraq for terrorism-related purposes. A prominent example is the banning of the "Millet Ibrahim" organization in Germany in 2012, and the "Need for the Caliphate" group in the UK in 2014, and the "Sharia for Belgium Organization" in Belgium in 2015.

[33] See Charles Lister, *Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?* Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[34] "Egyptian government considers the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist group." al-Jazeera, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2013/12/25/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9

[35] "First Saudi List of Terrorist Organizations includes the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Nusra and Da'esh." BBC Arabic, http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast/2014/03/140307_saudi_terror_organizations.

[36] "Emirates Describes Organizations, the Most Prominent of Which is the Brotherhood as "Terrorist", al-Jazeera, http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2014/11/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B5%D9%85-

[37] Charles Lister, *Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?* Brookings Doha Center, Doha, 2015, p. 1: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Research/Files/Papers/2015/08/13-foreign-fighters-lister/Ar-Fighters-Web.pdf?la=ar

[38] Attraction and polarization processes within the ranks of the "Islamic State" in Iraq and Syria become clear when they are compared to the two largest previous operations to recruit foreign

As Jihadi movements spread and the risks of terrorism increased, the international community better understood the need for the adoption of an integrated strategy in the war on terrorism and the elimination of violent extremism. According to a UN report, over the past two decades, the international community worked to confront violent extremism mainly within the framework of security type measures that were used to confront the terrorist threat posed by *al-Qaeda* and its affiliates. However, with the emergence of a new generation of groups, there is increasing international consensus that such measures to combat terrorism were insufficient to prevent the spread of violent extremism. In fact, the category comprising aspects of violent extremism is larger than the terrorist category, and using the terms "violent extremism" and "terrorism" interchangeably could lead to justifying the overuse of measures to combat terrorism in a widespread manner and applying them to forms of behavior that cannot be described as acts of terrorism.

Security Council Resolution 2178 of 2014 highlights the connection between violent extremism and terrorism, and emphasizes that measures taken to deal with them must be in line with international principles. It also acknowledges the need for prevention, because "violent extremism can lead to terrorism" and requires collective efforts, "including the prevention of the dissemination of extremist thought among individuals and their recruitment to join terrorist groups and foreign terrorist fighters." The resolution affirms that there is a need to adopt a more comprehensive course that is not limited to the basic security measures that are currently in force to combat terrorism.[39]

International approaches are still based on short-term methods that take the shape of war and criminal justice. They deal with the foreign fighters as terrorists, or consider them as potential terrorists in accordance with a mentality of criminalization, although statistics indicate that most returning foreign fighters do not have hostile intentions. This requires a reconsideration of security and legal procedures, and a widening of the approach to include more effective measures in accordance with the logic of liberal policies. Such measures include social integration, social cohesion and the relationship between the state and the citizen. All such measures must accord with a comprehensive and integrated strategy. According to Gilles de Kerchove, any danger that foreign fighters might pose must be evaluated on a case by case basis. While a minority of them might carry out a terrorist attack, many may be let down and may be suffering from post-traumatic shock. Some may feel that they have carried out

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fighters since this became a phenomenon in the 1980s. The number of recruited fighters by the "Islamic State" vastly exceeds those recruited by previous processes. The most recent recruitment processes occurred over a much shorter period. It is believed that around 5,000 people left for the Afghan front to fight against the Soviets in 1979-1992. During the decade prior to this one, some 4,000 foreign fighters left for the Iraqi front in 2003-2007 to fight against US occupation. See Aaron Zelin, *Sunni Foreign Fighters in Syria: Background, Facilitating Factors, and Select Responses:* http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/view/sunni-foreign-fighters-in-syria-background-facilitating-factors-and-select

[39] See United Nations, General Assembly, "Culture of Peace: The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism." Report by the Secretary-General, A/70/674: http://wwwhuman-human.blogspot.com.tr/2016/01/blog-post_93.html

their duty as Muslims by supporting the "Arab Spring", and may simply need to reintegrate into society.[40]

Terrorist threats and the dangers of violent extremism are no longer confined to the regional states neighboring the focal points of local civil conflicts. They have turned into a global phenomenon that crosses borders, raising security fears in western countries of the spread of radical extremist views amongst young people. The average flows of volunteers from the US and the European countries to the focal points of civil conflicts in the region have increased, and obsession with the return of fighters to their countries is a source of anxiety to all the security and civil agencies in those countries. Hence, tendencies, experiments, patterns and approaches have emerged seeking unconventional methods of dealing with the phenomena of "terrorism" and "violent extremism".

## European Models of Containment

In the context of confronting terrorism and violent extremism, some European governments have resorted to innovative, unconventional long-term models based on redirection and reintegration in dealing with returning foreign fighters. This approach is based on the principle of citizenship within the framework of democracy and the rule of law, and gives a citizen another chance for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. It deals in an individual manner with the motivations of returning foreign fighters, and seeks to understand the reasons that prompted them to join terrorist or hardline groups, as well as the reasons that prompted them to dissent from those groups and return to their countries. It avoids dealing with them as terrorists and extremists who cannot be changed and reintegrated. The motives for joining terrorist and extremist groups are politically, economically, socially and psychologically varied, and they are not purely of an ideological religious nature.

Despite the predominance of governmental military and security approaches, there is an international understanding of the need to include and empower local communities in efforts to eliminate violent extremism. The proponents of liberal policies are basing their fight to promote this approach on UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which emphasizes the need to empower local players to eliminate extremism and reintegrate returning foreign fighters. In Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city, the police and the municipal council in coordination with non-governmental and local organizations have joined Muslim communities on a wide scale to prevent foreign fighters from leaving by means of an "early prevention program" and to encourage others to return through an "exit program".[41]

Recent years have seen the emergence of a number of programs based on a policy of containment according to unconventional approaches that employ reorientation, management of beliefs and integration into society. Some

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[40] Gilles de Kerchove, Jacob Bundsgaard, Maj. Gen. Doug Stone, USMC (ret.),and Matthew Levitt, *Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters:* http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/view/rehabilitation-and-reintegration-of-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters

[41] Charles Lister, *Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?* Ibid., p. 8.

European states have adopted programs to deal with those returning from focal areas of conflict, and with cases of extremism on an individual basis. Each case is studied separately, and methods of dealing with them range from intellectual rehabilitation, to psychological care, to social integration. The most important social integration program is the "Aarhus model" in Denmark, which involves joint efforts by the security services and local authorities to integrate extremists by providing them with opportunities to complete their studies, and with life, work and social amenities to encourage them to reject extremism and violence. The "Hayat Program" in Germany is based on an integration of ideological and intellectual rehabilitation with functional and social rehabilitation to integrate extremists into public life and deal with their feelings of social alienation.[42]

The Danish "Aarhus" model and the German "Hayat" program are considered to be the best-known such experiments. The Danish approach relies on integration and inclusion by combining the approaches of war, criminal justice and containment. While Denmark arrests and prosecutes returning fighters whose participation in terrorism is proven, it offers help to others, and works to provide them with job opportunities, housing, education and guidance. These programs do not aim to alter conservative Islamic belief as long as it is not violent. The research of Preben Bertelsen, professor of psychology at Aarhus University in "psychology and life", is widely considered to be the scientific basis of the "Aarhus" model. He says, "the so-called 'Aarhus model' revolves around containment. Look at all those young men, and you will find that they are fighting similar problems to those confronted by many young people around the world – building their lives, understanding the world around them and finding a space and meaning in their societies. What we have to say to them is: If you have not committed any kind of crime, we will help you to find a way back."[43]

Allan Aarslev, who is in charge of the police's role in dealing with extremism in Aarhus, sums up the nature of the integrated program involving government institutions and civil society, and admits that the mission and choices it faces are difficult. He says, "It is easy to pass strict laws, but the difficulty lies in dealing fairly over a long period with those individuals, and it is an operation that requires groups of experts, psychology consultants, healthcare, help to get back onto an educational or professional path and the search for accommodation. It is a process of returning to a normal life pattern and to being in harmony with society. We are not doing this on the basis of any political beliefs, but because we think that we will succeed in the end." This is because this process runs in parallel with open, intensive, and often tough dialogue between city officials and the imams of the Grimhojvej mosque. In 2013, twenty-two members of the Grimhojvej mosque in Aarhus left to fight in Syria, whereas only eight other inhabitants of the city did the same that year. After the counseling team in Aarhus contacted the mosque's leadership, only one member left for Jihad in

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[42] *The Double Threat: Mechanisms for Confronting the threats of "Those Returning from Extremist Focal Points",* Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo, http://www.rcssmideast.org/Article/4288/%D8%A2%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%87%D8%A9-

[43] Daniel Kochis, *Terror in the Happiest Place on Earth.* Translated by Abdul Rahman al-Husseini, al-Ghad newspaper, http://www.alghad.com/prints/878625-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-

2014. Of the thirty-three Aarhus inhabitants who have left for Syria and Iraq since 2011, sixteen returned with the help of the authorities and counsellors. None of them subsequently committed any serious crimes, and most of them now work or have resumed their studies.[44]

The most important part of the Aarhus program, according to everyone who has participated in it, is its use of personal teachers. This enables returning fighters, or those who want to return to fighting to resort to those teachers with regard to their daily lives, and to enter into serious debates with them about religion and ethics. The mayor of Aarhus says, "You cannot simply pass laws that tell people how to think and what they should believe in, but you can work sincerely for dialogue and social integration." Vertical laws and strict measures are good, according to the Aarhus experience, but the basic solution is provided by the horizontal method that focuses on the details of daily life.[45]

The Aarhus model has become a central discussion point when it comes to dealing with tendencies towards extremism and terrorism and reorientation and integration programs. It offers an answer to the question "How do we prevent them from going to conflict areas, taking up arms, getting armed training, then returning to their societies after becoming more hardline?" In that context, Jonathan Birdwell, an expert on ways of dealing with hardliners, says, "There is an awareness amongst experts that the Aarhus model is the best, and must be replicated in other European cities."[46]

Another innovative project has emerged in Germany. It is known as the "Hayat" project and has been in operation since January 2012 in partnership with the German Federal Office for Immigration and Refugee Affairs. It carries out individual assessments of returning foreign fighters, and when possible, they are guided through counseling and reintegration in Berlin and eastern Germany. Project Consultant Julia Berczyk emphasizes, "We must distinguish amongst types of returnees and understand that throwing them all in jail could actually enhance extremism. We need to open some doors to ensure some exits." The "Hayat" method is based on a three-pronged process to eliminate extremism and encourage a gradual integration into society. It includes:

Firstly, the ideological aspect: This is based on delegitimization and neutralization of Jihadi discourse and encouraging foreign fighters to reconcile with their past.

Secondly, the practical aspect: This is based on helping foreign fighters to find jobs, education opportunities or training, and on finding accommodation for them.

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[44] Charles Lister, *Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?* Ibid., p. 9.
[45] "The Aarhus Model .. Will it Succeed in Stopping Europeans from Joining "Da'esh"?, translated and edited by Noon Post: http://www.noonpost.net/content/4342
[46] Nasser al-Sahli, "Aarhus … a Model for Combating a "Hardline Environment" in Europe?", Alarabi al-Jadeed: http://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/2015/11/20/%D8%A2%D8%B1%D9%87%D9%88%D8%B3--%D9%86%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B0%D8%AC-%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D8%A9-

Thirdly: the emotional aspect: This is based on dealing with their emotional needs, ensuring they get support from their families, and on establishing an alternative social point of reference. [47]

The "Hayat" project has proven its effectiveness at eliminating Islamic extremism, and has dealt with 130 cases. In that context several European countries and the US have worked to adopt innovative programs similar to Denmark's "Aarhus" project and Germany's "Hayat" project. The US attorney general Eric Holder announced on 15 September 2014 that the US justice department had established a program to combat the spread of extremist views, and to deal pre-emptively with the increased recruitment of young people by extremist groups. The program works through psychological rehabilitation and psychological, social and religious care for categories that might join terrorist organizations. Belgium has adopted a similar program that uses psychology to determine the motivations of those who join terrorist groups. The program subjects fighters returning from Syria to psychological and social monitoring to determine their motivations for adopting radical tendencies, and the ideological discourse used by terrorist organizations to attract new young recruits. France adopted a program to combat extremism in October 2013, based on launching awareness campaigns to encourage parents to report any changes in the behavior or beliefs of their offspring, on preventing the migration of minors without the approval of their guardians and on hacking into and banning radical websites that disseminate an ideology of *takfir* and attract young men to fight in Syria and Iraq. In addition to the "Hayat" project in Germany, contact centers have been established to provide counseling to families in the event that their offspring start to exhibit signs of extremism and to offer psychological, social and religious guidance to young people who are potential recruits for terrorist organizations.[48]

## Arab Models of Containment

The strategies and policies for combatting terrorism and eliminating violent extremism are unarguably more complex in the Arab world than in the west. This is because the biggest danger in western countries is basically limited to the issue of foreign fighters and the fear that they might carry out retaliatory attacks. Hence, it is a phenomenon relating to a minority that does not aim to establish physical control over any location. Moreover, its impacts are limited because Muslims are a minority, and they usually belong to moderate Islamic schools of thought. However, the danger in the Arab world is of a dual nature, because operations by Jihadi groups are not limited to retaliatory strikes. They are aimed at imposing physical control over areas, overthrowing governments and imposing Islamic *Shari'a* law. They target the state and society militarily and ideologically, their activities are varied and they comprise movements and groups that are spread over wide geographical areas. The most radical Jihadi

[47] Charles Lister, *Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Reintegration?* Ibid, p9.

[48] "Policies of Containment. Regional Implications of the Implementation of 'Ideological Counseling' in Western Countries." Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo: http://www.rcssmideast.org/Article/2852/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%82%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%8

organizations, such as "Islamic State" and *al-Qaeda* control large areas in several Arab countries, such as Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt and Somalia. Moreover, Jihadi ideology enjoys the support of cells, groups and networks that are embedded in sympathetic social incubators in an Arab-Islamic environment in which Islam as a religion is a basic component that shapes identity, tendencies and behavior.

Although the models of war and criminal justice can achieve relative success in western countries, their effectiveness is doubtful in the Arab world, where military and security approaches on their own have failed abjectly. The Jihadi phenomenon in the Arab world has grown, has become more dangerous and more widespread, is based on a military security structure, has a violent intellectual ideology and operates professional media and propaganda outlets. It seems that those managing Arab efforts to combat terrorism have begun to comprehend these new terrorist risks and are exhibiting a wider understanding in dealing with this phenomenon by resorting to soft initiatives in addition to the hard military and security approaches. Unconventional initiatives, projects and programs have sprung up focusing on deep causes and long-term treatments. However, the main fault with Arab methods of dealing with the problem is that most of them are originated by the governing establishment and its security agencies, rather than by establishments belonging to civil society, which governments have weakened and continue to pressure.

*Correctional Revisions*

Some of the most prominent initiatives that have contributed to delegitimizing violent extremism in the Arab world were launched by Jihadi groups, such as *al-Jihad* and *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* in Egypt and *al-Jama'ah al-Libiyyah al-Muqatilah* in Libya. The first group to put forward an initiative was *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* in Egypt. Its initiative, put forward in 1997, was known as the "Stop the Violence", and this was followed by a comprehensive intellectual revision rejecting the use of violence, putting forth Islamic interpretations that religiously delegitimize violence as a means of achieving political change, and working to dismantle the religious arguments providing a basis for violence in general, and for its mechanisms and military tactics, such as suicide attacks.[49]

Following in the footsteps of *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya*, a faction of the al-Jihad group put forward intellectual revisions in November 2007 through Sayyed Imam al-Sharif, who is known as Dr. Fadhl and as Abdul Qader Abdul Aziz and who is the former Emir of the Egyptian al-Jihad group. Those revisions reached similar

[49] The historical leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood issued a collection of reference books, authored by Karam Mohammad Zuhdi, Ali Mohammad Ali al-Sharif, Hamdi Abdul Rahman Abdul Atheem, Assem Abdul Majed Mohammad, Najeh Ibrahim Abdullah, Osama Ibrahim Hafez, Fouad Mohammad al-Doulibi and Mohammad Issam al-Dein Durbalah under the category "Correcting Concepts". They are: *The Initiative to Stop Violence: A Realistic Perspective and a Jurisprudence View,* al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004. Also: *Highlighting the Mistakes That Have Befallen Jihad.* al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004. Also: *Advice and Clarity in the Correction of the Concepts of Those Who Follow Shari'a Law*. al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004. Also: *The Forbidding of Exaggeration in Religion and of Declaring Others as Unbelievers*. al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004. Another collection of books followed, including *al-Qaeda's Strategies and Bombings, Mistakes and Dangers*. al-Obaikan Bookshop, Riyadh, 2004.

conclusions to those reached by *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya,*[50] and the movement's historic leadership issued a number of studies to revise its thought in December 2009, and prepared corrective studies.[51]

Despite the importance of such revisions, Arab governments used a security approach to deal with them, releasing those who had taken such initiatives and their supporters from jail. However, the authoritarian tendencies of those governments and the course of selective integration that they took weakened their credibility, causing those initiatives to appear like military-security surrenders, rather than ideological transformations and interpretations based on jurisprudence. This led to subsequent divisions amongst those who had taken those initiatives, followed by a reverse migration by some members towards radical Jihadi movements.

A Jordanian initiative is among the best known based on dismantling violent Jihadi ideology and revealing how it contradicts Islam's centrist and moderate model. The initiative formed a wide coalition of many religious scholars from the Arab and Islamic worlds to discuss the formulation of Islamic principles based on dialogue and diversity and opposed to violence and closed thinking. It culminated in the issuing of the "Amman Message" of 2005, which is an intellectual initiative that opposes violent extremism and terrorism and is based on strengthening the values of tolerance.[52]

In Egypt, *al-Azhar* and Egypt's *Dar al-Iftaa'* have escalated their role in the intellectual confrontation of violent extremism by taking several measures, most notably:

1. The Intellectual Observatory: *al-Azhar* set up a foreign language observatory, which succeeded in revealing the reasons prompting individuals to join extremist movements. It was also able monitor the messages and ideas that the "Islamic State" transmits to young people and respond in the same language in which those messages and ideas were published.

2. Peace Caravans: These tour the world to spread a culture of peace, correct erroneous concepts and call on Arab and Muslim elites, each in its area of specialization, to eliminate the roots of extremist thinking.

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[50] He authored a message entitled "A Document for the Rationalization of Jihadi Action". Sayyed Imam is considered to be one of the best known theorists on the Jihadi condition in the world, and his books are considered to be basic pillars of global Jihadi groups, particularly his two books A *Comprehensive Guide in Pursuit of Honorable Knowledge* and *That Which is Dependable in Making Preparations*.

[51] Some of the most prominent *al-Gama'a* leaders who prepared corrective studies are: Sami Mustapha al-Sai'di, known as Abu al-Munther al-Sai'di, who is in charge of *Shari'a* in the group; Abdul Hakim al-Khuweilidi Balhaj, who is known as Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq and who is the group's Emir; Miftah al-Mabrouk al-Thuwadi, known as Sheikh Abdu Ghaffar; Abdul Wahab Mohammad Qayed "Idris"; Mustapha al-Sayd Qunaifid "al-Zubair, who is in charge of the group's military wing; Khalid Mohammad al-Sharif, who is known as Abu Hazim and is the group's deputy Emir. See *Corrective Studies in the Concepts of Jihad, Following Religious Teachings and Judging People*, Islamists Online and Madbouli Bookshop, Cairo, 2006.

[52] Dr. Nouh Mustapha al-Faqir, *The Amman Message: A Definition and Explanation.* Dar al-Mamoun, Amman, 2008.

3. International Conferences: *al-Azhar* organized several conferences on combatting terrorism, the most important of which was the International *al-Azhar* Conference to Confront Extremism and Terrorism in December 2014.

4. International Initiatives: *Dar al-Iftaa'* has played several roles in combatting extremism intellectually at various levels. It has issued almost 10 international initiatives, including one entitled "Not in My Name."

5. *Al-Ro'ya* (Insight) Magazine: *Dar al-Iftaa'* has established a magazine entitled Insight, which is published in several languages to respond to the "Islamic State's" electronic magazine, *Dabiq*.[53]

*Forums and Institutes Promoting Moderate Thought*

Other Arab countries have put forward various models based on enhancing moderate thought to confront extremism. The Global Forum for Moderation was established in the Jordanian capital, Amman. The first declaration on centrism and moderation of Islam, later resulting in the Amman Message, was issued during the Forum's inaugural session in 2004, and it was signed by around 70 intellectual and religious figures from several Arab countries who are members of the Forum. The Global Forum for Moderation has branches in Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, India, Pakistan and Algeria. The Forum cooperates with institutions in other countries, and it has established 10 branches in Jordan.[54]

The Kuwait International Moderation Center was established in 2007, and it aims to spread centrist religious discourse amongst young people through education, the media and civil society institutions with the help of a number of specialized preachers and members of the clergy in order to confront the extremist ideas put forward by terrorist groups. The center was established to disseminate noble values and to correct erroneous thinking by Muslims and others in response to the waves of violence and terrorism that have spread in different parts of the world. The center's activities are not confined to Kuwait, and have spread throughout the world.[55]

In Qatar, the al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal was established in 2008. It works to enhance the concept of centrism by reviving Islamic thought through scholarly research to contribute to a new phase of Islamic civilization. The center's vision focuses on the establishment of a society based on centrism, open-minded cooperation and enlightened justice enhanced by knowledge in dealing with current issues such as democracy, economics, human rights, the role of women and the family, environmental problems and

[53] Ahmad al-Shoura, *The Limits of Effectiveness: Can the States of the Region Combat Terrorism Intellectually?* Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Cairo: http://www.rcssmideast.org/Article/4278/%D9%87%D9%84-%D8%AA%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%83%D9%86-%

[54] "The Global Forum for Moderation. The Idea and Establishment: Guidance Document." The Forum's official website: http://www.wasatyea.net/?q=node/3

[55] "The International Moderation Center – a Platform for Intellectual Tolerance." Russia Today, 6 November 2010, https://arabic.rt.com/news/57473

the challenges posed by war and peace, violence, terrorism, backwardness and corruption.[56]

*Rehabilitation, Guidance and Integration*

The Saudi experience of intellectual counseling is considered as a reference case for programs combatting intellectual extremism throughout the region.[57] The idea to establish the Mohammad bin Naif Center for Counseling and Care emerged in April 2003 on the instructions of Prince Mohammad bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz, who was the Minister of Interior at the time. The Center began to develop its work in 2006 to absorb those involved in misguided thinking, reintegrate them into society, reform their thinking through the center's various programs and help the beneficiaries achieve a mentality considered safe for them and their society. The program also helps beneficiaries to confront the intellectual and social challenges they might face after completing their judicial sentences. It also helps those who have been misled to understand their mistakes, return to the correct path and integrate into society as good and productive citizens in the interest of themselves, their families and their countries. The program focuses on the psychological, religious, intellectual and social dimensions, and passing it is a precondition for the release of those accused of extremism and participation in terrorist groups.[58]

The Director of the Mohammad bin Naif Center for Counseling and Care, General Said al-Bishi, says that 8916 counseling sessions were carried out inside prisons, benefitting individuals of 41 nationalities. The center employs 220 academics specialized in various fields, and they counsel certain cases based on the wishes of their relatives, who provide the center with their observations on their relatives who are receiving counseling. He says that the external counseling program has scored successes in over 13 governorates in the country, and that 11 women benefited from the annual counseling program through 71 sessions, as well as through electronic counseling. He adds that the center focuses on three pathways relating to marriage, employment and education, and adds that the uptake rates of the program are encouraging, despite the complexity of the issue, "as it involves dealing with thought, wherein the difficulty lies."

Saudi Arabia can be considered ahead of others when it comes to confronting electronic terrorism and weakening the electronic media arms of extremist organizations. In 2003, Saudi Arabia assigned a working group the task of confronting and dealing with terrorism intellectually and at the information level on the internet, putting the Ministry of Islamic Affairs in charge of that working group, while also preserving its independence and providing it with experts in various fields dealing with treatment and confrontation. The program was

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[56] al-Qaradawi Center for Islamic Moderation and Renewal: http://www.qfis.edu.qa/research-centres-ar/al-qaradawi-center-ar

[57] For more details, see Christopher Boucek, *Soft Saudi Strategy in Combating Terrorism: Prevention, Rehabilitation and Recuperation,* Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Middle East Program, Number 97, September 2008: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/saudi.pdf

[58] "Policies of Containment, Regional Implications of the Implementation of 'Ideological Counseling' in Western Countries." Ibid.

named "the Sakina (Tranquility) Campaign" and was launched as a popular campaign by a group of individuals keen to confront terrorists and respond to their allegations. The results were positive, and the campaign continued and grew, and its functions increased. Although this creative idea succeeded in establishing the largest known platform for the creation of an environment to combat terrorism and enhance centrism, it did not succeed in widening its activities to a large extent, and its influence is limited, particularly compared to the mechanisms and instruments used by the extremist groups.

In 2004, the Ministry of Education announced the preparation of a project entitled "Sponsoring Thought and Strengthening Behavior" to sponsor members of educational establishments – teachers and students – to oversee the school environment and to protect it from deviant thought. In 2006, the Ministry of Education announced that it would implement the Intellectual Security Program on a country-wide level. In 2008, the ministry announced the launch of the program – the largest ever of its kind in the country – to confront intellectual deviance in boys' schools and girls' schools. Its slogan was "Safe Thought ... Secure Life". Ahead of the launch, teachers had undergone training, and a committee known as the Intellectual Security Program was formed under the chairmanship of the deputy minister.[59]

Saudi Arabia launched a project entitled "al-Basira (Insight)" on 28 September 2014 to respond to the distorted ideas that extremist movements use to legitimize violence and extremism. The project monitors the electronic websites of proponents of the thought underpinning extremist groups and the documents and books that they issue, and it publishes counter ideological theses in the media and on social networking websites and those belonging to religious and educational establishments.[60]

Despite the praise directed at the Saudi experiment in confronting violent extremism, some experts cast doubt on the effectiveness of such programs, particularly with regard to propaganda campaigns in the virtual world and on social networking websites. According to Alberto Fernandez, the "Sakina" campaign and others were incapable of keeping pace with the professional and coordinated propaganda campaigns of the "Islamic State", because they seek to implant Saudi ideology in people's minds, and significant aspects of Saudi ideology coincide with the ideology of the extremists. Hence, those programs promote loyalty to Saudi goals without necessarily affecting "the future perspective of extremists."[61]

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[59] "Intellectual Saudi Efforts to Confront Terrorism." al-Sakina website: http://www.assakina.com/center/files/81996.html

[60] "Mohammad bin Naif Leads a Project to Refute Terrorists' Suspicions." Al-Arabiya: http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/saudi-today/2014/09/28/%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF-%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%8A%D9%81-

[61] Alberto Fernandez, *Here to Stay and Growing: Combating ISIS Propaganda Networks*. Brookings Institute, October 2015: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/10/combating-isis-propaganda-fernandez/is-propaganda_web_arabic_v2.pdf

*International Networking Centers*

The Hedayah Center was launched in the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi on 15 December 2012. It is considered to be the most outstanding international center for the confrontation of violent extremism. The UAE offered to host the center during the ministerial meeting marking the launching of the International Forum to Combat Extremism in New York in September 2011. It also made a significant financial contribution towards supporting the center during its formative phases. The center was established in response to a growing desire by the international community and members of the International Forum to Combat Terrorism for the existence of an independent organization dedicated to dialogue, training, cooperation and research in the field of combatting violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, bringing together experts, expertise and experience from all over the world. The Hedayah Center believes in pre-emptive solutions by preventing individuals from going down the path of radicalism and embracing the ideology of violence and of supporting terrorism. The center therefore seeks to cooperate with countries around the world in their efforts to change the minds of some individuals who have taken such a crooked path and to turn them back before they become fully involved in it. The center also seeks to overcome long-term strategic challenges.[62]

The center's activities have included the organization of a debate on 23 September 2014 on disarmament and reintegration policies in cooperation with the Global Center on Cooperative Security in New York, preceded by a meeting of experts in mid-May 2014 in cooperation with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum on measures to combat extremism and confront the phenomenon of foreign fighters. The center also participated in organizing an activity on the side-lines of the fourth meeting to review the UN's global strategy to combat terrorism in New York in June 2014 to discuss integrating security and human development, and means of benefitting from such integration to combat violent extremism.[63]

*Policies on Integration and Structuring the Religious Field*

The Moroccan experiment aimed at eliminating extremism in the long-term is considered to be a guiding example. It is based on promoting a political environment based on the comprehensive integration of moderation by facilitating the political integration of moderation and restructuring the religious field. The program has focused on dealing with jailed terrorist leaders who are capable of attracting new recruits. Those leaders are isolated from other inmates, and put through intellectual awareness programs. Younger members and sympathizers who are more receptive to having their beliefs corrected and to social reintegration are rehabilitated. Morocco's policies in combatting extremism are an example to be followed in dealing with extremism and terrorism. The main elements of Morocco's strategy to combat extremism focus on a reorganization of the state's religious bodies. This includes sending an official bulletin to all imams, the establishment of the "Directorate of Traditional

[62] "The Beginning." Hedayah website: http://hedayah.ae/about-hedayah/history/?lang=ar

[63] "Policies of Containment, Regional Implications of the Implementation of 'Ideological Counseling' in Western Countries." Ibid.

Education" at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, abolition of the ministry's centralized mode of operation, a revision of laws that sponsor places of Islamic worship, the formation of a religious council for Moroccan communities in Europe, the use of radio and television stations to promote moderate teachings and the revision of school textbooks and curricula.

Rabat's strategy to combat extremism also includes a number of political reforms that were called for by recent constitutional amendments and by the "Advanced Decentralization" project on the one hand, and dealing with jailed extremists and successfully reintegrating them into society on the other hand. Jailed Moroccans are given the opportunity of continuing their studies to earn university degrees, and the government forms partnerships with private institutions to provide work, training and employment opportunities for those prisoners once they are released.[64]

Despite the profusion of local, regional and international programs to eliminate extremism and their high costs, their results have been limited and ineffective. However, it is imperative to persist in developing them, because the most effective programs at uprooting extremism, according to John Horgan, are those that serve as a kind of half-way home for former extremists. They help prisoners to prepare for confronting the challenges of reintegrating themselves into daily life. Exactly like ordinary criminals, they are trained to anticipate their lives after being released, and they are made aware that they may remain at some risk of rejoining. The main objective of such programs is usually to make the individual more aware of such risks, and this serves as a form of long-term prevention against rejoining.

The journey into terrorism and out of it is both a personal and a complex experience. Programs to eradicate terrorism continue to offer some of the most creative methods of combatting terrorism, and they can be effective in reducing the number of members in the lower echelons of terrorist groups. However, if we do not carry out a sincere debate on the reasons for the existence of these programs and their modes of operation, their future will be in jeopardy.[65]

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that any approach to combatting terrorism and eradicating violent extremism requires a comprehensive and integrated approach, because the phenomenon is complex and complicated and derives from several different objective causes, conditions and circumstances that are economic, social and psychological. The phenomenon of terrorism is widespread, and its danger is increasing locally, regionally and internationally. Available strategies to deal with it are weak and have not achieved clear-cut success and effectiveness. Nevertheless, there is hope that more creativity and innovation will emerge in dealing with this phenomenon and confronting it, but this is predicated on

[64] Ahmad al-Shoura, *The Limits of Effectiveness: Can the States of the Region Combat Terrorism Intellectually?* Regional Center for Strategic Studies, ibid.
[65] John Horgan, *How Can Former Terrorists Be Deradicalized?* Translated by Alaa Abu Zeinah, al-Ghad newspaper:
http://www.alghad.com/articles/844296-%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%81-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%85-%D9%86%D8%B2%D8%B9-

increased knowledge and understanding of its deep causes. According to Jessica Stern, any effort at rehabilitation must be based on a clear understanding of what pushes people towards terrorism in the first place. This is because terrorist movements usually emerge as a reaction to a grievance, whether real or perceived, which members of the movement feel must be addressed. Nevertheless, ideology is almost the only reason, and is the most important element in an individual's decision to join a particular cause. The reasons that cause people to become terrorists are as varied as those that cause others to choose their professions: market conditions, social networks, education and personal preferences. Just as feelings towards justice and the law might motivate a lawyer to avoid working for a particular legal organization, the motivations of terrorists to search for meaning in continuing in their "jobs" or abandoning them change over time. Programs to eradicate extremism must take these variations, transformations and motivations into account and learn from them.[66]

Although millions of dollars are spent on strategies to combat terrorism, the US Government, according to Hadieh Mirahmadi, remains incapable of implementing a coherent, multi-faceted strategy to prevent local violent extremism by dealing with many of the factors that cause individuals to turn to violent extremism. Those factors include social alienation, psychological disturbances, political grievances and violent ideologies.[67] The approach to combatting terrorism and eradicating violent extremism in the long-term must be based on a comprehensive and integrated strategy that draws on a knowledge of the more structural issues aimed at mitigating the ideological forces that propel terrorism and radicalization, according to Ronald Crelinsten. It must also be based on working to improve conditions in countries that repel migrants, promoting social and economic rights, enhancing legal systems, encouraging cross-national dialogue, strengthening education, enhancing mutual understanding between cultures and civilizations and strengthening the roles of school, social control agencies, the police and the army. Such an approach must also be based on democratization, environmental protection, international cooperation and combatting terrorism over the long-term. It must also bring together all approaches at the local, national, regional and international levels. Policies to combat terrorism cannot simply take the form of a reaction or of repression. In democratic states and within a world order that is moving towards globalization, such policies must aim to gain acceptance as well as effectiveness, and both those criteria must be balanced against one another in the fight against terrorism. Moreover, the use of violence as an easy option in fighting terrorism simply confirms the beliefs of fanatic and hardline supporters of terrorism, whereas resorting to long-term efforts that entail a difficult path will isolate those fanatics and facilitate subjecting them to justice.[68]

The policies of the war on terrorism have faltered, and the reasons do not require deep insight and perceptiveness. *Al-Qaeda* and global Jihadism are prominent in several countries, and their ideological discourse has become more

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[66] Jessica Stern, "Can Extremism Be Eradicated?" http://www.hurriyatsudan.com/?p=781
[67] Hedieh Mirahmadi**,** *An Innovative Approach to Countering Violent Extremism*. Washington Institute: http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/view/an-innovative-approach-to-countering-violent-extremism1
[68] Ronald Crelinsten, *Counterterrorism,* ibid.

attractive. Hence depending on a hard security military approach while neglecting the objective causes, conditions and circumstances that produced the Jihadi phenomenon and the absence of political, economic, social and cultural solutions has led to logically catastrophic results. Despite a near total consensus that corruption, despotism and the absence of justice are the main causes for human rebellion and the adoption of violence and terrorism, the policies of the global "war on terrorism" that are also being copied at the local and regional levels, still emphasize dealing with the symptoms and considering "terrorist" violence as arbitrary, irrational and nihilistic.

# Breaking Terrorism: An Evaluation of Combatting the "Islamic State" Organization in Iraq

*Yassir Abd al-Hussein*

It is unconventional, on the international level, that an estimated 12.5 million square kilometers of land would fall in the hands of a trans-border organization; a miniature model of globalized terrorism, practicing medieval-style brutality, a result of the failure of the project of modernity, and one that reflects a geo-political shake-up of the map of the Middle East. This organization changed many concepts and standards, in particular the concept of war. If the emergence of the "Islamic State" Organization (IS) in Iraq and then Syria in 2014 is the first such occurrence since World War II, in terms of seizing vast swathes of land from two sovereign nations, then indeed this event reflects a real change in all concepts of war, even military science.

It is difficult to study, quantitatively and qualitatively, this rising trend in extremist groups; a trend that has come to threaten the Westphalian sovereignty of nation-states and cause structural and social imbalances. This trend began to flourish with the escalation of sectarian rhetoric and regional divisions, which contributed – one way or another – in the making of a non-conventional enemy. If this new enemy is non-conventional, then how can it be combated through conventional means?

Counter-terrorism strategies are no longer just those practical applications, techniques, and procedures that governments and security institutions adopt to prevent and deter terrorist groups, such as precautionary and preventive detection of potential operations, and decisive response to materialized operations in order to prevent their recurrence. These strategies are no longer able to meet the real capacity needed to confront this new trend in Arab and international societies.

The era of modernity saw the formation of nations on the basis of a people, a state, and internal security institutions that took security and defense measures to defend the nation, considering that these are the most important targets of extremist groups; the post-modern era, on the other hand, today witnesses an escalation of threats in a more comprehensive manner, not limited to the configurations of power and authority in our contemporary society. But, unfortunately, in the same vein, the state of indifference towards current developments also increased, at least in the following equation: (IS fights everyone = not everyone fights IS).

While structural changes in the concepts of terrorism constituted a new discourse in the field of international relations and international law, the terrorism of the "Islamic State" has yet to leave its mark on the effects of these critical relations in forming the terrorist identity.

The most important strategic arena for confronting IS today is in Iraq, especially after the country was chosen by IS as the strategic location for its virtual state,

bringing together extremists from the seven continents under its own banner in Iraq.

The internal and the external factors intertwine in the Iraqi scene, and the battle appears complicated, especially in light of the major chaos the region is witnessing. In the past, Iraq constituted an important pivot for *al-Qaeda*, and today, it is the most important pivot for the "Islamic State" by virtue of it being the connection space between the efforts of the previous generations of *al-Qaeda* and today's IS generation.

Despite the globalized rhetoric of terrorism, and the extremist organizations' non-recognition of eastern maps and borders, as well as the safe havens chosen by these organizations as stepping stones – as manifested in their literature – yet the geopolitics of extremism did not neglect the geographical factor in its deliberations, and hence, Iraq became the prepared and fertile grounds to actualize their objectives in the creation of the "Caliphate State." The deliberations that resulted in choosing Iraq, in particular, considered the following aspects:

First: Despite the importance of Afghanistan as a starting point for the organizational structuring of *al-Qaeda*, and the rise of the "Afghan Arabs" phenomenon there, making Afghanistan the first mecca for recruitment for all extremist organizations, Afghanistan does not have ideological symbolism for Arabs and Muslims, neither a religious symbolic dimension nor a historical one in terms of Islamic civilization. Iraq, on the other hand, possesses both the religious and historical symbolic dimensions, considering that it holds the characterizations of sanctification for Muslims as the land most profound in its Islamic symbolism after Makkah and Madinah.

Second: Iraq has a strong geo-economical dimension, as the country possesses economic resources, particularly oil, making it a pivot for global strategic competition.

Third: There is belief that, for *al-Qaeda*, the Afghanistan phase was just a training ground, and that this geographical arena would not meet the aspirations of Jihadi Salafism particularly after the justifications for Jihadi presence there faded. So, the battle moved to the Middle East, more specifically to Iraq.

Fourth: What happened in June 2014 was the result of years of terror and systematic destruction aimed to control and create a psychological environment suited for the rise of the "Islamic State" in its manifest form.

On its part, the Iraqi government's approach to countering this organization came gradually and in stages, in terms of grasping the sudden ascension of extremist groups, especially that such ascension came as a complete shock to decision-makers in Baghdad after the rapid collapse of Iraqi security forces in Mosul and Al-Anbar.

Iraq's strategy in countering terrorism depends on reviving the role of the military apparatus, and on involving mass "citizenry" efforts in the confrontations, through the participation of the *Al-Hashd al-Sha'abi* (Popular Mobilization) factions with 120,000 fighters, in addition to the tribes and the Peshmerga forces, and cooperation with the limited air support offered by the international coalition. All this came at a time that Iraq could not afford to await

the response of the international community against the "Islamic State." US President Barack Obama had announced on August 8th, 2014 that US forces will intervene to protect US citizens in the area, but the actual campaign did not begin until September 10th, 2014 when Obama announced that he was instructing the launch of raids in Syria, and intensifying the raids in Iraq, some of which were direct, and others through Iranian and Russian support in combatting IS.

Many studies have already addressed the "Islamic State" organization, the reasons behind its appearance, and its swift expansion into vast territories in Iraq and Syria, but what is necessary now is to research the reasons why the organization's influence has not been weakened or eliminated, over two years after it seized control of Mosul. IS is still present, and this prompts the need to reevaluate the mechanisms of countering and combatting it. This paper seeks to highlight the main problematic issues of this war, particularly in regards to Iraq, from the following dimensions:

1. The dilemma of unilateral vs. multilateral solutions
2. The dilemma of local vs. regional environment
3. The dilemma of urban warfare vs. conventional military warfare
4. The dilemma of domestic vs. foreign solutions
5. The dilemma of IS's planning strategy vs. its implementation strategy
6. The dilemma of unified vs. divided cities

## The Iraqi Approach to Counter-Terrorism

The absence of a methodological approach in clearly understanding the theories of terrorism is a cumulative systematic crisis on the international level in the fields of social, legal, and political studies. Research and books on the subject all speak of the lack of consensus on a definition of terrorism, whether on a regional or international level, so how would it be possible to reach consensus on counter-terrorism approaches? The issue is even more complicated in a country like Iraq, which has suffered from successive futile wars and systematic terrorism.

In Iraqi legal texts, terrorism is defined as follows:

- The current Iraqi Constitution, adopted in 2005, stipulates in Article 7 that: "First: No entity or program, under any name, may adopt racism, terrorism, the calling of others infidels, ethnic cleansing, or incite, facilitate, glorify, promote, or justify thereto […]; Second: The State shall undertake combatting terrorism in all its forms, and shall work to protect its territories from being a base or pathway or field for terrorist activities."[69]
- Article 1 of the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13 for the year 2005 defines terrorism as: "Every criminal act committed by an individual or an organized group that targeted an individual or a group of individuals or groups or official or unofficial institutions and caused damage to public or private properties, with the aim to disturb the peace, stability, and national unity or to bring about

[69] The Iraqi Constitution, adopted in 2005, Article 7.

horror and fear among people and to create chaos to achieve terrorist goals." [70] According to legal experts, however, the stated definition of terrorism in the 2005 Anti-Terrorism law does not constitute a clear and straightforward definition of terrorism.

- Iraqi legislations, before the Anti-Terrorism Law No. 13, did not define the term "terrorism," neither as a crime in the Penal Code nor in any other law, despite the fact that the term "terrorism" or "terrorist crimes" are mentioned in some of the provisions of the Penal Code, such as Article 365 and 366.

There is no clear definition of terrorism in the vision of Iraqi decision-makers, except for some references in the Iraqi National Security Strategy. The same problem faces the issue of constructing a counter-terrorism approach, despite the multiplicity of agencies tasked with formulating security decisions. Combatting terrorism and preventing its spread is a noble humanitarian endeavor that needs to be a national effort by the state and its strong institutions which administer the affairs of societies that adopt democracy, respect for human rights, and peaceful transfer of power. This endeavor also needs real and genuine regional and international efforts, because, under such globalized form of terrorism, no state can accomplish this mission alone. This is especially pertinent in combatting the financing of terrorist groups, cutting their sources of strength particularly social incubators and safe havens, and designing strong domestic strategies that address and treat the causes and factors behind terrorism, such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and illicit arms and drug trades.[71]

There is a strategic "illusion" that the Iraqi decision-makers attempt to conceive, but this is not sufficient to combat the terrorism that has destroyed Iraq since the war in 2003 to this day. Countering terrorism, ideally, includes all the activities, techniques, and strategies implemented by governments and across the security and defense institutions, and all state institutions for that matter, including civil society organizations, to combat terrorism militarily or through economic measures related to development and tackling unemployment, or even intellectually and ideologically through *Munasaha* (advice); this represents the real means to treating the problem of terrorism.[72]

Typically, in their counter-terrorism approaches, countries rely on a set of theories and strategies that aim to degrade and destroy the threat of terrorism, including:[73]

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[70] Iraqi Anti-Terrorism Law Number 13, for the year 2005, Article 1.

[71] Amer Hassan Fayyad et al, *Wilayat al-Sharr al-Muta'aslim*, [Lit. "The Provinces of [self-proclaimed] Islamized Evil], Beirut: Al-Dar al-Arabiya li al-Uloum, 2015, p. 127.

[72] Jassim Muhammad, *Mukafahat al-Irhab: al-Istratijiyat wa al-Siyasat fi Muwajahat al-Muqatileen al-Ajanib wa al-Di'aya al-Jihadiya*, [Lit. "Countering Terrorism: Strategies and Policies in Confronting Foreign Fighters and Terrorist Propaganda"], Cairo: Al-Maktab al-Arabi li al-Ma'arif, 2016, p. 6.

[73] For more details, see: Jihad Owdeh, Muhammad Abd al-Azeem al-Sheemi and Ayman Zaki, *Madkhal li al-Zhahira al-Irhabiya fi Misr wa al-Sa'udiya: Tajarub Istratijiya*, [Lit. "An Introduction to the Phenomenon of Terrorism in Egypt and Saudi Arabia: Strategic Experiences"], Cairo: Al-Maktab al-Arabi li al-Ma'arif, 2015, pp. 360 and following pages.

- Coercive strategy: The conventional tools in the fight against terrorism rely on the coercive power (use of force) of the state, most commonly through criminal justice and war.[74]
- Preemptive Strategy: This strategy within anti-terrorism approaches is concerned with preventing terrorist plots and plans from materializing, also described as "initiatory" strategy or countering terrorism through intelligence work.
- Persuasion Strategy: Most researchers agree that the majority of terrorist incidents aim to send a message to different audiences, using mixed means between coercion (threats, violence, terrorizing) and persuasion (explicit and implicit demands), especially that terrorism is considered a form of psychological warfare.
- Defense Strategy: Includes various types of defensive measures in order to reduce the risk of terrorist attack to a minimum by making the target less attractive for an attack, which is known as "solidifying the target."
- Long-Term Strategy: It is known that there is no quick solution to the problem of terrorism. Conventional strategies can stop terrorist operations, but they may also lead to facilitating further polarization and animosity, such as what happened in Iraq after the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, where Iraq – and the rest of the world – should have anticipated the rise of a new Al-Zarqawi, considering that the conventional strategy is not a decisive and complete treatment.

It is not clear which counter-terrorism strategies are used in Iraq, in light of the complexity of both the domestic and external scenarios, as well as the nature of the security institution. The strategies may be observed in the following manner:

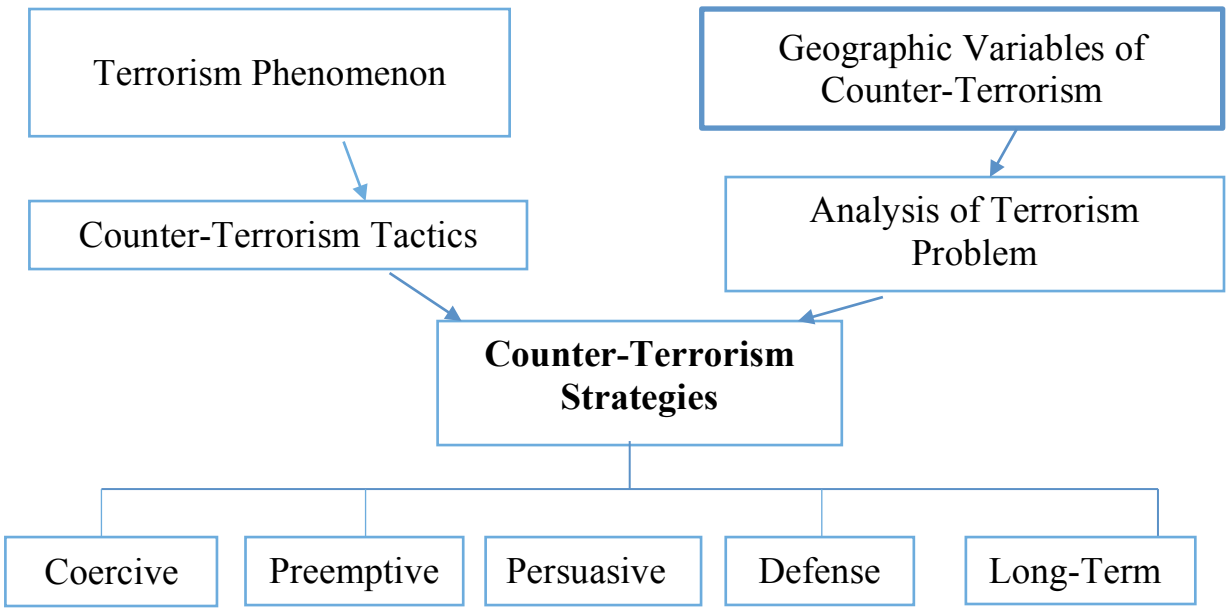


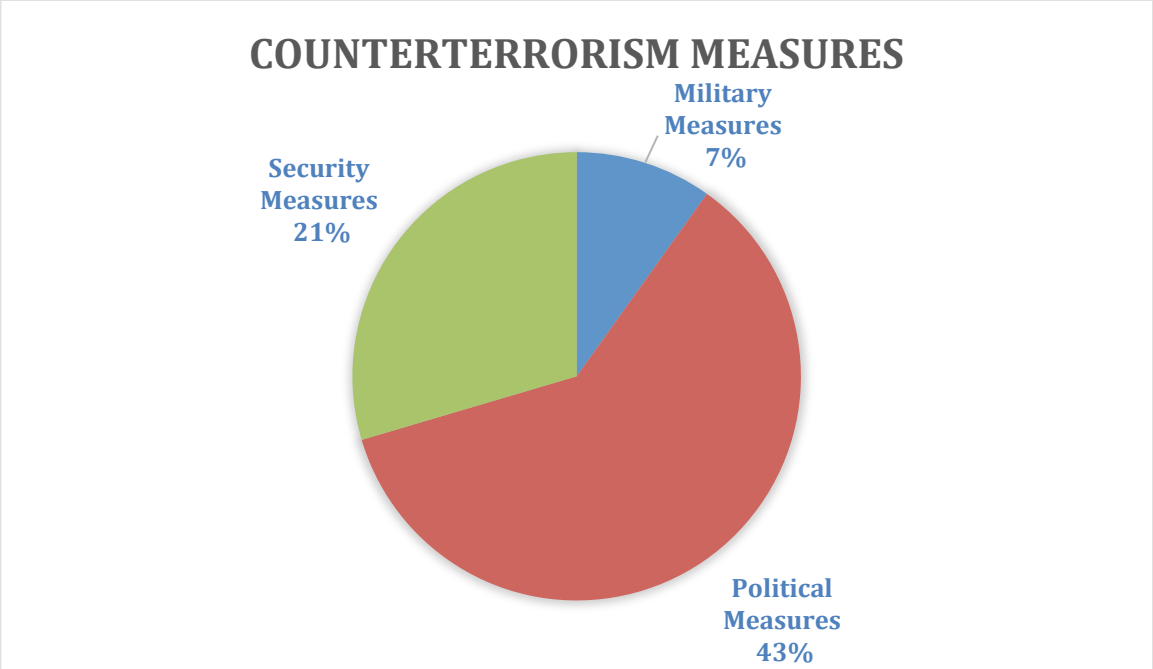

*Diagram 1: Source: Jihad Owdeh, Muhammad Abd al-Azeem al-Sheemi and Ayman Zaki, Madkhal li al-Zhahira al-Irhabiya fi Misr wa al-Sa'udiya: Tajarub Istratijiya, [Lit. "An Introduction to the Phenomenon of Terrorism in Egypt and Saudi Arabia: Strategic Experiences"], p. 360.*

[74] Alex. P. Schmid, "Frameworks for Conceptualizing Terrorism," Terrorism and Political Violence, 16: 2, 2004, pp. 197-221.

## 1. The Dilemma of Unilateral vs. Multilateral Solutions

Terrorism represents an integrated and complex system of psychological, social, military, religious, propaganda and political aspects, and so in turn, counter-terrorism measures need to address this integrated system through a multifaceted approach and on various stages in order to eliminate it. One of the major complexities of countering terrorism and extremism is that it cannot be accomplished through military means alone (unilateral treatment), considering the fact that the war on terrorism is a psychological and ideological one, and a struggle over aberrant minds. Such a war cannot be confined to a single approach.

There are many methods, tools, means and approaches to dealing with violence, because of the complexity of the phenomenon and the divergence and/or overlap of its many aspects. Many studies have been written on such various approaches, for example, statistical results of a Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) study indicate that military means have limited the ability of terrorism by 7%, whereas political solutions and security solutions limited its abilities by 43% and 21%, respectively.[75]




*Graph 1. Effectiveness of counter-terrorism measures in limiting the abilities of terrorism, prepared by the author per GNRD's findings*

A political solution associated with the vital treatment of root causes of violence is essential in confronting and limiting the phenomenon of violence, neutralizing its incubators, and protecting individuals and the society from its consequences.

[75] Loai Deeb, "Statistics on Terrorism," presented at the International Conference on "Balancing Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights: Challenges and Opportunities," Geneva, Switzerland, February 16-17, 2015, in Brian Whitaker, "Combating Terrorism, the GNRD Way," Al-Bab, June 12, 2015, http://al-bab.com/blog/2015/06/combating-terrorism-gnrd-way

If we consider the phenomenon of violence in Iraq, for example, it was nurtured by various factors, some of which were a legacy of history and an expression of its understanding, and others were reactions to certain mistakes, among many other factors that cannot be detailed here, but the aim is to expose the ineffectiveness of unilateral treatment in the face of this danger.

The national security of countries is no longer an independent military affair, therefore, and in order for the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy to succeed, it must be an integral part of a comprehensive national strategy approach that includes military, diplomatic, economic, psychological, and propaganda and media elements, among others, that reflects the unity needed to develop security policies that are capable of managing and confronting security crises.

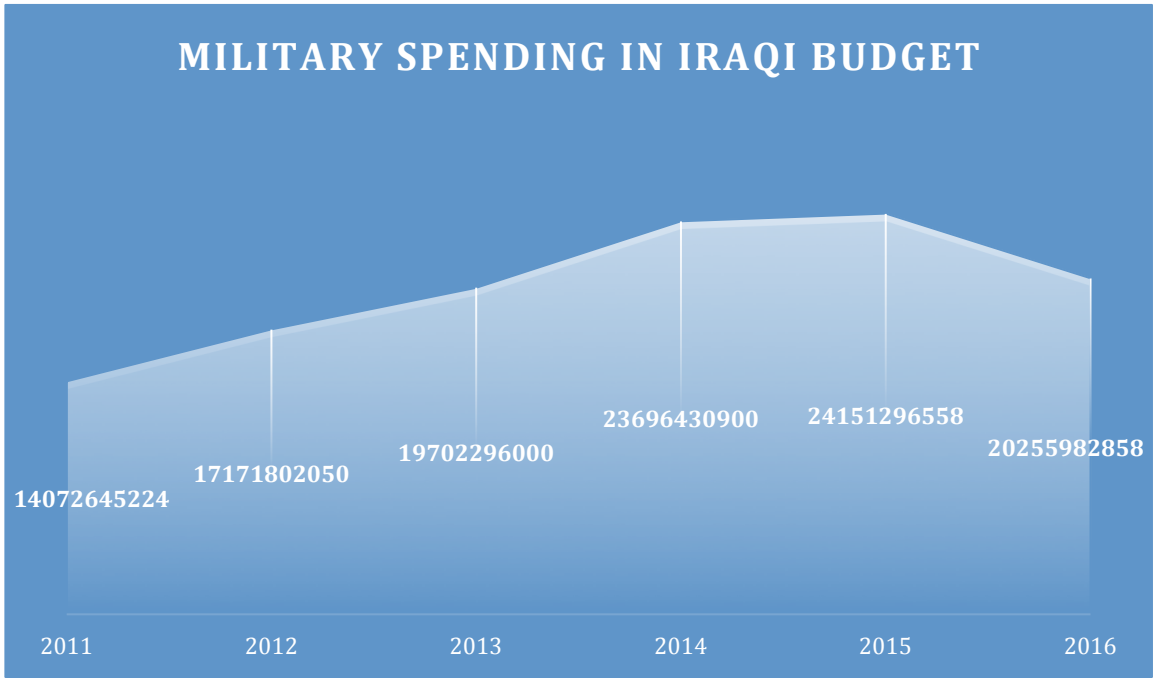
In reviewing the Iraqi security measures, we find that they are confined to unilateral treatment and single solutions, by focusing on the military dimension while neglecting other dimensions essential in the battle against this organization. This is evident in observing the military expenditure in the Iraqi fiscal budget in the table below:[76]

| Year | Military Spending in Iraqi Dinars |
|---|---|
| 2011 | 14,072,645,224 |
| 2012 | 17,171,802,050 |
| 2013 | 19,702,269,000 |
| 2014 | 23,696,430,900 |
| 2015 | 24,151,296,558 |
| 2016 | 20,255,982,858 |

*Table 1. Prepared by author based on Iraqi budgetary laws*

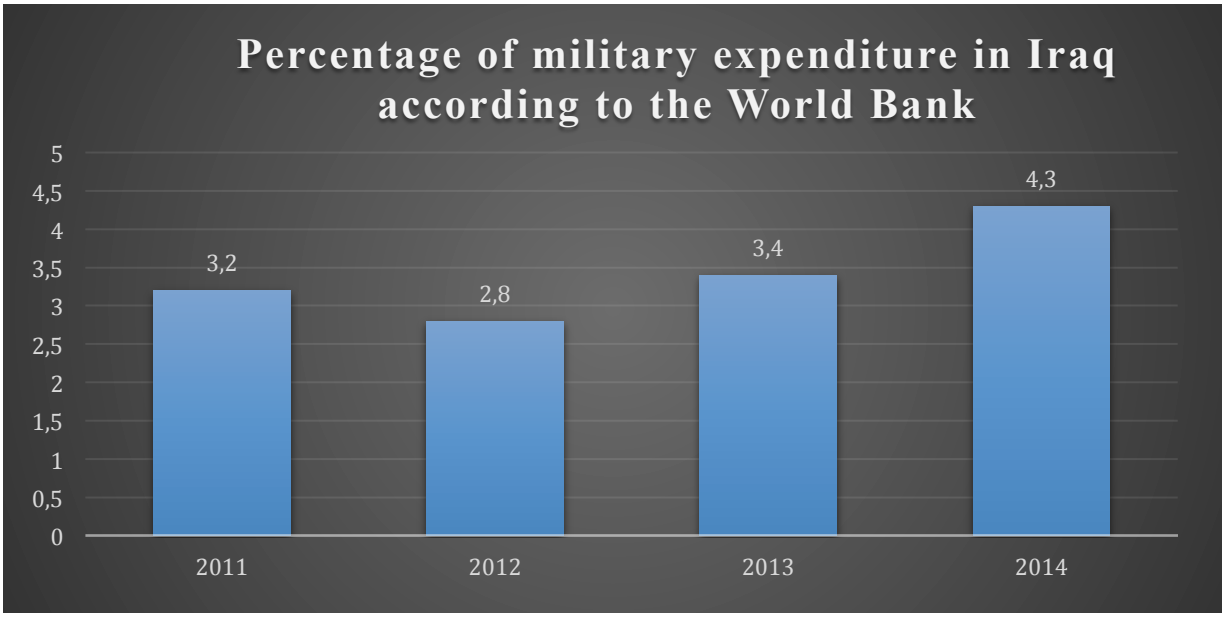
The figures in Table 1 reveal the increase in military expenditure since 2011, reaching peak figures in 2014 (the year Mosul fell in the hands of the "Islamic State") as well as in the following year 2015, which saw the highest levels of military expenditure. There was a slight drop in spending in the 2016 budget, due to lower oil prices and the reduction of spending on all state sectors. Yet these amounts of money, distributed mostly to – and spent by – the Ministries of Defense and Interior, were undoubtedly greater than the share of any other ministry, including service ministries such as health, water resources, electricity, or any other.

[76] Information in the table was prepared by the author based on Iraqi budgetary laws issued by the Iraqi Finance Ministry. The figures include military spending allocated to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Defense, the Iraqi Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Agency, in addition to the spending on the *Al-Hashd al-Shaabi* (Popular Mobilization) forces, with the exception of the Peshmerga forces in the north of Iraq.




*Graph 2. Prepared by author based on Iraqi budgetary laws*

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Iraq's military expenditure rose by 536% between 2006 and 2015, which is the largest increase by any country in the world during that period.[77] According to the World Bank, the increase is evident in the following figures:



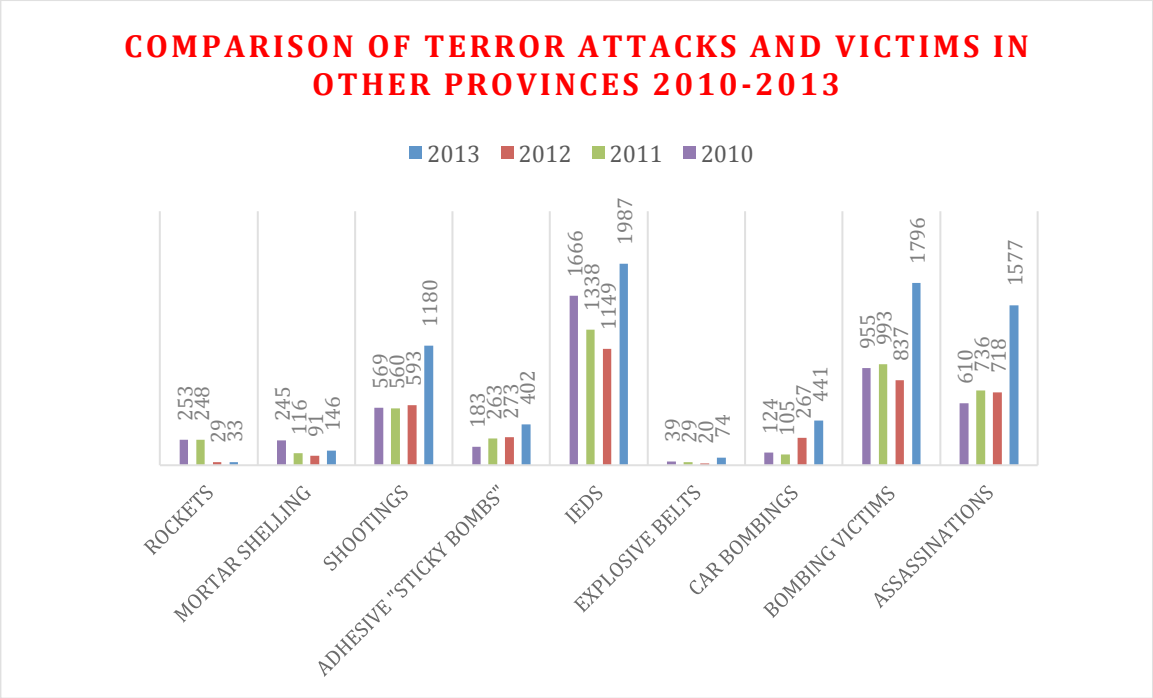

*Graph 3. Percentage of military expenditure in Iraq in the years 2011-2014 according to the World Bank*

The unilateral direction in the country's counter-terrorism approach is also evident in the details of military contracts that Iraq has signed with many

[77] "World Military Spending Resumes Upward Course, Says SIPRI," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, April 5th, 2016, https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2016/world-military-spending-resumes-upward-course-says-sipri

countries in the field of armament,[78] compared to financial costs and expenditure that the Iraqi government allocates to the health, culture, or education sectors.

Yet this unilateral strategy has not contributed much, even though weapons are essentially important in the face of the sophisticated weapons that IS has been able to obtain. With all these funds spent for the purpose of protecting the lives and security of civilians, still the numbers of innocent casualties are continuously on the rise. Despite the fact that Iraq has witnessed brief periods of security stabilization, this strategy has not been effective in lessening the numbers of victims, as shown in the following illustrations:

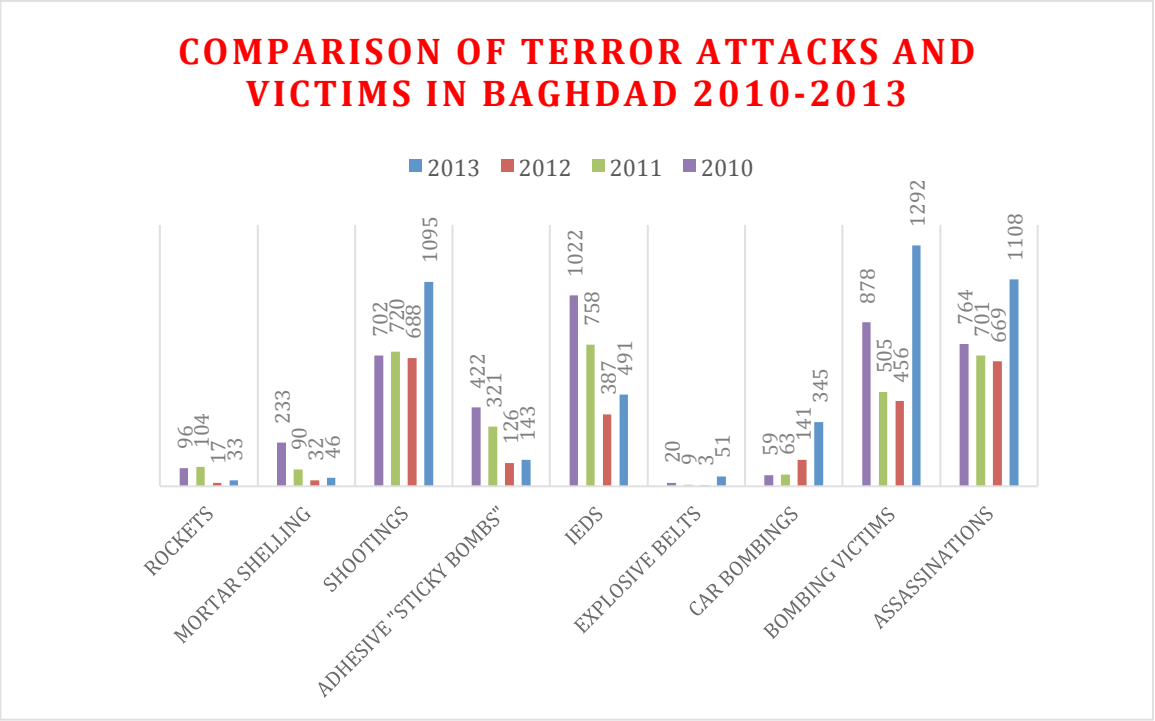



*Graph 4: Comparison of terror attacks and victims in Iraqi provinces (except Baghdad) 2010-2013. Source: National Security Service, Victims of the Dissolved Ba'ath Party and Takfiri Terrorism, pg. 13.*

*Table 2: Comparison of terror attacks and victims in Iraqi provinces (except Baghdad) 2010-2013.*

| Year | Assas-sinations | Bombing Victims | Car Bombings | Explosive Belts | IEDs | Sticky Bombs | Shootings | Mortar Shelling | Rockets |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2013** | 1577 | 1796 | 441 | 74 | 1987 | 402 | 1180 | 146 | 33 |
| **2012** | 718 | 837 | 267 | 20 | 1149 | 273 | 593 | 91 | 29 |
| **2011** | 736 | 993 | 105 | 29 | 1338 | 263 | 560 | 116 | 248 |
| **2010** | 610 | 955 | 124 | 39 | 1666 | 183 | 569 | 245 | 253 |

[78] For further details on Iraqi military armament deals, see: The Iraqi Strategic Report 2010-2011. The Hammurabi Center for Research and Strategic Studies, Baghdad, 2011, p. 212.




*Graph 5: Comparison of terror attacks and victims in Baghdad 2010-2013. Source: National Security Service, Victims of the Dissolved Ba'ath Party and Takfiri Terrorism, p. 13.*

*Table 3: Comparison of terror attacks and victims in Baghdad 2010-2013.*

| Year | Assas-sinations | Bombing Victims | Car Bombings | Explosive Belts | IEDs | Sticky Bombs | Shootings | Mortar Shelling | Rockets |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2013** | 1108 | 1292 | 345 | 51 | 491 | 143 | 1095 | 46 | 33 |
| **2012** | 669 | 456 | 141 | 3 | 387 | 126 | 688 | 32 | 17 |
| **2011** | 701 | 505 | 63 | 9 | 758 | 321 | 720 | 90 | 104 |
| **2010** | 764 | 878 | 59 | 20 | 1022 | 422 | 702 | 233 | 96 |

Iraqi decision-makers need to adopt a comprehensive security strategy that takes into account that countering terrorism cannot be limited to the military dimension alone, but needs to also address – and include – various social, cultural, and religious dimensions in the fight against the "Islamic State" and terrorist organizations in general.[79]

The problem of a unilateral approach to countering terrorism has not only been an Iraqi problem, but is the product of a deficient international vision, evident through two manifestations:[80]

[79] The global coalition against IS founded a counter-extremism center, known as "*Sawab*," that aims to counter terrorist propaganda ideologically and culturally (co-founded by the US and the UAE), but until now, no real impact has been felt, particularly in the ideological and intellectual aspects.

[80] Futuh Abu Dahab Haikal, *Al-Tadakhul al-Dawli li Mukafahat al-Irhab wa In'ikasatuhu 'ala al-Siyada al-Wataniya*, [Lit. "International Intervention to Counter-Terrorism and Its Implications

- The international vision has dealt with terrorism as a "disease," whereas terrorism is a symptom and an indicator of other far more complex problems facing some communities. Sustainable counter-terrorism efforts need to address the root causes that drive perpetrators of such acts, and not only the manifest causes of the phenomenon.
- Overestimating the effectiveness of military and security means in the fight against terrorism. Attacking countries or terrorist groups using military means and heavy weaponry obstructs the possibility of targeting the core of the problem correctly, and in fact, exacerbates the problem further. Research conducted by RAND Corporation found that of the 648 terror groups that were active in the past, roughly 43% of them ended after they reached peaceful political accommodation with their government, 40% of them ended as a result of being penetrated and eliminated by local police and intelligence agencies, while only 7% of the groups ended as a result of military force. This is further evidence that the one-dimensional military approach to countering terrorism is flawed.[81]

## 2. The Dilemma of Local vs. Regional Environment

The phenomenon of terrorism that emerged in Iraq, represented by the most brutal generations of savage violence, is strongly linked to internal factors. The phenomenon of the "Islamic State" is not separate from the Arab environment, and was not "born" recently. If we observe the local society from the lens of sociology and delve into the records of history, we would find that history marred with blood, both at the level of Jihadi Salafism or the other various versions of terrorist organizations, such as the "Islamic State", *al-Shabaab* movement, and Abu Sayyaf, among others. The simple equation below describes how IS came about:

*( extremist Salafist thought + failed state + tyranny + poverty ⟶ regional conflict = IS)*[82]

Thus, the phenomenon is a sheer product of the Arab social deficit, the failure of the elixir of coexistence in the Arab social experience, a natural consequence of the phenomenon of failed states, the militarization industry of society, the beast of unemployment, and the phobia of different identities in the Arab mind, and a reflection of a real educational crisis in Arab schools. The phenomenon is also a product of the states that employed this cancer to serve its goals, making it into a multinational company that may be hired to serve the states' regional interests.[83]

The Iraqi National Security Strategy for 2016, issued by the National Security Advisory, outlined the most prominent challenges and threats in the internal and

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on National Sovereignty"], Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2014, p. 173.

[81] Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, "How Terrorist Groups End: Implications for Countering Al Qa'ida," RAND Corporation, 2008, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9351.html

[82] Yassir Abd al-Hussein, *Al-Harb al-'Alamiya al-Thalitha: Da'ish wa al-Iraq wa Idarat al-Tawahush*, [Lit. "World War III: The Islamic State Organization, Iraq, and the Management of Savagery"], Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbu'at Publishing, 2015.

[83] Yassir Abd al-Hussein, *Kayfa Yusna'u al-Da'ishi*, [Lit. "How a Da'eshi [Islamic State Org. Adherent] is Made"], Al-Alam al-Jadid newspaper, Baghdad, January 6th, 2016.

external environments facing counter-terrorism efforts. The strategy distinguished between the two environments using equations that measure the level of threats and challenges, using the following equation: ("intent" + "ability" + "weakness" = "net threat value"). In these values, "intent" refers to the presence of intention to carry out the threat, "ability" refers to the ability to execute the threat or ability of the threat to materialize, and "weakness" value refers to the vulnerability of concerned institutions and the weakness of their capacity to confront the threat. The level of danger, on the other hand, is calculated by multiplying the value of "effect" (the magnitude of effect caused by a materialized threat, from 1 to 5) with the value of "potential" (the possibility of the threat materializing, from 1 to 5). The levels of danger are classified as follows: the first level is "Critical Danger," with the highest value being 25, which requires immediate response; the second level is "High Danger," with a value of 15-16, which would be addressed in the medium term; and the third level is "Medium Danger," with a value of 9-12, the threat of which would be dealt with in the long term.[84]

*Table 4: Domestic threats and their level of danger*

| | **Internal Threats** | **Intent** | **Ability** | **Weakness** | **Net Threat Value** | **Danger Level** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | **Effect** | **Potential** | **Danger Value** |
| 1 | Terrorism in All Forms | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 5 | 5 | 25 |
| 2 | Administrative & Financial Corruption | 10 | 8 | 6 | 24 | 5 | 5 | 25 |
| 3 | Political Instability | 10 | 10 | 8 | 28 | 5 | 4 | 20 |
| 4 | Extremism & Sectarianism | 10 | 6 | 5 | 21 | 4 | 5 | 20 |
| 5 | Organized Crime | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 6 | Cybernetics (Information & Communications) | 10 | 6 | 8 | 24 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 7 | Water Shortages | 10 | 8 | 8 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 8 | Rentier Economy (Single-Source Revenue) | 10 | 10 | 6 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 9 | Energy | 8 | 8 | 6 | 22 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 10 | Undetonated War Mines & | 10 | 10 | 6 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 16 |

[84] Iraqi National Security Strategy for the year 2016, Appendix, p. 1.

| | Internal Threats | Intent | Ability | Weakness | Net Threat Value | Danger Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Effect | Potential | Danger Value |
| | Projectiles | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Health | 10 | 8 | 8 | 26 | | | |
| 12 | Fragility of Social Fabric | 8 | 6 | 8 | 22 | | | |
| 13 | Weakness of Education | 8 | 10 | 8 | 26 | | | |
| 14 | Social Diversity | 8 | 6 | 6 | 20 | | | |
| 15 | Proliferation of Small Arms & Light Weapons | 10 | 6 | 5 | 21 | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| 16 | Administrative Borders between Provinces | 8 | 6 | 6 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| 17 | Natural Disasters | 5 | 8 | 7 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 9 |

*Table 5: External threats and their level of danger*

| | External Threats | Intent | Ability | Weakness | Net Threat Value | Danger Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Effect | Potential | Danger Value |
| 1 | Foreign Intervention in Domestic & Regional Affairs | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 | 5 | 4 | 20 |
| 2 | Effect of Source Country Activities on Iraq Water Sources | 10 | 10 | 8 | 28 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| 3 | Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction at the Regional Level | 6 | 6 | 8 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| 4 | Disruption of Regional Military Balance | 8 | 8 | 8 | 24 | | | |

| | External Threats | Intent | Ability | Weakness | Net Threat Value | Danger Level | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | Effect | Potential | Danger Value |
| 5 | Climate Change | 8 | 8 | 8 | 24 | | | |
| 6 | Cultural Globalization | 8 | 7 | 5 | 20 | | | |
| 7 | Threats to Oil Export Infrastructure (Land & Sea) | 6 | 7 | 8 | 21 | | | |
| 8 | Side Effects of the Use of Nuclear Energy | 2 | 8 | 8 | 18 | | | |
| 9 | Conventional Attacks on Iraq | 3 | 10 | 6 | 19 | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| 10 | Unresolved Border Disputes | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 9 |

The identification of the issues that pose a threat to Iraq falls within either local and regional variables, but they also represent a serious attempt to formulate an Iraqi vision towards terrorism-related issues, especially that the internal and external environments cannot be separated in the formulation of treatments for the problem of terrorism. It is evident that terrorism, in all its forms, constitutes the most dangerous issue facing the domestic environment, in addition to administrative and financial corruption and political instability. On the external level, the most dangerous threat comes from foreign and regional intervention in Iraqi affairs, and hence, it is not possible to separate the internal environment from the external one in such considerations, and the priority is given to strengthening the internal environment to counter terrorism.

## 3. The Dilemma of Urban Warfare vs. Conventional Military Warfare

The Iraqi military establishment has suffered major setbacks following the 2003 war, especially after the decision to disband the Iraqi army, made by Paul Bremer, the US Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority of Iraq at the time, especially considering that the army was already depleted from successive devastating regional wars. In addition, the dire situation after the war exacerbated the depleted status of the Iraqi military establishment.

The dilemma is that the strategy of the "Islamic State" depends on urban and guerrilla warfare, without clear tactics, and such wars cannot be dealt with by the logic of conventional warfare. Hence, there was a need to establish a

"civilian" popular alternative, manifested in the founding of the Al-Hashd al-Sha'abi (The Popular Mobilization Units "PMU") to serve as an operational equivalent in the street and urban warfare to counter IS's brutality.

The idea of alternate or substitute armies is not new, and is based on the principle of support and reinforcement for (institutional) security forces with the objective of achieving human security. The idea dates back to the era of the French Revolution in 1789, where paramilitary forces were formed to defend the gains of the French revolution against internal enemies.[85]

Since June 2014, Iraqis have looked proudly at the PMU phenomenon, and with just cause. The popular mobilization gave Iraqis a "patriotic symbol to offset the failure of their government agencies. The religious[86] and political leadership called on the people to mobilize and the result was powerful. Instead of feeling weak, Iraqis felt strong. Perhaps as many as 120,000 volunteers were raised almost immediately after Mosul's fall. Of these a small proportion brought firsthand recent battle experience from the fighting undertaken by Iraqi Shiite militia groups in Syria. These junior leaders were the only officers in Iraq with experience of mid-intensity combat of the kind fought against the "Islamic State". Iraqi families felt safer knowing their sons would be fighting within units that were highly motivated, under officers who would not abandon their children or sell them out to the enemy." [87]

As one of the formations of the Iraqi armed forces, the "Popular Mobilization" operates as an official body linked to the General Commander of the Armed Forces, Haider al-Abadi, and commands and controls the Popular Mobilization militia forces. According to statistical reports, the forces are not made up of Shiites only, but come from various sectarian and ethnic groups from different provinces, as shown in the figures below:[88]

*Table 6: Number of volunteers in the "Popular Mobilization" forces from Iraqi provinces and groups:*

| **Province** | **Number of Volunteers** |
|---|---|
| Al-Anbar | 4747 |
| Salahuddin | 4896 |
| Mosul | 3570 |
| Kirkuk | 4635 |

[85] Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *Mawsu'at al-Siyasa*, [Lit. "The Encyclopedia of Politics"], Beirut: Al-Mu'asasa al-Arabiya li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, Vol. 2, 2nd ed., 1990, p. 220.

[86] The Popular Mobilization militia forces were formed after Abd al-Mahdi al-Karbalai, the representative of Iraqi Shia Spiritual Leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called on those able to use arms to volunteer in the war against terrorism, based on a religious edict (*fatwa*) for Jihad, during a sermon Al-Karbalai gave on June 14, 2014.

[87] Michael Knights, "The Future of Iraq's Armed Forces," Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies in The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 2016, p. 29, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/The-future.pdf

[88] Information obtained by the author from the Spokesperson of the Popular Mobilization forces, Ahmad al-Asadi, in Baghdad.

| Province | Number of Volunteers |
|---|---|
| Samarra | 1740 |
| Christians (Babylon Brigades) | 500 |
| Shabaks | 800 |
| Turkoman | 3520 |

The founding of the Popular Mobilization factions as a model to fight urban and terror guerrilla warfare is a good thing, and in conjunction, forces were also established from various Iraqi tribes and clans, in addition to the Peshmerga. The only predicament related to these formations is the future of these forces after the end of the war on the "Islamic State," although the project to establish a "National Guard" is still under discussion in Iraq.

## 4. The Dilemma of Domestic vs. Foreign Solutions

The international response to IS's war in Syria and Iraq was clearly slow and gradual, and perhaps the difficulty of the regional and international scene contributed to this cold reaction to the new equation in the region.

The tenth of June 2014 represented the breaking point, with IS seizing control of Mosul. But the international reaction, represented by the global coalition of more than 60 countries led by the United States, arrived much later, after US President Barack Obama announced on August 8th, 2014 the launch of American campaigns. Obama outlined the justification for this interference as follows:

- The protection of American citizens in the region;
- The protection of the Yazidi minority;
- Stopping the advance of insurgents to Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan.

But the actual US military intervention began on September 10th, 2014, with the launch of airstrikes in Syria and Iraq. The US-led global coalition raised the slogan of "long war," a philosophy that has left a negative impression that this coalition is not serious in destroying the "Islamic State."

The problem is that Iraq, both in terms of government and public opinion, rejects any participation of ground forces of the global coalition. In the same token, and due to the nature of US domestic circumstances after coming out of a costly war in Iraq that left a heavy legacy, the opinion that has been synthesizing finds that the success of the international support for Iraq depends on supporting those who hold the ground (the Iraqi army), through armament. In practical terms, it appears that the limited effectiveness of the global coalition will remain within the folds of the following framework:[89]

[89] Kamal Habib, *Hudud Fa'iliyat al-Tahaluf al-Dawli fi Muwajahat al-Irhab*, [Lit. "The Limitations of the Global Coalition's Effectiveness in Combating Terrorism"], Al-Siyasa al-Dawliya (International Politics) Journal, No. 199, January 2015, pp. 89-99.

- Air power is the only means to destroy IS.
- The framing of the Coalition's strategy is based on sending military advisors and experts to assist in training, especially of the Iraqi army.
- The continuation of IS activities in Iraqi and Syrian territories.
- Turkey lacks effective seriousness in fighting IS, especially considering its position towards the global coalition.
- Absence of the priorities of the global coalition, and contradiction in views within the US administration itself, with President Obama stating that the goal of the coalition is to topple Bashar al-Assad, while the Secretary of State says it is to get rid of IS.
- The US administration is convinced that the global coalition's strategy in Iraq cannot be separated from Syria.

The solution to this dialectic problem lies in the hands of sheer Iraqi confidence in Iraqi security efforts, despite all the violations and setbacks. The alternative is the continued discrediting of the efforts of the global coalition which, despite all its air raids, has not been an effective instrument so far in eliminating IS.

## 5. The Dilemma of IS's Planning Strategy vs. Its Implementation Strategy

The theories on the emergence of IS varied; is the birth of IS a purely Iraqi one? Or, was it a birth in the Levant that found its way from Syria to Iraq? Analyses and information were conflicting, even on the subject of the presence of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and his training in Syria after his release from the US prison in Camp Bucca.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis on March 15th, 2011, Iraq has been viewing this crisis with apprehension, especially considering the geo-political and security dimensions that link Iraq to the Syrian crisis. Iraq shares nearly 650 kilometers of borders with Syria, and hence, the caution and anticipation in the Iraqi position towards the Syrian crisis, which indicates security and political caveats that the Syrian alternative would spillover on the Iraqi scene.

All the information indicates that, for the "Islamic State," Iraq represents the *Implementation* grounds, whereas Syria serves as the *Planning* grounds; and therefore, Iraq has difficulty in comprehending IS's movements or in exposing the plans the organization seeks to implement within Iraq. To this effect, even the US strategies in leading the global coalition speak of "liberating Iraq" from IS first, before tackling Syria. Other views prefer to secure the Iraqi and Syrian borders in order to divide and separate IS.

In earlier years, these borders (Iraqi-Syrian) had been an impediment to easy flow of foreign fighters, requiring the use of smugglers and sympathetic locals. While IS was able to overcome this impediment, the use of such intermediaries created challenges such as fewer resources for the organization, and other risks.[90]

[90] Daniel Milton, "The Islamic State: An Adaptive Organization Facing Increasing Challenges," in *The Group that Calls itself a State: Understanding the Evolution and Challenges of the Islamic State*,

American sociologist Eric Davis' analysis of the rapid expansion of IS in Iraq and Syria in mid-2014, and its continued attacks in northern Iraq, including efforts to seize the Kurdish city of Erbil, and making further progress in Syria is that IS's terrorist threat does not only target Iraq and Syria, but the world beyond. While *al-Qaeda* has never referred to itself as a state, and its primarily focus has been attacking the West, IS organization on the other hand adopted the title the "Islamic State of Iraq" in 2004, in its pursuit of the creation of a modern nation-state and gaining territory in the Middle East.[91]

The issue of oil perhaps has the largest role in determining the direction of IS's planning when it comes to a comparison between Iraq and Syria. Oil revenues are reported to make up a large portion of the overall revenue of IS. Some estimate that IS controls production facilities in Syria that produce a maximum of 200,000 barrels of crude oil each day, while maximum production capacity in oil fields controlled by IS in Iraq is about 80,000 barrels of oil each day. Table 7 represents a hypothetical calculation of how much money IS could be receiving from oil.[92]

*Table 7: Possible Daily Revenue to IS Contingent on Production and Price*

| | Barrels/Day | Black Market Oil Prices (per Barrel) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | $18 | $30 | $60 |
| Iraq | 20000 | 360000 | 600000 | 1200000 |
| | 40000 | 720000 | 1200000 | 2400000 |
| | 80000 | 1440000 | 4400000 | 4800000 |
| Syria | 20000 | 360000 | 600000 | 1200000 |
| | 50000 | 900000 | 1500000 | 3000000 |
| | 200000 | 3600000 | 6000000 | 12000000 |

Michael Eisenstadt presents a set of recommendations toward a successful strategy against IS in Iraq through a realistic assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, described as follows:[93]

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The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, December 2014, p. 43, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CTC-The-Group-That-Calls-Itself-A-State-December20141.pdf

[91] Eric Davis, *ISIS's Strategic Threat: Ideology, Recruitment, Political Economy*, The New Middle East, August 17, 2014, http://new-middle-east.blogspot.com/2014/08/isiss-strategic-threat-ideology.html. Ibrahim al-Haidari, *Susyolojiya al-'Unf wa al-Irhab*, [Lit. "The Sociology of Violence and Terrorism"], Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, 2015, pp. 220-221.

[92] Daniel Milton, "The Islamic State: An Adaptive Organization…" Op. cit., pp. 57-58.

[93] Michael Eisenstadt, "'Defeat into Victory': Lessons for Rebuilding the Iraq Security Forces from Modern Arab Military Success Stories," Policy Analysis, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, January 21st, 2015, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/other/Eisenstadt-IraqDefeatVictoryBrief-20150121.pdf

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| Seasoned leadership and effective military organization | Weakened by military and airstrikes |
| Resonant cause (revival of the Caliphate) | Tendency to overreach – impose draconian version of *Shari'a* |
| Powerful propaganda machine (social media and YouTube) | Potentially fractious coalition – not all allies share its agenda |
| Aura of invincibility created by series of impressive victories | Ineffective governance/reliance on terror to ensure control |
| Relatively well-equipped forces | Overstretched forces – cannot adequately defend all areas it controls |
| Adaptability | Insufficient finances to govern 6-8 million people |
| Interior lines of communication | Isolated and landlocked – lines of communications vulnerable to attack |

From the security and geopolitical standpoint, the Iraqi case in countering terrorism cannot be separated from that in Syria, especially since the strategy of IS depends on the interdependence among border cities and towns as well as the foundations that the organization developed to facilitate continuous two-way communications, which makes separating the approaches in the two countries quite difficult.

## 6. The Dilemma of Unified vs. Divided Cities

The characteristics of countering terrorism in every country are unique in their specificity to that country's context, distinct from other countries. There is a close and direct relationship between the prevalence of violence and terrorism, on the one hand, and the social, cultural, and economic conditions that contribute to this prevalence, on the other hand. Violence is a social phenomenon that affects the individual first, who is threatened directly by violence, and at the same time, affects the group collectively, which suffers from its consequences as violence is imposed on it coercively.[94] Studies on the phenomenon usually distinguish between domestic terrorism and international terrorism, despite the fact that both phenomena share in common the use of violence in order to reach specific gains, most commonly political ones. The two also have a set of criteria in common, including:

- Locations and safe havens: the fields of operations to recruit supporters and win their support ideologically
- The choice of targets

[94] Ibrahim al-Haidari, *Susyolojiya al-'Unf wa al-Irhab*, [Lit. "The Sociology of Violence and Terrorism"], Op. cit., p. 215.

- The ideological background
- An organizational structure
- Financiers

In terms of locations, which is the most important aspect in this spatial dilemma, terrorists usually do not settle in a specific place, or if they do, they do not show any territorial interest or attachment towards their areas of settlement. More precisely, although terrorists are able to resort to a particular place and operate there, because of the existence of exceptional conditions there – as is the case with countries ridden with instability such as Iraq, yet these terrorist do not claim, and others do not envision that they or their groups maintain a special attachment to this place.[95]

Nevertheless, IS's strategy does rely on the moral and symbolic gain of capturing cities. Psychologically, the black banners that indicate areas that have come under their control give the organization a boost of confidence in their operations. Here lies a key puzzle in terms of Iraqi cities; there have been major cities with millions of residents, such as Mosul, that fell at the first hearing of "car honks," according to the expression of an eyewitness describing it as part of "psychological warfare," whereas there were other cities that withstood IS's advances despite all the obstacles, difficulties, and sieges imposed on them.

In this context, two cities can be taken as case studies. The first is Haditha, a city with a Sunni majority, and the second is Amerli, a small town with a Shiite majority. Following is a description of how these two cities presented great examples in confronting IS, despite all the challenges.

*Haditha*

Haditha lies in the western Iraqi Al-Anbar province, about 260 kilometers northwest of the capital Baghdad. The city has a population of about 49,000 people, and the Haditha district as a whole has about 100,000 people. The prominent features of Haditha city include:

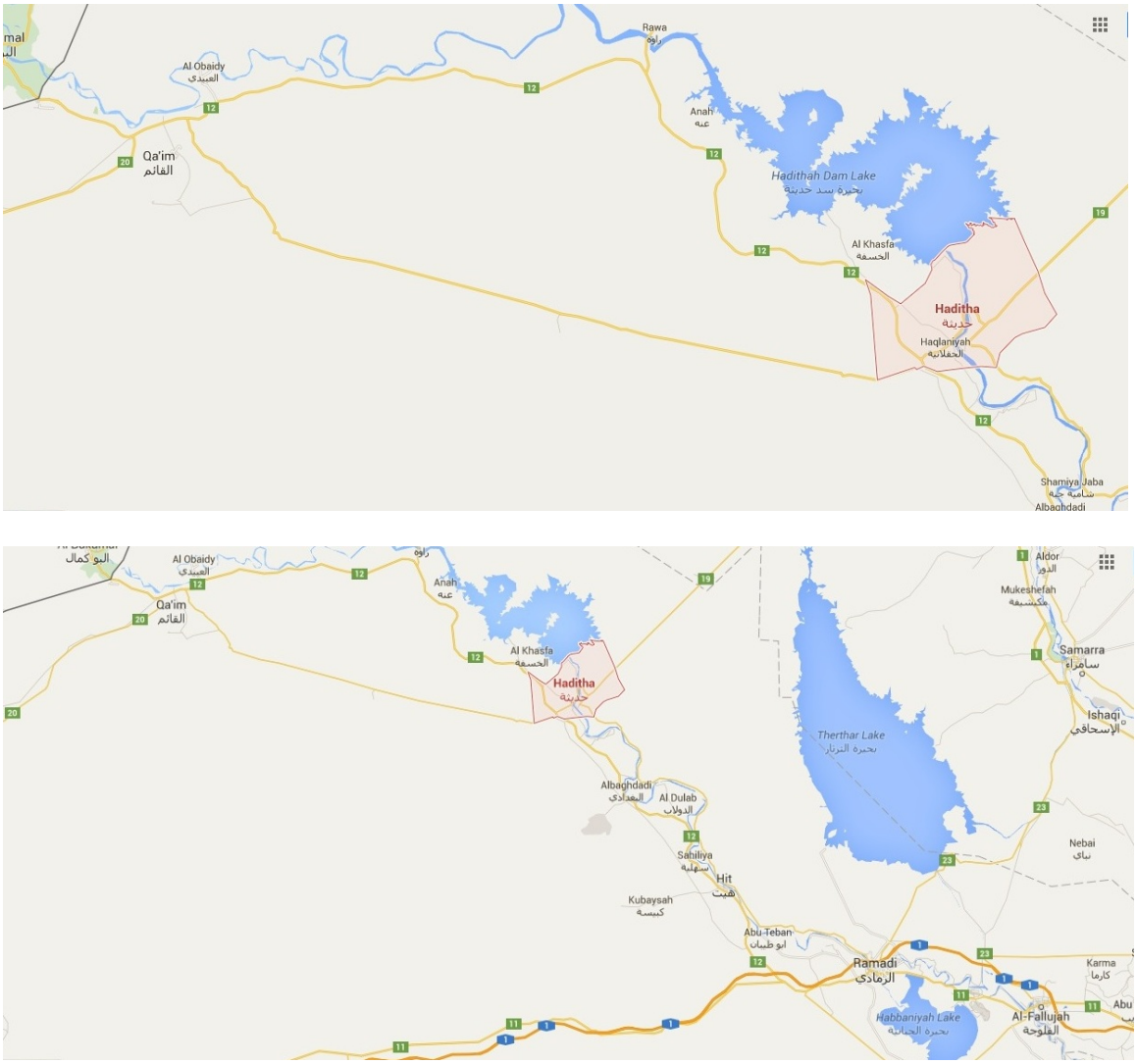
1. A predominately middle-class society of intellectuals, scholars, and overall a good level of education and employment opportunities.
2. Characteristically a tightknit tribal society, interrelated through intermarriage between the clans and tribes of the area.
3. The prevalence of Sufism, where the city has numerous mosques, shrines, tombs, and Sufi orders.[96]
4. During the US war on Iraq, the city was a major security problem for US forces, prompting them to retreat from the city and reposition in the outskirts.

The most notable aspect about the city today is its successful resilience after enduring more than 35 military attacks by IS. The district of Haditha is the only

[95] Abd al-Majid Mablaghi et al, *Al-Irhab Ta'rifuhu wa Aaliyat Mukafahatuh*, [Lit. "Terrorism: Definition and Means of Combating it"], Center of Civilization for the Development of Islamic Thought, Beirut, 2015, pp. 63-64.

[96] Among the famous shrines in Haditha city is the tomb of Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Aalousi al-Tayyar, who is a descendant of the famous Sufi sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Gilani, whose entombed in a shrine in Baghdad.

district remaining under the control of security forces and tribal units, out of eight neighboring districts that fell under IS's control. There are major concerns about sabotage in the event that IS seizes control of the city, and takes over control of the Haditha Dam,[97] Iraq's second largest dam, which may pave the way to occupying and controlling other cities. There is dire need to take the necessary measures to prevent terrorist organizations from seizing control of water sources in Iraq, as pointed out by various logistical reports.[98]




*Map of the city of Haditha*

There are various explanations and justifications for Haditha's resilience against IS capture, including:

[97] The Haditha Dam is Iraq's second largest dam, lying in the northern part of the city, and is about 260 kilometers northwest of Baghdad. The dam reserves water from the Euphrates River, amounting to a lake (The Haditha Dam Lake) that extends across vast swathes of land. See: Iraq 1988, the Annual Book of the Republic of Iraq, Baghdad: Dar al-Ma'moun Translation, 1989, p. 79.
[98] Jeremy Ashkenas, Archie Tse, Derek Watkins, and Karen Yourish, "A Rogue State Along Two Rivers: How ISIS Came to Control Large Portions of Syria and Iraq," The New York Times, July 3rd, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/03/world/middleeast/syria-iraq-isis-rogue-state-along-two-rivers.html?_r=0

- Haditha lies near the Ayn Al-Assad airbase in the nearby Al-Baghdadi district. This proximity has helped Haditha withstand IS attacks, considering that the airbase is of prime importance to the Iraqi government and the international coalition. However, this explanation is insufficient to justify IS not entering and capturing the city, considering that other cities before it fell despite having many military bases.
- The influence of the *Sahawat* (Awakening) forces of the Al-Jaghayfa[99]tribe in the city had a major role in confronting IS. However, many other large Sunni Iraqi tribes and clans have confronted and stood against IS, but their cities were not able to withstand the organization's attacks. Hence, this may not be a sufficient justification.
- Many air strikes targeted IS sites near Haditha in support of security forces, Popular Mobilization forces, and the Jaghayfa tribal *Sahawat* in their defense of the city. Meanwhile, many other Iraqi cities also witnessed airstrikes on IS targets there, but were not a prime reason for the resilience of these cities.

On the other hand, we believe that the key factors behind Haditha's endurance and stand against IS include the general discourse of religious tolerance experienced in the city, the prevalence of Sufism, and the relationships that Haditha leaders established with Shiite religious references in Najaf through support for ongoing military and humanitarian aid, according to city residents.

*Amerli*

The town of Amerli lies in the Tuz Khormatu district of Salahuddin Province. The majority of its fewer than 20,000 residents are from the Shiite Turkoman ethnic minority. IS besieged Amerli after it seized control of Mosul and most of Salahuddin province. The organization imposed a tight siege on the town and prevented the entry of water and food in its attempt to take over the area.

The attacks on Amerli were unremitting, with the first attack witnessing the use of five armored tanks, six Humvees, more than five armored vehicles seized by IS during the takeover of Mosul, and nearly 300 IS fighters. Amerli residents withstood nearly 50 terrorist attacks afterwards.

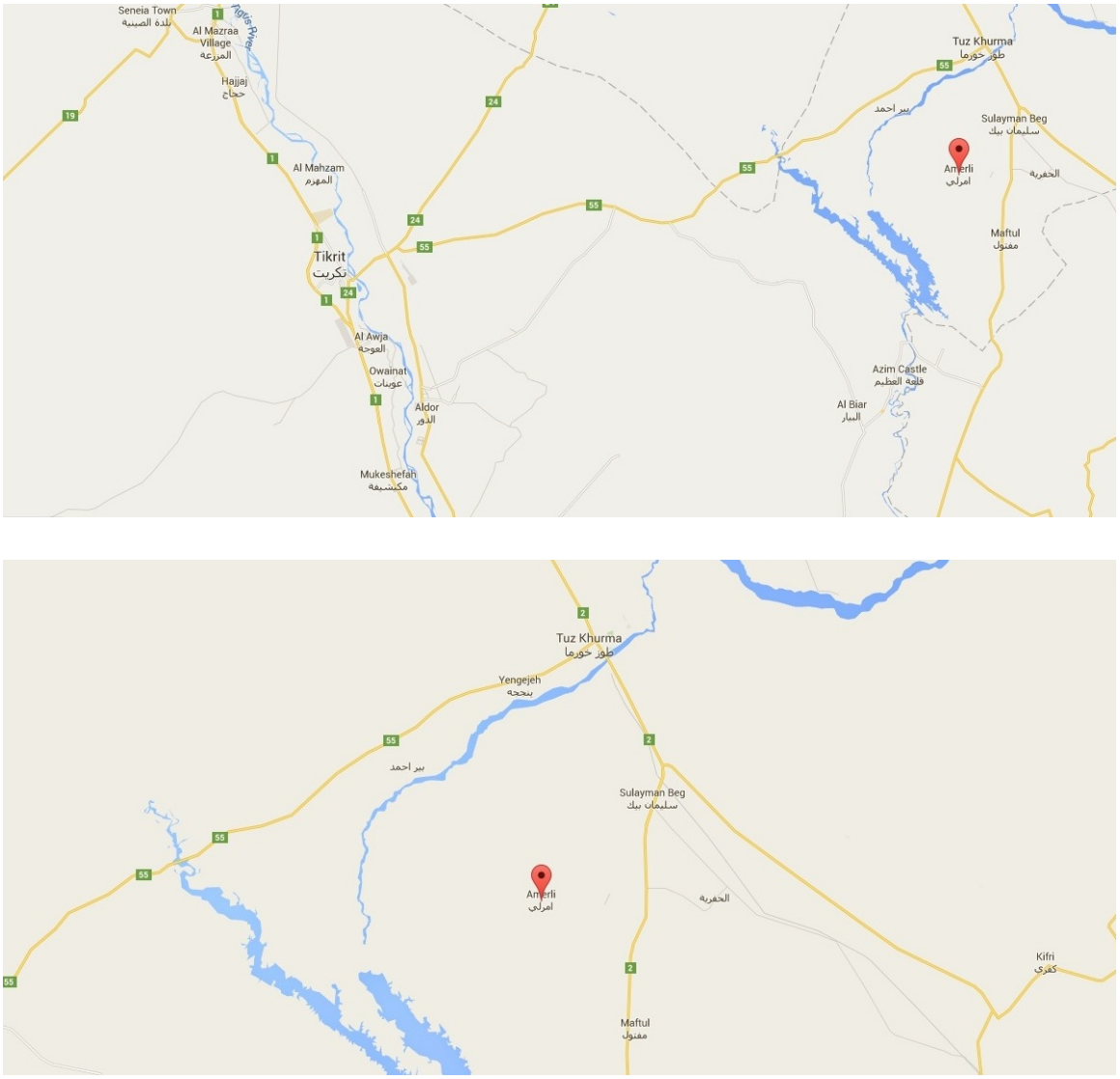
The siege was broken after 84 days as Iraqi security forces and Popular Mobilization factions entered the city. More than 700 militants were killed in the confrontations, which also resulted in about 100 civilian casualties.

IS was not able to occupy this small town, which is located in a remote area void of any military installations. The map of the area bears the following observations:

- There are no open land routes to deliver material and moral support to the city.

[99] IS spokesperson, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, stressed in an audio recording issued by IS that the organization will capture Haditha "no matter what," threatening that "you will regret, as it [the invasion] will be a revenge, where if people passed by Haditha and their homes they will say 'there once were Jaghayfas here." See: Report on Haditha resilience, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enGbXp_YmFw

- This city, small in size and population, is located near – and in the midst of – surrounding areas fully controlled by IS.




*Map of Amerli*

Michael Knights describes the details of Amerli's resilience during the siege: "On June 20, 10 days after the fall of Mosul, IS fighters started to overrun Turkmen villages surrounding Amerli. By July 15, only Amerli was left unconquered — the last bastion out of 31 Shiite villages in the area, cut off from an escape route to either the Shiite south or the Kurdish north. Since July 17, the densely populated town has received daily rocket attacks. The town's defenders, around 400 local men armed solely with AK-47s, have beaten off many IS attacks."[100]

According to some studies, Amerli is the only town that IS attempted and failed to occupy in Iraq and Syria following the events in Mosul. IS sustained major losses there, more IS fighters were killed in Amerli in one month than fighters in

[100] Michael Knights, "Iraq's City of Orphans," Foreign Policy, August 14th, 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/08/14/iraqs-city-of-orphans/ Also see: Michael Knights, "Saving Iraqi Turkmens Is a Win-Win-Win," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch No. 2285, July 16th, 2014, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/saving-iraqi-turkmens-is-a-win-win-win

Syria in a year and a half. The combat force that fought IS in Amerli numbered nearly 1,500 most of them civilians and local tribesmen. IS, on the other hand, had captured fifty cities and villages in Mosul and the Nineveh plain in two weeks, half of which fell without any resistance.

Following are the main reasons believed to be behind the city's victory and resilience in the face of IS attacks:

- Societal harmony is characteristic of this town, both ideologically and ethnically.
- The decision to resist was made by a large group of the population, despite the modest capacity and means available,[101] compared to Tel Afar, another – and much larger – Shiite district, whose residents were unable to withstand IS's attacks despite having 10 times more fighters than in Amerli (the population of Tel Afar district is more than 250,000 whereas Amerli's population is nearly 20,000).

The resilience of Amerli was able to stop IS's incessant advance into cities and towns in the province of Kirkuk.[102]

## Conclusion

Iraqi efforts to combat terrorism and extremism cannot be denied or underestimated, considering that it is the first country in the region to suffer the first heavy blows of *al-Qaeda*'s terrorism, which preceded the emergence of the "Islamic State" and current extremist organizations. Iraq today stands at the forefront of countries combatting and countering all local extremist currents operating on its land, and has been sacrificing the lives of its defenders in the Iraqi armed forces, Popular Mobilization factions, and the Peshmerga, in order to rid the country of IS.

But in return, there is dire need to address these dilemmas and problems that affect the core of counter-terrorism operations in Iraq, in order to ensure the success of these strategic operations, protect the land, and stop recruitment into terrorist and extremist organizations.

This success cannot be achieved by Iraqi efforts alone, but requires regional and international support, because this war is not about the future of Iraq alone, but affects the overall regional and international balances as well.

Knowing what we know today of the real causes behind the emergence of ideological deviation and gravitation towards terrorism, in light of the inflamed political and regional crises in the region, and with all the attempts to spare Iraq from the state of regional strife as much as possible, it remains nevertheless inevitable that the terrorism we see today, if it didn't exist now, would exist in the near future anyway. This inevitability is the result of several consolidated and interrelated factors, including in particular the religious education system,

[101] On July 7, 2007, Al-Qaeda attacked Amerli with 4.5 tons of explosives buried in a truck under a load of watermelons, killing 159 civilians and wounding over 350. See: Michael Knights, ibid.

[102] The residents of Amerli had the option to evacuate and flee the town, especially after seeing what happened in the nearby towns of Bashir and Bastamil, but after consultations, they decided to build barricades, took their positions, and resolved to defend their town.

high unemployment rates, widespread educational and cultural illiteracy and rampant political and financial corruption, among others. These are all causes that radical fundamentalism sees no solution to, save violence. The radical fundamentalists would use violence against those perceived to be protecting the regimes that commit these sins, and in adopting violence as a solution to these problems, they unknowingly took the path of violent communism, that of the "Red" Bolshevik Revolution, for Lenin said that "not a single problem of the class struggle has ever been solved in history except by violence," and likewise Mao Tse-tung said that "historical experience is written in iron and blood."

Enhancing Iraq's counter-terrorism efforts requires formulating a strategy to monitor the government's performance on the level of the security forces, especially in the peripheral and border regions, considering that the establishing of "emirates" in many countries is often done in peripheral border regions. The issue of financing is also a critical element for terrorist organizations, therefore, the Iraqi government should impose stricter measures on banking and money transfers, which sometimes hide under the guise of civil society and charity organizations.

It is important for the Iraqi government to invest in the efforts made by the Popular Mobilization forces in the battle against IS, and to provide adequate support for them and integrate them within the framework of building a new, strong and professional military, one that transcends all the narrow considerations. The government should also relentlessly pursue dividing IS between Syria and Iraq, as much as possible, and to cutting its supply lines in an effort to neutralize and eliminate it.

# Does Yemen Have a Counter-Terrorism Strategy?

*Nabil al-Bukairi*

Before discussing whether Yemen truly has a counter-terrorism strategy, the question that needs to be addressed first is whether there is a clear and internationally agreed upon definition of the phenomenon of terrorism. Or, is the definition that is available a mere *functional* one, where the phenomenon is dealt with according to the needs and wants of different parties that benefit from it, and according to the tactics and strategies particular to their interests and influence in the region?

I think the predicament that today faces any real efforts or genuine intentions towards counter-terrorism is that "terrorism" itself has become an ambiguous and impalpable issue, where each party has its own explanation, vision, and solutions that are suitable to its own method of dealing with the phenomenon. Each party now uses what has come to be known as "counter-terrorism" as one of its tools in managing its interests, policies, and approaches.

In short, and figuratively, this is what is meant by a "counter-terrorism approach" in dealing with this phenomenon in Yemen. This paper attempts to zigzag through this Yemeni approach, which is one of the most unsuccessful approaches that has proven to produce further violence and terrorism rather than treat it, as described by American activist Medea Benjamin, in her book "Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control."[103]

It is a compounded failure when the phenomenon of terrorism is dealt with nonchalantly, and with a lack of the spirit of humanitarian responsibility in addressing such issues that impact the lives, security, and stability of innocent people. It is a compounded failure when there is a lack of serious and responsible methods of dealing with terrorism; the events of the last two decades have proved the major failure of the downright military and security approach, which deals with the phenomenon as a mere criminal offense, stripped of the causes and effects, and treats the results without consideration of the factors that produce them. In this scenario, the magnitude of the disaster mushrooms with a sort of geometric sequence where the disastrous results constantly multiply.

The case of Yemen is considered one of the oldest cases in the Arab region where the phenomenon of violence ensued, especially with the early connection between the ruling regime in Yemen and Jihadis returning from Afghanistan – known at the time as "Afghan Arabs" – who were employed by the United States and its allies in the Arab region to counteract the Soviet Union during the Cold War, which will be discussed later in this brief study.

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[103] Medea Benjamin is an American peace activist, and a staunch opponent of the security and military approach to the phenomenon of what has come to be known as terrorism. In an interview with Al Jazeera, she spoke at length about the failure of the security approach, which relies on indiscriminate killing through unmanned drones that are used by the US Government – and with the blessings of the Yemeni government – as one of the most important means of combating terrorism in Yemen. See the interview entitled *Al-Drones: Al-Harb al-Samita* [Lit. "Drones: The Silent War"], https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xiMGRKOfUFs

The core of the problem, however, lies in the fact that the phenomenon of terrorism, which remained from the onset a security and military issue, was utilized by the Yemeni authorities as the most advantageous issue that could be capitalized on in the local and international politics market for over two decades. The issue of violence became a political bargaining chip beginning in the 1990s,[104] and the security "function" was added to it later according to the American approach to dealing with terrorism and elements involved in it. This, in turn, corresponds exactly with the main purpose of the emergence of such groups, as propagated in the media and intelligence agendas.

The security approach – which is the essence of the American approach based on the principle of force, and force alone – in dealing with terrorism produced disastrous and counterproductive results, not only on the domestic American level, but on the international level as a whole, as evident in the ramifications of the War on Terror, which led to the toppling of Afghanistan and then Iraq. This security approach was later adopted again in the post-Arab Spring era, after the "Spring" was on the verge of purging all the justifications and root causes of violence and terrorism in the Arab world, starting with political authoritarianism,[105] economic and developmental failures, and the religious texts that were used as tributary pretexts for the use of violence and force in order to achieve demands and express rejection of policies.

Thus, the more we move away from the true definition of terrorism, the more we also move away from knowing its main root causes. There is a close link between the true causes of terrorism and the political utilization of this phenomenon. This is evident in the evasion of formulating a substantive approach to the phenomenon, and of defining terrorism and addressing its root causes. The longer this evasion continues, the longer the concept of terrorism will remain permeable, and its definition will remain adaptable to any party that wants to use and employ it for their own interests and policies.

The disaster today is that the continued implementation of an approach based solely on force and violence in itself constitutes a generator that perpetuates – and exacerbates – the cycle of violence, as evident in the events of over more than a decade since the attacks of September 11, 2001 and until today. The cycle of violence widened during this time period; violent extremist groups (according to the Western characterization) were limited to Afghanistan in the past, whereas today they have become a phenomenon that extends to various regions.

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[104] From the onset, the Yemeni authorities used groups returning from Afghanistan in its war with its political opponents after the declaration of Yemeni unification in May 1990. Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh allied with the Arab and Yemeni *Mujahideen*, who were returning from Afghanistan at the time, in the summer of 1994 battle against the Yemeni Socialist Party. Many of the *Mujahideen* were dragged into the battles, and the most dangerous of them were eradicated, including Muslim Barasin, who was first of the Jihadi leaders to be killed after the battle that saw the defeat of the Socialists and their expulsion from the south of Yemen. Those remaining of the *Mujahideen*, such as Tariq al-Fadli, Jamal al-Nahdi and others, were absorbed into security forces and the Permanent Committee for the General People's Congress, the ruling party at the time, headed by Ali Abdullah Saleh.

[105] Sahar Aziz, "In Calling for Muslims to Oppose Terrorism, Obama Ignores Its Root Causes," Brookings Institute Middle East Politics and Policy, February 15th, 2016, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/02/16-countering-authoritarianism-counterterrorism-aziz

These violent groups evolved from the simple and primitive form, controlling small areas in the mountains and caves, to groups that today possess the capabilities of states: vast geographical regions with a people and borders, state economic capabilities with oil, taxes, levies and other capabilities that make up a state, as is the case with the "Islamic State" organization (IS) today in Iraq and Syria (dubbed in the media as "Da'esh" according to its Arabic name acronyms).

The phenomenon of terrorism has become complicated with the intertwining of the political dimension with the religious, security, intelligence, and economic dimensions, among others. Its threat has magnified now that terrorism may extend beyond the framework of attempts to control and employ it by various actors, especially that the interdependent world as a whole has become something like a one room, where the problems and manifestations interrelate more and more every day.

With the advancement of technology and ubiquity of international travel and transmission of information, the West can no longer afford to ignore deteriorating conditions in authoritarian states that could quickly become terrorist safe havens. One need only look to the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid, London, and most recently Paris as evidence of the internationalization of local conflicts. Indeed, terrorist groups based in failing sub-states have made no secret that they target the "far enemy" – the Western nations who support the autocratic regimes – as much they target the "near enemy."[106]

There is dire need for the success of the massive efforts being made today to counter the growing threat of violent groups, especially amid the perpetual state of decoy and deception in failing to formulate an objective definition of apparent terrorism, especially a clear and explicit definition agreed upon not only by political actors, but by social scientists and academic ones as well. It is only in light of such a definition that we would be able to talk about effective and objective treatments and solutions for this phenomenon that is ever growing and taking on diverse, more brutal and chaotic dimensions compared to the past, in a dangerous development that could lead the whole world into a downward spiral of chaos and violence, the results and limits of which are impossible to predict. This is a problem towards which many Western politicians, along with some academics in this field, turn a blind eye towards, colluding in a field that is subject to the mood of politicians and their games.

This following discussion seeks to answer the difficult question of the Yemeni approach to countering terrorism, whether there really is such an approach, and if so, what this approach has achieved and what are its pros and cons. Furthermore, it analyzes the relationship between the Yemeni and the American views of terrorism and means to combat it, and the major problems and mistakes that have reflected on the approach – if it exists. It also considers how Yemen and Yemenis have been affected by the policies of combatting what is called terrorism, particularly the crimes and woes of drone attacks. This endeavor seeks to extrapolate the substance of terrorism through the history of this phenomenon in the case of Yemen.

[106] Ibid.

## The History of the Phenomenon of Terrorism in Yemen

The phenomenon of terrorism is still far from being addressed methodologically and objectively today, the only approach through which it would be possible to analyze the phenomenon as it is, devoid of all the augmentations and conceptualizations that have become stuck in the minds of consumers of any news about terrorism and related aspects. The case of terrorism is consumed through the lens of preconceptions and profiling-in-advance, and is a case that has not evolved into the level of a phenomenon except through politicized media handling where a lot has been said, but not in any methodologically disciplined and standardized manner, except in rare cases.

With the numerous events that took place over the past two decades, the problem of violent extremist groups became significantly complicated especially with the overlapping and intertwining of the security, political, religious, economic, intelligence, and military dimensions. But what has not changed until this moment is the consistent main hallmark of these groups; that is, groups without an objective, a project, a vision, or features that can be clearly delineated in a manner that enables a researchers to build from their data an approach through which this problematic phenomenon may be understood, as opposed to from the stereotypical approach used by many.

But today, at least, and after more than two decades since the emergence of this phenomenon, there is ample data through which the phenomenon of terrorism can be dissected and analyzed in order to come up with adequate information and facts. Such an endeavor would make it possible to build a practically integrated vision of the violent phenomenon, its mechanisms, orientations, and future ramifications.

It has become clear today, more than ever, the extent of confusion, deception, and concealment of facts in the field of research studies of this phenomenon, in addition to the magnitude of utilization and deliberate stereotyping by pigeonholing this phenomenon into rigid templates that cannot be reformulated, except by those who originally formulated them and wish to keep them to be used in their own interests, unaware that they can be employed and utilized by others, each in their own favor and objectives.

The formative beginnings of this phenomenon in Yemen are virtually one in terms of source and origin, and have been known to researchers and observers for over two decades of "terrorism." The early beginnings started with the Afghan Jihad, which produced the phenomenon of "Afghan Arabs," with all its backdrops, complexities and interrelatedness, manifested in each country according to its own context of time and place.

## The Early Beginnings of Violent Groups in Yemen

The phenomenon of violent groups in the Yemeni case is considered the most ambiguous and equivocal, despite the clarity of its early beginnings. The phenomenon is associated to a great extent with the "original homeland" (Yemen) of the founder of *al-Qaeda*, Osama bin Laden, whose sense of belonging to Yemen constituted a compass for the movement, reinforced by Jihadi theorists

such as Abu Musab al-Suri[107] and others. Such theorists delineated for Jihadism an array of ideas through which the organization propagated the idea of mobilizing an "army of Islam," stemming from various religious, social, political, and economic factors.

Since then, the idea of an Army of Islam was formulated, inspired by the struggle of the "Afghan Arab Mujahideen" in the 1980s against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. It was during that time that the idea of a globalized Jihad began to crystalize, based mainly on indirect support from international and regional intelligence services that, at the time, employed the tool of Jihad in its international confrontation with the Soviet Union.

A number of Jihadi leaders from the "Afghan Arabs" returned to Yemen, and were soon embraced by the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh and employed in the battles against its Socialist adversaries at the time. Yet this "employment" did not end there, as was revealed by one of the prominent ideologues of Jihadi movements in an interview.[108]

The Yemeni aspect of this phenomenon is attributable mainly to the presence of Osama bin Laden at the head of this group, considering his personality, wealth, and Yemeni Hadhramaut origin, in addition to a charisma that captivated everyone with his generosity, courage, and clarity, and more significantly, his *religious dimension* that was, at the time, employed in a futile battle that only served international and regional agendas under the guise of Jihad.

Yet the practical and operational beginnings of the Jihadi organization in Yemen began with the advent of the War of Unity between the Yemeni Socialist Party and the General People's Congress, the partners in the unity at the time, which took place between 1992 and 1994. It was then that the early real employment of the ideological violence of these groups was taken up by the regime of former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who was able to lure a number of Afghan Arabs into his battle against his then Socialist adversaries. This is in addition to what was going on behind the scenes, as Osama bin Laden, while still in Afghanistan, began preparing to bring down the Socialist Party in South Yemen after accomplishing the mission to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan.[109]

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[107] Abu Musab al-Suri is one of the most prominent theorists of Jihadi thought. His real name is Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, and he is considered one of the most important advocates of the idea that Yemen should become a permanent and central headquarters of the Jihadi organization, espoused in his publication "*Makanat al-Yamaniyeen wa Dawrihim fi Himayat Muqadasat al-Muslimin wa Tharawatihim*" [Lit., "The Status of Yemenis and their Role in Protecting Muslim Sanctities and Wealth"]. This book is one of the most important references related to making Yemen a stronghold for Jihadis and transferring the headquarters from Afghanistan to Yemen. Al-Suri was arrested in 2005 by Pakistani intelligence forces, and was given up to US intelligence services. His fate remains unknown.

[108] Sayyid Imam Abd al-Aziz al-Sharif, known as Dr. Fadl, one of the most prominent ideologues of Jihadi movements and author of "*Al-'Umda fi E'dad al-'Udda*" [Lit. "The Deliberations [Required] for the Preparations [for Jihad]," said in an interview with an Egyptian TV channel that Afghan Arab Jihadis (Al-Qaeda members) were supported and directed by the Yemeni intelligence service, known then as The Political Security Organization (PSO).

[109] Abu Musab al-Suri (Mustafa Sitmariam) mentions in his famous book, entitled "*Da'wat Al-Muqawama al-Islamiya al-'Aalamiya*," [Lit., "The Call to Global Islamic Resistance"], (which is an encyclopedic and historical chronology and reference on the emergence and path of Jihadi groups) the story of the beginnings of Al-Qaeda organization and how Osama bin Laden

### *Al-Qaeda*'s Second Phase in Yemen

In its second phase, *al-Qaeda* began to focalize and position itself in a more institutional manner rather than a generally unruly and disorganized way. Early on in this phase, *al-Qaeda* announced the creation of Jaysh Adan-Abyan (The Islamic Army of Aden-Abyan "IAA"), headed by Abu al-Hassan al-Mihdar in 1997. IAA launched its first operation in 1998 by kidnapping sixteen Western tourists, mostly Britons, in the southern province of Abyan, and fortified itself in the mountainous region of Hattat. The kidnapping operation elevated *al-Qaeda* into the rank of major violent groups, especially after the failure of the operation to rescue the hostages, in which two British tourists were killed. Al-Mihdar was captured in the confrontations and was put on trial and executed shortly afterwards towards the end of 1998 in Sana'a.

The bombing of the USS Cole off the coast of Aden in 2000 came in the context of *al-Qaeda*'s response to the execution of Al-Mihdar, and was the biggest attack by *al-Qaeda* before the September 11, 2001 attacks – if these attacks are truly attributable to *al-Qaeda*.

After that, the assassination of Abu Ali al-Harithi in the desert of Ma'rib by a US Predator drone attack on November 3rd, 2002 is considered one of the early American measures against the first cells of *al-Qaeda* in Yemen. This incident presaged the ensuing all-out war between the organization and US forces in Yemen after the September 11 attacks. Al-Harithi was one of the early *al-Qaeda* leaders with a direct relationship with Osama bin Laden at the time, and is widely believed to have been a direct envoy of bin Laden, and had returned from Afghanistan to prepare the grounds for the return of bin Laden and his followers to Yemen, according to Abu Musab al-Suri.

### *Al-Qaeda*'s Third Phase in Yemen

This stage represents the organization's progression towards globalizing Jihad, where it transcended beyond the local scene beginning with the establishment of *al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula* (AQAP) in November 2009, initiating the "globalized" phase of the organization, headquartered in Yemen.

This phase is characterized by large qualitative operations, with a clear propagandist dimension that resonated widely in the media, such as the attempted blowing up of a US airliner over Detroit in December 2009 by Nigerian national Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

With the announcement of forming *al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula* during this phase, the media began to portray Yemen as a hotbed of terrorist threat to

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emphasized, before the unification, the need to liberate South Yemen and govern it, yet after the unification he believed in the need to control and govern all of Yemen. Bin Laden, according to Al-Suri, prepared a plan for this and communicated with tribal and religious leaders then. The plan was moving smoothly and with great precision until the outbreak of the war in the summer of 1994, when one of the most important Jihadi leaders, Muslim Baraseen, was assassinated in Shabwa after Socialist Party forces were defeated there. Other senior Jihadi leaders, such as Al-Fadli and Al-Nahdi and others, were absorbed into President Saleh's party and security forces, and were given high ranks.

international peace and security, in a manner that served private agendas that sought to aggrandize the subject of terrorism in Yemen to transform the country into a "closed" terrorist zone. This, in turn, hindered all efforts that were being made in order to restore the well-being of Yemen, a country that has suffered from the tarnishing of its image as a result of terrorism.

### *Al-Qaeda*'s Fourth Phase in Yemen

During this stage, which began with the Arab Spring revolutions, *al-Qaeda* began to retreat from the spotlight. Yet soon after, and with the subsequent phase of counter-revolutions and coups against the Arab Spring revolutions, *al-Qaeda* began to re-emerge strongly, especially after the coup that deposed Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, the strike against the Libyan revolution, and the suppression of the Syrian revolution. These events produced a new trend of uncontrolled and rampantly violent organizations, represented by the "Islamic State" organization and others, in a stage that continues until today.

This phase is characterized by rampant violence and the emergence of obvious intelligence employment of this non-objective violence, which has manifested in forms closer to Hollywood than anything else. This phase witnessed the emergence of cinematic-style films that depicted violent crimes, produced and disseminated in such a staggering way that targets a massive audience, in an effort to ingrain the idea that the existence of terrorism is a direct consequence of revolutions and calls for change.

In Yemen, the phenomenon of what became known as the "Islamic State" (IS), or Da'esh, did not manifest in the way it did in the cases of Syria, Iraq, Libya or Egypt, but the prospects of Da'esh-like implications began to appear in the Yemeni scene, albeit reservedly. This post-Arab Spring violent wave, represented by the "Islamic State", however, was faced by the major problematic obstacle represented by the wave that preceded it in Yemen: *al-Qaeda*. *Al-Qaeda*, until today, still maintains the strongest influence on the overall Jihadi Salafist current, and its activities in Yemen have not reached the extent of the "Islamic State" due to the structural differences between the Yemeni scene, on the one hand, and the Syrian and Iraqi ones on the other.[110]

This current phase also witnessed the fall of the capital Sana'a into the hands of Houthi militias, who raised the banner of "War on *al-Qaeda*," as a disingenuous slogan aimed to receive Western support for its coup against the legitimate authority and national dialogue. Houthis propagated the idea of combatting *al-*

[110] A notable difference in the case of the Jihadi Salafist membership bases in Yemen, on the one hand, and Syria and Iraq, on the other hand, is that the popular bases in Yemen are members of a socially conservative society, as opposed to Iraq and Syria, where large numbers of those who joined the current came from Leftist, Baathist, and Pan-Nationalist backgrounds, as an expression of the conditions of marginalization, injustice, and exclusion inflicted on these components by Sectarian governments in Iraq and the like in Syria following the Arab Spring. These elements found nothing to lift this injustice off them, save mustering under the name and banner of the "Islamic State" organization. On the other hand, in Yemen, most of those belonging to Jihadi Salafist current come from socially and tribally conservative environments. This led to a polarization between two camps: the "Islamic State" and Al-Qaeda. During this period, the factors for the emergence and expansion of the "Islamic State" in Yemen were almost non-existent and certainly unprepared, in comparison to the conditions in Iraq and Syria at the time.

*Qaeda* and the "Islamic State", but the two sides have not engaged against each other in a single battle throughout the year. On the contrary, both *al-Qaeda* and the Houthi insurgency targeted the bulk of their operations against the legitimate government forces and state institutions in the south and north of the country, respectively. Not a single battle between the two sides was noted, on the contrary, there was coordination and cooperation between the two camps when *al-Qaeda* seized control of the city of Al-Mukalla, which was a main crossing point for Houthi and Ali Abdullah Saleh's supply lines for gas, diesel, and weapons coming in from Iran via the Arabian Sea.

Furthermore, the Houthi delegation at the Kuwait Talks objected to the issue of liberating the city of Al-Mukalla from *al-Qaeda* by Arab Alliance forces and the National Army, and considered such a move an occupation and aggression against Yemen.

## The Yemeni Approach to Counter-Terrorism

Returning to the main subject, the question posed is whether there truly is a Yemeni approach to countering the phenomenon of terrorism similar to the Saudi approach, which is based on what is known as the *Munasaha* Committee (Giving Advice) that seeks to rehabilitate individuals who had joined extremist groups, such as the Jihadis returning from Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay detention, Iraq, and other places.

In the Yemeni case, countering terrorism is perhaps the only approach in which the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh was able to identify and parallel with the American approach. Saleh's regime was able to employ and utilize these groups in its political conflicts from the early beginnings of this phenomenon in Yemen starting in the early 1990s. This means that there is somewhat of a correlation, perhaps a relationship, between the Americans and Saleh's regime in regards to this issue, evident particularly in the way both sides were similar in their means of handling the terrorism "game" from an early stage.[111]

In strengthening his power and legitimacy, locally and internationally, Saleh presented his regime as an active partner in the War on Terror after the September 11, 2001 attacks. He provided all possible support to the American side, particularly after the major *al-Qaeda* plan to attack US interests, that began with the bombing of the USS Cole off the coast of Aden on October 12th, 2000.

The USS Cole attack was the beginning of major *al-Qaeda* operations against American and Western targets in general, such as the attack on the French oil tanker "Limburg" off the coast of Al-Mukalla in October 2002. All these attacks reinforced the American conviction that Yemen, in addition to being the original

[111] The American position on the subject is based on considering the phenomenon of terrorism as purely a security problem, and believing that the only solution the security approach that relies on killing, prisons, torture, and human rights violations. This has taken a critical and dangerous dimension in this context, and resulted in serious consequences on all levels with respect to grave breaches of human rights. This study discusses some of these issues that took place and are still ongoing in Yemen, from the context of the security approach to counter-terrorism, manifested in secret prisons and drone warfare, the innocent victims of which have reached gravely large numbers.

homeland of *al-Qaeda*'s founder Osama bin Laden, is also a major hotbed of conflict for the organization. This prompted the US to adopt a purely security and military approach to dealing with *al-Qaeda* and combatting what it called "terrorism," according to its own characterizations and interests, and not according to the dictates of common interests between nations and peoples.

It is from this limited security and military angle that President Saleh met eye-to-eye with the United States, which led the two sides to enter into a sort of partnership in everything related to terrorism. This was manifested in the creation of the Yemeni Counter-Terrorism Special Forces, with US funding, training, and expertise, and which were closely associated with, and run by, President Saleh's sons. A new intelligence force was also created for this purpose, called the "National Security Bureau" (NSB).[112]

In addition to the NSB, the special counter-terrorism units, which enjoyed tremendous US arming, training and expertise, were often used outside of their special missions' jurisdiction (which is counter-terrorism), and were dragged into the February 2011 revolution to crackdown on political opponents. The forces were also used against Saleh's political adversaries in the battles in the region of Al-Hasba in mid-2011, a matter that reflects the real nature and objective of these forces, under the banner of anti-terrorism. Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh used these forces as a cover to rally international support and legitimacy for his regime, which he intended to bequeath to his eldest son.

It is in this context that former President Saleh dealt with the American view on countering terrorism, and he even outperformed the Americans themselves in terms of his success in employing his objectives and tools in dealing with terrorism from a purely security angle. Saleh's security-oriented standpoint, however, served as real nourishment to extremist groups, which used the armed confrontations as a peg to fight the American-allied Yemeni regime, which they [*al-Qaeda*] viewed as a legitimate target of all its operations against the US and its regional allies, or "agents" according to *al-Qaeda*'s description.

The purely security approach conversely led *al-Qaeda* and extremist groups to solidify their adherence to – and belief in the rightness of – confrontations with the local Western-allied regimes, led by the United States. The US encouraged this security dimension as an American strategy through which it was able to freely justify its presence and influence throughout the world, under the pretext of combatting terrorism. To serve this aim, the US enacted laws and formed alliances without ever delineating a concise definition of "terrorism".

From this context, US "counter-terrorism" policies were initiated in the Middle East and throughout the world, especially in regions classified by the US as *al-*

[112] The National Security Bureau (NSB) is a Yemeni intelligence service, created specifically to combat what is called terrorism. It is the third department of the security and intelligence apparatus, which includes the Political Security Organization (PSO) and Military Intelligence. The National Security Bureau enjoyed US funding, expertise, and training for its members, and was closely tied with the Americans. This made the Bureau the "American Eye on Yemen," particularly in regards to the issue of terrorism, which was dealt with from a purely security angle, without consideration of other factors and causes that give rise to and exacerbate this phenomenon. Furthermore, the Bureau was involved in the wake of the February 2011 revolution, in which the intelligence and military capabilities of the Bureau were used to crack down on the popular peaceful youth revolution.

*Qaeda* havens, such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Iraq. Furthermore, the idea crystallized to "disable" notions of national sovereignty of these countries in order to allow the US and its air power to fly in their skies and carry out acts of war that resulted in thousands of innocent victims who lost their lives extrajudicially. This scenario adversely resulted in increased *al-Qaeda* activities and eased the recruitment of new members who joined its ranks out of motivation for revenge and retaliation for their loved ones who were killed in US drone strikes in Yemen and elsewhere.[113]

The problematic legacy of this approach, on all levels, rephrases the question of whether there truly is a conscious and responsible Yemeni approach to counter-terrorism into questioning the reality and extent to which there is systematic employment and exploitation of the problem of terrorism in line with personal agendas of the regime. It also exposes American involvement in this matter, as revealed in the documentary film "*al-Qaeda*'s Informant," which aired on Al-Jazeera about Hani Mujahid, a former *al-Qaeda* operative turned informant, who accused the head of the Yemeni National Security Bureau Brigadier General Ammar Mohammad Abdullah Saleh, nephew of Ali Abdullah Saleh, of involvement and coordination with *al-Qaeda* cells to carry out terrorist operations, including the targeting of the US Embassy in Sana'a in September 2008.

The revelations exposed in the documentary film are only a small portion of the volume of exploitation and manipulation of the issue of "terrorism" by Saleh's regime, and perhaps with US complicity, evident in the persistent security handling of the matter through continued support and backing of Saleh's regime as a "partner" in the War on Terrorism, according to Saleh's vision rather than according to the way it should be. It is this feature that Saleh used to cling to remaining in power, especially after the peaceful February 2011 revolution, which – had it succeeded – would have sought to treat many of the defects that afflicted Yemen, particularly terrorism, a large portion of which is caused by tyranny and lack of development, rather than a mere whim or thirst of young people for war and fighting.

Hence, Saleh's regime was always careful to hold tight to this thread since its inception in the 1990s, and remained in close contact with elements that had previously gone to Afghanistan to join the Jihad there. The regime was also keen to recruit informants among the youth, and entrap them into this slippery slope through systematic and deliberate policies that facilitated the rise of this phenomenon.[114]

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[113] An investigative report conducted by Journalist Mohammad al-Ahmadi for Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ) entitled "Drone Strikes Fuel Al-Qaeda Sympathy in Yemen," revealed the harsh reality of the counter-productive outcomes of drone attacks, especially in regions that were heavily impacted by these strikes, instigating some of their residents to join the ranks of Al-Qaeda in revenge for their relatives who were killed in these raids. See the report: http://en.arij.net/report/drone-strikes-fuel-qaeda-sympathy-in-yemen/

[114] Many cases related to the involvement of young people in acts of terrorism reveal that they originally had no connection with this file, until they were released from National Security prisons; prisons where teenaged youth were thrown into for no fault other than having a relative or a friend who was suspected of belonging to these groups. There were systematic practices used in these prisons to instigate young people to engage in acts of terrorism, including brutal

**Drones: Breeding Terrorism**

Another grim aspect related to producing, breeding, and perpetuating terrorism is largely associated with "Drone Warfare," the strategy of unmanned aircraft killing machines that the United States uses in its so-called War on Terror. The indiscriminate use of drones and air power and the consequences of such use have become the most effective means in synthesizing and breeding large numbers of new recruits into *al-Qaeda*'s ranks, clearly motivated by revenge, as revealed by an investigative report by ARIJ.[115]

This criminal technique has been used outside the framework of law, and in blatant violation of international laws and conventions and human rights charters, apart from violating the national sovereignty of countries that have suffered such acts. Drone and air warfare is one of the problematic factors that provoked large numbers to join the ranks of *al-Qaeda*, an example of which is the massacre that occurred in the village of Al-Maajala in which dozens of innocent Bedouins were killed while sleeping in their tents.[116]

Such incidents recurred numerous times in various areas, including the killing of Ma'rib deputy governor Jaber al-Shabwani, whose convoy was mistakenly targeted by a US drone strike on May 25th, 2010, along with four of his companions. It is believed that Al-Shabwani was en route on an official mission to meet with members of *al-Qaeda* who were intending to surrender themselves and give up fighting with *al-Qaeda*, according to sources close to Al-Shabwani.

Many others faced the same fate as Al-Shabwani. 14 innocent people were killed in a US drone attack on a wedding procession in the region of Yaklaa in Berdaa city in Al-Baydaa province. So many other stories tell of dozens of victims who lost their lives as a result of this security approach to dealing with issues the solutions to which cannot possibly be further violence.

In observing the harvest of over 12 years of US-Yemeni cooperation in the "War on Terror," it is evident that the harm and damage inflicted on Yemen has been much greater than the harm inflicted on terrorism. Hundreds of innocent people were killed or injured in either US strikes or *al-Qaeda* counter-strikes. Many cities were turned into rubble, while others face the ensuing risk of becoming battlegrounds.[117]

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torture, humiliating investigations, desecration of the Qur'an and insulting the Divine. The author obtained this information during meetings with relatives of youth who took part in hostilities with elements of the *Ansar al-Shari'a* in Abyan in 2012.

[115] The report received "Best Investigative Report" award for ARIJ network, related to the increased numbers of people joining Al-Qaeda in response to US drone strikes in Yemen. See: Mohammad al-Ahmadi, "Drone Strikes Fuel Al-Qaeda Sympathy in Yemen," Op. Cit.

[116] On the morning of December 17th, 2009, one of the bloodiest US airstrikes in Yemen occurred, targeting the village of Al-Maajala in Abyan province. The attack is believed to have been carried out by US missiles launched from the sea by a US battleship on a small gathering of villagers and Bedouin shepherds who were sleeping in their tents. About 41 people were killed, including 14 women and 21 children in this criminal incident. US media attempted to falsify the story, presenting it as if the airstrikes had targeted an Al-Qaeda training camp.

[117] Adel al-Ahmadi, "*Huroub al-Ta'irat al-Amerikiya fi al-Yaman: Al-Qatl bilaa Adilla*," [Lit. "The US Air War in Yemen: Killing without Evidence"], Al-Araby al-Jadeed (The New Arab), April 3rd, 2014, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/investigations/2014/4/3/%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-

The cycle of violence created by the drones and airstrikes' security-oriented approach proves that this approach fuels and perpetuates violence rather than being a solution to it. This is due to the approach being outside the framework of law and reason, and it being built upon a systematic and deliberate political vision aimed at enabling its actors to continue to hold and manipulate the strings of this game rather than find effective solutions to combat it.

*Table 1. The number of US drone strikes against al-Qaeda in Yemen, and the number of casualties (including injured) from 2011 to August 2014.*[118]

| YEAR | NUMBER OF AIRSTRIKES | CASUALTIES |
|---|---|---|
| 2011 | 6 | 18-25 |
| 2012 | 44 | 322-357 |
| 2013 | 25 | 100 |
| 2014 (until August) | 26 | 109 |

The above table shows the incidents that occurred from the beginning of 2011 until August 2014. The following two years (2015 and 2016), however, witnessed near doubling of the attacks and numbers of victims. These figures deem the air operations as breeding measures for the growing numbers joining the ranks of *al-Qaeda* in Yemen, particularly after the big setback of the counter-revolution that led to the September 21st, 2014 coup that toppled the state and its institutions. The coup transformed the state's security and military apparatus into sectarian militias, as many of its members were discharged and replaced by sectarian militia members. This has opened the door wide for a forceful re-emergence of violent terrorism, which in turn gives rise to a new variable that serves as an extension to the cases of Iraq and Syria, and paves the way for the emergence of the "Islamic State" organization's model.

With the fall of the state in Yemen, everything fell; there no longer is a state, but rather governing militias that have transformed all the state's resources in favor of their sectarian militia wars. This has provided additional factors for the perpetuation of the phenomenon of violent terrorism – according to the American definition and description – which mushroomed as a response and counteraction to the coup. This has further resulted in the US Government's identification and participation with the Houthi sectarian coup, which presented itself as an opponent of "violent groups" (*al-Qaeda* and IS), but in fact waged war against the Yemeni popular resistance that erupted in the face of the Houthi takeover that toppled the state.[119]

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%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AA%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%AF%D9%84%D8%A9

[118] Mohammad al-Ahmadi, "Drone Strikes Fuel Al-Qaeda Sympathy in Yemen," Op. Cit.

[119] US war planes participated in the Al-Qeifa Battle in Redaa city in Al-Baydaa province, as air cover following the September 21st, 2014 coup in favor of the Houthi militias against the popular

Even more gravely, the Houthi militias ruling in Sana'a worked to transform the US-backed, funded and armed Counter-Terrorism Special Forces into combat troops in their militia wars against the popular resistance and the national army in Taiz, Ma'rib, Al-Baydaa and other places without any US objection to the intervention of these forces. On the contrary, the use of these forces seemed to come with US approval and blessings, especially in that the coup enjoyed clear US support from the onset.

## Conclusion

The continued absence of a systematic, objective, and clear definition for the concept, causes, and mechanisms of terrorism poses the biggest obstacle in the face of any attempt to analyze and question the approach to countering terrorism. It is only through the existence of a real counter-terrorism approach that the phenomenon itself may be dissected; but this is far from being accomplished, considering that the phenomenon itself is complex, ambiguous and overlapping with many other complexities that answer to the will and desire of major international powers that seek to keep the subject of terrorism as one of the portfolios through which they can identify their friends and foes, all the while keeping this phenomenon under their disposal.

In this context, the search for a Yemeni approach to counter-terrorism will remain an exercise in paddling outside the scope of objectivity, and thus, it is not possible to reach empirical conclusions. This calls for the need to expose more of the circumstances related to political utilization and exploitation of this subject, and the implications of this utilization on the nature and prospects of Yemen. This utilization and exploitation of the issue of terrorism was one of the factors behind the fall of the state into the hands of the September 21st, 2014 coup, the perpetrators of which raised the banner of "War on Terror" to enable them to invest it in the international politics market, particularly with regard to the US, whose retreat from the Yemeni scene constituted a green light for the takeover.

This political and security exploitation, coupled with the absence of a clear comprehensive national counter-terrorism approach, led to the collapse of the state in Yemen, and before that led to the obstruction of political, economic, and social development and transformed Yemen into one of the worst-ranking countries in the world in the index of safety and security. This has reflected significantly on the reputation of Yemen, resulting in complete obliteration of the tourism and investment markets, rendering Yemen a failed state and hindering any possible progress and development in the country.

Yemenis have paid a heavy price. The regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh used the issue of terrorism as one of its political trump cards in search for international legitimacy to keep him in power on the Yemeni political scene for a long time. He further sought to exploit this trump card in order to bequeath his position to his

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resistance in Redaa. The use of US air power in support of the Houthis was under the guise of weak and subjective pretexts that claimed that the ranks of the popular resistance in Redaa included supporters of Al-Qaeda, a matter that was denied by the resistance at the time. Such a behavior by the Americans led to fueling anti-American sentiment and animosity among these tribes, which were on the defensive in the face of Sectarian Houthi militias.

son, whom he presented as a strong warrior against terrorism, and invested in the security approach by creating special anti-terrorism forces under the leadership of his sons and relatives. These forces are the elite combat units that engaged forcefully in cracking down on the peaceful youth revolution, and later, participated vigorously in the coup that toppled the state in Yemen in September 2014.

An objective and methodological approach to dealing with terrorism relies mainly on identifying the root causes of this phenomenon. Political authoritarianism comes at the top of these causes, followed by secondary factors that collectively contribute to producing, escalating, and perpetuating violence, including the strictly security approach to counter-terrorism, economic degradation, lack of development, weak and deteriorating education, in addition to the exploitation of ambiguous religious texts as a secondary and final factor that violent groups resort to in order to legitimize their violence against society.

# Terrorism in Egypt and the Crisis of Combatting It

*Ahmed Zaghloul Shalata*

Despite the declaration of war on terrorism in Egypt nearly three years ago and the Egyptian regime's implementation of various strategies to combat it, terrorist activity remains present in both Sinai and some inland areas of Egypt. This raises the question about the secret of the strength and resilience of terrorist groups and the continuity of their activities against the state. This paper seeks to answer this question by discussing the factors behind the resilience of these groups, the logistical and social dimensions that nurture them, analyzing the state's strategies in countering terrorist activity and their effectiveness, and discussing some of the ongoing changes witnessed in the structure of the Jihadi current. This paper argues that, despite the various strategies applied by the regime to combat terrorism, some of these strategies have been counter-productive, and have contributed to perpetuating the causes of violence, which paves the way for continued terrorist activity.

## Terrorist Activity in Egypt: The Motives Behind Terror's Endurance

> *«A masked group killed the officers, they had machine guns. Those of Da'esh's, I saw them put the flag on the red four-wheeled vehicle. Four of them came down and beat the officers and threatened the civilians. Not 20 minutes had passed before the killed the victims, stole their weapons, and fled to the hilly area. »*

This was the testimony of an eye witness[120] in the district of Helwan in southern Cairo on May 9th, 2016 after a shooting ambush carried out by a group of masked men against an unmarked minibus carrying plain-clothed police officers. The shooting attack lasted 20 minutes and left all the officers dead. The question remains: what is the secret of the strength, resilience, and steadiness of these groups? The answer is connected to the joining of forces of local and regional contexts that contribute in providing the raw materials for violent ideology, and give such organizations impetus and the ability to endure despite the measures taken against them, and even produce a diverse range of followers and sympathizers with this ideology.

In terms of "local factors," the domestic policies of the regime themselves in turn become a logistical incentive for terror groups, and provide ample opportunities to continue in their Jihadi/terrorist activities. These factors include:

### *Increased Public Inclination towards Organized Political Violence*

Successive political tensions in Egypt continue to feed the growing disposition towards violence as a tool of political resistance in the face of the ruling authorities and their "violations." These dispositions are reinforced by the

[120] See the report: www.elwatannews.com/news/details/1157450

practices of security services against detainees and the opposition, and the unprecedented use of the term "physical liquidation" in official government statements to refer to the victims of confrontations that are publicly announced.[121] Other symbolic tools exacerbate this inclination towards violence, such as the religious or social justifications for the concept of violence, as a result of ongoing practices that push towards widening the sphere of physical violence.

Such justifications stem from the diversity of those who adopt and sympathize with the concept of violence, whether Islamists or not, both of whom share in common the harm inflicted by security policies upon them at varying degrees, and the sense of collective injustice shared by large segments of the population.[122] These justifications have a vengeful dimension that provokes them to support or even join various violent groups or to form limited cells for specific goals.[123]

*The Coup against the Islamist Experience*

The domestic reactions after President Mohammed Morsi was deposed gave the "kiss of life" to Jihadi groups, who stressed that what took place was a war against Islam, and that Jihad against these "agencies" is the fundamental rule. The ousting of Morsi confirmed the view adopted by these groups of the futility of participating in the democratic process. Despite their rejection of the rule of Morsi and their *Takfir* of him for adopting democracy, neglecting to apply *Shari'a* law, not opening the door for Jihad to liberate Palestine etc., Jihadis, nevertheless, had a significant presence in the *Al-Nahda* and Rabi'a al-Adawiya protests against the coup, and contributed to carrying out a series of attacks against police and the army as a declaration of their rejection of the return of the repressive police state. As residents of border regions (such as Sinai), their convictions in such confrontations is that they "owned the right for reprisal" against police and state security agencies, and that the confrontations instigated them to send a strong message affirming that they will not allow for the return of

[121] The term "liquidation" first began to be used in official statements with the beginning of clashes between armed militants of the "*Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis – Wilayat Sinai*" and the Egyptian army on July 1st, 2015. An official announcement was made of "the liquidation of 13 members of the Muslim Brotherhood organization in an apartment in 6 October city." See the report on the incident: http://gate.ahram.org.eg/News/689384.aspx

[122] "Egypt's Rising Security Threat," The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy, November 15, 2015, pg. 14, http://timep.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Tahrir_Report_FINAL_WEB.pdf

[123] It is worth noting that the seeds of this political violence were planted and are a continuation to the state of violence that fed off political developments and tensions in Egypt since 2011, particularly since the events at Mohammed Mahmoud Street in November 2011, when rubber pellet rifles (known as *khartoush*) began to appear in the hands of protesters as a reaction to police violence. Live bullets were used against protesters at the Ministry of Defense and other protests. The political tensions during the rule of Mohamed Morsi also nurtured violent groups of various backgrounds and frames of reference, such as the Black Bloc and some traditional Jihadi groups. The violent religious discourse also added fuel to fire, reaching its peak with the rhetoric of Salafist preacher Mohammad Abd al-Maqsoud in the Conference for Supporting Syria in June 2013, and other cases of exchange of violence in streets and attacks motivated by "identity" in certain areas, etc. The discourse of violence further dominated with the Protest at Rabi'a al-Adawiya Square, and was exacerbated with the political developments following the ouster of Morsi, and the security measures in Sinai fueled the counter-violent situation and contributed to the turning of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis towards targeting civilians.

the police state, even if it leads to war.[124] All such tensions ultimately lead to provoking and invigorating the rejectionist mood, both in thought and action, whether in the spread of physical and symbolic violent ideology or through activist confrontations, both peaceful and violent ones.

*Other Factors*

The geographic factor also had an effect in facilitating the movement of violent groups. There are regions that facilitate – by virtue of their geographic characteristics – opportunities for Jihadis to expand and operate, giving them freedom in terms of movement, monitoring, supplies, concealment, hiding, and the entry and escape of perpetrators, as is the case in border regions in Sinai, in northern Egypt, or in the Western desert region, and nearby areas. This was evident in the operations carried out by these groups, such as targeting military recruits in Al-Wadi al-Jadid province and clashes with security forces in "Siwa," "Farafra," and the "Al-Zahir al-Sahrawi" regions of the provinces of Asyut and Bani Suef. The geographic factor is also linked to the facilitations provided by some border-region mafias, which *practically* control unofficial entry and exit movements. Such facilitations are offered in return for financial incentive rather than belief and conviction in the goal sought to be implemented by these groups.

Regional factors: Domestic developments in the "Arab Spring" countries also fueled Jihadi expansion in the region for various reasons, most notably:

- The intertwining of *al-Qaeda*'s official position with the "Arab Spring" revolutions, and its declaration that the two approaches are not contradictory, especially as *al-Qaeda*'s most prominent figures attempted to undertake "ideological adaptation" by circumventing *al-Qaeda*'s differences with the democratic revolutions in regards to methods of change, objectives, and so forth. *Al-Qaeda* also viewed the developments as a step in its favor, whereby hostile, Western-allied regimes were being overthrown. *Al-Qaeda* considered that the minimum gain is a better "chance" for its activities to reach its ultimate goal, as long as there is opportunity for Jihadi currents to stand out and operate.[125] However, this perspective was not the dominant one across the overall Jihadi current, which generally believes that the fundamental Jihadi ruling is that participating in the democratic process is futile, and maintains Jihad against these regimes as the only path.
- The success of the "Islamic State" organization (IS) in imposing its control over vast geographical areas to where it became a sort of a "state" and not just a Jihadi organization. IS also exhibited resilience in its ability to withstand the global coalition against it, and expanding according to a

[124] Ismail al-Iskandarani, *Al-Harb fi Sinai: Mukafahat Irhab am Tahawulat Istratijiya fi al-Ta'awun wa al-'Idaa'?*, [Lit. "The War in Sinai: Combating Terrorism or Strategic Transformations in Cooperation and Enmity?"], Political Analysis Series, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, January 2014, p. 15, http://www.dohainstitute.org/file/Get/6a4c3140-7acf-4115-9ad7-a73ba879671c.pdf

[125] Mohammad Abu Rumman, *Aydiuloujiat Al-Qa'eda wa Muhawalat "al-Takayyuf" ma'a al-Thawrat al-'Arabiya*, [Lit., "Al-Qaeda's Ideology and the Attempt to 'Acclimate' with Arab Revolutions"], *Al-Siyasa al-Douwaliya* (International Politics) Journal, No. 158, July 2011, (paraphrased).

dynamic, well-deliberated strategy and calculated, complex tactics that rely on solid structural and ideological foundations.[126] This constituted impetus for the growth of Jihadi ideology, whereby the "caliphate" is no longer a dream but has become a reality, prompting large numbers of young people to travel to join the "Jihad," whether from among followers of old and faded Jihadi groups (such as remnants of *Tanzim al-Jihad* or *Al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiya*),[127] or from the fluid overall Jihadi bloc. Some had initially traveled solely for relief work for a period of time, but eventually fluctuated between various armed groups and settled with one of them. Meanwhile, others from those who traveled were already influenced by Jihadi ideology while in Egypt.

- The fall of some Arab regimes and the consequent collapse of their militaries fueled the state of violence by increasing opportunities for the flow of arms into the country, especially Libya which remains the primary exporter of arms into Egypt. According to security statements, 80 percent of drugs and weapons that flood into Egypt comes from Libya.[128] Furthermore, internal conflicts in other countries contributed to creating momentum for Jihadi thought. Calls for Jihad against ruling regimes multiplied, contributed to creating a climate that allows for exercising "Jihad" on a wide scale, and in a formal way, especially amid the dissemination of material that documents the atrocities happening in countries such as Syria, Yemen, Mali, and elsewhere.

## The State and Its Counter-Terrorism Strategies

The strategies of the Egyptian regime in combatting violence and eliminating the targeting of military, police, and public facilities include the following dimensions:

On the **legal level**: The assassination of Attorney General Hisham Barakat on June 29th, 2015 prompted Egyptian authorities to swiftly issue the Anti-Terrorism Law,[129] which was passed on August 16th, 2015, as a supplement to the "Terrorist Entities Law"[130] of February 2015, which delineated the legal measures of dealing with terrorist entities and individuals, including legal restrictions against detainees and tougher court rulings against leaders of such entities, including death sentences and life imprisonment.

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[126] Hassan Abu Hanieh, *Al-Dawla al-Islamiya min Halab ila al-Mosul*, [Lit. "The Islamic State: From Aleppo to Mosul"], Altagreer, June 7th, 2015, http://www.all4syria.info/Archive/221115

[127] *Istishad 3 Masryieen Yantamouna ila al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiya fi Suriya*, [Lit., "Three Egyptians belonging to the *Al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiya* killed in Syria"], Al-Watan Newspaper, September 1, 2012, http://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/44184#.U_0YVtosTx4.facebook, Also, there was the death of the former head of the military wing of *Al-Jamaa'a*, Rifai Ahmad Taha, on April 9th, 2016 in an airstrike on his vehicle in Syria while he was on route to attempt to reconcile between Al-Nusra Front and Ahrar al-Sham groups, both of which are fighting the Syrian regime. See the report: http://goo.gl/Uvqgn7

[128] See the report on "Secrets of Smuggling and the Volume of Arms Trade in Egypt, 'Israeli' Weapons Stocks Flood Sinai, Celebrities Carry Arms to Defend themselves, People in Upper Egypt Cannot do without Weapons for Battles and Revenge," July 22nd, 2015,: http://goo.gl/W4SSXl

[129] See the text of the Anti-Terrorism Law: http://goo.gl/oYvjK8

[130] See the text of the Law on Terrorist Entities: http://www.elwatannews.com/news/details/605740

On the **political level**: The State declared the Muslim Brotherhood movement a terrorist organization, and restricted *Da'wa* and religious preaching on the overall Islamic current under the pretext of "drying up" the ideological sources of violence.

On the **religious level**, the regime sought to "nationalize" and institutionalize the religious sphere, under the pretext of warning of the dangers of Jihadi thought. Such efforts were carried out through the policies of the Ministry of Awqaf (religious endowments) towards administrators of the affairs of mosques. The efforts included propagandist "media" contributions by the official religious institutions through conferences organized by *al-Azhar* institution, and the state institutions' attempt to rival the "producers" and ideologues of Jihadi thought across social networking sites by creating two pages on Facebook under the names of "The 'Islamic State' (IS) under the microscope" and "The observatory of deviant and *Takfiri* religious edicts," in an effort to dismantle and refute the premises of extremist organizations.

On the **economic level**: the state put a freeze on the funds of some Islamic societies under the pretext of their association with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. The move aimed to "dry up" the sources of funding for any potential "terrorist" activities.

On the **media level**: the state propagated and stressed the responsibility of the Muslim Brotherhood for all violent groups and claimed that it operates them – based on the history of the Brotherhood with violence. This propaganda argued that, through these violent groups, the Muslim Brotherhood seeks to ensure the continuity of its popular bases and incubators for its activities. The state's rhetoric, however, evaded any mention of the independent branch of the "Islamic State" organization in Egypt (*Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis*), for various purposes, including:

1. Directing the political conflict in the regime's favor, to buttress its positions as the "savior" that removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power, and hence, it was the Brotherhood that provoked the regime to use violence in its confrontations, since the Brotherhood is a "terrorist" organization and its actions in the aftermath confirm the correctness of the regime's approach in dealing with it.
2. Recognizing the existence of an independent organization that has pledged allegiance to the "Islamic State", and has no relation to the Muslim Brotherhood, deprives the regime of a "domestic" source of power by virtue of it being the "savior/rescuer." For the regime to admit and recognize the "*Wilayat Sinai*" IS branch amounts to a political and security failure, especially since this entity emerged during the current regime's reign. Furthermore, such an admission would contradict the "image" that the regime has made for itself at the expense of the Muslim Brotherhood, which would consequently lead to a diminishment of the acceptance and support that the regime enjoys from the public.
3. The Egyptian regime's recognition of IS's Egypt branch may have other repercussions on the international level, considering that Egypt's participation in anti-IS measures has been confined to the political and religious spheres. Egypt's participation only extended to military engagement

when it launched airstrikes against IS strongholds in Libya after the organization killed 21 Coptic Christian Egyptians on February 16th, 2015, limiting its response to airstrikes under the pretext that the domestic conditions do not allow for deploying forces out of the country. If the regime were to recognize IS now, this would compel it to participate more strongly in the coalition and consequently widen the scope of the army's battles, and broaden the scope of cooperation in a manner that may push for alliances and arrangements that would yield internal complications.

On the **military level**: Egyptian security policies are the main force behind exhausting and straining the activities of Jihadi organizations, evident through various measures, including:

- Continuous targeting of Jihadi cells, such as the measures against what were known as the "*Wadi*" (Valley) cells, which led to diminishing their influence compared to earlier in 2013.
- Continuous security confrontations against leaderships to weaken the organizations, such as the killing of the leader of "*Ajnad Misr*" on April 5th, 2015 during confrontations with security forces, which subsequently weakened the organization's activities.
- Cutting logistical support for these groups by targeting their weapons stores in different locations.
- Efforts to infiltrate these organizations: despite some failed attempts – according to claims declared by IS's *Wilayat Sinai*[131] – yet there have been successes that were not given their due in the media. Security forces managed to pre-emptively strike the *Al-Murabitoun* movement (which was established by Hisham Ashmawi, the former head of the military wing of *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis*), in the movement's first – and last – operation (until the writing of this paper). The strike happened after members of the movement clashed with air and ground forces in Siwa Oasis in the western desert region near the Libyan border on August 13th, 2015, which resulted in downing two helicopters and the survival of Ashmawi, who reportedly returned wounded to Libya, and no information about him since then is known.[132]
- The diminishing strength of *Wilayat Sinai* in recent months, particularly since the major clashes in Sheikh Zuweid in early July 2015, which affected its activities on the operational and propaganda levels.

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[131] The "Islamic State's" branch (*Wilayah*) in Sinai published a video entitled "*Harb al-'Uqoul*" (The War of Minds), on June 8th, 2015, in which it emphasized the failure of Egyptian security forces to infiltrate the organization. The video reported two cases, one of a Sinai resident whose car was booby-trapped without his knowledge so that it would explode when passing through one of the ambushes set up by *Wilayat Sinai*. Another case is of a Salafist young man from Kafr Sheikh governorate who was "planted" as an infiltrator by the security forces, and was forced by the organization to dig his grave with his own hands before he was killed.

[132] For more information on these confrontations, see: Ismail al-Iskandarani, *Ma'arik fi Al-Sahraa al-Gharbiya.. Wa Najaat al-Matloub al-Awwal Amniyan*, [Lit. "Battles in the Western Desert.. and the Escape of the Most Wanted man"], Al-Modon electronic newspaper, August 14th, 2015, http://goo.gl/isjDWg

On the **operational level,** the IS Egyptian branch, *Wilayat Sinai*, has been weakened, which is evident in its inability to carry out significant operations inside Sinai since Apache helicopters and F-16 jets targeted its strongholds and inflicted significant damages and casualties that cannot be underestimated.

It has also been weakened on the **propaganda level**, where its recent publications[133] are a mere desire for media presence rather than actual physical presence, power and influence. The publications orbit in the framework of "media warfare" but without any new facts or events, as is evident in the absence of its documentation of the confrontations in Sheikh Zuweid compared to previous similar incidents.[134] Furthermore, recent publications have been much poorer in technical quality compared to previous ones, indicating that the organization has been losing its technical cadres.

## Did These Policies Succeed?

Despite the partial successes in dismantling some terror organizations and depleting them militarily during confrontations, however, combatting the phenomenon as a whole requires re-examination of these strategies in light of the continued terrorist threats and operations that result in casualties from among the police, army, and civilians. Re-examination should stem from observing the reality of the repercussions of these strategies on two levels: first, the status of the "Jihadi bloc" in light of the continuity of confrontations, and the second is related to the outcomes of the "tactical" state of affairs, particularly the tactical mobilization of the religious sphere, in light of the regime's mobilization of all its resources to nationalize and regulate the religious sphere in an effort to tighten the grip on Jihadi growth.

Despite the diversity of these strategies, we find that in some respects their results were counterproductive, leading instead to provoking and pushing towards supplying Jihadi groups with more followers and sympathizers, especially amid the greatly diverse and organizationally un-regulated Islamist current, and amid the growing numbers of people harmed by current political or security practices who may transform into real actors within these groups. This

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133 The weakening of the organization's propaganda and media influence is evident in its video publications entitled "*Sayd al-Murtadeen: Rad' al-Muwahideen li Hamalat al-Murtadeen*" [Lit., "Hunting the Apostates: The Unitarians' (believers in one God) Repelling of the Apostates' Campaigns"], (1 and 2), and another entitled "*Hassad al-Ajnad*" [Lit., "The Soldiers' Harvest"], on September 1st, 2015, which is the weakest video considering that it did not document anything new except for pictures previously published by the organization, which were dull and weak. The video focused on previous operations that targeted soldiers, and was keen to highlight the presence of a social incubator and host, showing children welcoming members of the organization as they returned from operations, however, there are facts that refute this. Other scenes portrayed in the video included the killing of a resident of Sheikh Zuweid who refused to allow armed groups into his home in the beginning of the operations there, and members ascending to the roof of the house to attack a nearby facility.

134 For example, the detailed documenting of the attack on a checkpoint in Karm al-Qawadis on October 24th, 2014, showing details of the attacks, casualties, and weapons seized by the organization. The video, published by *Wilayat Sinai* on July 3rd, 2015 is entitled *Ghazwat al-Sheikh Abu Suhaib al-Ansari* [Lit., "The Battle of Sheikh Abu Suhaib al-Ansari"].

may even transform the outcomes of domestic and regional political contexts into real physical and material, and even symbolic resources for the Jihadi movement.

The steadiness of the "Islamic State" organization's operational and propaganda activities reflects two realities: first, that the organization enjoys two geographic spheres, one is in the real "practical" geography, situated in Iraq and Syria, where it has varied and sophisticated heavy weaponry and has operational control via cadres and cells that reinforce it directly and across borders (and in turn, these cells receive IS's material and moral support). This allowed it to branch out and expand into territories in other countries such as southern Yemen, Libya, Egypt's Sinai, Somalia, northeastern Nigeria, and Pakistan. The second geographical sphere is "virtual," represented in the massive fluid bloc that backs it in regions it does not control or is unable to reach. Through this internet-enabled expansion, it can reach various parts of the world that are inaccessible to it through weapons and physical reach. IS has cunningly used various social networking outlets to recruit new members and penetrate into the minds of youth in Western countries. It has also been successful in rivaling *al-Qaeda* and rallying the fluid Jihadi bloc behind it, especially because it represents the practical experience of Jihadi ideology in the consciousness of these young people.

The second reality indicates that the organization does not only rely on ideologies and deep conviction in religious texts as much as it relies immensely in its practices on "reactionary" policies, all the while, it remains keen to play up the solid religious grounds for its practices.

IS's practical and virtual expansion and the growing support it enjoys reflect an actual crisis being experienced by the "fluid Jihadi bloc,"[135] which roams between its theoretical ideas and the possible reality of actualizing these ideas. The general Jihadi scene manifests two main characteristics: first, the *absence of centralized organization*, whereby the fluid Jihadi bloc, which remains the largest in terms of numbers, tries to identify with its surroundings while slowly expanding, adopting complex strategies in choosing those targeted for recruitment and testing them afterwards. This does not negate that there are organized groups from within this fluid Jihadi current, which adopted a more clustered non-hierarchical structure – for security reasons – and operates on the model of small cells. Some of these groups formed alliances and organizations in particular political contexts and with different objectives, which tend to wilt with the fading of its purposes or weaken with the withdrawal of its constituents.

The second characteristic is manifested in the *absence of an integrated and comprehensive vision towards the aspired political project*. As previously mentioned, this bloc has suffered several crises; starting with the outcomes of the 2011 revolutionary movements, which overthrew and changed Arab regimes "peacefully" in a manner that underscored the ineffectiveness of the traditional Jihadi thought when it comes to "change." This was manifested in *al-Qaeda*'s

[135] The "fluid" Jihadi bloc is the one not subject to or belonging to any organization, but rather is an ideological bloc – or spectrum – that adopts the principle of the necessity of Jihad, and is the closest to logistical support for any activist group. It also represents the first and "theoretical" phase that precedes the "movement" or organizational phase through which it seeks to actualize its ideas and practically implement them.

keenness to affirm and expand its symbolic control over the fluid Jihadi bloc by encompassing the principle of peaceful revolutionary surge, as delineated in the collection of letters by its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, entitled "Messages of Hope and Glad Tidings to Our People in Egypt" in the first half of 2011. At this early stage, the loyalty of most Jihadis – whether material or symbolic – was to *al-Qaeda*. But in a later stage, the experience of the political rise of Islamists, their ascension to power, and the subsequent coup against them and the ongoing conflicts that ensued, provoked and fueled the violent and *Takfiri* temperament among broad segments of Islamists.

The absence of a *project* and a structural *model* are old features that did not seem to create any tangible or manifest crisis in the past as it has in the last few years. The fluid Jihadi bloc has been experiencing a real conflict, much clearer than before, related to the search for the "model" to emulate. After it had reached a consensus on the symbolic role of *al-Qaeda*, this consensus shattered with the defection of what came to be known as the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (ISIS, or Da'esh according to its Arabic acronyms), which later became the "Islamic State" Caliphate. The schism was exacerbated with the rivalry between the two camps in polarizing and recruiting, resulting in a real crisis within fluid Jihadi circles. Jihadis were in a dilemma; between the model that has been achieved with the establishment of the "Caliphate State," and the uncontrolled practices of this group, especially the obliteration of those who disagree with it, in addition to its internal strife with *Jabhat al-Nusra*. Nevertheless, these developments do not seem to have an effect on reducing the *Takfiri* momentum that continues to grow and attract new supporters. There are varying perceptions and frames of references regarding the strategies of change between Jihadi groups, on the one hand, and political Islamism groups – the majority of which have taken a decisive position towards *Takfir* – on the other hand. Yet the reality of the situation indicates that there are wide grey areas between the two groups; especially that these groups are – in principle – ideological in nature and adopt intellectual and ideological causes that are reflected in each group's activism and practices.

Returning to the **tactical** strategy of the state in Egypt concerning religious affairs, we find that the practices of the "official" religious establishment tend to be primarily propaganda-oriented, geared towards the outside rather than "practical" practices that achieve tangible results on the ground. This propaganda approach is evident in two dimensions:

**First**, *the policy of conducting conferences and official reports and statements*; *al-Azhar* institution organized an international conference for combatting terrorism and extremism (on December 3rd and 4th, 2014), attended by numerous Muslim and Christian religious figures from around the world, aimed at discussing means to confront this phenomenon. Despite its symbolic purpose, the conference in fact reflected negatively on *al-Azhar*, whose Grand Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyib rejected the *Takfir* of the "Islamic State" organization, stressing instead the "impermissibility of *Takfir* of any Muslim regardless of their sins." This came in the wake of media attention to the Nigeria's Grand Mufti's *Takfir* of IS during his speech at the conference. This position may be analyzed on two levels:

***Religiously*:** The position taken by *al-Azhar* institution, considering its religious esteem, stems from fears of the repercussions of opening the door of *Takfir*,

which may spill over to the domestic Egyptian scene between the various segments of society and threaten the security of society and the state.

***Politically*:** Opponents of the Grand Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyib and other Islamist currents characterize this position as either:

a) Dissolving of responsibility; from the perspective of national interest, considering that acknowledging the *Takfir* of such groups would serve IS supporters and sympathizers, and would lay the responsibility of the outbreak of terrorism and growth of fundamentalist movements on *al-Azhar*, indirectly at the least, or;

b) Hesitant; in terms of Al-Tayyib's unwillingness to clash with the general orientations of the regime, in addition to his desire to avoid further attacks against him for his continuous subservience to the "secular" regimes.

This propaganda level also saw a declaration issued by the Ministry of *Awqaf* entitled "The Egyptian Letter to Renounce Violence and Extremism." The Minister of *Awqaf* seeks to pass this letter in an official manner to the Egyptian Foreign Ministry to be presented to the UN Security Council, considering that Egypt currently heads the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee.[136]

The **second** *level of these practices is the reliance of the religious establishment on initiatives and campaigns*: Less than a week after the November 2015 Paris attacks, the Egyptian *Dar al-Iftaa'* (Religious Edicts Department) announced a new universal initiative, entitled "Do Not Talk in Our Name" aimed at countering islamophobia and addressing non-Arabs around the world. The initiative focuses on highlighting facts about Islam in various languages, including English, French, German, and Spanish, and seeks to expose the ideological foundations of *Takfiri* groups. The initiative comes after 9 previous ones undertaken by *al-Azhar*, the Ministry of *Awqaf*, and the *Dar al-Iftaa'* itself, which perhaps undertakes the largest efforts in this area. The department had issued the magazine "*Insight*" in English to counter the "Islamic State's" *Dabiq* magazine. It also issued an "Observatory" to monitor *Takfiri* practices in March 2014, in addition to its attempt to compete with productions of Jihadi ideology on social networking sites by creating two Facebook pages "The 'Islamic State' [IS] under the microscope" and the "The observatory of deviant and *Takfiri* religious edicts," in an effort to dismantle and refute the premises of extremist organizations.[137]

The State's religious establishment's efforts in refuting Jihadi and *Takfiri* discourse of both the "solid" and the "fluid" Islamist blocs remain far from producing real impact, especially considering that this religious establishment has a negative image in the consciousness of Islamists in general, which hampers the roles it is expected to assume. This negative perception stems from the following issues:

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[136] See report on the conference and document, http://goo.gl/2EYSz3. It is worth noting here that the activities of the Ministry of *Awqaf* come in part of its rivalry with *al-Azhar* clerics over who is more qualified and who does their duty more effectively in regards to countering *Takfir*. This rivalry comes as a result of the unprecedented practices of the two institutions in the post-July 3rd, 2013 era, a rivalry that never existed before in the history of their relationship.

[137] Ahmad Zaghloul Shalata and Mustafa Hashim, *Fi Tafkik Da'esh*, [Lit. "In Dismantling Da'esh (The Islamic State organization)"], unpublished analysis, November 2015.

- *Al-Azhar* represents the authoritative official regime in the consciousness of Islamists, and thus, there are continued reservations against accepting it as a religious frame of reference, and there are continued desires to rival its religious role.
- There are differences in approach and school of thought; Islamists tend to predominantly adopt the Salafist approach, to varying degrees, whereas *al-Azhar* has adopted Ash'arism in the modern era, which increases the differences between the two camps.
- *Al-Azhar*'s clerics are viewed to be in constant "closeness" to ruling regimes, and they continue to attempt to embellish the regimes' practices, in addition to the clerics' unrelenting negative positions towards the Islamist current.

## Conclusion

The previous review of the strategies adopted during the past three years, in which the Egyptian state declared a comprehensive war against terrorism, reveals the failure of these strategies in effectively countering terrorism whether by eliminating the existing groups or addressing the causes of violence in society. The military confrontations, despite limited successes, have not been able to practically accomplish any more than exhausting and weakening Jihadi organizations by cutting supply lines and eliminating leaders and members of these groups, but have not been able to completely eradicate these groups, or eliminate their negative short and medium-term repercussions; for two reasons:

**Firstly,** the fight against terrorism is not a military battle, but a security and intelligence battle. Therefore, the most important role is that of police forces in coordination with the intelligence apparatus, especially that these forces possesses the flexibility and experience in dealing with the "gang warfare" that terrorist organizations wage, and are able to engage in confrontations in residential and urban areas without significant losses. The army, on the other hand, does not have adequate flexibility for such confrontations, considering that its combat doctrine is limited to protecting the borders of the country, and does not include counter-terrorism activities.[138] This incompatibility would be reflected in the severity of confrontations, which would in turn have significant negative impact on the people living in confrontation areas.[139]

**Secondly,** leaders of some Jihadi organizations have extensive military experience, considering that many of them were former army officers. This further complicates the army's operations since opponents would be familiar with the tactics of the army's movements and operations.

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[138] On the issue of changing the Egyptian army's combat doctrine and the related regional and international contexts, see: Mohammad Al-Minshawi, *Al-Aqida al-Qitaliya li al-Jaysh wa Khilaf al-Qahira - Washington*, [Lit., "The Army's Combat Doctrine and the Cairo-Washington Dispute"], Shorouk News, May 5th, 2014, http://www.shorouknews.com/columns/view.aspx?cdate=05052014&id=baac8537-855c-4e3e-bc63-9d9a826c7e77

[139] For example, the "Massacre of the Habedi Family" in Sinai on November 11th, 2015 reflects the implications of the militarization of confrontations with terror groups on society and the negative effects resulting from that. As a result of an errant missile by the army, the family's house turned into complete rubble and 13 people were killed. See: http://goo.gl/n8nUdh

These organizations also derive factors for their survival from the surrounding community. For example, political, security, or legal practices against political factions, human rights organizations, and civil society fuel the state of violence already enflamed in society, and fan the anger among the people towards the security forces. This prompts the need for revision, evaluation, and reconsideration of the adopted strategies from a multi-dimensional aspect, where the political, security, and social elements are integrated and interlinked in light of the following:

First, **addressing the predisposing conditions for terrorism** by eliminating the factors that allow for the creation of social incubators of violence, which is done through:

1. Political reconciliation with the opposition, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, in order to prevent segments of the movement from adopting violence in retaliation to what is happening to the movement and its leadership.

2. Review of the legal situation of detainees, including releasing individuals who were not involved in any particular cases, especially in light of human rights groups' confirming that authorities practice pretrial (preventive) detention as a political punishment rather than a precautionary measure.[140] Also, the need to reconsider the politically motivated sentences imposed on Islamists and opposition leaders, which include long prison sentences or the death penalty.

3. Re-evaluation of existing security strategies, particularly in Sinai and elsewhere, and accountability of members of the security forces (both army and police) to prevent instigating facilitating factors for the creation of social incubators of violence.[141]

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[140] According to a report issued by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights entitled "Detention without End," there are at least 1,464 people held in Egyptian prisons with pending trial, whose arrests have exceeded the legal limit, in violation of Article 143 of the Code of Criminal Procedures, which sets a ceiling on pretrial detention from 18 months to 2 years in criminal cases. See the report: http://www.eipr.org/en/pressrelease/2016/05/10/2600
Furthermore, a report by Amnesty International for 2015-2016 reveals that security forces arrested 11,877 members of "terrorist groups" during the period between January and the end of September 2015, according to the Assistant Minister for Public Security at the Ministry of the Interior. The crackdown was thought to include members and perceived supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood and other government critics. The authorities had previously stated that they had arrested at least 22,000 people on such grounds in 2014. In some cases, detainees in political cases were held in prolonged detention without charge or trial. By the end of the year, at least 700 people had been held in preventive detention for more than two years without being sentenced by a court, in contravention of the two-year limit on such detention in Egyptian law. Student Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed Hussein remained detained without charge or trial for more than 700 days after his arrest in January 2014 for wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "Nation without torture". See the Amnesty International Report 2015/2016: The State of the World's Human Rights, pg. 147, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2016/02/annual-report-201516/

[141] Reports indicate some negative practices by security forces, such as provocations, harassments, long waits, and sometimes violence, not to mention the obstruction of food and vegetables to the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid at army checkpoints such as the Al-Reesa land checkpoint on the outskirts of El-Arish city. See: *Kama'in al-Jaysh al-Masri Tastafiz Nisaa'*

Second, **opening a civil dialogue on the reintegration of Islamists who were not involved in acts of violence into society.** The continued marginalization of the Islamist current from public life further deepens the identity crisis afflicting them, which reflects negatively in their actions (as is the case with Islamists in Europe, whose identity crisis led them to join the "Islamic State" organization, a model that allows them to practice "Islam"). All this lies in favor of the Jihadi discourse, which perpetually affirms to Islamists that the conflict revolves around the "Islamist presence," and that it is not necessarily a political conflict. Constrictions against the overall Islamist current nurture *Takfiri* thoughts and practices, which in turn poses a major threat to society, especially with the large popular base of the Islamist current, estimated at nearly 10 million (according to the volume of voting by the Islamist current in the 2011 Parliamentary elections).

Considering the reservations addressed in this paper regarding the performance of the state's religious establishment, it is necessary to engage Islamist currents that are qualified and proficient in intellectually debating issues of *Takfir*, as the effectiveness of such intellectual confrontations varies according to the level and competence of those participating in them, and depends on various methods including sermons, lessons, studies of the principles and regulations of *Takfir* and jurisprudential issues relating to the excuses of ignorance, lack of rulership etc.. The examples of two precedents that achieved success at varying levels in the past strengthen the chances of success of such an endeavor today. The first was the debates carried out with *Takfiri* groups in the 1970s and 1980s. Debating Islamist currents relied on "evidence," and as long as the debaters are adept in their methods of dialogue, they are able to convince their opponents to accept what they say.

The other example appeared in the 1990s, with several attempts by clerics and intellectuals – not affiliated with the official religious establishment – most notably Mohammed Mitwalli al-Shaarawi, Mohammed al-Ghazali, and Mohammed Salim al-Awwa, to mediate between the government and *Al-Jamaa'a al-Islamiya* group, which later resulted in intellectual and ideological revisions in which the movement renounced violence. This practical adeptness is available in two categories within the Islamist currents: the scholarly (scientific) Salafist current, with its two branches, the "organizational" represented in *Al-Da'wa al-Salafiya* (Salafist preaching) movement, and the "non-organizational" represented in independent Salafist sheikhs, including Mustafa al-Adwi, Mohammed Hassan, Abu Ishaq al-Heweni, and others, and Salafist sheikhs from the *Madhkhaliyya* Salafism trend, most notably Mohammed Saeed Raslan.

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*Sinai*, [Lit., "Egyptian Army Checkpoints Provoke Women of Sinai"], Al-Jazeera, March 23rd, 2016, available on the following link: http://goo.gl/FVnwXY Such incidents are exploited by terrorist organizations to create social incubators for themselves; as a result of the security practices towards the women of Sinai at the Al-Reesa checkpoint, the "Islamic State's" Sinai branch (Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis) targeted a security checkpoint in Al-Safa region in southern El-Arish with a car bomb on March 19th, 2016, killing 18 security officers. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis indicated in its statement that the attack came in response to the "inspection of Muslim women and their humiliation at checkpoints." See the report: http://goo.gl/48wHFh

Third, **encouraging the involvement of civil society in the confrontations**: there is the need to provide opportunities to civil society organizations to work without restrictions and limitations,[142] and the need for these organizations to contribute to formulating counter-terrorism strategies.

[142] For examples of such restrictions, see: *Al-Mujtama' al-Madani fi Misr bayna 40 Alf Munazama aw la Shay' Ghadan*, also in English, entitled "Egypt: 40,000 NGOs or No NGO," Human Rights Monitor,: http://humanrights-monitor.org/Posts/ViewLocale/3108#.V5smOo-cE2w
It is also worth mentioning that in March 2016, the issue of "foreign funding" resurfaced days after the European Parliament issued a statement on the death of an Italian student in Egypt and on the state of human rights and restrictions on human rights organizations operating in Egypt. For further details, see: "*Ihiyaa 'al-Qadiya 173' bi Sha'n al-Tamweel al-Ajnabi Irhab li al-Mujtama' al-Madani*, [Lit., "Reviving Case 173 Regarding Foreign Funding: Terrorizing Civil Society"], http://humanrights-monitor.org/Posts/ViewLocale/24611#.V5smmo-cE2x, see also: http://albedaiah.com/news/2016/03/17/109135

# Jordan's Approach to Counter-Extremism

*Hussain al-Rawashdeh*

Since the end of June 2014, when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the creation of the "Islamic State" and proclaimed himself Caliph of all Muslims, questions continue to arise: where did this organization come from? What is the truth behind it? How has it managed to spread and expand so rapidly? What are the ideological and social incubators that enabled this organization to rise? What are the networks of relations that link it to its surroundings? What are its objectives? And, what is the conceivable fate of this organization?

Answers to such questions were a mixture of truths and delusions. Some think, under the impact of coincidence and surprise, that what has been taking place is a foreign plot aimed at embedding a functional entity that would break up the Arab world and plunge it into chaos. This perspective tends to accuse the West and some major powers in the region of being partners in the plot. On the other hand, there are others who see the "Islamic State" organization (IS, commonly dubbed as "Da'esh") as the real and legitimate "child" of the Arab World, and consider the Arabs are responsible for its birth. This perspective finds that IS emerged from a dire political and social context, and is the natural result of centuries worth of oppression and tyranny that has exploded in a moment, bringing about this "monster."

Jordan has not been spared this charged atmosphere of extremism, violence and terror. Nearly ten years before the "birth" of IS, in October 2005, Jordan's capital Amman witnessed three terror bombings that targeted hotels, killing 57 and injuring 115. The attacks were claimed by *al-Qaeda in Iraq*, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi – the "mother" organization from which IS emerged. Moreover, Jordan's memory is laden with marks of terror activities, beginning with Jaysh Muhammad (1991), the Afghan Jordanians (1994), the *Al-Islah wa al-Tahaddi* organization (1997), the assassination of US diplomat Laurence Foley (2002), the Jayyousi cell (2004), down to the Irbid terrorist operation (2016), in which a Jordanian officer was killed.

Jordan found itself face to face with the "Islamic State", an entity that has stretched its boundaries in Iraq and expanded into Syria, passing through Deir ez-Zour, Al-Raqqa, and reaching northern Aleppo and northern Idlib. In Iraq, IS expanded into Mosul and the Anbar province, where the town of Ar-Rutbah is only 70 kilometers away from the Jordanian border. IS has stretched into territories over 181 kilometers along the Jordanian borders with Iraq, and about 370 kilometers along the Jordanian borders with Syria.

For Jordan, the sources of concern from the threat of IS are not only the question of history, which has left a "footprint" of terrorism in the minds of Jordanians, nor only the question of geography, where the kingdom lies alongside the "Caliphate State," but also an array of other interrelated concerns, including Jordan's participation in the international coalition against terrorism, Jordan's alliance with the United States and most Western countries against terrorism, and the threat of the spread of terrorist and extremist thought especially after

nearly 2,500 fighters from the Jihadi Salafist current in Jordan joined the ranks of IS and *Jabhat al-Nusra*. There are nearly 7,000 affiliates of the Jihadi Salafist current in Jordan, who may at any moment become a "social incubator" for IS inside the kingdom, in addition to the presence of renowned Jihadi Salafist ideologues within Jordan, such as Omar Mahmoud (Abu Qutada al-Filastini) and Muhammad al-Maqdisi, among others. Despite having espoused positions that are in opposition to IS's practices, these ideologues nonetheless consider themselves "mentors" of Al-Baghdadi and his followers.

The answer to the question of whether the "Islamic State" poses a threat to Jordan was determined from the onset. Yet, the Jordanian approach to understanding the "phenomenon" of IS, firstly, and in determining how to confront it, secondly, needed more time for clarification. Perhaps the incident of IS's burning alive of Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbah, in January 2015, amounted to a turning point in Jordan's official and popular position towards the war against the organization. This heinous incident indeed provided the necessary legitimacy for this war on all levels.

This paper seeks to understand the Jordanian approach to fighting extremism and terrorism, specifically in the model posed by IS. In Jordan's approach, the military, security, political, and religious contexts intertwine, and the economic and social contexts intertwine with the legislative as well.

To grasp this approach, first we must understand what took place, and why, with respect to the general atmosphere and the historical moment in which IS emerged as a terrorist organization in Iraq and Syria, and also in regards to the reasons and factors that produced this organization and enabled it to expand and spread. Furthermore, we need to grasp the political, religious, and social interpretations that IS relied on to gain sympathizers and believers in its "idea."

## The King's Speeches

Here we can build on the approach presented by King Abdullah II in his speeches that dealt with the problem of extremism and terrorism, which helps shed light on the Jordanian approach to counter the extremism that the kingdom believes is a threat, both in terms of IS as an organization or as an ideology.

The King believes that it is not possible to tackle the threat of terrorism "in a vacuum," for a world that allows the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to move further away from a two-state solution is a world that fuels extremists' recruitment. The King also sees links between extremism and terrorism, on the one hand, and the core issues that constitute key sources of such these 'isms,' on the other hand. He states: "Winning hearts and minds remains a big challenge, as this will also require, in the longer and medium terms, dealing with fundamental issues related to good governance, poverty, youth, job creation, and education." (From King Abdullah's speech at the UN Leaders' Summit hosted by US President Barack Obama on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in New York, September 29, 2015).

In other speeches, the King also links extremism and terrorism to political violence, and to globalization as well. He states: "We are all at risk of being victims of further violence resulting from ideologies of terror and hatred… The

choice is ours: an open world full of promise, progress and justice for all; or a closed world of divided peoples." (King Abdullah's speech before the US Congress, March 7, 2007).

The King also believes that the war on extremism and terrorism is a war within the circle of Islam. He states: "It is a war that we Muslims are fighting in defense of our religion and higher moral values against terror groups that have no connection with Islam." (King Abdullah speech at Sharm el-Sheikh conference, 2014). But this war, in the King's view, must garner international consensus if the goal is to win it. He states: "Jordan has worked actively with the global community for a comprehensive approach to the challenges that terrorist groups pose today. I have said from the outset that we are fighting a war within Islam against the outlaws of Islam, the *Khawarej*. Yet, as is painfully seen, these terrorists and outlaws threaten the entire world. They spare no peoples; they respect no boundaries, moral or geographic… This is a war we have to fight, and win, as a united global community. Our efforts must be framed within a broader strategy of military, diplomatic, and human development policies. (King Abdullah speech at the MED 2015 – Mediterranean Dialogues Conference in Rome, Italy, December 10, 2015).

In the context of countering extremism and terrorism, the King focuses on two main dimensions: the intellectual dimension, which requires security coordination and exchange of information on an international level; and the media dimension, related to the communications revolution and social networking sites, in particular. The King states: "I spoke here of the need for a 'coalition of the determined', and indeed this has transpired… While the battles may be fought on the ground – and by the population that is most affected – this war can only be won on the ideological plane." (King Abdullah's speech at the leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in New York, September 29, 2015). On the media dimension, the King says in the same speech: "Another challenge we still need to address more effectively is the battleground in cyber space. We know the "Islamic State" is replenishing its ranks by targeting and luring potential members worldwide through social media."

## The Paths of Jordan's Approach

The King's approach towards extremism and terrorism is not necessarily new, or related particularly to the "outlaws of Islam" or "*Khawarej*," which is the description he gave of IS. The King had previously, in November 2004, launched the "Amman Message," which is a statement aimed at correcting the image of Islam, and expressing the religion's position towards contemporary issues, particularly the issue of terrorism. Jordan also sponsored the launch of the subsequent three-point declaration, signed by 300 Islamic scholars in an international convention held in Amman in 2005, as a supplement to the Amman Message, which defined: who is a Muslim, whether excommunication from Islam (*Takfir*) is permissible, and the stipulations related to issuing religious edicts (*Fatawa*).

Furthermore, Jordan later issued an open letter in October 2006, entitled "A Common Word" adopted by 138 Muslim scholars, addressed to leaders of the Christian religion, aimed at clarifying Islam's true teachings, especially those

related to Islam's position towards followers of other faiths, Christianity in particular. Another open letter, signed by 126 Islamic scholars, was issued to respond to the "Islamic State" leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, and includes 24 points of refutation of the actions and ideology of IS.

The above measures may be interpreted within the context of a "preemptive" approach to rebut the thought of terror organizations. However, and with the rise of IS and the spread of its threat, Jordan came to face a challenge that requires a broader and more comprehensive approach. This approach depended on two tactics:

- *Confrontation abroad (military and security deterrence)*: aimed at targeting the organization, inflicting losses on it, and preventing it from reaching the Jordanian borders or penetrating the internal front.

- *Internal containment*: targeting the idea and thought of the organization, which has become an attractive one, and targeting sympathizers using both security and intellectual means. In addition, this tactic also exploits and utilizes the differences and disagreements within the Jihadi-Salafist current in the country in order to counter the organization.

In a report prepared by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan in 2015 on Jordan and its position on the wars in Syria and Iraq, a recommendation was made highlighting the "need to expand and develop the concept of security, and the need for integrating the cultural, political, and economic dimensions into the concept of security." The report also pointed to the danger of "the absence of a political strategy to defeat this organization, because the roots of the problem are necessarily political."

In this context, and according to a document leaked by the Ministry of the Interior, the Jordanian approach to countering terrorism has been formulated on three levels:

*The domestic level*: includes preventive measures on the security, intellectual, and educational levels to prevent the spread of extremist thought and to eradicate its roots, in parallel with conducting dialogues and meetings to refute extremist thought and spread moderate thought instead. This comes in an effort to educate society and protect it against extremism. In addition, the plans include implementing programs for training preachers and imams, and rehabilitation of individuals who have returned to Jordan from fighting with terrorist organizations, and attempting to integrate them back into society.

Domestically, there is also the "National Counter-Extremism Strategy," which was prepared by the government in 2015, but the contents of which were not disclosed. The strategy included a "plan" to distribute roles and tasks between official state institutions. Other measures on the domestic level include a report prepared by committees formed by the Scientific Research Fund to prepare recommendations on religious, educational, and media reforms. Also, legislations were enacted related to countering extremism and terrorism, most important of which is the Anti-Terrorism Law, passed in June 2014, which widened the definition of terrorism to include crimes of electronic publishing, and increased

punishments for supporters and sympathizers of terrorist acts. Furthermore, Jordan enhanced its security efforts to curb "hotbeds" of terrorism and prosecute those involved in them.

*The regional level*: According to the Interior Ministry document, the regional level in countering terrorism has been limited to protecting the borders from infiltration of fighters to and from Jordan.

*The international level* relates to Jordan's participation in the international coalition against terrorism and its cooperation with countries around the world to prevent its spread.

The same document refers to three areas of this confrontation: 1) confronting extremist ideology; 2) promoting social cohesion; and 3) building flexibility within Jordanian society.

Through its security approach to confronting extremism and terrorism, Jordan has managed to maintain security and stability in the midst of fiery regional surroundings. Jordan has also been able to prevent the infiltration of militants across its borders and their ability to form cells within the country. Furthermore, it has effectively exploited and utilized the differences and disagreements within the Jihadi Salafist current in an effort to crack down on the "idea" of IS, and the organization itself, simultaneously.

Yet, what about the intellectual level, which the King himself considered the main "battleground in which we should win"?

## Another Reading

Perhaps another reading is necessary here, in order to understand what is taking place in the Arab world, down to the emergence of the IS "monster." Such an understanding would help develop the necessary approach to confronting extremism and terrorism, which indisputably constitutes a grave and imminent danger to Jordan, and to others in the region and throughout the world.

What happened in the Arab world may be summarized in a few words, namely: "our history has exploded!" Simply put, all the confinements and tensions that have accumulated during the Arab historical experience has transformed into colossal abscesses. Whether they were caused by political disappointments, religious wounds, cultural wretchedness, or civilizational backwardness, they nevertheless reached the point of explosion as a result of pressure, oppression, injustice, and hopelessness. The accumulated abscesses gushed out all they contained of blood, toxins, and lesions to the point that the unnervingly chilling images we see today are nothing but a natural outcome of a long phase of enduring and suffering, coupled with despair and deep sense of injustice, and the consequent attempts to escape at any cost, even if that cost is "suicide."

As with any explosion that happens in nature, the Arab world found itself before a "catastrophe," the likes of which it had never experienced in its modern history. And; in the midst of disappointment and despair from the outcome of the Arab Awakening, and the shocking images of killing and repression, the so-called "Islamic State" emerged in its beastly dystopic form, as if it were the raw answer to the question of the colossal "explosion" that has bewildered us.

The attempts to understand what has been taking place in the Arab world leads to three areas that sum up the reality of current conditions: the first is the field of politics, which has failed to build a state and a society on the basis of citizenship, justice, and democracy, and failed in creating a vital connection with the world and our contemporary times on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. The second area is religion, which has been turned – at the hands of some preachers and theologians – into a servant for politics or a follower of it, or in some instances became a dagger in the hands of the marginalized, oppressed, and the insane. Those who transformed the spirit of religion have done so with the help of jurisprudential rulings and edicts that are no longer fit for use. The third area that sheds light on contemporary reality is that of history, where we rummaged into its waste, knowingly or not, only for it to explode in our faces with all that it holds of fuel for conflict between sects and denominations, and of the strife of victimization, governance, and idolization of special figures and personages.

From here came the idea of terrorism in its newest version, represented by the "Islamic State". It was not a coincidence that this idea, which transformed into a fierce organization with an actual "state" on the ground, came within two time-based contexts. The first is the deterioration of the "Arab Awakening": this time context saw the demise of mass protests and demonstrations, which had dreamt of "change", called for freedom, justice, and dignity – movements that in most Arab countries, which experienced them culminated in military rules or outright wars. It was evident that the tools of the conflict between the various players came in the form of sectarianism and dividing the land, and that regional powers interfered to expand the sphere of their influence and gains. Meanwhile, major powers were not far behind in jumping on the bandwagon, whether directly or by proxy instruments in the region. Hence, the Arab world found itself before complex and overlapping equations, and new grievances, the most prominent of which is that of "Sunni victimization." IS was indeed a part of the scene, but soon became the key player in it.

The other context is the passage of one hundred years since the start of World War I (June 28, 1914), which is the same date on which Al-Baghdadi proclaimed the establishment of the Caliphate State. The Arab memory still recalls to this date the calamities that befell the Arab *Ummah*: The fall of the Ottoman caliphate, the Balfour Declaration granting Jews a state in Palestine, the Sykes-Picot redivision of the Arab region, and so forth.

This gives rise to the question of whether these two temporal contexts – the collapse of the Arab awakening, and the crushing of the Arab dream 100 years ago – have any bearing on the current "revelation" of the Arab "self"? Is the "Islamic State" an expression of this revelation, with its savage reactions not only against the "other" (who played a role in this current catastrophe), but also against the Arab "self" as well?

The advent of the "Islamic State" did not come as a surprise. The organization and its thought belong to what came to be dubbed as the "third generation" of global Jihadism. This generation began with the *Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra* (Excommunication and Exodus) groups, and later *al-Qaeda*, until 2004 when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi established the *Al-Tawhid wa al-Jihad* organization in Iraq,

which later called itself *al-Qaeda* in the Lands of Mesopotamia (*al-Qaeda in Iraq*, AQI). After Al-Zarqawi was killed in 2006, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir was elected to lead the organization until 2010, when Abu Omar al-Baghdadi formed the "Islamic State of Iraq" (ISI). After Abu Hamza and Abu Omar were both killed together, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi emerged in 2010, but by then the organization had been on the retreat as a result of the tribal *Sahawat* (Awakenings) formed by Sunni Iraqis. This "generation" of Jihadis re-emerged strongly in 2014, when Al-Baghdadi announced the establishment of the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (ISIS or ISIL), after it had previously taken over Syrian regions, including Al-Raqqa and Khan Assal in 2013. This culminated in IS's shocking takeover of Mosul and the complete retreat of the Iraqi military towards the end of 2014.

These beginning, the birth pangs of the advent of the "Islamic State", were awaiting the prime moment for a historic explosion, which indeed soon took place. Hence, the "Islamic State's" terror is the result rather than the cause. Terrorism is a reflection of the conditions of each society, and is commensurate with these conditions. On the other hand, the "savagery" of terrorism also corresponds to some degree with what the political regimes have done to its peoples, or to the volume of "rubble" they left behind when they collapsed, or to the degrees of schisms, rupturing and schizophrenia that conflicts over identities have caused in the Arab character. It may also be added here that terrorism at times finds its own justifications within itself; it is against democracy and against any human experience that aims to build, progress, and civilize, because the whole concept of terrorism, in and of itself, is based on destruction and not building.

## Facts and Myths

But why did this happen? We do not really need deep excavations into the "Arab Self," particularly in the sociological and religious dimensions, in order to discover the myths through which terrorism, represented today by IS, has been nurtured. There is the myth of the "nation state," for example, which the Arab Self has not been able until now to even define or demarcate its borders. The Arab "state" remains a skeletal structure, void of any content. This state, which the Arab "emotional" awareness has been nurtured to believe is the property of its citizens – in the mythical imagination – is in no way like it is in reality. The same goes for the myths and legends of development, democracy, justice etc..

The Arab Self also found that the momentum and movement of the state, and that of the society with it, was often moving in the opposite direction of these values and principles. The fact is, there are over 60 million illiterate people in the Arab world, and over 100 million unemployed youth. There is not a single Arab university among the top 100 universities in the world. The dismal scene extends to scientific research, press and academic freedoms, and the overwhelming numbers of Arabs displaced from their countries. It suffices to read annual human development reports to know what these political "myths" have caused disappointment for the Arab peoples and hopelessness, which spawned the "Islamic State", and is likely to spawn even worse phenomena if the scenario of repression, corruption, and despotism continues as is, and if the doors were shut in the face of "moderates" who are looking for a glimpse of hope of a better

future.

More shocking, however, were the myths that laid the foundation and furnished for the "Islamic State" a place in the religious sphere, not only because these myths derive their legitimacy from the Islamic frame of reference to which they claim to belong, but also because the formed a launching point from which we built our consciousness and culture, and based our judgements towards the "self" and the "other." This does not mean that the idea of IS is in accord with our religious and cultural heritage, as such a generalization needs deeper scrutiny, but I do believe that it is these religious myths that have deviated from our doctrinal and jurisprudential corpus and heritage (for reasons related to power, the relationship of religious leaders to rulers, and the breakup of society) that are the ones that this "Islamic State" employed to justify its terror and savagery, and attract sympathizers.

For example, there is the myth of the "caliphate," which continues to pose a psychological complex to many Muslims. This myth has been employed to justify brutality, killing and transgression against human values, which the 'just state' employs in supposed accordance with the principles that religion represents. There is also the myth of *Takfir* (excommunication from religion), which has reduced salvation to the "self," and judges others to be "doomed." The myth of "*Jihad*" has been reduced to fighting, and meanwhile another myth divides the world into two camps based on the scale of *Al-Walaa' wa al-Baraa'* (loyalty and disavowal).

IS exploited these religious "myths," but this in no way means that this organization belongs, one way or another, to Islamic "religiosity," unless we consider it an affiliation to the "wounded" and "oppressed" version of Islam, or perhaps the religiosity of the mentally ill. IS used these myths to take revenge upon history and the present, to destroy the self and the other; because the only means they have is that of killing, which is, unfortunately, the worst means for change, and the swiftest way to respond to, and confute, opponents.

And so; the responsibility for the production of the "Islamic State" falls on the Arab political regimes, the myths of which were uncovered by contemporary grievances, as is the case with the Sunnis in Iraq and Syria. The responsibility also falls on the "religious authority," which has failed to free itself from the superstitions that have bounded the spirit of religion. It is important to note here that it is the sociological factor, not the ideological, that is the basis of the problem, on grounds that it is social environments that produce crime. IS has indeed nurtured itself from these sociological grounds, whether under the pretext of Sunni-Shiite conflict, or by playing on the "lure" of force, or by pairing "parties" of historical feuds (the Sunnis with the Baathists and the youth who came out to spite their regimes), or to simply fill the void left by regimes when the local social services became absent.

It is evident that it was none other than the Syrian regime that allowed the "Islamic State" to expand into Syria, and it was none other than the "sectarianism" that al-Maliki fueled that allowed the organization to be revived in Iraq. It is the ongoing tyranny, or the rubble left behind by collapsed regimes, that gave IS the chance to rise, expand, and proliferate in the Arab region. Hence, IS today mocks all those who wagered on the "ballot boxes" and paid the toll in

prisons and cemeteries. Meanwhile, it extends its hand to "shake the hands" of all those who contributed and invested in the manufacturing of its terrorism, and in its rebirth.

**Remarks**

In the framework of this understanding, if it is correct, then it follows that Jordan ought to utilize the "points of strength" that it enjoys, and address the "points of weakness" it suffers from, to form a holistic approach to countering the threat of terrorism and extremism. Jordan ought to rely upon the cornerstones that constitute points of strength in its fight against terrorism and extremism, including the basis of its political leadership on "religious legitimacy," the politically-moderate character of its political system, the moderate mood of "religiosity" among the Jordanian society, and the absence of "identity" conflicts, whether on the religious, sectarian, or ethnic levels.

In conjunction, Jordan ought to deal with the points of weakness that make the country an attractive field for terrorism, whether it is the "Islamic State" (which does not hide its animosity towards Jordan), or the "idea" of the "Islamic State", which finds fertile ground in Jordanian society among elements that have not yet transformed into stable safe havens and social incubators for terrorism, but are susceptible to become so.

The points of weakness within the Jordanian state include:

Political impasses and an obscure future for reform, the dire economic conditions (with the national debt reaching $35 billion and unemployment of nearly 14%, according to official statistics), the lack of trust between the state and society, the reduction of the concept of security to its "technical" dimension, carried out by specialized security forces, rather than a holistic approach that treats the political, cultural, economic and other dimensions as well.

It is relevant to note here the following observations in the context of analyzing the Jordanian approach to countering terrorism and extremism.

1. The need to identify the nature of the approach or strategy being adopted, whether it is an approach of "extraction" by force or by law, which would amount to emergency and first aid fixes or an approach of "infiltration," where the "less extreme" elements may be co-opted and employed to change and influence others' convictions or a "purification" and "purging" strategy, which would require endurance and long-term vision. These approaches may be adopted in combination, or in stages. Jordan currently employs two main approaches: deterrence abroad and containment inside.
2. Any approach to be adopted requires an accurate and systematic answer to the question of extremism, in terms of comprehending its causes, diagnosing the "grounds" from which it emerges, and having awareness of the areas and environments in which it spreads, the numbers of those involved and their sympathizers. To accomplish this, there must be extensive information and studies on the phenomenon, because strategies are not built upon impressions and whims, but on facts, studies, and

capabilities. Furthermore, strategies are not merely a process of distribution of roles and tasks, but rather requires rules that would lay foundations for "change" in major issues, such as political, economic, educational, and religious reforms, rather than merely embellishing the façade of the current realities.

3. The extremism afflicting us is often cloaked in the garb of "religion," and speaks in its name. The reality is that religion serves as an "impetus" at times, and a "cover" at others. Therefore, there is dire need for proactive institutions in the religious sphere to play a role in rationalizing the state of "religiosity." But this alone does not suffice, for extremism has other sources of nourishment, and these sources ought to be dried up and purged, whether they be political, economic, social, or intellectual. This is not limited to social "environments" that produce extremism on the local domestic context, such as poverty and injustice, but also the external contexts, whether they be in our often imbalanced foreign relations or our political positions towards what happens in our surroundings. These positions reflect, necessarily, on people's lives and their sense of dignity towards their homelands.
4. When devising any approach, two issues must be taken into account: the first is for the approach to be a result of a general consensus, and with the participation of both official entities and civil society institutions, where experts representing various fields related to the phenomenon put forth their contributions. The second is related to the need for political will to give the approach the necessary legitimacy and the human and material resources needed to implement it, and the necessary content and tools to convince the public of its value, whether that public audience are those "involved" in extremism, or sympathizers, or those susceptible to be influenced by it, or even "moderates" who need to be deeply ingrained in "moderation."
5. In the context of any approach, the act of vilifying "extremists" and casting judgements upon them based on this general characterization (unless they commit acts of violence or terrorism), will not be of benefit to countering extremism. Hence, and firstly, what is needed is to confront and counteract extremism, and not merely crack down on extremists. "Extremists" should be dealt with as victims or persons afflicted with an illness that needs treatment, and should be classified according to the degree of their threat and danger. There need to be efforts to support "moderates" and not pigeonhole them with extremists in one basket.

# Saudi Arabia's National Counter-Terrorism Strategy: The Legislative Approach

*Awadh al-Badi*

Saudi Arabia is, and has been, a target of terrorism. The country has faced a number of terrorist acts throughout its modern history. Even before the attacks of September 11, 2001, *al-Qaeda* carried out terrorist attacks against the Kingdom. However, Saudi Arabia's response fell short of devising a comprehensive national strategy to tackle such a threat.[143] The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States and the launching of the US global war on terrorism positioned the Kingdom in the forefront of this war's battles, nationally and internationally. The fact that a number of the perpetrators of 9/11 were Saudi nationals unleashed a campaign holding the Kingdom responsible for the spreading of radicalism and extremist ideology and their financing in the Muslim world. This campaign included attacks on Saudi religious, legislative, cultural, educational, media, finance, and social policies. However, while Saudi Arabia was cooperating with this international campaign against terrorism and confronting these accusations,[144] it had to face its own 9/11. In 2003, a series of fatal terrorist attacks struck the Kingdom at the hands of *al-Qaeda*, the same organization that claimed responsibility for the terrorist attacks in the US.[145] The declared aims of *al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula* (AQAP) attacks on Saudi Arabia's soil were to destabilize the Kingdom, to question the religious legitimacy of the Saudi state, to alienate it from the United States, and to topple

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[143] For details of the nature of Saudi Arabia's response to these attacks, see Anthony H. Cordesman and Nawaf Obaid, *National Security in Saudi Arabia: Threats, Responses, and Challenges*, Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2005, pp. 256-262.

[144] In a press conference held on December 3, 2002, Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Policy Advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz at the time and Current Foreign Minister, voiced Saudi feelings toward these accusations: "Since September 11, we have engaged in several issues. Whether it involves the war against terrorism, whether it involves intelligence, whether it involves financial issues, whether it involves coordination and cooperation with other countries, we've done that... We believe that our country has been unfairly maligned. We believe that we have been subjected to criticism that we do not deserve. We believe that people have been misinformed about Saudi Arabia and what Saudi Arabia has done or frankly that people have lied about what we have done or what we allegedly have not done ... We have been described as the kernel of evil, the breeding ground for terrorists. Our faith has been maligned." Adel Al-Jubeir Holds News Conference on Fighting Terrorism, in "Saudi Arabia Announces Counter-Terrorism Measures," SUSRIS, December 9, 2002: http://susris.com/2002/12/09/saudi-arabia-announces-counter-terrorism-measures/

[145] Three suicide bombers simultaneously attacked three expatriate residential complexes in Riyadh causing 35 deaths and 200 injuries. Another massive bombing happened in the Almahea housing compound in Riyadh on November 10, 2003, resulting in nearly 17 deaths, and as many as 116 injuries. On April 21, 2004, terrorists launched two suicide car bomb attacks against Saudi Arabian security headquarters in Riyadh. Five people were killed and over 150 were wounded in the attack. Terrorist acts carried by Al-Qaeda continued to strike the Kingdom. For a chronological list of terrorist acts committed in Saudi Arabia up to 2016, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents_in_Saudi_Arabia

its government; hence, to establish their form of governance in the cradle of Islam.[146]

Saudi Arabia then had to develop its own national counter-terrorism strategy and engage in its own war on terrorism. After the first terrorist attack in Riyadh in May 2003, the strategic objective of the Saudi war on terrorism was made clear by Prince Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, then Crown Prince and de facto King, who stated: "We will fight the terrorists and those who support them or condone their actions for 10, 20 or 30 years if we have to; until we eliminate this scourge. I believe that the world must stand shoulder to shoulder with each other if we are to eliminate this evil from our midst."[147] The far-reaching aim of this dual strategy of combatting terrorism domestically and internationally was to eradicate this threat by adopting policies that employ "hard" means in the battlefield and "soft" means in the battlefield of the *mind* at the national level, and by cooperating with others at the international level to tackle this global phenomenon. This multifaceted strategy has been an evolving process during the last 16 years in all its aspects.[148] It has succeeded in containing *al-Qaeda*'s terrorism in the Kingdom. However, since 2014, *al-Qaeda*'s terrorism has been supplemented by a new wave of terrorist activities conducted by the so-called "Islamic State of Iraq and Syria" (ISIS). Therefore, Saudi Arabia's war on terrorism is continuing without hindrance. This paper aims to contextualize the Saudi legislative efforts in enacting the necessary legal instruments to achieve the strategic goal of its war on terrorism.

## The International Legal Context of Saudi Arabia's War on Terrorism

Terrorism is not new in modern world history. The use of violence by radical movements and non-state actors to realize their objectives is a historical fact.

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[146] Cordesman & Obaid, op. cit., p. 120-122; also see Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp.199-202.

[147] He reiterated this position again after assuming the throne in 2005, see "Transcript: Saudi King Abdullah Talks to Barbara Walters," ABC News, October 14, 2005, http://abcnews.go.com/2020/International/story?id=1214706&page=1

[148] Aspects of this multifaceted strategy include: security, religious, financial, legislative, administrative, judicial, cultural, and media. New rigorous policies were adopted as part of this strategy to combat terrorism. Saudi Arabia's efforts on each of these fronts are the topic of numerous books, studies, briefs, reports, conferences, and media discussions. For an overview of these Saudi efforts, see as examples: Abdullah F. Ansary, "Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach," *Middle East Policy*, Summer 2008, Vo. XV, No. 8, 11, available at: http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/combating-extremism-brief-overview-saudi-arabias-approach?print; Ali S. Awadh Asseri, *Combating Terrorism: Saudi Arabia's Role in the War on Terror*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010; Christopher Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," *Carnegie Papers*, No. 97, September 2008, available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp97_boucek_saudi_final.pdf; Hamza A. Baitalmal, "Conceptual Framework of Saudi Arabia's Efforts in Countering Terrorism: The Case of Intellectuals and Mass Media," *Harvard Pub*, 17-18, Cambridge, MA, 2016, available at: http://scholar.harvard.edu/majidrafizadeh/BaitalmalSAEfforts; Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior, "Combating Money Laundering &Terrorism Financing: The Law and Practice of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," Paper presented PER at The 11th International Summit on Transnational Crime, *Crans Montana Forum*, Geneva, Switzerland, November 16-19, 2011, available at: http://www.cmf.ch/wp-content/uploads/Saudi-Arabia-Crans-Montana-Forum-Paper-in-English.pdf

However, since the 1930s, the issue of combatting terrorism has been on the global agenda. The initial universal effort to curb acts of terrorism was reflected in the League of Nations' Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Terrorism of 1937. This Convention, which was adopted by 24 states of the League of Nations, introduced the preliminary international attempt to define terrorism. Its Article 1.2 stipulated terrorism as: "All criminal acts directed against a State and intended or calculated to create a state of terror in the minds of particular persons or a group of persons or the general public." The convention, in its Article 2, specified acts that were to be considered acts of terror against the state: "attacking public officials, heads of state and their families, or the destruction of public facilities, endangering the lives of members of the public, manufacturing, obtaining, possessing or supplying arms, ammunition, and explosive or harmful substances in order to commit such actions."[149] This convention, which ended with the demise of the League of Nations, became a point of reference for subsequent deliberations relating to legal and political standpoints regarding terrorism in the United Nations and regional intergovernmental organizations.[150]

Since the 1960s, under the auspices of the UN and its specialized agencies, the international community has elaborated a multitude of multilateral legal instruments to deal with such acts of violence and to prescribe the obligations of states towards them. At the present time, this framework includes 16 UN conventions and protocols,[151] a set of Security Council resolutions,[152] the UN

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[149] See the text of the Convention at: https://www.wdl.org/en/item/11579/view/1/1/

[150] J Ben Saul, "The Legal Response of the League of Nations to Terrorism," *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, Vol. 14, No. 4, September 2016; also see Javier Rupérez, "The United Nations in the Fight against Terrorism," lecture at *The 132nd International Senior Seminar*, 2006, p. 2, http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/statements/2006_01_26_cted_lecture.pdf

[151] In his report (DOCA/64/161- 22 July 2009) to the General Assembly, entitled "Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism," the UN Secretary General indicated that "currently, there are 30 instruments, 16 of which are universal (13 instruments and 3 recent amendments) and 14 of which are regional, pertaining to the subject of international terrorism, available at http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a9e2c190.html

These universal instruments are: 1) 1963 Convention on Offenses and Certain Other Acts Committed On Board Aircraft; 2) 1970 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft; 3) 1971 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation; 4) 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation; 5) 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation; 6) 2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft; 7) 2014 Protocol to Amend the Convention on Offences and Certain Acts Committed on Board Aircraft; 8) 2005 Amendments to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material; 9) 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation; 10) 2005 Protocol to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation; 11) 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf; 12) 2005 Protocol to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms located on the Continental Shelf; 13) 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection; 14) 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings; 15) 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism; and 16) 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. For more on these treaties, see texts at http://www.un.org/en/counterterrorism/legal-instruments.shtml.

[152] See texts of these Resolutions at www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/res-sc.html.

General Assembly Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2006,[153] and many regional treaties. These treaties, conventions, and protocols have formed the framework for combatting acts of terrorism and have provided a universal legal regime against terrorism. However, they all do not agree upon a universal legal definition of terrorism, but they do identify offenses considered as acts of terrorism. The basic commitment indicated in these legal instruments is "to incorporate the crimes defined in the treaty at issue into the domestic criminal law, and to make them punishable by sentences that reflect the gravity of the offense. The states, which are party to these treaties, also agree to participate in the construction of ''universal jurisdiction'' over these offenses, that is, to take the necessary measures to give their courts very broad jurisdiction over the offenses in question. In addition, these treaties require various types of cooperation among the signatory states, ranging from cooperation in preventing terrorist acts to cooperation in the investigation and prosecution of the relevant offenses." [154] In general, international terrorism is the domain of these international legal instruments, and therefore they are confined to offenses that have an international dimension.[155]

The events of September 11, with their international dimension, provided the ideal concomitances to the implementation of the relevant universal conventions relating to terrorism. As much as these events were a turning point in combatting terrorism internationally, they were also a turning point in domesticating the crime of terrorism into the national criminal law of states.

In the aftermath of these events, the Security Council adopted three important resolutions, 1368, 1373, and 1377. Chief among these resolutions is the September 28, 2001 Resolution 1373 adopted under chapter VII of the Charter of The United Nations. This resolution, which is binding on all member States, represents a guide for a comprehensive action plan of combatting terrorism and its financing.[156] It decides that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts, including freezing funds and other financial assets. The resolution also obliges all States to improve border security, clamp down on the recruitment of terrorists, intensify information sharing and law enforcement cooperation in the global war on terrorism, and deny terrorists and their supporters any assistance or safe haven. In addition, it requires all member States to ratify and implement the provisions of the international counter-terrorism instruments, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of December 9th, 1999, which constituted the foundation of the global fight against terrorist financing. Furthermore, this Resolution establishes the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a subsidiary organ of the Security Council, comprising all 15 of its members to oversee implementation of the Resolution. As stipulated by the UN, the mandatory requirements arising from Resolution 1373 and legally

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[153] See text at https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/united-nations-general-assembly-adopts-global-counter-terrorism-strategy.

[154] Daniel O'Donnell, "International Treaties against Terrorism and the Use of Terrorism during Armed Conflict and by Armed Forces," *International Review of The Red Cross*, Vol. 88, No. 864, December 2006, pp. 856-58.

[155] Ibid., p. 860.

[156] S/RES/1373, September 28, 2001, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1373(2001).

binding standards are: criminalization of terrorist acts; penalization of acts of support for or in preparation of terrorist offenses; criminalization of the financing of terrorism; and depoliticization of terrorist offenses. Measures to ensure effective criminalization include: refusal of asylum rights for terrorists; border controls and prevention of the forgery of travel documents and identity papers; freezing of funds of persons who commit or attempt to commit terrorist acts; prohibition on placing funds or financial services at the disposal of terrorists. Furthermore, international cooperation in criminal matters is mandatory through mutual assistance between States, intensification of exchanges of operational information, use of bilateral and multilateral agreements to prevent and eradicate terrorism, and prevention of abuse of refugee status, and rejection of all politically motivated grounds to justify refusal of an extradition request."[157]

Though this resolution's provisions are binding, their implementation was left for member States to determine the best approach to either amending their Criminal Code or by adopting new ones incorporating provisions of all ratified international instruments pertaining to terrorism.[158]

**Saudi Arabia's Legislative Approach**

Pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution 1373 that required all States to report to the CTC on steps taken to implement its provisions, Saudi Arabia confirmed, in December 2001, its resolute stance on terrorism, and therefore, its condemnation and combatting terrorism is based on basic principles, not a reaction to circumstances or events. These principles are: 1) Commitment to the Islamic *Shari'a*, the norms of international law, moral principles, and the humanitarian legacy of the Arab nation; 2) Condemnation and interdiction of terrorism in all international and regional forums and effective contribution to all their efforts, and signature and ratification of relevant international and regional conventions following active participation in their formulation; 3) Adoption of resolute measures to prosecute the perpetrators of terrorist crimes and institute legal and judicial proceedings against them in accordance with the Islamic *Shari'a* and the Kingdom's international, regional and bilateral commitments; 4) Enactment of stronger and more sophisticated statutes and regulations for the suppression of terrorism and terrorist offenses and further development of security services and all other entities involved in combatting terrorism; 5) Modernization and further development of security services and all other entities involved in combatting terrorism; and 6) Promotion of cooperation with other countries and with international and

[157] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Guide for the Legislative Incorporation and Implementation of the Universal Anti-Terrorism Instruments*, New York: United Nations, 2006, pp. 10-11, available at «https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Guide_Legislative_Incorporation_Implementation/English.pdf.

[158] Ibid., p.6.

regional organizations in preventing and combatting terrorism, especially through the exchange of information.[159]

Based on these principles, Saudi Arabia embarked on cooperating with the CTC in implementing this resolution and related international conventions and protocols, and reporting on steps it has taken toward binding provisions, international conventions, and protocols.[160] While all issues stipulated in the Resolution were important to its implementation, nevertheless, legislation, financial controls, and adherence to international legal instruments were the dominant subjects of exchange between Saudi Arabia and the CTC. On the issue of legislation regarding criminalizing acts meant to provide and facilitate financing for terrorist activities, Saudi Arabia stipulated that "[i]n the Islamic *Shari'a*, which the Kingdom applies, and from which it derives its statutes, crimes of terrorism are included among crimes of *hirabah*, the severest of penalties are applied to these crimes in Islamic *Shari'a* as set forth in the Holy Qur'an [Qur'an: 5:33]. The crimes of *hirabah* (brigandage) include the killing and terrorization of innocent people, spreading evil on earth (*al-ifsad fi al-ard*), theft, looting and highway robbery."[161] On supplementary reports to the CTC, Saudi Arabia stipulated that the financing of terrorism also falls into the crime of "*hirabah"* because it "falls into the category of 'spreading evil on earth' (*al-ifsad fi al-ard*). This may incur the non-discretionary *hadd* penalty for *hirabah* (brigandage), which can sometimes mean the application of the death penalty."[162]

On the issue of financial asset controls, Saudi Arabia reported measures taken to counter money laundering activities in all economic sectors and in the field of international and regional cooperation. These measures include issuance of the regulations required for the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and approval of the Financial Action Task Force[163](FATF)'s 40 Recommendations.[164]

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[159] Report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) Concerning Counter-terrorism, at 5, U.N. Doc. S/2001/1294 (December 26, 2001), at: http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/1373.html (scroll to Saudi Arabia, report available at https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/722/76/PDF/N0172276.pdf?OpenElement).

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) Concerning Counter-terrorism, at 5, U.N. Doc. S/2001/1294 (July. 10, 2002), at: http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/1373.html (scroll to Saudi Arabia, report available at https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/513/51/PDF/N0251351.pdf?OpenElement).

[163] The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the Paris-based inter-governmental organization established by the G-7 Summit in 1989 to "set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system." It has 37 member states. In August 2015, Saudi Arabia jointed the FATF as an Observer Member. For more on FATF, see their website at http://www.fatf-gafi.org/home/

[164] In 1990, FATF developed 40 recommendations to combat the laundering of drug money. These recommendations were revised in 1996 to reflect developments in the business of money laundering. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, FATF expanded its recommendations to cover the issue of terrorist financing, adding nine special recommendations. The FATF Recommendations were revised for the second time in 2003, and these, together with the Special Recommendations, have been endorsed by over 180 countries, and are universally recognized as

In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to deal with the issue of the funding of terrorist acts and terrorist organizations, and took the important step of creating the 8 (later expanded to 9) Special Recommendations on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. Saudi Arabia later approved all 49 recommendations.[165] Implementing these recommendations set the frame of reference for Saudi Arabia's compliance with international standards on combatting terrorism financing and money laundering. In adherence to international legal instruments and their provisions, Saudi Arabia confirmed that when it acceded to such international or regional instruments,[166] it made their provisions part of the Kingdom's domestic legislation with the same effect as domestic laws.[167]

### The Long Road towards the Law of Terrorism Crimes and Financing

Although Islamic *Shari'a* remains the main source of legislation in Saudi Arabia, the urgency of taking effective legislative measures to combat terrorism and its financing prompted Saudi Arabia to quickly codify new laws and regulations. In order to criminalize money laundering and terrorist financing activities, the Anti-Money Laundering Law was enacted in August 2003.[168] This law, with its implementing regulations, incorporated all existing national laws in the areas of concerns regarding money laundering and the provisions of related international conventions and protocols. Through its 29 articles, the law defines offenses, penalties, duties and responsibilities of financial institutions and their officials. It establishes a unit for combatting money laundering under the name of "Financial Intelligence Unit" in accordance with the requirement of FATF Recommendations, to be responsible for "receiving notifications, analyzing them and preparing reports regarding suspicious transactions in all financial and non-financial institutions."[169] Furthermore, it stipulates the exchange of information disclosed by financial and non-financial institutions with competent authorities

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the international standard for anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). See ATF, International Standards on Combating Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism & Proliferation, updated October 2016, FATF, Paris, France, at: http://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/fatfrecommendations/documents/fatf-recommendations.html

[165] The first 40 Recommendations of FATF were approved by the Saudi Council of Ministers in its decision No.15 of 17th Muharram 1420 (May 4, 1999).

[166] Saudi Arabia acceded and ratified 13 UN conventions and protocols, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 1999, and other regional conventions including the Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism of 1998, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) Convention on Combatting International Terrorism of 1999, and the GCC Agreement to Combat Terrorism of 2004.

[167] Report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001) Concerning Counter-Terrorism, at 5, U.N. Doc. S/2001/1294 (September 26, 2002), at http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/resources/1373.html (Scroll to Saudi Arabia).

[168] Royal Decree No. M/39, 25 Jumada II 1424/ 23 August 2003, English text available at http://www.nazaha.gov.sa/en/Library/Document/Regulations/Documents/Anti-MoneyLaunderingLaw.pdf

[169] Ibid., Article 11.

in other countries based on reciprocal treatment.[170] General courts have the jurisdiction to decide all crimes provided for in this law.[171]

Money laundering was defined in this law as: "Committing or attempting to commit any act for the purpose of concealing or disguising the true origin of funds acquired by means contrary to *Shari'a* or law, thus making them appear as if they come from a legitimate source."[172] Criminal Activity is defined as: "Any activity constituting a crime punishable by *Shari'a* or law, including the financing of terrorism, terrorist acts and terrorist organizations."[173] The law stipulates that money-laundering crimes include:

(a) Conducting any transaction involving funds or proceeds, with the knowledge that they are the result of a criminal activity or have an illegitimate or illegal source;

(b) Transporting, acquiring, using, keeping, receiving, or transferring funds or proceeds with the knowledge that they are the result of a criminal activity or have an illegitimate or illegal source;

(c) Concealing or disguising the nature of funds, proceeds or their source, movement, ownership, place or means of disposal, with the knowledge that they are the result of a criminal activity or have an illegitimate or illegal source;

(d) Financing terrorism, terrorist acts and terrorist organizations;

(e) Participating by way of agreement, aiding and abetting, incitement, counsel, advice, facilitating, collusion, covering or attempting to commit any of the acts stated in this Article."[174]

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[170] Ibid., Article 13.
[171] Ibid., Article 26.
[172] Ibid., Article 1.1.
[173] Ibid., Article 1.7.
[174] Ibid., Article 2. Implementing Regulations of this article considers financing terrorism, terrorist acts and terrorist organizations includes funds resulting from lawful sources, and that knowledge can be inferred from the objective and factual conditions and circumstances; thus, creating an element of criminal intent constituting one of the crimes provided for in this Article. Examples of the criminal activities or the unlawful or illegal sources whereby the dealing in funds resulting therefrom is deemed a money laundering crime are as follows: (a) Crimes provided for in Article (1) of the Implementing Regulations of the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, for the year 1988, which was ratified by the Council of Ministers' Resolution No (168) dated 11/8/1419H; (b) Organized crimes provided for in the United Nations Convention for Controlling Transnational Organized Crimes (Palermo Convention) issued in December 2000 and ratified by Royal Decree No. (m/20) and the date of e 24/3/1425; (c) The crimes set out in paragraph (5) of Article II of the International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, ratified by Royal Decree No. (m/62) and the date of e 18/7/1428; (d) Smuggling, manufacturing, trading in or promoting intoxicants; (e) Crimes of money counterfeiting provided for in the Royal Decree No (12) dated 12/7/1379H; (f) Forgery crimes provided for in the Anti-Forgery Law issued by Royal Decree No (114) dated 26/11/1380H amended by Royal Decree No (53) dated 5/11/1382H; (g) Bribery crimes provided for in the Anti-Bribery Law issued by Royal Decree No (36) dated 29/12/1412H; (h) Smuggling weapons and ammunitions or explosives, or manufacturing or trading in them; (i) Procurement and preparation of brothels or exercising of debauchery; (j) Plundering or armed robbery; (k) Thefts; (1) Defraud and swindling; (m) Embezzlement of public funds of government bodies or that which the state contributes to, as well as private funds of companies and commercial establishments and the like; (n) Engaging in banking activities illegally, as provided

Penalties for such acts stipulated in this law as follows:

- Imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years and a fine not exceeding five million riyals, or by either punishment, along with the confiscation of funds, proceeds and means associated with the crime.[175]
- Imprisonment for a period not exceeding fifteen years and a fine not exceeding seven million riyals, if the crime of money laundering is coupled with one of the following cases:
    - The perpetrator commits the crime through an organized crime syndicate;
    - The perpetrator uses violence or weapons;
    - The perpetrator occupies a public office to which the crime is connected or exploits his authorities or powers in commission of the crime;
    - Deceiving and exploiting women or minors;
    - Committing the crime through a correctional, charitable, or educational institution or in a social service facility;
    - Issuance of previous local or foreign judgments convicting the perpetrator, especially in similar crimes.[176]
- Imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years and a fine not exceeding five hundred thousand riyals or by either punishment of any chairman of the boards of directors of financial and non-financial institutions, or board members, owners, managers, employees, authorized representatives, or hired hands who act under these capacities if they violate any of their obligations specified in the law. The same punishment is applied to those performing the activity without obtaining the required licenses.[177]
- A fine of not less than one hundred thousand riyals and not exceeding the value of funds subject to the crime may be imposed on financial and non-financial institutions whose responsibility is proven pursuant to the provisions of Articles 2 and 3 of this Law.[178]
- With the exception of punishments provided for in this Law, imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months and a fine not

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for in Article (2) of the Banks Monitoring Law, issued by Royal Decree No (5) dated 22/2/1386H; (o) Mediation in the securities without a license provided for in Article (31) and dealing in security based on information obtained from an insider provided for in Article (50) of the Capital market law by Royal Decree No. (m/30) and the date of e 2/6/1424; (p) Mediation in the insurance business without a license provided for in Article (18) of the Cooperative Insurance Companies law by Royal Decree No. (m/ 32) and the date of 2/6/1424H; (q) Crimes related to commercial activities such as fraud in brands, weights and prices as well as imitation of goods and commercial concealment as provided for in Article (1) of Anti-Commercial Concealment Law, issued by Royal Decree No (m/49) dated 16/10/1409H; (r) Smuggling provided for in the Unified Customs Law for the GCC States, issued by Royal Decree No (241) dated 26/10/1423H Tax evasion crimes. Full text of Anti-Money Laundering Law & Its Implementing Regulations: Annex 4 of FATF and MENAFATS, *Mutual Evaluation Report of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, 2010, pp 224-236, available at:
http://www.menafatf.org/MER/MER_SaudiArabia_English.pdf

[175] Ibid., Article 16.

[176] Ibid., Article 17.

[177] Ibid., Article 18.

[178] Ibid., Article 19.

exceeding one hundred thousand riyals, or by either punishment for anyone violating its provisions.[179]

While this law and its implementing regulations provided the legal base for combatting money laundering and terrorism financing in Saudi Arabia, it was subject to review after five years or when necessary.[180] However, amendment to this law was warranted to correspond to judicial reforms taking place in the Kingdom, including the establishment of the "Specialized Criminal Court" in 2008 to try terrorism-related cases. This law and its implementing regulations were also subject to review by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to assess progress in implementing its 40+9 recommendations and related provisions of UN conventions and UN security resolutions. The Mutual Evaluation Report issued by FATF and Middle East & North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), [181] concerning Anti-Money Laundering and Combatting the Financing of Terrorism in Saudi Arabia, concluded that while Saudi Arabia is largely in compliance with most of its recommendations, it is nonetheless still in need of improvement in implementing other recommendations. On the legal aspect, it was recommended to separate the issue of money laundering from terrorism finance.[182] Reviews have led to enacting two new laws. In 2012, the Anti-Money Laundering Law was enacted[183] to replace the old one. The new law, in its 32 articles, maintains the old main articles, but introduces new provisions including: referring the jurisdiction of cases to the Specialized Criminal Court instead of the General Courts;[184] more duties and responsibilities on financial and non-financial institutions, including non-profit organizations; application of its provisions on Saudis and non-Saudis; and adding a travel ban for Saudi nationals for a period equal to the term of imprisonment, and deportation for foreign nationals after serving the term of imprisonment.

The second law, the "Law on Terrorism Crimes and Financing", was enacted in 2013.[185] This law of 41 articles, which took effect in February 2014, defines terrorism, terrorism financing, and procedures. It refers to the crime of terrorism as "any criminal act committed, individually or collectively, directly or indirectly, by a perpetrator, with the intention to disturb public order, destabilize national security or state stability, endanger national unity, suspend the Basic Law of Governance or some of its articles, undermine state reputation or status, cause damage to state facilities or natural resources, attempt to coerce any of its authorities into a particular action or inaction or threaten to carry out acts that would lead to any of the aforementioned objectives or instigate such acts."[186] The

[179] Ibid., Article 20.
[180] Regulation 28-1 of the Implementing Regulations. See footnote 32.
[181] MENAFATF is FATF Style Regional Body (FSRB) established in Bahrain in 2004 by agreement between the governments of its members to set regulations, rules and procedures and cooperate with FATF to achieve its objectives of Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation. http://www.menafatf.org/topiclist.asp?ctype=about&id=546
[182] For full report, see footnote 39.
[183] Royal Decree No. M/31 dated 11/5/1433H (3 April 2012), English text available at https://www.boe.gov.sa/ViewSystemDetails.aspx?lang=en&SystemID=29&VersionID=280
[184] Ibid., Article 29.
[185] Royal Decree No. M/16 dated 24/2/1433H (7 December 2013), English text available at https://www.boe.gov.sa/ViewSystemDetails.aspx?lang=en&SystemID=327&VersionID=305
[186] Ibid., Article 1.a. The broadness of this definition has raised the concerns of international human rights groups and organizations.

law also defines the crime of terrorism financing as "any act involving collecting, providing, receiving, allocating, transporting or transferring of funds or proceeds, wholly or partially, for any individual or collective terrorist activity, organized or otherwise, within the Kingdom or abroad, directly or indirectly, from a legitimate or illegitimate source; carrying out for the benefit of such activity or its elements any banking, financial or commercial transaction; collecting, directly or through an intermediary, funds to be utilized for its benefit; promoting its ideologies; arranging for training sites; sheltering its members or providing them with any type of weapons or forged documents; knowingly providing any other means of support and financing as well as any act that constitutes a crime within the scope of the agreements mentioned in the appendix to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and as defined in said agreements."[187] This law applies to all residents in Saudi Arabia, nationals or non-nationals, committing terrorist crimes specified in the law inside or outside of Saudi Arabia, if not tried for the crime.[188] The law gives the Minister of Interior the authority to arrest anyone suspected of committing a crime covered by this law.[189] It provides the investigating authority to detain any person accused of a terrorist crime for periods not to exceed one year, and possibly longer, if approved by the specialized court.[190] Jurisdiction of this law is the sole responsibility of the specialized criminal court; however, its verdicts can be appealed.[191] The law permits a trial in absentia if the accused is duly notified of his crime, and stipulates the right to appeal.[192]

The law also stipulates that the accused has the right to seek the assistance of an attorney.[193] This law sanctions, through its procedural and general provisions, the Minister of Interior and the Specialized Court, full authority over the full process of regulating, monitoring, investigating, jailing, sentencing, trying, extradition, and the process of implementation of Security Council Resolutions No. 1267 and No. 1373.

## Conclusion

While Saudi Arabia is fighting its war on terrorism on all fronts to achieve its strategic goal of eliminating this destructive global threat, the legal aspect of this war is as important as the other aspects of its National Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Saudi Arabia has enacted the most stringent statutes and regulations for the suppression of terrorism and its financing in accordance with its commitment to implement the provisions of UN conventions and protocols, UN Security Council resolutions pertaining to combatting terrorism and its financing, and the 40+9 recommendations of FATF that constitute the international standards for curbing money laundering and terrorism finance. Eliminating terrorism is not an easy task. However, furnishing the legal base is

[187] Ibid., Article 1.b.
[188] Ibid., Article 3.
[189]Ibid., Article 4.
[190] Ibid., Article 5.
[191] Ibid., Article 8.
[192] Ibid., Article 9.
[193] Ibid., Article 10.

an important step in the long rough march toward that end. Saudi Arabia is doing just that in criminalizing crimes of terrorism and its financing.

# Anti-Terrorism Policies in Morocco: From a Security Approach to a Holistic Approach

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## The Terrorism That Afflicts Us

Just weeks ago, Moroccans commemorated the victims of the terrorist attack that struck Casablanca 13 years ago (on May 16th, 2003). The attack was, and still is, a wound in the memory of Moroccans, and in the memory of Casablanca, which – like the rest of the Kingdom's regions – has been recovering day after day and continues to confront terrorism with an enduring strong will to build and progress in all fields, including the economic, social, intellectual, political, religious, and human rights.

Meanwhile, the jostling between "exclusionist thought" – which does not believe in dialogue – and tolerant and modernist thought is ongoing, and contributes to the perpetual regeneration of both sides, even if the paths and methods vary. Jihadi thought, unfortunately, continues to find followers in our society. In this context, terrorist incidents continued to recur, including in Casablanca in 2007, and in Meknes and Marrakesh in 2011. Terror attacks also struck in the past, including the bombing of the Atlas Asni Hotel in Marrakesh on August 20th, 1994, as part of initial attempts to involve Morocco in the phenomenon of terrorism.[194]

Although the pace of terrorist threats has slowed down recently, in terms of the threats that seek to harm public security of society and the state, these threats, however, remain credible in terms of the potential for infiltration and causing limited or significant economic and human damages. These threats continue through terror groups affiliated with the "Islamic Caliphate State," dubbed in the media as "Da'esh," which periodically threaten to strike in Morocco.[195]

The continuation of threats and the desire to ensure the continuity of their effectiveness is a difficult predicament, because the terrorist threats that came in the post-Bin Laden era, and since the birth of the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria" (which later became the "Islamic State" (IS) organization), are mechanisms for generating threats from outside the kingdom by attracting elements from vulnerable segments of the local society,[196] and then relying on infiltration that aims to destabilize the security of the country. This has been evident throughout

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[194] El-Mostafa Rezrazi, et al., "*Al-Kitab al-Abyadh 'an Al-Irhab fi al-Maghreb*," [Lit. "The White Papers on Terrorism in Morocco"], The International Research Group for Transregional and Emerging Area Studies, Tokoyo, Japan: Redmek Publishing, Rabat, 2015 (Arabic edition), pp. 38-40.

[195] Most recent threats were made through a video in which a follower of the "Islamic State" threatened to strike in the city of Rabat,: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dttm-h_LqG4, See also http://www.alriyadh.com/1022931, and "*Al-Irhab Yatarabas bi Shamal Ifriqiya*," [Lit. "Terrorism Lurks in North Africa"], Al-Bayan, No. 12648, February 3, 2015, pp. 30-31.

[196] This analysis seems to be on the retreat, considering that vulnerability, isolation, and economic, social, cultural, and religious marginalization are no longer direct factors in mobilization and recruitment within extremist or Jihadi organizations.

the majority of operations carried out by Moroccan security forces in the past two years.[197]

Like other countries in the world, Morocco faces two other phenomena, the first is self-suggested radicalization and recruitment, and the self-receptiveness (individual decision) to the propaganda discourse of Jihadi groups, or what the media dubs "lone wolves."[198] The other phenomenon is that of terrorism in prisons.

Who bears the responsibility for terrorism? The responsibility is indeed a shared one between history and key actors, and it is a mixture in which poverty intersects with ideology, and with psychological enticement, along with cross-continental and cross-regional currents that intersect in their perceptions of the world in a violent, reductive, and chauvinistic manner.

In terms of history, Jihadi ideology emerged and reproduced for over seven decades, weaved special relationships with the religious texts, and gained followers throughout the Muslim world, before it began spreading through gaps and fissures to penetrate the Western social fabric.[199] It then began to branch into smaller groups that diverge at times and converge at others, depending on the circumstances and the general international climate at various times.

On the other hand, there are international actors and key players, who – for a period of time – took advantage of, and utilized, Jihadi thought to strike down communist movements,[200] and vice versa. The mechanism of exploiting terrorist activity further evolved in unethically concocting some of the crises experienced in our world today.[201]

Morocco also witnessed fanatical religious movements in the mid-1960s, which later evolved to become an inquisitorial machine, as illustrated by the *Chabiba al-Islamiya* (Islamist Youth) movement. But after the killing of Omar Benjelloun, one of the pioneers and activists of the Moroccan leftist current in 1975,[202] the

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[197] Statement by the Moroccan Ministry of Interior, dated March 20, 2016, regarding the dismantling of an armed terrorist cell, spread across nine cities, that was preparing to carry out "a serious terror plot that targeted the stability of the kingdom." Also see the latest statements on May 13th and 18th, 2016 regarding dismantling a terrorist cell in the northern and eastern parts of the country, headed by a member of the "Islamic State" organization, of Chadian nationality, who was arrested in a safe house in Tangier. Members of the cells included Moroccans and Algerians. The seized materials reveal the level of threat posed by this cell, including bomb-making materials, recordings, and observation and surveillance of potential bombing target sites.

[198] Ramon Spaaij, "Understanding Lone Wolf Terrorism: Global Patterns, Motivations and Prevention," Springer. 2012, also Pantucci Raffaelo, "A Typology of Lone Wolves: Preliminary Analysis of Lone Islamist Terrorists," International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, 2012.

[199] El-Mostafa Rezrazi et al., "*Al-Kitab al-Abyadh 'an Al-Irhab fi al-Maghreb*," [Lit. "The White Papers on Terrorism in Morocco"], Op. cit.

[200]Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam Politique au Maroc*, [Lit. "The Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco"], Presses de Sciences Po, 1999, Also in Arabic entitled "*Al-Malakiyya wa al-Islam al-Siyasi fi al-Maghrib,*" translated by Khalid Chegraoui and Mohamed Hatami, Casablanca: Al-Fanak Publishing, 2001.

[201] Michel Bugnon-Mordant, *États-Unis, la manipulation planétaire*, Favre, 2003.

[202] Mohamed Tozy, *Monarchie et Islam Politique au Maroc*, [Lit. "The Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco"], op. cit., pp. 226-242. Meanwhile, renowned researchers in the West did not pay attention to this issue when it emerged. For example, the valuable study by John Waterbury on Morocco in 1968 did not make any reference to the Moroccan regime's employment and

*Chabiba* fragmented, reflected in waves of division, exodus, and diffraction. Other groups also faced a similar fate, including the *Tabayyun* Group, the Moroccan Mujahideen Movement, *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem* (The Straight Path) group, *Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra* (Excommunication and Exodus) group, The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM), *Al-Khayar al-Islami* (The Islamic Choice) group, and *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, among others.[203]

The Moroccan security institutions' dismantling of more than 150 terrorist cells since 2000 constituted rich material for researchers that enabled them, by virtue of accumulation of incidents, to reach conclusions based on the facts. First, the conclusions refute the interpretations (which seem closer to justification rather the explanation) that argue that most of the suicide bombers of the May 16th, 2003 attacks came from poor backgrounds. This led some researchers to misconnect the phenomenon of terrorism with poverty and marginalization.[204] However, reviewing the list of those involved in terrorist acts after May 2003 reveals this misconnection, as most of them belonged to stable or even high social class backgrounds. The majority of those convicted in terrorism cases began to practice their extremist tendencies through "*Ta'zir*" (scolding and reprimand) based on the concept of the "Prevention of Vice." This "moral impetus" often becomes a gateway to *Takfiri*-exclusionist ideology, which inevitably leads to legitimizing systematic and organized violence. The path of terrorists reveals that most of them gradually advanced into and within terror organizations, which themselves gradually advanced in their ideological makeup and political project. This calls for studying the relationship between extremist thought and the process of establishing ideological foundations of violent and terrorist practices.

Many Moroccan "Mujahideen" have gone to areas of tensions, such as Afghanistan, Bosnia, Sudan, and others.[205] Upon their return, some attempted to present themselves as pioneering figures of Jihadi Salafist thought. Some of them maintained connections, material ties, or pledged allegiance to *al-Qaeda*. With the new wave of Jihadism, which coincided with the disintegration of the concept of "domestic" terror organizations in Jihadi thought that sought to overthrow

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utilization of the religious dimension, particularly the extremist currents, in confronting the Left. See: John Waterbury, "The Commander of the Faithful: The Moroccan Political Elite - A Study in Segmented Politics," Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970. Also in Arabic, entitled "*Amir al-Mu'minin: Al-Malakiyya wa al-Nukhba al-Siyasiya al-Maghribiyya*, translated by Abdul Ghani Abu al-Azm, Abd al-Ahad al-Sabti, and Abdul Latif al-Falaq, Rabat: Mu'asasat al-Ghani, 2004, pp. 367 and following pages.

- The same problem can be detected in numerous other Arab and Muslim countries that were not Marxist or socialist in nature, and with some ambivalence in regards to other Arab countries like Algeria, which developed mechanisms of the "Islamic University" in the 1970s during the reign of the late President Houari Boumediene, which served as a hub for elements of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Al-Qaradawi and Al-Ghanouchi, to meet and thrive. Libya during the era of Ghaddafi is another example, where there was state patronage of Islamic schools and universities and religious propaganda, at the same level as the state's propaganda for Ghaddafi's African unity project and attempts at Islamization through allurement and appeal.

[203] El-Mostafa Rezrazi et al., "*Al-Kitab al-Abyadh 'an Al-Irhab fi al-Maghreb*," [Lit. "The White Papers on Terrorism in Morocco"], op. cit., pp. 30-34.

[204] El-Mostafa Rezrazi, *Al-Dinamikiyat al-Nafsiya 'inda al-Intihariyien al-Jihadiyien*, [Lit., "The Psychological Dynamics of Jihadi Suiciders"], PhD dissertation in Clinical Psychology, Mohammed V University, Rabat, 2014.

[205] El-Mostafa Rezrazi et al., "The White Papers on Terrorism in Morocco," op. cit.

national regimes, and the rise and subsequent retreat of the concept of Global Jihad, espoused by Al-Zawahiri and Bin Laden, we witness today the return of the concept of a single united Caliphate. The Caliphate conception is built upon the strategies of centralized empowerment and the vicegerency system of governance,[206] along with the establishment of a network of "emirates" whenever followers in various parts of the Muslim world manage to secure geographical areas, regardless of their size.

The responsibility for confronting terrorism is shared between all, including security agencies, citizens, governmental and civil organizations, the media, and religious scholars. It is unfair to blame solely the state security apparatus for the weakness of efforts to monitor, refute, and combat Jihadi ideology. It is also futile to blame the state for some secular trends in Morocco that exploit the war against terrorism for the sake of settling their scores with Islam as a religious doctrine and values system.

Here, the question of responsibilities ought to be rephrased, not for the sake of laying responsibility and blame on one party or another, but rather in order to divide and distribute responsibilities among all based on a sense of citizenship and patriotism.

## Religious Text and the Birth of Jihadi Violence

The Islamic religious texts are independent and liberated from institutionalization. Herein lies their strength, but also the risk of being wrongly interpreted. Neutralizing religious texts from politics has been a failed mission in most Muslim countries, because the Islamic religious substance, or content (*Matn*, i.e. gist), is laden with political instances, especially in matters related to the relationship between society and the state, and between states.[207] Since the 1930s, extremist religious currents produced literature that sought to formulate a worldview that is based on the need to govern by God's decrees,[208] followed by formulations that divided the world into an "abode of peace," "abode of reconciliation," and "abode of war."[209] Such discourse sought to reframe local societies, and classify them into an "Islamic" society and a "*Jahili* (era of ignorance)" society,[210] and yet another "misguided and allured" society.[211] Then, in moments of tension and mobilization, Jihadi theorization spawned to build a

[206] Atlantic Council, "Briefing on Moroccan-European Counterterrorism Cooperation," December 7, 2015.

[207] On this issue, and on the Moroccan experience and the process of intertwining and interlocking between religion and political institutions, see: Mohamed Tozy, "The Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco," op. cit., pp. 15-155.

[208] Among the prominent theorists who sought to establish roots for this concept is Abd al-Qadir Awdeh, in *Al-Islam wa Awda'una al-Qanuniya*, [Lit., "Islam and Our Legal Conditions"], 2nd ed., 1967.

[209] Muhammad bin Abd al-Salam al-Ansari, "*Mustalahat Shar'iyya: Dar al-Islam wa Dar al-Kufr*" [lit., "Islamic Doctrinal Terms: The Abode of Islam and Abode of Disbelief"].

[210] Sayyid Qutb, *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq*, [Lit., "Milestones"], Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1973.

[211] Al-Zubayr Khalafu Allah, *Al-Taghyeer: Aaliyatuhu wa Wasa'iluhu fi al-Minhaj al-Nabawi li Al-Imam Abd al-Salam Yasin*, [Lit., "Change: Its Mechanisms and Means in the Prophetic Method in the Thought of Imam Abd al-Salam Yassin"], in a seminar on "Change in the Thought of Imam Abd al-Salam Yassin," Saturday December 13, 2014, held at the organization's headquarters in the city of Sala.

dividing threshold between "those who are with us" and "those who are against us," founded upon the notion of "*Al-Walaa' wa al-Baraa'* (loyalty and disavowal).[212]

But for their part, Islamic scholars and jurists held to their convictions that they were "right," without putting in genuine efforts to safeguard and solidify this "rightness" and "correctness." They belittled the misguided youth who joined *Takfiri* and exclusionist groups with patronizing condescension, in the belief that they – the scholars and jurists – are the "most rightful" and hence the "strongest." Over time, Jihadi groups branched out, strengthened, and fortified themselves against the "scholars" from the premise of a dismissive notion that these scholars are "jurists of the Sultan."[213] In a moment's time, Islamic libraries became filled with discourse and theorization that worked to reinforce Jihadi thought over the decades.

About ten years ago, religious entities in a number of Arab countries undertook a pioneering effort to refute extremist Jihadi thought, and focused on scrutinizing and dismantling the fundamental conceptions upon which this exclusionist thought is based, such as the concepts of *Al-Jahiliya* (state of ignorance), *Al-Hakimiya* (God's sovereignty), *Al-Walaa' wa al-Baraa'* (loyalty and disavowal), and others. But a preliminary reading of this pilot project reveals that these efforts were not continuous, and there was limited follow-up of Jihadi literature that proliferated in the 1970s and 1980s. Furthermore, efforts to scrutinize and refute did not keep pace with new and reemerging Jihadi thought in publications and Jihadi websites, particularly the "Islamic State" organization and new groups affiliated and allied with it.[214]

## The Nature of Terror Threats in Morocco

In general, the threat of – and harm caused by – terrorism is built upon common foundations, even if the results and methods of different terrorist groups vary.

In the case of Morocco, the threats of terrorism remained for a long time limited to cells that were generated from within the local society, in addition to the threats of foreign infiltrators or Moroccans returning from battle fronts such as

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[212] Muhammad bin Saeed al-Qahtani, *Al-Walaa' wa al-Baraa' fi al-Islam*, [Lit., "Loyalty and Disavowal in Islam"], Al-Durar Publications, no publishing date.

[213] The study of historical experiences of opposition and rebellion of jurists against Sultans is very important in understanding the current conditions. See: Mohamed Tozy, "The Monarchy and Political Islam in Morocco," op. cit., pp. 41-61.

[214] See limited influence examples in Egypt, Ministry of Interior, in Mohammad Hamza, *Mukafahat al-Irhab wa al-Tataruf wa Uslub al-Muraja'a al-Fikriya*" [Lit. "Countering Terrorism and Extremism, and the Method of Intellectual Revisions"], 2012; See also: Muhammad bin Omar Bazmol, "*Dawr al-Tarbiya fi Mukafahat al-Tataruf wa al-Irhab*," [Lit. "The Role of Education in Combating Extremism and Terrorism], Faculty at Um Al-Qura University, Da'wa and Principles of Religion Department; and Christopher Boucek, "Saudi Arabia's "Soft" Counterterrorism Strategy: Prevention, Rehabilitation, and Aftercare," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 22, 2008, http://carnegieendowment.org/2008/09/21/saudi-arabia-s-soft-counterterrorism-strategy-prevention-rehabilitation-and-aftercare-pub-22155; See also Assakina website, run by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Islamic Affairs, http://www.assakina.com/about-php

Afghanistan, Iraq, and then Syria, Libya and Mali,[215] or those who were recruited in immigrant diasporas in Europe to carry out attacks in various parts of the Muslim world.[216]

Jihadi elements also went to the African regions of the Sahel and Sahara, especially the countries where *al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM) was active. AQIM had branches in all the North African countries, but initially grew and thrived in Algeria, where a decade of civil war in the 1990s made the country fertile ground for the organization. *Al-Qaeda* elements also found safe haven in regions north of Mali, especially with the settlements of conflict with Tuareg groups since the Algiers and Tamanrasset Accords in 2005-2006 and afterwards, which contributed to clearing the Azawad region from Malian oversight and authority with the withdrawal of police and the military from the area. The easy networking of Jihadi groups with criminal elements and smuggling, drugs, arms mafias, human and underground immigration traffickers and with Tuareg rebels enabled the formation of tactical alliances and constituted an important material and funding resource for Jihadis.

With the collapse of the Libyan regime, the path became clear for dangerous and cross-border illicit trade, enabling *al-Qaeda* to enter into the Malian conflict, followed by successive groups such as the "Islamic State", which permeated and spread throughout the Sahel and Sahara regions, which are closely linked to North African countries,[217] despite African and French intervention, particularly after Operation Serval and Operation Barkhane.[218] The two operations managed

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[215] Muhammad Mahmoud Abu al-Ma'ali, *Al-Qa'ida wa Hulafauha fi Azawad: Al-Nash'a wa al-Tawasu'*, [Lit., "Al-Qaeda and its Allies in Azawad: Origins and Expansion"], Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2014.

[216] For further discussion of the terror cells in Morocco, and the chronology of their dismantling, see: El-Mostafa Rezrazi et al., "The White Papers on Terrorism in Morocco," op. cit., pp. 79-287.

[217] Abu Al-Walid Adnan al-Sahrawi, one of the pioneers of Al-Qaeda in the Sahel repeatedly threatened Morocco with Jihadi attacks. Al-Sahrawi is one of the leaders of the Polisario youth wing (the Sahrawi youth movement), and organizer of the Belmokhtar group, despite them having disagreed with each other and cut ties later on. On his part, Belmokhtar reestablished his relations with AQIM, which had been tense for a while.

[218] Several studies and reports on this subject were conducted by the research team at Mohammed V University in Rabat, see for example:

-Chegraoui Khalid, « le Maghreb et l'Afrique, une histoire mouvementée ; continuité et conflits de l'interrégional au continental : le Maroc en voisinage », in *les identités régionales et la dialectique Sud-Sud en question*, Dakar, Codesria, 2007, p. 49-63.

-Défis stratégiques et sécurité au sahel Sahara, le rôle du Maroc, Assemblée parlementaire de l'OTAN sous-commission sur la gouvernance démocratique (CDSDG) et sous-commission sur la transition et le développement (ESCTD), chambre des Conseillés, Rabat, Maroc, 15 April 2014.

-« De la Tunisie à la Libye : analyse de deux approches de gouvernance politique et sécuritaire » in *Les perspectives des évolutions post-printemps arabe dans la région MENA*, GRESS, Fondation Hanns Seidel, 5 June 2015, Marrakech.

-EL Moussaoui EL Ajlaoui, " Les enjeux stratégiques du Maroc dans l'espace Sahélo Saharien », Le Maroc dans la géopolitique africaine, Institut des études africaines, Rabat, May 2015.

-«Architecture sécuritaire dans l'espace saharien », Bamako -3, 4 December 2013.

-« Dialogues sécuritaires dans l'espace Sahélo saharien. Repenser la sécurité sous régionale. « Les défis et enjeux sécuritaires au Maroc », Etude interne en collaboration avec la Fondation F. Ebert et le SIPRI, 2016.

-« Les crises sahélo-sahariennes : germes de la balkanisation ». Revue des FAR. N° 356, 2013.

-« Les enjeux du Maroc dans l'espace sahélo saharien ».Colloque : le Maroc dans les nouveaux enjeux africains. 20éme session du GERM. Rabat. October, 2015.

to temporarily halt the progress of the Jihadi and exclusionist project to establish an entity in northern Mali, but did not completely eradicate their presence. On the contrary, the operations led to scattering and dispersing these elements into neighboring countries, especially in southern Libya. Scattered elements sporadically mixed with the general populations or resorted to safe havens in the Sahel and Sahara regions awaiting the retreat of African and French security and military operations. These ramifications became evident recently with the increase in military operations in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cote d'Ivoire. Simultaneously, the threat is also becoming evident in the overall North African region, and also on Europe, especially after cases of kidnapping, taking hostages, and threatening French interests in the Sahel countries.

However, Morocco is the only Arab Muslim country where terrorist organizations have failed to create hotbeds on the ground to use as sites for training, positioning, and launching attacks. Terrorist cells in Morocco follow the model of sleeper cells, particularly in urban areas, and have tried to expand into the mountainous areas but generally failed.[219]

What is new, however, is the growing and increasing level of threats emanating from Libya and the Sahel and Sahara regions especially amid the absence of security cooperation and coordination with Morocco's neighbors in the eastern part of the kingdom.[220]

In addition, the Islamic "Caliphate" State organization has managed to implement a new strategy aimed at encouraging Jihadis to stay in their home countries, and to work in full secrecy until they carry out the attacks from inside the country. This aspect raises further concerns, considering that the processes of tracking, monitoring, and prevention require continuous and systemized intelligence work in order to control urban areas. It is indeed a possible – but complicated – task.[221] In this task, traditional intelligence and investigative *human* efforts play an important, decisive, and integral role that complements electronic surveillance, which started to form the backbone of many European intelligence agencies, but exposed their countries to major risks, considering the limited scope and results of electronic intelligence work.

Another concern for Morocco today is for the differences with Algeria to play a role in exacerbating the already lax security measures in controlling and monitoring Algeria's borders with Morocco. Reports emerged confirming that the Algerian military leadership reached a secret understanding with Mokhtar Belmokhtar to attack Morocco's interests, in return for not attacking Algeria's

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-Al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique et les enjeux géostratégiques en Méditerranée occidentale. Colloque «Ceuta, Melilla et les Iles méditerranéennes à lumière des expériences internationales et du droits international » Rabat 25 September 2010.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Khalid Chegraoui, in Institut Royal des Etudes Stratégiques en coopération avec Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung - Rabat, *La sécurité au Sahel après la crise du Mali Quels enjeux et défis pour les pays régionaux et internationaux?* Séminaire international organisé le 28 March 2014 à Rabat.

- Khalid Chegraoui, *Boko Haram un mouvement opportuniste*, LE MATIN, 11 September 2014.

-*Le terrorisme, problématique d'une définition*, le MATIN, 16 May 2005

-*Les nouveaux Talibans de la Corne de l'Afrique*, Libération, 15 June 2006.

[221] El-Mostafa Rezrazi, *Al-Ta'awun al-Amni li Mukafahat al-Irhab: Al-Aaliyat al-Mutadakhila*, [Lit., "Security Cooperation to Combat Terrorism: Intertwined Mechanisms"], The First Moroccan-Spain Forum for Combating Terrorism, Madrid: the Arab Institute for Culture, May 5th, 2016.

interests. Although this is the logic of "conspiracy theory," it nevertheless and certainly adds to Morocco's concerns.[222]

## A Frank Opinion Regarding Revisions

Making revisions is a positive endeavor that reflects the dynamism of dialogue possible between various actors in society and the state, including elements that were formerly involved in wrongdoing. Revisions are also an important mechanism for reintegrating these elements into society and normal life.

However, there are two reservations that merit consideration. First, revisions must include a comprehensive and genuine apology from what repenting criminal entities or individuals have done to society and the state, without discrimination. It is insufficient to apologize to the state, and then expect society to accept and reintegrate them. Second, such revisions must not become pretext in order to evade punishment for crimes stipulated by the Penal Law. Revisions may lead to lessening punishments, but not to dropping the civil right to prosecute the crime.

## The Moroccan Approach to Countering Extremism and Terrorism

The holistic approach adopted by Morocco since the attacks in 2003 demonstrated its worth. It included the restructuring of the religious sphere,[223]

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[222] See "Latest French Intelligence Reports on Algerian Hostage Crisis," https://wikileaks.org/clinton-emails/emailid/12095

[223] Morocco has applied a new religious policy through rehabilitating, regulating and monitoring the religious sphere in general, in part of the policy delineated in the King's speech on April 30, 2004.

"It is possible to read the religious policy approaches through the effort of the State in the field of religious education. The Ministry of *Awqaf* (Religious Endowments) and Islamic Affairs worked to improve the quality of education and training in the Traditional (religious) Education sector, provided support classes in modern sciences and foreign subjects, which benefited over 1,000 students in 54 traditional education institutions during the year 2005. On its part, the Department of Traditional Education in the Ministry of *Awqaf* conducted training sessions for preachers and "*Fuqahaa*" (jurists) of traditional schools. One of the sessions was dedicated to providing jurists with knowledge of administrative and financial management of educational institutions, while another session aimed to provide them with a certain modern education curriculum and methods. The Department's efforts come in part from its endeavor to implement more serious measures and issue executive decrees related to the Traditional Education Law in accordance with the directives of the King's April 30, 2004 speech.

The year 2005 witnessed the launch of education for the first class of a training program for 150 imams and 50 female counselors (*Murshidat*) each year. Graduates of this training program would be employed by a labor contract with the state and would receive the same pay and compensation of assistant administrator (10th rank). Also, the training system at the Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania was reconsidered, and the institute became a subsidiary of the Ministry of *Awqaf* in an effort to attract a new generation capable of carrying out the new tasks, which include: developing the creative and persuasive abilities of scholars associated with the official institution, training them to address and deal with the media field and to compete in the plurality and appeal of religious discourse that broadcasts through channels that have widespread audiences, especially after the national media sector was reinforced with the establishment of the Mohammed VI Channel for Qur'an (on November 2, 2005) aimed to "enhance the public audio and visual media's educational role, and making it a key tool in restoring the identity of the Moroccan nation and highlighting its doctrinal and religious unity." Other efforts included the

whereby sectors that supervise this sphere were reorganized, and new sectors were created, meanwhile each sector's responsibilities were better organized and clarified. The Moroccan approach to religious affairs included efforts such as:

- Establishing the Department of Mosques
- Establishing the Department of Traditional (Religious) Education
- Restructuring the Supreme Scientific Council (April 22nd, 2004)
- Establishing a Scholarly Committee for *Iftaa'* (Issuing religious edicts) (April 22nd, 2004)
- Restructuring the Moroccan League of Islamic scholars, which became the Moroccan Mohammadiya League of Scholars (April 30th, 2004)
- Establishing the Mohammed VI Holy Qur'an Radio Station (October 16th, 2004)
- Launching the Mohammed VI TV Channel for Holy Qur'an and launching the website of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs (November 2nd, 2005)
- Reorganizing the Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania to become the Institute of Dar Al-Hadith Al-Hassania (August 24th, 2005)
- Establishing a center to train and prepare imams and male and female counselors 2005-2006
- Establishing the European Council of Moroccan Oulema (scholars) (November 6th, 2008)
- Launching the plan for the Charter of Oulema (Scholars) (April 29th, 2009)
- Establishing the Mohammed VI Foundation for printing the Holy Qur'an (2010)
- Establishing the Mohammed VI Foundation for the Promotion of Social Works of Religious Custodians (2010).[224]

Other efforts include promoting and reinforcing the foundations of democratic governance,[225] reflected in the rise of a moderate Islamist political party to lead the Moroccan government and overcoming the problematic tensions of the so-called Arab Spring after holding elections in which all participating parties attested to the credibility of the electoral process compared to past experiences.[226] Accountability was reinforced, especially in the field of human

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establishment of a website for the Ministry aimed to "highlight the doctrinal and religious unity of Morocco." See: Abd al-Hakim Abu al-Lawz, *Al-Tawajuhat al-Jadida li al-Siyasa al-Diniya fi al-Maghreb*, [Lit., "New Trends of Religious Policy in Morocco"], Insaniyaat (Humanities), Issue No. 31, 2006.

[224] For more on the Moroccan governmental and official institution's activities in the religious field, see: A Chronology of Religious Affairs in Morocco from 1999 to 2016, http://www.habous.gov.ma/%D9%83%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7.html

[225] The Constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco for year 2011.

[226] Some political sectors continued to oppose this trend, particularly Islamist extremists and a group peculiar to Morocco, which is a mix between extremism, a form of Sufism, and Salafism

rights.[227] The security field was also overhauled through the restructuring of the General Directorate for National Security. Furthermore, a Central Judicial Research Center was established, whereby the processes of monitoring organized crime and terrorist movements became organized under a legal and judicial framework, and where the security dimension constitutes a provisional framework for pre-emptive and arrest measures. In the same context, prior intelligence arrangements and important practices were also part of the Moroccan approach to combat extremism and terrorism.

### The Status of Extremist and Terrorist Organizations Related to Morocco[228]

| **Terrorist Groups** | | **Extremist Groups** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Group Name* | *Current Status* | *Group Name* | *Current Status* |
| The Moroccan Mujahideen Movement | Dispersed | *Al-Chabiba al-Islamiya* (Islamist Youth) | Dismantled, now operating outside of Morocco, with small cells still active inside the country |
| The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) | Dispersed | *Al-Tabayyun* Group | Faded |
| *Jama'at al-Salafiya al-Jihadiya* (Jihadi Salafist) Group | Dispersed | *Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan* (Justice and Spirituality) Group | Active |
| *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqeem* (The Straight Path) | Dismantled | | |
| *Al-Takfir wa al-Hijra* (Excommunication and Exodus) | Dismantled | | |
| *al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb* (AQIM) | Being pursued | | |
| *Al-Muwaqi'oun bi al-Dam* (Those Who Sign in Blood) | Being pursued | | |

called *Al-'Adl wa al-Ihsan* (Justice and Spirituality) group, and the radical Left current, especially the Marxist "Democratic Way" party.

[227] Among the indicators of increased accountability in the field of human rights is the promotion of the "National Council for Human Rights" to the rank of a constitutional institution that has local councils to monitor human right conditions. Noteworthy also is Morocco's experience of establishing the Equity and Reconciliation Commission to address the effects and remnants of years of "bullets" during the reign of King Hassan II. The Commission is the predecessor of the National Council for Human Rights, and had worked to promote the culture of responsible dialogue and reconciliation with the past, and stressed the need for reparation for physical and emotional damages and the arrangement of writing the difficult history.

[228] El-Mostafa Rezrazi, *Al-Dinamikiyat al-Nafsiya 'inda al-Intihariyien al-Jihadiyien*, [Lit., The Psychological Dynamics of Jihadi Suiciders], Op. Cit.

| **Terrorist Groups** | | **Extremist Groups** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Group Name* | *Current Status* | *Group Name* | *Current Status* |
| *Al-Murabitoun* (The Sentinels) | Parts of the movement dismantled | | |
| *Jama'at al-Mulathamoun* (The Masked Ones) | Parts of the movement dismantled | | |
| *Ashbal al-Jihad* (Jihad Cubs) | Dismantled | | |
| *Fatah al-Andalus* (Conquering Al-Andalus) | Dismantled | | |
| The "Islamic State" Organization - North Africa *Wilaya* Branch | Being pursued | | |
| Small independent cells, loyal to either *al-Qaeda* or "Islamic State" | Mostly dismantled between 2013-2016 | | |

Furthermore, the King launched various workshops in the fields of judicial reform and combatting economic and social marginalization.[229] Morocco also adopted a policy of economic take-off by transforming the various regions of the country into investment-attracting hubs.[230]

The fundamental elements of restructuring the religious field in Morocco stem from efforts to reinforce the role of the "*Amir al-Mouminine*" (Commander of the Faithful, i.e. the King), which is a prestigious institution that has given Moroccans historical depth to spiritual stability and security,[231] and deprives extremists from any religious legitimacy in their political discourse, which is ideologically infused with religious rhetoric.

What distinguishes Morocco's experience in handling the religious field from other countries in the Arab and Muslim world is that its approach does not only address the content of religious doctrine, with a focus on moderate Ash'ari and Maliki schools of thought, but also includes regulating worship centers, care and interest in religious practitioners, such as Imams and male and female counselors, training them, and integrating them into the public service labor

[229] The first of such experiences was launched in 2003-2004 under the National Initiative for Human Development program.
[230] These include launching major economic and industrial projects in cities and areas near Tangiers, Casablanca, Ouarzazate, and others.
[231] Kei Nakagawa, The Mixed-Best Strategy in Fighting Extremism in Morocco, ITEAS, Tokyo, 2015.

sector. Morocco adopts an approach of relying on accredited imams, which prevents the phenomenon of volunteering in the administration of mosques.[232]

Morocco's contribution to security cooperation with its partners is not limited to its integration and enhancement of informational and operational coordination and cooperation; Morocco today has become a pioneering partner in establishing a new doctrine for international cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism. This doctrine promotes security cooperation to a degree of supra-diplomacy, making cooperative relations immune to incidental effects of apathy, lack of interest, or disputes that may arise between governments.

The Moroccan approach has focused on promoting security cooperation with other countries. However, successes in security cooperation sometimes face obstacles that stem from political backdrops, as is the case in the nearly non-existent cooperation between Morocco and Algeria, despite the common imminent security threats facing the two nations from the Sahel, Libya, and the Mediterranean region. One reason for this lack of cooperation is Algeria's unwillingness to separate its disputes with Rabat over the Western Sahara issue[233] from the need for security cooperation to transcend and rise above these disputes. There are also technical obstacles, related to the reliance of some nations, particularly in Africa, on their militaries to counter terrorism, especially countries where terrorist organizations there succeeded in securing safe havens for their activities and operations. Morocco, on the other hand, adopts the urban intelligence approach, which relies on surveilling and dismantling cells before they grow and spread towards mountainous or remote regions, and before they succeed in securing safe havens or geographical control.[234]

Cooperation with Western countries is also sometimes mired in difficulties, especially when the security cooperation is overshadowed by a mentality of unequal "North-South" detachment, and lack of respect for the concept of separating between the facts and their sources.[235]

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[232] Ibid.

[233] "Western Sahara Realities," Wikileaks documents, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09RABAT706_a.html. El Mostafa Rezrazi, "Chegraoui Khalid, (coll.), Behind the Scenes: Exploring Tindouf from Inside," Tokyo: Nihon Hyoro Publishing House, 2015.

[234] El-Mostafa Rezrazi, "Morocco's War on Terrorism: The Case for Security Cooperation Today," London: Gilgamesh Publishing House, 2016.

[235] Ibid.

# Tunisia's Approach to Fighting Terrorism through the "National Counter-Terrorism Strategy"

*Sami Brahem*

## Theoretical Preludes

Since the first terrorist assassination incident in Tunisia, politicians and experts have expressed the need for a national anti-terrorism strategy. This amalgamated phrase has come to have a "magical" effect, whereby everyone wagers on its existence, and competes to have the honor of participating in it, on top of the fact that disputes may even erupt over which entities have the authority to formulate and oversee it. I have been honored to participate in formulating the ideas of the strategy, which was formulated during the time of the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa, on behalf of the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies (ITES), a presidential research institution.

This paper seeks to shed light on the nature of the national strategy, its value, and what it presents of perceptions and mechanisms to combat terrorism, while respecting the reservations regarding its practical outcomes.

Before presenting a perspective on the philosophy behind the national strategy, this paper sets forth some theoretical introductions that include a diagnosis of the religious situation after the revolution, the relationship between the state and religion, and the problems facing the administration of religious affairs, which hinder efforts to adequately combat and prevent terrorism by cutting its lifelines, causes, motives, and addressing its manifestations and threats.

## Diagnosing the Status of Religion after the Revolution

Over the course of decades of the "national state," the relationship between the Tunisian state and religious affairs was marked by tension and imbalance. Before the revolution, the relationship was slanted in favor of the state, putting religion under the tutelage of the state. After the revolution, however, the scales tipped, this time in favor of society, with the state's "guardianship" and authority over religious affairs of society and public conscience collapsing. The state was unable to keep pace with the rapid transformations in the religious sphere and the outburst of repressed religiosity in a most chaotic, scenic, and disorderly fashion. This chaos and disruption led to sharp polarization on the basis of identity, manifested in a clash between the media and cultural spheres, on the one hand, and the religious one on the other, which nearly led to serious social rupture before the Constitution resolved this conflict through a vision that combined the values of religion and the values of modernity.

Religious affairs have also been marked by the weakness of the civil society frameworks that operate in the religious sphere, such as associations and research centers, which have lacked the influence and ability to frame and administer dialogue, and have been unable to effectively mediate between social actors in the religious sphere and oversight authorities and institutions in the state. This has been evident in the inability to shield the youth from the

magnetization of extremist and terrorist groups, and other polarizations in issues such as the Al-Zitouna University religious education and the disputes over freedom of expression, creativity, and respect for sacredness. Such issues were administered with the mentality of wrestling and conflicting resolves, which at times led to security intervention.

Another weakness has been the lack of influence of Al-Zitouna University on society, intellectually, culturally, and educationally, and its inability to assume its role in intellectual, doctrinal, and cultural framing and arbitration, mainly because of the marginalization and constriction it faced before the revolution.

## Results of the Diagnosis

All of this has led to the emergence of new religious identities in an unprecedented manner, such that religious people can resort only to their own conscience and awareness, and to the new intellectual and cultural mediums, particularly the virtual ones (the internet). This has led to:

- A break with the "nationalization" of religion, meaning that now every Tunisian has the freedom to belong to any ideological, sectarian, or jurisprudential school of thought he or she chooses, or is polarized towards. This has run contrary to the Tunisian cultural context, which led to:
- The infiltration of the local religious sphere by outside doctrinal, ideological, and intellectual influences, and new religious discourses that lacked Tunisian authenticity and intellectual frame of reference. This was coupled with questioning and casting doubts on the very credibility of the Tunisian religious frame of reference and religious institutions. Furthermore, forms of religious adherence emerged that managed to evade civic oversight and legal controls, ones that derive their legitimacy directly from what they consider to be divine authority, some of which leaned towards extremism, violence, threatening public security, insurgency against the law, and later transformed into organized terrorism.

As a result, new religious and cultural jostling erupted, often in a chaotic manner, through which different categories of society expressed their various approaches towards the concerns of religion and its issues.

## Issues of Religious Affairs

What are the functions of the civil democratic state – the religion of which is Islam and the language of which is Arabic – in administering the subject of religion, a subject that is characterized by diversity, and often collision and disarray, and sometimes reaching the extent of chaos?

How do we define the concept and set the limits of the axiom of "autonomy of the religious sphere," in light of the Constitution's stipulation that "the state is the guardian of religion"?

Is the state an original power that derives its authority, regulatory character, and legitimacy of its administration of religious affairs from itself?

Or is its role procedural and functional in the context of a civil contract to oversee this religious sphere?

To what extent does the society have a margin of autonomy in administering religious affairs, especially after the Tunisian experience in which we have witnessed the outcomes of the independence of religious affairs from the state?

Is the revolution an opportunity to decisively and finally restore the strategic balance between society and the state, and put an end to the state's monopoly over religious affairs and reorganize the relationship between the two?

## State Guardianship of Religious Affairs

Society has a basic need for a symbolic moral and guiding authority, as one of the main reasons for the disturbance of balance between the state and society is the collapse of the moral authority of the state; that is, its ethical and moral credibility. This collapse happens as a result of tyranny and corruption, and the forced, condescending, coercive modernization projects that encompass all areas, including religious affairs. This calls for rebuilding the relationship between the state and the religious sphere on the basis of the constitution, which has chosen the term "guardianship" to regulate this relationship, and the need to define the parameters of the concept of "guardianship."

Here, we need to distinguish between the different forms of relationships between the state and the religious sphere:

*The Interventionist Monopolizing State:*

Is a state that monopolizes the administration of religious affairs, by controlling the spaces of worship, rituals, regulating religious education, and unilaterally making decisions related to these affairs. This state is one that combines temporal power and spiritual power.

*The Resigned (Acquiescent) Passive State*

Is a state that does not interfere in the internal religious affairs, but does exercise the role of public authorities in terms of monitoring, oversight, and accountability when transgressions criminalized under the law occur. But, this state does not have a regulatory character in all that is related to the internal affairs of the religious sphere, and in return, the religious sphere does not interfere in public affairs, except in indirect ways such as educational guidance. This state separates between the temporal power and the spiritual power.

*The State Guardianship over Religious Affairs*

Is a state that combines the regulatory and the neutral characters in its relation with religious affairs. Its regulations are non-monopolizing, and its neutrality is not resigned. The state has responsible guardianship, motivated by national interest, preserving moderate-centrist values of religion, and protecting public rights and interests.

Here, the state has a regulatory and arbitration function in religious affairs in regards to administering dialogue and consultation with theorists and scholars of the religious sphere in the framework of a set of standards, laws, and regulations, some of which are regulated by a legislative institution, and others

by specialized scholars of "rituals and worship," while others through a moral contract with civil society. Such an administration is not wholly left to society, but is also not monopolized by the state.

## Religious Functions

The state is the only entity entitled to appoint and remove occupants of positions, but within standards agreed upon through consultation. The state appoints those who meet the legal and religious conditions, and those who the public accepts, with the need to distinguish between the functions of administrative positions and religious positions.

The role of the "guardian state" is to administer the societal dialogue in regards to religious affairs, and to follow the path of collective conscience, without interfering in the freedom of conscience and belief, as this matter is not open for "nationalization" or state regulation, because it is related to the conscience of believers.

This form of administration requires – out of necessity, rather than credit or improvements – the broadening of the circle of relationship and mutual consultation between the state and civil society working in the field of religious affairs (including notables, experts, and opinion leaders), not for the sake of "openness" and superficial enlightenment, but rather for the sake of partnership in the administration of these affairs, and building agreements and covenants that organize these affairs and serve as a reference when disputes and conflicts occur.

Religious affairs are a special case, particularly because of the overlapping of the civil and spiritual dimensions, which requires from the state an open-minded regulatory function, which would protect the right of stakeholders of religious affairs to express their opinions, suggest and participate in decision-making, especially in major challenges that face the state and society such as reform of religious education, restructuring religious issues, organizing and administering human resources and institutions, reforming religious discourse, and the prevention of fanaticism, extremism, violence, and terrorism in the name of religious interpretations.

This requires the rebuilding and restructuring of both official and civil religious institutions.

## Official Institutions

Rebuilding and restructuring official religious institutions in terms of their function as moral supervisory and administrative authorities capable of pushing towards developing common religious values that reflect public conscience. They should be able to take mutual and shared positions towards controversial issues and in crisis management, and able to assume the role of neutral intermediary in communicating with public opinion. Such official institutions ought to have the credibility to encourage commitment and adherence to human and ethical principles, and the ability to play a key role in the organization of social life and conflict resolution within society and the religious sphere, in addition to building

frameworks of cooperation and solidarity in everyday life matters between individuals and groups. These institutions should be qualified to be part of the solution, rather than a part of the conflict.

### Civil (Non-Governmental) Institutions

There is the need to build independent and stable civil institutions that are esteemed and respected, and distant from political rivalries and sectarian or group conflicts, institutions that would contribute to defining and propagating the corpus of the reform movement in Tunisia, which is regarded as a common asset in terms of intellectual competence, methodology, and values, expressing the collective conscience and public consciousness and contributing to their development and actualization. These institutions need to be qualified to mediate between the state and society and between the actors in the religious sphere, and to be in direct positive interaction with the state and the spiritual, intellectual, and cultural social movements in a manner that contributes to the crystallization of a centrist-moderate project that stems from the depth of society.

### Reforms

This reality necessitates the actualization of a set of fundamental reforms that would bring about a strategic vision. These reforms include restructuring official and semi-official institutions that answer to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and cooperate with it (such as the Higher Islamic Council, the Higher Council for Culture, and the Higher Council for Education), as esteemed referential entities that have adequate authority and financial and human resources, while ensuring the representation of effective experts and professionals who are known for their integrity, effectiveness, dynamism, and qualifications to assume these positions.

These institutions are capable of correcting the imbalances between the state and society on the level of guidance, formulating visions, and developing shared values in order that they be a product of social dynamism and work to safeguard its stability, sustainability, and conformity.

Other needed reforms include:

- Embarking on a comprehensive reform of the Al-Zitouna University to enable it to play its role as a world-class educational and scholarly beacon, and to contribute in the development of religious discourse and content. This reform would emanate from the scholarly frameworks of this university.
- Supporting religious education, under the supervision of Al-Zitouna Mosque, as supplementary education geared towards nurturing and educating the public in the principles of religion, without the outcome of this education amounting to academic degrees.
- Developing a legislative framework that would regulate the Awqaf (religious endowments) and restore its civic role in a manner that strengthens civil

institutions to improve religious affairs, and grants these institutions social immunity and financial independence.

- Controlling and monitoring the sources of financing and funding of social work in institutions and centers in order to protect society from foreign intervention through funding that is often conditional upon implementation of foreign agendas.
- Deep reform of religious and educational contents in school curriculum.

All of these above issues and objective goals could contribute to launching the path of comprehensive reform under the title of liberation and enlightenment.

## Towards a National Strategy to Counter Terrorism

The above introductions were overtures to addressing the problem of terrorism in light of a new conception of the relationship between the state and religious affairs, a conception that would free it from the sediments of a strained relationship before the revolution, and the status of weakness and fragility after the revolution.

Terrorism is an old yet regenerating global scourge that has been practiced under the banner of many religions, nationalities, ideologies, and spheres. The history of various nations and civilizations is laden with various patterns of terrorism, including tyrannical dictatorships, the terrorism of brutal colonial powers, foreign and domestic "economic terrorism" practiced today under the banner of globalization, the systems of domination over economic sovereignty, international trade, flow of foreign direct investment, the activity of global capital, and the movement of people and goods etc..

There is also the terrorism perpetrated by networks of corruption, organized crime, money laundering, arms and drug trade. Then, there is the *Takfiri* (excommunication from religion) terrorism, which often intertwines with the above forms of terrorism in its emergence, development, and manifestation, and is classified in the rank of aggression, oppression, and corruption on earth, and is founded upon a figment as one of the varieties of violent extremist religiosity that adopts a closed-minded understanding of religion and excommunication of those who differ, and adopts armed violence as a means to an end.

This subversive destructive thought and this pattern of terrorism, grew among some Tunisians outside the country during the 1990s. Inside the country, its emergence was associated with the marginalization and exclusion of the moderate Islamist movement which ended up in prison or in exile, and with the detrimental outcomes of a strategy to "dry up" the sources and manifestations of religiosity. This thought and pattern of terrorism broke out with the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the occupation of Iraq, and the country witnessed several terror attacks prior to the revolution, most notably the "Suleiman Group" plot.

After the revolution, militant groups gradually rebuilt themselves, exploiting a climate of inattention, lawlessness, and weakness of security forces, coupled with regional unrest. The groups formed various wings, attracted and recruited young

people, and stockpiled weapons. In May 2011, the first post-revolution clashes with terror groups occurred in the northern town of Rouhia.

Terror operations and threats continued progressively after that, with the aim of weakening the state according to the principle of "wars of vexation and attrition," and as a prelude to undermining the state and bringing about the "savagery" required to establish the so-called "Islamic state," as detailed in the literature of Jihadi terror ideology.

Terrorism today is the most crucial national and civilizational challenge, and it has cost the country heavy losses, has had a negative effect on its conditions, and has constituted a serious threat to democratic transition and social peace. Terrorism has also had severe effects on the national economy, and on the sense of security and confidence in the future. Despite the successes achieved in combatting it on the state and social levels, and the foiling of many plots, and despite the efforts of successive post-revolution governments in tackling the phenomenon, its danger still exists and is prone to grow. The methods of terrorism witnessed a quantum leap, such as the increased sophistication in the Ben Guerdane operation, where the "Islamic State" organization attempted to seize the city and establish an Islamic Emirate in the country, in line with its strategic objective to establish and maintain a stronghold that would serve as a junction for human resources and a launching point for expansion. Luckily, it did not succeed in this.

The problem of terrorism is extremely complex and overlapping, and is – as serious research has shown – dependent on a diverse and tangled web of subjective and objective factors, and a number of variables that vary from one person to another. The terrorist personality is one that is abnormal and aggressive, molded collaboratively by unpredictable atmospheres and motivating hubs, coupled with personal predispositions and the persuasive lure of extremist and fanatic groups and organizations of corruption and crime.

Hence, confronting this scourge necessitates a comprehensive strategy, one that combines prevention and treatment, in the short and long run, applies the vertical and the horizontal approaches, combines addressing the roots and causes of terrorism on the one hand and confronting its manifestations and effects on the other hand. This strategy would divide the roles and responsibilities among all national components, without exception.

## The National Counter-Terrorism Strategy

1. The main stake is to weaken terrorism as a prelude to eradicating it.

2. Objectives

- Enhance the state's capabilities in combatting terrorism and improving its performance
- Protecting new generations from falling into the trap of terrorism
- Convincing terror elements to revise their convictions and quit their practices.

3. Starting Points:

- This proposed strategy is based on the effort to understand the phenomenon of terrorism and to dismantle it. It is dependent on the utilization of all national energies, and the experiences of various nations and peoples in combatting it. It stems from the confidence in the ability of Tunisians to defeat terrorism and from the realistic optimism for a better future.
- The democratic state that is rooted in the country's civilizational identity is the one capable of dealing with this phenomenon. Restricting and tightening the grip on freedoms and religiosity, and provoking religious sentiments, does not deal with the problem but instead exacerbates it and attracts supporters and sympathizers to it.
- It is necessary to distinguish between those who espouse non-violent Salafist ideology, and Salafists who are supporters of violence and terrorism. Pigeonholing all such elements into one category is unjust, and only serves to expand the circle of enemies and the disgruntled, and fuels the flames of terrorism.
- *Takfiri* (excommunicative) terrorism cloaks itself with a religious garb, and uses the Islamic frame of reference in a skewed manner; therefore, winning the battle against it cannot be achieved without a strong and central involvement of the religious sphere in the fight.
- The strategy of terrorism is based on targeting the transitional democratic path, striking at the internal home front, weakening the state, and pushing towards chaos and "savagery." Therefore, it must be confronted with a counter-strategy that works to fortify the political path, strengthen national unity, reinforce the state, and empower stability, solidarity, and camaraderie.

4. The Legislative Frameworks and Human Rights Guidelines

Countering terrorism on the national level is actualized through legislative frameworks and is subject to legal texts and guidelines. Adherence to these parameters ensures an effective response to terrorism and safeguards the strength of the state.

A. *The Constitution*

According to the second paragraph of Article VI of the Constitution: "The state undertakes to disseminate the values of moderation and tolerance and the protection of the sacred, and the prohibition of all violations thereof. It undertakes equally to prohibit and fight against calls for Takfir and the incitement of violence and hatred." This means that it is the state's responsibility to confront, with its legal and judicial powers, all manifestations of incitement of violence as well as acts of violence. The state is tasked with countering all forms of intellectual and physical terrorism without violating the guarantees of rights and freedoms stipulated in the rest of the clauses of the Constitution.

B. *The Anti-Terrorism Act*

The Anti-Terrorism Law is the second framework that determines the state's methods of countering terrorism. The law is a legal translation of the stipulations of the Constitution. The parliamentary ratification of this law represented a response to numerous calls for the need to provide a legal framework to countering terrorism. Despite the importance and significance of this legislative text, it is worth noting here that the ratification of the law did not enjoy consensus. The hopes of eradicating terrorism that were built upon this law were exaggerated. Prior to issuing the law, it was envisaged as a magical and rapid solution. The fact of the matter is, terror attacks following the ratification of the law multiplied at a higher pace and stronger impact.

C. *Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights: The Relationship*

There is usually tension between counter-terrorism and human rights. The performance of security force in terms of monitoring, surveillance, pre-emptiveness, intervention, investigation, and other procedures is governed by a set of factors and constraints. Some of these factors are due to the nature of the phenomenon itself, and others are related to the security establishment which still has not completely gotten rid of the security mentality and some violating practices. It is not beneficial to pit the need to combat terrorism against the protection of human rights. On the contrary, the effectiveness of combatting terrorism is strongly connected to the respect of human rights. As for the argument often used in counter-revolutionary discourse – which argues that an autocratic system is better than uncontrolled freedom, and that the dictatorial regime at least achieved security and stability – it is a completely flawed argument. When a regime controls society with an ironclad grip, and encloses it as if it is a pressure cooker, then upon the removal of the regime, society is only bound to explode as a result of the repression and injustice that have accumulated over the years.

## 5. Solutions Needed on the National Level

A. *Preventive Treatment*:

Many parties, both from the state and its ministries, and society and its various institutions, need to intervene and play a role in preventive solutions. This type of solution is a deep structural one that addresses the causes, factors, and climates that produce and nurture terrorism in an effort to break the link between terrorism and its possible harbors, and to cut the supply of recruits and protect the youth from drifting towards its circles.

Terror groups have extensive capabilities of attracting people, and offer various services. They provide an alternative communal and economic life, a safe haven, a sense of presence, relevance, and distinction, and a sense of belonging to an ambitious project and an alluring new narrative whose discourse is distinguished by an ability to overwhelm with its illusions, ideals, techniques, and effects.

Hence, what is the best course of action in light of these challenges?

What is needed in this preventive course of treatment is to actualize a social, economic, political, and cultural environment that produces moderation and centrism rather than extremism and terrorism.

- Politically:

The phenomena of extremism and terrorism feed off the state of coercive authoritarianism that has afflicted the Arab world, and the atrocities of occupation and unjust international policies. Indeed, the post-revolutionary state of turmoil and uncontrolled freedoms, which were accompanied by internal schisms, political divisions, ideological polarization, and demonization of the "other," have provided a fertile environment for extremism and the spread of violence. After the revolution, Tunisia witnessed intense social and political protests, and a tremendous amount of strikes, sit-ins, and violent targeting of state and security institutions, a matter that worked in favor of terrorism in pushing towards chaos, instability, and armament, and hampered the work of various authorities and exhausted and scattered the efforts of security services in the early prevention and protection from these phenomena. The post-revolutionary conditions also reflected the collective social and official mentality that reached a point of apathy towards prospects and outlooks and towards swift attention to the imminent danger.

Therefore, combatting this scourge requires the preservation of a sound democratic environment and the policy of accord, and broadening the margins of political participation for all. The most prominent hallmark for this level of stability is strengthening national unity, considering that Tunisia cannot succeed in the fight against terrorism if the national ranks are in a shambles. Addressing and combatting the phenomenon of terrorism can be done most effectively when the political scene is most united, steadfast, and vigilant.

- Economically and Socially

The deteriorating economic situation that is unable to meet the aspirations of young people, and the marginalized social climate that is furious with the state, are among the factors that foment terrorism. In such a climate, uncontrolled and raging religiosity becomes a shelter for crushed social segments that have been unable to express themselves in alternate ways. Terrorism is also fueled by the disintegration of social and family ties, the lack of social stability, and manifestations of homelessness, delinquency, and criminality. Indeed, a large proportion of those involved in terrorism were, at some stage of their lives, delinquents, drug addicts, or imprisoned felons.

Studies have shown that the fight against poverty and marginalization, through improving economic and social conditions and the reduction of unemployment, help reduce the conditions that harbor extremism, considering that development destroys the causes of resentment and frustration that usually feed the desire for revenge and the tendency to drift towards extreme solutions. Other alleviating factors include controlling price hikes to preserve the purchasing power of low and middle-income segments of society, improving the mechanisms of social and health care for vulnerable groups, taking preliminary steps to break down the

ties between smuggling and terrorism by finding deep-seated solutions to the problem of smuggling, and strong engagement in the fight against crime, corruption, and money laundering through oversight and deterrent measures.

It is also important to engage the family structure through awareness and training on sound nurturing and dealing with children who show early signs of gravitating towards extremism and violence.

- Culturally and Educationally

Terrorism thrives in a climate of cultural marginalization, weakness of social and educational institutions, declining influence of role model figures such as parents, teachers, officials, intellectuals, and religious preachers in preserving a spiritual and emotional balance in new generations, and in a climate of anti-religious extremism that is disrespectful of the sacred. In Tunisia, terrorism benefited from the policies of eradicating sources of religiosity, and their by-products, which resulted in the absence of a Tunisian religious frame of reference that enjoys legitimacy and trust. This created a hybrid climate of intellectual aridity and ignorance of religion, especially among the youth, and weakened the Tunisian religious field in the face of imported forms of religiosity, rendering it unable to answer the needs of upcoming generations. Most of those who belong to the phenomena of extremism and terrorism in Tunisia were not nurtured on the "normal" moderate religiosity, but rather discovered it excitedly through the Jihadi Salafist discourse imported from the outside.

It is therefore most urgent to rehabilitate the centrist-moderate religious field, in all its components, to enable it to better encompass the youth and counteract extremism. There is also a dire need to establishing an enduring cultural, intellectual, and religious preaching movement to undertake intellectual and ideological confrontation of terrorism, to expose its deviation using reason and religion, and to empower the role of the educational system in rejecting extremism and violence and ingraining the culture of moderation and nurturing public ethics and patriotism, and to adopt an intensive media counter-campaign that utilizes digital media to confront terrorism, which has proven savvy in using social networking to communicate and disseminate its destructive messages and to embody and magnify its communication plans.

In order for these preventive treatments and solutions to be methodical, built upon real data and accurate diagnosis, a national research center ought to be established to study the phenomenon of terrorism, its trends and strategies, and to encourage scientific and scholarly research and regularly conduct seminars and studies in the field.

B. *Correctional and Rehabilitative Treatment:*

This treatment is the task of the Ministries of Justice, Religious Affairs, and Social Affairs, in addition to civil society and experts in the field. It is geared towards those who espouse violent approaches, both in prisons and in society, to engage them in dialogue, work to reform and rehabilitate them within a national program that also includes psychologists, social workers, and religious leaders,

through classes and seminars to attempt to remove the suspicions and illusions from their minds, and to correct the disordered feelings they have. Indeed, many of those who fell into the trap of terrorism were drawn to it out of frustration and a sense of humiliation, poor self-esteem, spiritual void, and inability to integrate and prove their existence, in addition to the fact that the majority of them tend to be of a young age, fueled by enthusiasm, impulse, rejection, and lack of ability to evaluate the consequences.

The state should monitor and encourage the positive transformations that may occur within these extremist groups, which may be manifested in revisions or reflections, and should allow them the opportunity to grow in the direction of weakening the phenomenon of extremism.

C. *Field Treatment (Security and Military):*

This treatment is the jurisdiction of the military and security forces, which need to develop and enhance their efforts. This is done through an objective methodological assessment of the security situation in the country and an evaluation of the volume of successes, failures, and threats. This treatment is based on measures of prevention, protection, surveillance, and confrontation that is the expertise of those in the field.

Enhancing the "field" treatment is dependent on the improvement of performance in these four measures, which is the role and arena of state apparatuses and experts in security and military affairs. Political parties are also encouraged to present general observations such as calling for developing training in the field of non-traditional warfare against terrorism, revamping and updating equipment and machinery, organizing joint field work and strengthening cooperation and coordination between various agencies, restructuring and updating the state's information system, reforming the penitentiary system in accordance with the law, strengthening cooperation with friendly countries, and better organizing the work of security trade unions to protect it from deviating from the legal tracks.

6. The Regional Dimension

A. *The Libyan Case*:

Libya represents a strategic depth and importance for Tunisia, as the two countries share strong economic ties, and because the number of Tunisians working in Libya is estimated to be in the tens of thousands, and where a large number of Libyans currently reside in Tunisia. Simply put, what is happening in Libya spills over directly into the domestic conditions in Tunisia. Conditions in neighboring Libya are witnessing major tensions and instabilities that are being exploited by armed terrorist organizations that use Libya as a ground for training, planning, and launching operations, such as what occurred in the battle of Ben Guerdane, when militant "Islamic State" elements tried to seize the coastal Tunisian city near the borders with Libya. With the stalemated political process in Libya, the negative effects will not stop at the Libyan borders, but are bound to spill over into neighboring countries, particularly Tunisia. Therefore, it is in the

interest of Tunisia to give the Libyan file ample importance in a manner that would contribute to reaching a consensual political solution between the warring parties in Libya. As long as the political solution is hindered and delayed, there remains constant pressure on the democratic experience in Tunisia.

B. *Coordination with Algeria*:

Algeria suffered a painful experience in what is known as the "Bloody Decade" in the 1990s. The country also has considerable experience in dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism, as it has been laden with the pains and consequences of terrorism until now. Moreover, the country is still concerned with the problem of terrorism as it continues to face it today. Several terrorist elements have positioned themselves on the Algerian-Tunisian borders, and Algeria is located on the African coast, which includes North African countries where arms smuggling, drug trafficking, and illegal immigration are active. All these factors render Algeria a country in the heart of the confrontation with terrorism. Cooperation and coordination with Algeria is of the utmost importance. In addition to the security-military treatment, Algeria has also adopted an approach of dialogue, and called on armed groups to disarm in return for their reintegration into society in part of the National Reconciliation Program.

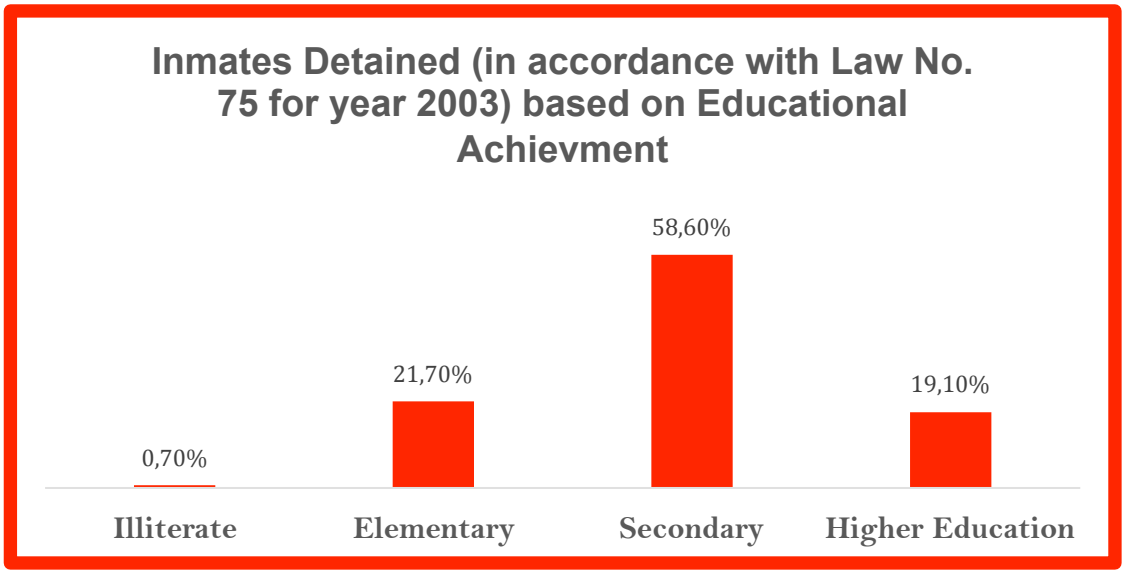
7. International Axes:

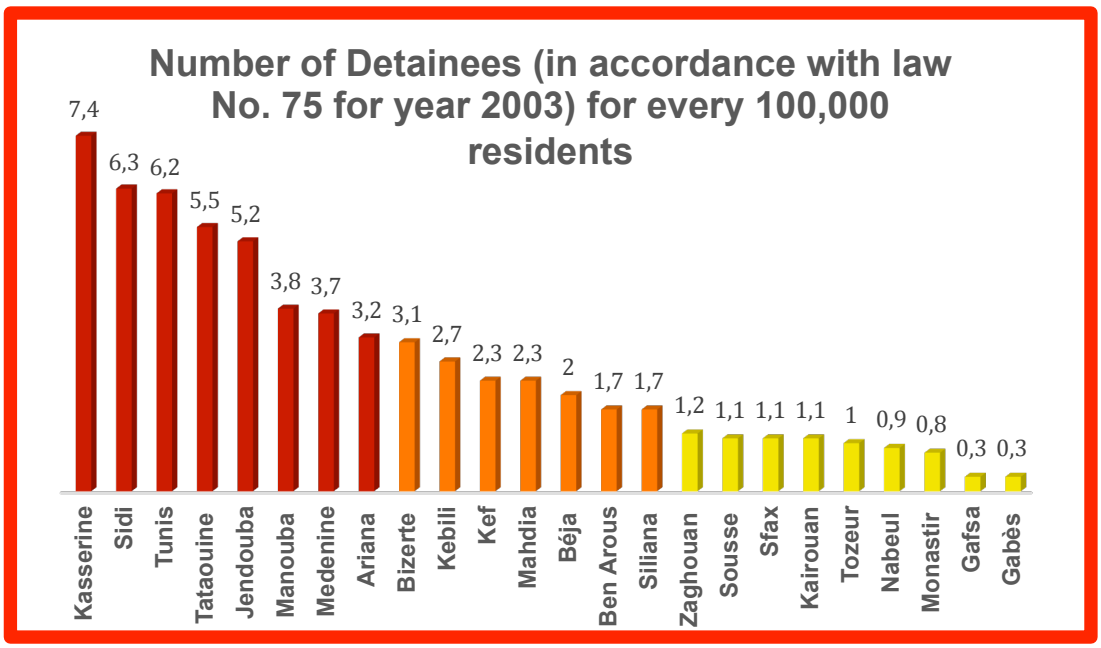
Terrorism is a global cross-border phenomenon, and confronting it takes place within the framework of numerous international agreements and legislations. In Tunisia, the confrontation of terrorism is also bound by the Tunisian Constitution and the Anti-Terrorism Act.

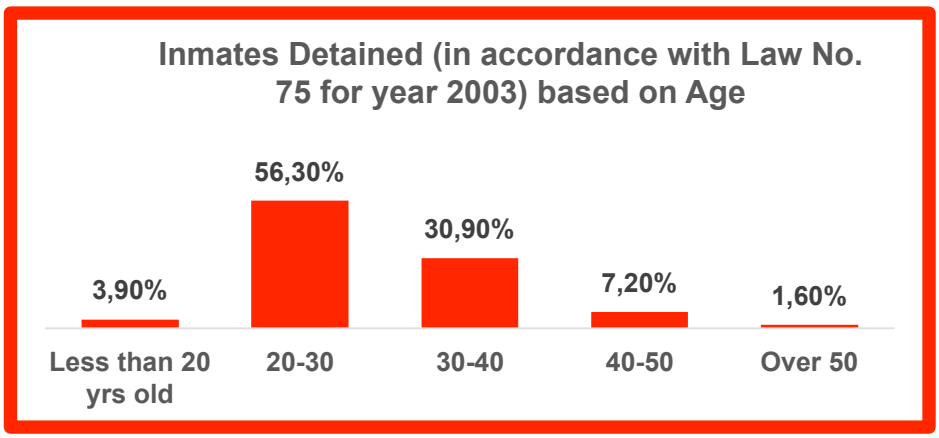
International cooperation constitutes a strong front in addressing and combatting terrorism, however, it is also governed by balances and differences in purposes and goals. It is important to note that, in the international context, each party whether regional or international is governed by its own agendas and interests, which stem from its own calculations and circumstances. This tangled situation, which intersects at times and contrasts at others, adversely affects the international coalition and weakens it, and in turn facilitates and strengthens terrorism. When purposes and objectives vary, crucial gaps occur. It is through these gaps that the threat of terrorism continues to strike.

Through this paper I hope that the vision presented here is a contribution to the building blocks of a national and civilizational counter-terrorism project, the effectiveness of which will only materialize through concerted efforts and visions and the cohesion of all forces and contributions. May God protect our country, our people, our Arab nation, and all of humanity from the scourge of terrorism.

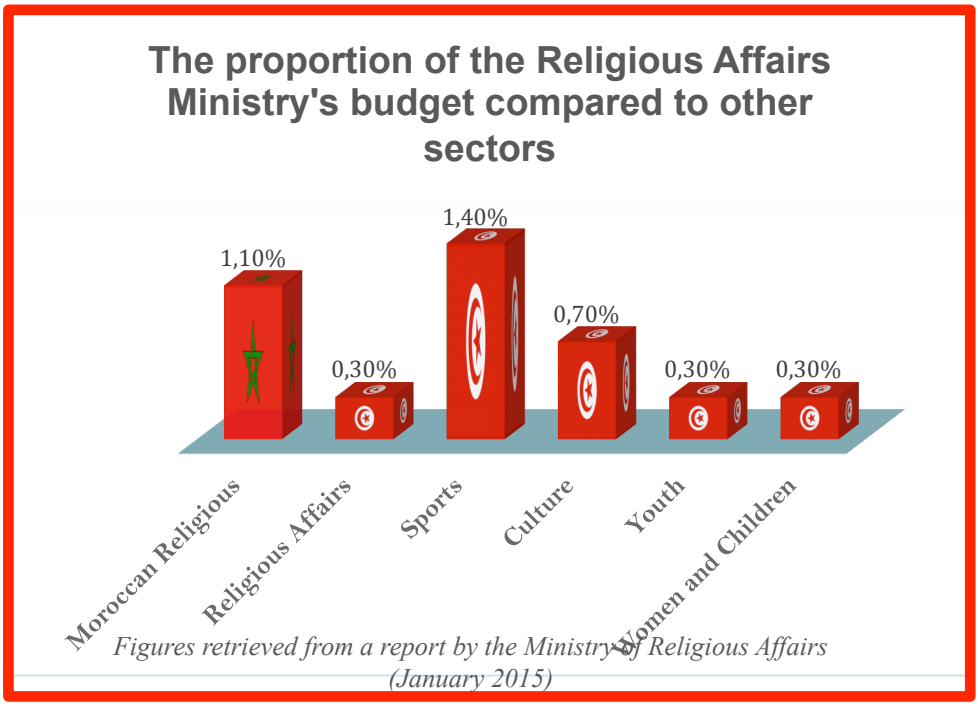
**Appendixes (Tunisia)**

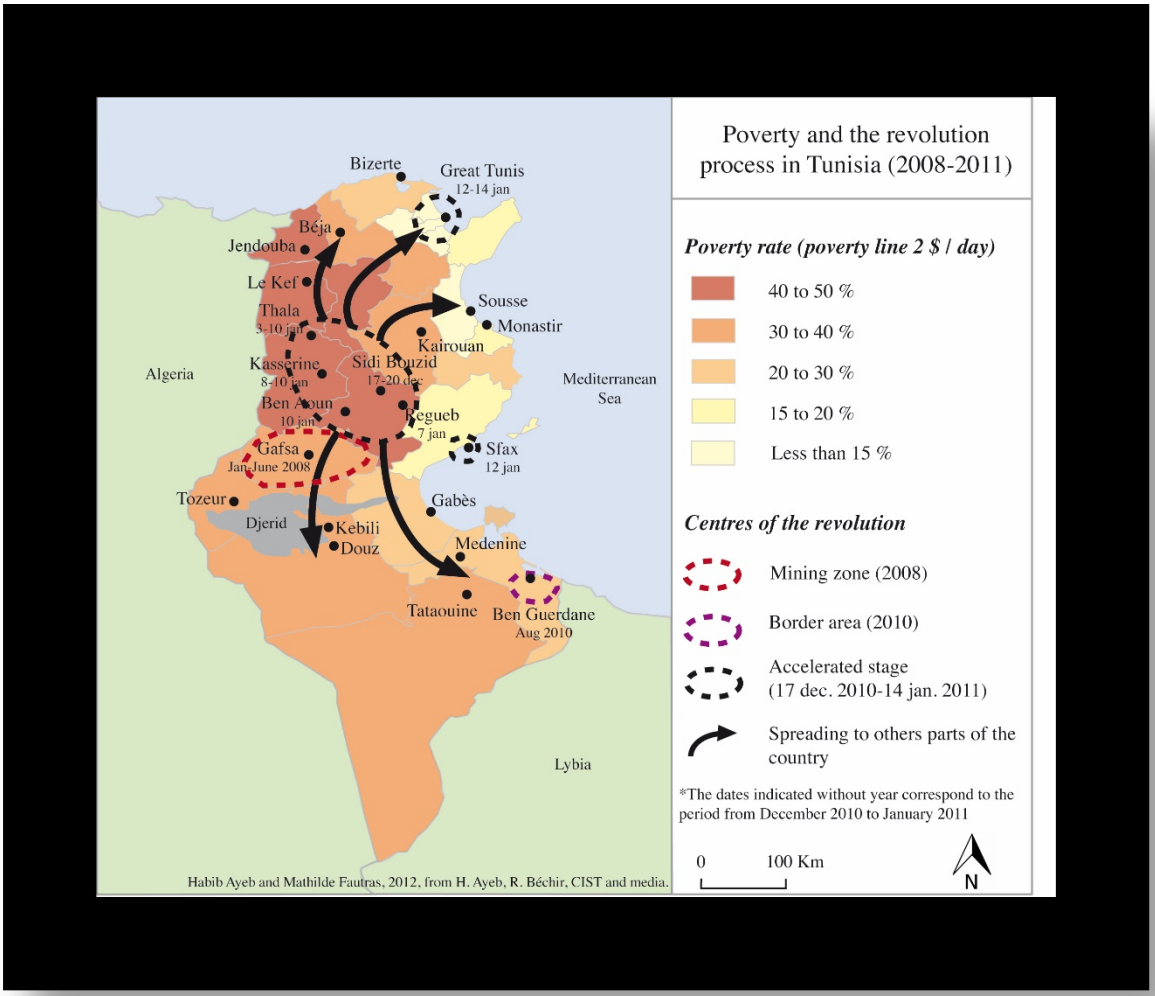


| Governorate | Illiteracy Rate | Unemployment Rate among Graduate Degree Holders | Unemployment Rate | Poverty Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| National Rate | 18.9% | 30% | 16.5% | 15.2% |
| Beja | 30.4% | 46.3% | 19.5% | 25.7% |
| Jendouba | 32.8% | 47.1% | 19.1% | 25.7% |
| Kef | 25.6% | 36.4% | 10.8% | 25.7% |
| Siliana | 28% | 38.8% | 20.5% | 25.7% |
| Kasserine | 29.9% | 38,8% | 46.9% | 32.3% |
| Sidi Bouzid | 29.8 | 57.1% | 24.4% | 32.3% |




Poverty and the revolution process in Tunisia (2008-2011)
Poverty rate (poverty line 2 $ / day)
40 to 50 %
30 to 40 %
20 to 30 %
15 to 20 %
Less than 15 %
Centres of the revolution
Mining zone (2008)
Border area (2010)
Accelerated stage (17 dec. 2010-14 jan. 2011)
Spreading to others parts of the country
*The dates indicated without year correspond to the period from December 2010 to January 2011
0
100 Km
N
Bizerte
Great Tunis
12-14 jan
Béja
Jendouba
Le Kef
Thala
3-10 jan
Kasserine
8-10 jan
Ben Aoun
10 jan
Sidi Bouzid
17-20 dec
Kairouan
Sousse
Monastir
Regueb
7 jan
Sfax
12 jan
Gafsa
Jan-June 2008
Tozeur
Djerid
Kebili
Douz
Gabès
Medenine
Tataouine
Ben Guerdane
Aug 2010
Algeria
Mediterranean Sea
Lybia
Habib Ayeb and Mathilde Fautras, 2012, from H. Ayeb, R. Béchir, CIST and media.

# Pursuing a More Comprehensive Strategy to Counter-Terrorism: The Challenges of Moving from Talk to Walk. The Experience of the United States

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## The Threat

Since September 2001, the terrorist threat in the United States and around the world has evolved, and is both more globalized and more localized than ever before, with an array of terrorist threats having gained traction in areas of instability, limited opportunity, and broken governance. Today, the principal threat to the United States no longer comes from a centralized *al-Qaeda* leadership operating out of Afghanistan, but from decentralized *al-Qaeda* affiliates and extremists, many with agendas focused on the countries and regions where they operate, including the Sahel, Arabian Peninsula, and Horn of Africa. It also comes from the "Islamic State" organization (IS, also known as ISIS, ISIL, or Da'esh), which continues to hold territory in Iraq and Syria, and is now estimated to have operational branches in 18 countries,[236] and propagates its narrative using social media and other 21st century technology. Tens of thousands of fighters have traveled from more than 100 countries to Iraq and Syria to join the "Islamic State", and nearly one third of them have returned to their home countries, some disillusioned and others trained and committed to carrying out violent attacks upon their return.[237] With the "democratization of terror,"[238] where attacks can be committed without training by, resources from, or connections to terrorist groups and a growing number of attacks perpetrated by individuals who were not on the radar of intelligence services, but may have had criminal backgrounds or mental health issues, the threat today is significantly more complex than it was on September 12th, 2001.

Speaking in the aftermath of the December 2015 San Bernardino attacks in the US that killed 14 people, Jeh Johnson, the US Secretary for Homeland Security, said that "we have moved to an entirely new phase in the global terrorist threat." Terrorists have "in effect outsourced attempts to attack our homeland. We've seen this not just here but in other places. This requires a whole new approach, in my view."[239] Whereas *al-Qaeda* would spend years planning, today, in large part because of the internet and social media, the time it takes to move from

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[236] William Arkin, Robert Windrem and Cynthia McFadden, "New Counterterrorism 'Heat Map' Shows ISIS Branches Spreading Worldwide," ABC News, 3 August 2016: http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/new-counterterrorism-heat-map-shows-isis-branches-spreading-worldwide-n621866

[237] "Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq," The Soufan Group, 2 December 2015: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf

[238] Daniel Benjamin, "The Nice Attack and the Democratization of Terror," TIME, 15 July 2016: http://time.com/4408909/nice-attack-democratization-terror/

[239] "US rethinking strategy on fighting homegrown attacks - NYT," Reuters, 5 December 2015. http://www.reuters.com/article/california-shooting-policy-idUSKBN0TP01M20151206

"flash" to "bang" is much shorter. When interviewed on the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the Director of the US National Counter-Terrorism Center summed up the current threat very simply: the United States "face[s] more threats, coming at [it] from more places, involving more individuals than [it has] at any time since 9/11. It's also worth remembering that the scale of the capabilities of these extremist actors does not rise to the level that core *al-Qaeda* had at its disposal at the time of 9/11."[240]

## Evolution of Response since 9/11: Expanding CVE in CT

In the initial period after 9/11, the United States focused most of its counter-terrorism (CT) attention on hardening its own defenses at home – spending upwards of $650 billion on homeland security during this time, according to one estimate[241] – in addition to deploying its military, and expanding its intelligence and law enforcement efforts that targeted operational planning, terrorist fundraising, travel, facilitation, and recruitment of *al-Qaeda* core. Those efforts proved to be successful in disrupting plots, removing terrorist leadership, and keeping the American homeland safe from attacks plotted overseas.

Largely because the United States identified and addressed the intelligence and other security shortcomings that contributed to 9/11,[242] the national security machine has proven increasingly adept at identifying and disrupting terrorist networks. As a result, there have been no successful large-scale attacks. Overseas, much of the US strategy was based on an intelligence campaign that involves partnering with countries around the world to gather information on suspected top terrorists. In cases where the US Government or partners cannot arrest terrorists – and Washington has devoted increasing attention and resources to building the capacity of its partners to investigate, prosecute and incarcerate them within a rule of law framework – it kills them in drone strikes or through other direct actions.

Yet, while the military and broader security dimensions of CT have continued to grab most of the headlines – and attract the overwhelming majority of the resources – the US strategy for addressing the threat has in fact evolved over the past decade in a variety of ways. For example, it has moved beyond a "Global War on Terror" to a campaign focused on specific terrorist groups threatening the US and its allies. It has shifted away from the use of waterboarding and other tactics that arguably did more to drive radicalization and alienate partners than reduce the threat, to one that underscored that the most effective CT strategy and tactics are ones that respect human rights. It has expanded from a military and intelligence-dominated approach to one that emphasizes the importance of a "whole of government" response, with increasing emphasis placed on the role of

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[240] Paul Cruickshank, "A View from the CT Foxhole: An Interview with Nick Rasmussen, Director, NCTC," Combating Terrorism Center, 11 September 2015. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-view-from-the-ct-foxhole-an-interview-with-nick-rasmussen-director-nctc

[241] Daniel Benjamin, "Is America Next?" Politico Magazine, 22 March 2016. http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/03/brussels-terrorist-attack-united-states-next-213758

[242] Steven Brill, "Is America any Safer?" The Atlantic, September 2016. http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/09/are-we-any-safer/492761/

civilian institutions, beginning with the criminal justice sector. It now recognizes that governments alone lack the solutions; and partnering with and empowering local communities as part of a "whole of society" response to the threat is required in order to prevent violent extremism from taking root in communities. It now places increased emphasis on building the capacity of the most vulnerable states and communities to defeat terrorists locally, and strengthening the international CT architecture to allow for more effective inter-state cooperation and burden-sharing.

These shifts can be seen in four core strategic documents: 1) the 2011 National Strategy for Counter-Terrorism[243] (national CT strategy); 2) the 2011 National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States [244] (national CVE strategy); 3) the 2015 National Security Strategy[245]; and 4) the 2016 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism.[246]

Although much has been written about the evolution of the US's CT strategy and policies over the past decade,[247] this paper focuses on the increased attention that has been given to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) – both at home and abroad – over the past couple of years. As more political and military leaders in Washington and in other capitals have come to understand that while focused military campaigns against terrorist groups remain essential, more attention needs to be given to identifying and addressing – often through community-led initiatives – the often very localized grievances that terrorists exploit to attract new recruits if we hope to get ahead of the threat and prevent future threats from emerging. While this is increasingly recognized as the key to getting ahead of the threat, it has proven much easier to say than do.[248] This paper will highlight some of the challenges to operationalizing a locally-led effort to counter and prevent violent extremism (CVE) both in the United States and abroad.

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[243] "National Strategy for Counterterrorism," The White House, June 2011.
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf

[244] "Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States," The White House, August 2011.
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf

[245] "National Security Strategy," The White House, February 2015.
https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf

[246] US Department of State and USAID, "Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism," May 2016.
https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257913.pdf

[247] For example, see the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland website http://www.start.umd.edu/counter-terrorism-and-countering-violent-extremism?qt-qt_content_types=0#qt-qt_content_types

[248] Alex P. Schmid, "Countering Violent Extremism: a Promising Response to Terrorism," International Center for Counter-terrorism (ICCT), 12 June 2012.
https://icct.nl/publication/countering-violent-extremism-a-promising-response-to-terrorism
and Georgia Holmer, "Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective," United States Institute of Peace, September 2013.
http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Transnational/CVEUSIP.pdf

## CVE in the United States

Before turning to CVE in the United States, a brief overview of the threat of violent extremism[249] in the country is warranted. There are currently 102 individuals that have been charged with IS-related offenses since March 2014. 48 of these individuals have pleaded or were found guilty.[250] Furthermore, according to the FBI, there are 900 open terrorist investigation cases, most of which are related to the "Islamic State" organization, with at least one in each of the 50 states.[251]

Overall, there have been 250 Americans who either tried to or successfully joined IS. There is no single terrorist profile, and their demographics are diverse. Most are young and found to be active online in Jihadi circles. The average age is 25, 1 in 7 are women, and 1 in 5 had familial ties to Jihad either through marriage, or through having a family member that traveled before them to Syria or Iraq.[252]

In the US, authorities are increasingly dealing with terrorist-inspired, rather than terrorist-directed attacks. This constitutes a more complex security challenge than the one that confronted the US in the decade after September 11 – disrupting plots against the US that were being hatched in terrorist sanctuaries and safe-havens such as in Afghanistan or Yemen[253] – because a self-radicalized individual doesn't need to contact a terrorist group before carrying out an attack. This makes preventing and detecting them even harder. In addition to prevention and detection, US officials are grappling with a number of other challenges that have been included in the CVE issue basket, for example: 1) how best to steer radicalizing individuals, who celebrate terrorist propaganda, but have not committed violent crimes, away from violence; and 2) how to rehabilitate and reintegrate those violent extremist prisoners who have served their time or those disillusioned young people who travelled or were seeking to travel to Syria, but no longer pose a threat to society.

There is increasing recognition in Washington that the traditional security tool kit, which is focused on arrests, prosecutions, and incarceration – and the zero-tolerance approach to terrorism that has permeated the United States,

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[249] While CVE efforts in the United States have looked at all forms of violent extremism, regardless of religion, ideology, or geography, this paper is focused particularly on efforts to counter the violent extremism linked to those terrorist groups that subscribe to Salafi-Jihadi ideology. This form of violent extremism is, in fact, the primary concern of CVE policy in the United States today.

[250] George Washington University's Program on Extremism, "ISIS Recruits in the US Legal System," 29 August 2016. https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/August%202016%20Snapshot.pdf

[251] Jesse Byrnes, "FBI investigating ISIS suspects in all 50 states," The Hill, 25 February 2015. http://thehill.com/blogs/blog-briefing-room/233832-fbi-investigating-isis-suspects-in-all-50-states

[252] Peter Bergen Congressional Testimony, "ISIS Online: Countering Terrorist Radicalization & Recruitment On the Internet & Social Media," US Senate Committee on Homeland Security, 6 July 2016. http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/bergen-testimony_psi-2016-07-05

[253] "Homeland Security Chief Discusses Changing Nature of Terrorism," US Department of Defense, 13 October 2016. http://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/622878/homeland-security-chief-discusses-changing-nature-of-terrorism

particularly since 9/11 – may be inadequate for dealing with the current situation.

*Prevention, Rehabilitation and Reintegration*

Police, prosecutors, judges, and prison officials across the US require a broader set of tools for addressing the threat. For example, if one looks at the rehabilitation and reintegration challenges, one sees that some 300 people have been found guilty of terrorism-related charges in the US since 2001.[254] In the last two years alone, 102 individuals have been charged with IS-related offenses, most of them non-violent,[255] and American prisons currently hold some 450 convicted terrorists.[256] According to one analysis,[257] at least 41 individuals have been released from prison in the last few years and more than 100 inmates in US prisons with links to terrorism will be released over the next five years.[258] These figures, however, generally do not include those convicted since the emergence of the "Islamic State" organization, when the pace of prosecutions of suspected terrorists and supporters skyrocketed.

Yet, despite the growing number of people sent to prison for non-violent terrorism charges, the US Government, unlike many of its partners in Europe (and increasingly beyond) has yet to put in place tailored plans for their rehabilitation inside prison or reintegration once they are released. Although plans may be underway to create special programs for this segment of the prison population,[259] the US Federal Bureau of Prisons currently does not appear to have a systematic way to address disengagement and deradicalization of terrorist offenders. For example, those who have been convicted of committing a crime by going to Syria and Iraq to fight and have been incarcerated will have needs that are distinct from the general prison population. They may not regard their actions as criminal, and the prison experience may serve to further radicalize them, giving rise to an enduring threat upon their release.

The options available to investigators, prosecutors and judges are similarly limited, particularly for dealing with disillusioned young people arrested for having travelled or seeking travel to support the "Islamic State", but who are judged not to pose a security threat and for whom a 10 to 20-year prison

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[254] US Department of Justice, "2009 Budget and Performance Summary," 16 September 2014. https://www.justice.gov/jmd/2009-budget-and-performance-summary-2008-budget-highlights-key-performance-measures-and

[255] George Washington University's Program on Extremism, "ISIS Recruits in the US Legal System," 29 August 2016: https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/August%202016%20Snapshot.pdf

[256] Hannah Fairfield and Tim Wallace, "The Terrorists in US Prisons," The New York Times, 7 April 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/04/07/us/terrorists-in-us-prisons.html

[257] Jerome P. Bjelopera, "Terror Inmates: Countering Violent Extremism in Prison and Beyond," Congressional Research Service, 28 October 2015. http://docs.house.gov/meetings/HM/HM05/20151028/104102/HHRG-114-HM05-Wstate-BjeloperaJ-20151028.pdf

[258] Nicole Hong, "Terror Convicts Pose Dilemma After Release From Prison," Wall Street Journal, 15 February 2016. http://www.wsj.com/articles/terror-convicts-pose-dilemma-after-release-from-prison-1455560250

[259] Ibid.

sentence might risk further radicalization. The emphasis continues to be placed on arresting and prosecuting such individuals, despite an increasing recognition among policymakers that alternatives to criminal prosecution and incarceration, in certain circumstances, can help facilitate the cooperation of family, friends, and other members of vulnerable communities who may be reluctant to cooperate with law enforcement if they know that any outreach might put their loved one in a prison cell.

In the absence of any federal guidelines in this area, a federal judge in Minneapolis has taken it upon himself to explore the possibility of designing a deradicalization program – in lieu of jail time – for some young defendants in a trial related to the "Islamic State".[260] Seeking to move beyond this ad hoc approach, the Justice Department has an "Alternative Dispositions Working Group" looking to develop policy guidance for prosecutors and judges around the US seeking alternatives (e.g., disengagement programs) to prosecution in cases like these.[261]

Similarly, the FBI is soon expected to roll out its – somewhat controversial – Shared Responsibility Committees (SRCs) designed to provide FBI alternatives to simply arresting individuals on the path to violence. The SRCs would be a "voluntarily-formed group made up of law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, religious leaders, family and community members that identify potential violent extremists for intervention."[262] Concerns have been voiced surrounding the FBI's role in these non-criminal entities and the privacy and other protections that will be afforded to those identified for, and those delivering, the interventions.[263]

The FBI also recently unveiled an online classroom resource on extremism called "Don't Be a Puppet"[264] and provided a guide to school administrators that addresses "concerning behavior" and how to intervene.[265] Much like its planned SRCs, this initiative has also been heavily criticized by civil rights and Muslim-community advocacy groups, which claim the tool "perpetuates profiling and negative stereotypes of Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim, and encourages the policing of ideas and beliefs."[266]

For its part, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including through its new Office for Community Partnerships (established in 2015) and its July 2016

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[260] Laura Yuen, "Two Men Convicted on ISIS-related Charges Ask for Rehabilitation," MPR News, 30 June 2016. https://www.mprnews.org/story/2016/06/30/two-men-convicted-isis-related-charges-seek-rehabilitation-deradicalization

[261] Eric Rosand, "Taking the Off-Ramp: A Path to Preventing Terrorism," War on the Rocks, 1 July 2016. http://warontherocks.com/2016/07/taking-the-off-ramp-a-path-to-preventing-terrorism/

[262] See collection of letters expressing concern over CVE, US House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security. https://democrats-homeland.house.gov/sites/democrats.homeland.house.gov/files/sitedocuments/pclobletter.pdf

[263] Ibid.

[264] Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Don't Be A Puppet," https://cve.fbi.gov/home.html

[265] Lauren Camera, "FBI's Anti-Extremism Website Should Be Scrapped, Groups Say," US News, 6 April 2016:http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-04-06/fbi-dont-be-a-puppet-website-criticized-by-advocacy-groups

[266] Ibid.

announcement of its first-ever grant solicitation to support community-led CVE efforts, is increasingly focused on empowering local communities to help prevent young people from being captivated by terrorist propaganda and dissuading those who have already been captivated from turning to violence, stressing that these efforts must begin within the communities themselves.

Multi-stakeholder local programs, announced with great fanfare at the February 2015 White House CVE Summit, have begun to be piloted in three cities (Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis), with officials in those cities only just starting to distribute more than $500,000 in Department of Justice grant money to jumpstart new local efforts to address youth prevention and intervention, mental and behavioral health, and radicalization in prisons.[267] The new DHS money that is now available (although only $10 million in total, roughly the same amount available in the Netherlands, a country of less than 17 million people, for community-led CVE work) should allow these programs to be scaled up and new ones to be developed. This money is being made available – via the very cumbersome US Government grant-making process – to support local CVE work in five areas: building resilience, training and engaging with community members, managing intervention activities, challenging the narrative, and building the capacity of community-level NGOs active in CVE.

Some observers have complained not only of the inadequate and slow-to-arrive CVE funding, but that the developed programs have been "hobbled by a vague mission that has sown confusion and fueled strong opposition from civil rights and community groups that fear the programs will amount to government spying on law-abiding Muslims."[268]

One program that has seemingly managed to steer clear of the controversies and criticisms of other community-led CVE programs in the US was developed by the World Organization for Resource Development and Education (WORDE) in cooperation with authorities from Montgomery County, Maryland.[269] It focuses on generating public awareness about the risk factors of violent extremism and empowering the appropriate figures in the community to intervene with vulnerable individuals before they choose a path of violence. It was built on the premise that preventing violent extremism is a multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder endeavor that needs to involve a wide spectrum of community-based actors across the public and private sector.

This initiative is reportedly the first empirically evaluated community-led CVE program in the US, with a National Institute of Justice grant used to fund the evaluation that was released in June 2016.[270] The evaluation found that the program "had intended positive effects on 12 of 14 CVE-relevant outcomes… and

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[267] Philip Marcelo, "A federal pilot effort to combat extremist recruitment in Boston, Los Angeles and Minneapolis has been slow to start since it was announced nearly two years ago," US News, 24 March 2016. http://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2016-03-24/effort-in-3-us-cities-to-combat-extremism-off-to-slow-start

[268] Ibid.

[269] "The Montgomery County BRAVE Model," WORDE. http://www.worde.org/programs/the-montgomery-county-model/

[270] Michael J. Williams, John G. Horgan and William P. Evans, "Evaluation of a Multifaceted, US Community Based, Muslim-Led CVE Program," US Department of Justice, June 2016. www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/249936.pdf

[is] the first evidence-based CVE-relevant programming in the United States." Among the recommendations in the evaluation was that the WORDE-run program should be replicated in other communities across the US.

It remains to be seen whether this program, which has benefited from considerable support from Washington and operates in a community where the criticisms of "CVE" aren't nearly as acute as in other corners of the US, can in fact be replicated. One would assume that at least some of the $10 million in DHS funding for community-based CVE work will be used to at least try to do so.

In addition to the new CVE funding, in 2016 the US Government established a DHS-led task force[271] to coordinate federal CVE efforts – which have been criticized[272] for being duplicative, disjointed, and disconnected. The new task force, which has been hobbled by the somewhat familiar bureaucratic obstacles in Washington, is focused on: "developing intervention programs; synchronizing federal CVE outreach and engagement; managing CVE communications and leveraging digital technologies to engage, empower, and connect CVE stakeholders; and coordinating and prioritizing federal CVE research and establishing feedback mechanisms to increase the relevance of CVE findings."[273]

With the task force slowly becoming operational, there is also the hope that federal agencies that have an important role to play in CVE, particularly prevention, will become more involved, such as the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, which have historically been reluctant to do so because of the links to the FBI and other security-focused agencies.

However, with the task force lacking authority to (re)-direct the CVE efforts of individual federal agencies or control or direct the funding allocated by Congress to individual federal agencies for CVE work, it remains to be seen how much impact it will actually have.

Moreover, the creation of a "federal" CVE task force dominated by the FBI, DHS, and DOJ may improve coordination in Washington, despite lacking any representation from state and local authorities let alone the kinds of community-level professionals viewed as being essential for developing and implementing effective prevention, intervention, and even reintegration programs. However, it is probably ill-suited to the task of truly empowering communities to get more involved in CVE efforts across the country. As noted above, a number of federally-led CVE efforts have been (often unfairly) accused of stigmatizing

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[271] "Countering Violent Extremism Task Force," Department of Homeland Security, 8 January 2016. https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/01/08/countering-violent-extremism-task-force

[272] Lorenzo Vidino and Seamus Hughes, "Countering Violent Extremism in America," Center for Cyber & Homeland Security at the George Washington University, June 2015. https://cchs.gwu.edu/sites/cchs.gwu.edu/files/downloads/CVE%20in%20America%20.pdf

[273] "Written testimony of DHS Office for Community Partnerships Director George Selim for a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations hearing titled "ISIS Online: Countering Terrorist Radicalization & Recruitment On the Internet & Social Media," US Department of Homeland Security, 6 July 2016. https://www.dhs.gov/news/2016/07/06/written-testimony-ocp-senate-homeland-security-and-governmental-affairs-permanent

Muslim communities, serving as a guise for intelligence-gathering, and violating the civil liberties of law-abiding Muslim-Americans.[274]

In fact, local concerns about the "CVE" moniker have led some cities to abandon the term as they move forward to design and implement multi-agency programs aimed at preventing violent extremism from taking root in their communities. For example, Boston recast what was originally intended to be one of the three model city-led CVE initiatives in the United States. The program is now called: "Promoting Engagement, Acceptance and Community Empowerment," or PEACE. Minneapolis, another pilot city, rebranded its CVE program as "Building Community Resilience."[275] Relatedly, Los Angeles is at the forefront of increasing efforts in municipalities in the US to use a public health (as opposed to a criminal justice or law enforcement) framework for addressing violent extremism at the community level.[276]

Yet, despite the distraction that "CVE" has become – and the impediment that the term creates to getting the necessary involvement from local communities – Washington continues to frame federal government-led or -funded efforts to prevent extremism in the US around the term. Moreover, the federal CVE task force is dominated by national security agencies across the capital, with too few opportunities for other parts of the federal government, like those focused on education and health, let alone city or community-level actors, to get involved. There is also a question of the extent to which those actors would want to be too closely associated with an entity so dominated by the "usual" CVE suspects. Thus, it seems unlikely – on its own – to be effective in catalyzing the depth and breadth involvement from these actors in the effort that will be required.

As a complement to the federal task force, consideration should be given to creating a non-government-led "National Prevention Network"[277] to harness the efforts of communities and professionals around the country interested in helping prevent the violent radicalization of individuals in their communities.

Such a network could help mobilize resources by leveraging corporate and philanthropic contributions to support local prevention and intervention projects and involve non-law-enforcement professionals around the country with experience working on CVE or related fields (e.g., public health or drug or broader crime prevention). It could allow communities, including local authorities, to more easily draw on the expertise from the growing number of its members and professionals (both in the US and overseas) that need to be

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[274] Murtaza Hussain, "Critics Say Bill Would Turn Muslim Communities into Mini-Surveillance States," The Intercept, 15 July 2015. https://theintercept.com/2015/07/15/civil-rights-groups-blast-proposed-government-office-countering-violent-extremism/

[275] Philip Marcelo, "What's in a name? Governments recast anti-extremism efforts," Associated Press, 26 August 2016. http://bigstory.ap.org/article/29e87290d5a74a988cce221ef6a14996/whats-name-governments-recast-anti-extremism-efforts

[276] Stevan Weine, David P. Eisenman, Janni Kinsler, Deborah C. Glik, and Chloe Polutnik, "Addressing violent extremism as public health policy and practice," Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 28 June 2016. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19434472.2016.1198413?needAccess=true

[277] The author first put forward this proposal in "Communities first: A national prevention network to defeat ISIS," The Hill, 2 August 2016. http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/homeland-security/290046-communities-first-a-national-prevention-network-to

involved in designing and implementing "social service" prevention and intervention efforts as they move to develop their own programs, tailored to the needs of their citizens. It could help ensure that communities that don't feel compelled to develop a full-fledged CVE program, but are interested in getting much smarter about the problem and how they can identify early signs of radicalization and steer their young people away from violence, have the opportunity to do so without having to involve Washington. Such a network would energize professional associations of educators, community development workers, mental health and social services organizations, which have generally been reluctant to actively engage in Washington-driven CVE efforts, and create scalable partnerships with a philanthropic sector that has also been leery of involving itself in efforts that have been so closely associated with the FBI and other security actors.

A National Prevention Network would also help ensure that the community-led approach to CVE that was the centerpiece of the February 2015 White House CVE Summit – where President Obama underscored how important it is to "empower communities to protect their families and friends and neighbors from violent ideologies and recruitment"[278] – becomes a reality in the United States and is not dependent on who is in the White House or, more broadly, in Washington.

**CVE Abroad**

Starting with President Obama's September 2014 address to the UN General Assembly, when he called on all countries to do more to address the drivers of violent extremism within their borders, the global conversation about violent extremism and how best to counter it and prevent its spread has mushroomed.

This speech didn't initiate the global CVE conversation, but it elevated and, perhaps equally importantly, broadened it from one that had largely been limited to addressing the ideology or propaganda used to draw in recruits and narrowly focused on trying to identify the small number of individuals on the cusp of violent radicalization. Now, partly as a result of the White House CVE Summit and the follow-on regional summits, which produced a far-ranging Action Agenda[279] that informed the development of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism, the conversations now include a focus on the social, economic, and political conditions that create the marginalization and alienation that can push people into the arms of terrorist groups or make individuals more vulnerable to the siren call of violent extremism. No longer are we simply discussing the "pull" factors. Second, and relatedly, with this expanded focus, questions of how states treat their citizens and communities and the role

[278] "Remarks by the President at the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism," The White House, 19 February 2015. https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2015/02/19/remarks-president-summit-countering-violent-extremism-february-19-2015

[279] "Draft Follow-On Action Agenda, the White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism Ministerial Meeting," Global Center for Cooperative Security, 19 February 2015. http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Draft-Follow-On-Action-Agenda-3-April-2015-version.pdf

that these communities themselves can play in marginalizing communities and alienating young people are now central to the CVE discourse.

The US took a number of steps to sustain the momentum generated by the high-level political attention that CVE received in 2015. On the bureaucratic front, it elevated CVE as a priority within the Department of State. What had been the Bureau of Counter-Terrorism became the Bureau of Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism. It created a dedicated CVE office within the Bureau and created the first-ever senior position in the Department focused on CVE. However, the funding that the Bureau has to support community-led CVE projects in key regions such as the Middle East, North, East and West Africa, the Gulf, and South and Southeast Asia is only some ten percent of its overall budget. While CVE spending is expected to increase in 2017, it will continue to be dwarfed by what the Bureau spends on supporting foreign law enforcement and security services.

As a complement to this bureaucratic shift, the US established the Global Engagement Center (GEC) to invigorate its efforts to counter the propaganda and other messages the "Islamic State" and other terrorist groups are using to recruit young people to turn to violence. The US Government has struggled when trying to discredit extremist propaganda disseminated by groups like IS and *al-Qaeda*. At the State Department, then-Secretary Clinton established the Center for Strategic Counter-Terrorism Communications (CSCC), a unit of communications specialists fluent in Urdu, Arabic, Somali, and other languages to battle with extremists online. The CSCC was a major improvement on previous efforts to coordinate US Government responses to extremist propaganda and showed early promise when messaging directly against terrorist recruiters online in Arabic, but a shift toward English-language messaging downplayed the center's strengths and opened the floodgates of media scrutiny, most of it hostile.

In replacing the CSCC, the GEC – which was given more staff and funding than its predecessor – was intended to signal a shift from direct online engagement to partner-driven messaging and content, reflecting the widespread consensus that "while the US Government has a good message to tell, [it is] not always the most credible voice to tell it."[280]

Although launched with great fanfare, the GEC appears to be building on an approach similar to the one the CSCC had already gravitated towards – as it shifted increasingly away from direct messaging: identifying and empowering credible, independent voices to counter extremist messaging – seeding but not directing those efforts; supporting the development of regional messaging centers in countries in key regions (UAE, Malaysia, and Nigeria); developing thematic campaigns around specific issues (families, returnees); and working

[280] Jeff Seldin, "US in 'Crisis Mode' in Fight against IS Online Messaging," VOA News, 6 July 2016. http://www.voanews.com/a/united-states-crisis-mode-fight-islamic-state-online-messaging/3407346.html The four goals of the new operation include empowering and building the capacity of a global network of positive messengers (including NGOs, schools, young people, social and civil society leaders) against violent extremism; using data analytics to better understand the dynamics of on-line radicalization and inform the design and targeting of counter-messaging programs; working with partners, including governments and the private sector, to design and implement thematic counter-messaging campaigns; and coordinating the efforts of the many US Government agencies working in this counter-messaging space.

with private sector leaders from the entertainment, technology, and advertising sectors to explore innovative ways to counter IS propaganda and amplify anti-IS voices internationally, from religious leaders to IS defectors.

Whether the GEC – which is currently led by a former US Defense Department official – will be more successful than the (somewhat unfairly) maligned CSCC remains to be seen and will depend on a number of factors. For example, will it be able to identify and support – with US Government funds – the most credible messengers, a challenge that isn't eliminated by moving away from direct US Government messaging; will it be able to match messaging and messenger to the right audience and thus plant seeds of doubt or encourage fence-sitters to more actively counter extremism on their own; will its work be more integrated with the broader international CVE efforts of the US Government, recognizing that counter-messaging alone cannot steer young people away from violence.

On the strategic front in 2016, and with the intention of memorializing the CVE Summit's Action Agenda in US policy, the US Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) released their first-ever joint international CVE strategy. Among other things, the strategy calls for building a "whole of society" approach to preventing violent extremism from taking root and one that involves national and local governments, the private sector, and communities. It has five elements: 1) expanding international political will, partnerships, and expertise to better understand the drivers of violent extremism and mobilize effective interventions; 2) assisting foreign governments – at both the national and sub-national level – to adopt more effective policies and approaches to prevent the spread of violent extremism; 3) using development assistance to reduce specific political, social and economic factors that contribute to community support for violent extremism; 4) empowering and amplifying locally-credible voices that can change the perception of violent extremist groups and their ideology among key demographic segments; and 5) strengthening the capabilities of government and non-governmental actors to isolate, intervene with, and promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals caught in the cycle of radicalization to violence.[281]

Although this new prevention-oriented international CVE strategy, with its emphasis on supporting efforts of partner governments to implement the UN Secretary-General's PVE Plan of Action, is seemingly straightforward, both the Department of State and USAID will face numerous challenges as they seek to operationalize it overseas, including the following:

### *I. Lack of Resources*

First and foremost is whether national governments around the globe can muster the political will to invest in the resources and tools required to implement the global CVE agenda, with its heavy emphasis on empowering local communities. This becomes particularly difficult in the face of a growing number

[281] US Department of State and USAID, "Department of State & USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism," May 2016. https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/257913.pdf

of terrorist attacks, with political leaders under increasing pressure to show toughness and their constituents generally pressing for a muscular response: tighter borders, better intelligence cooperation, longer prison sentences, more military operations. Thus, while you might see political leaders coalescing around the calls at the UN for a prevention-focused approach to addressing the threat at home, the political dynamics and resource allocations, particularly in the aftermath of an attack, are often quite different.

### *II. Synergy between Different Actors and Disciplines*

Second, there is the sheer number of actors that have a role to play, whether at the national or sub-national level, domestically or internationally, within or outside of government, to implement the CVE agenda. While the call for a "whole of society" approach sounds appealing in theory, it risks producing a web of overlapping mandates, activities, and structures, some with ties to more traditional fields such as counter-terrorism, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, human rights, and development, that could hinder overall effectiveness if not organized properly at different levels.

### *III. From State-Centric to Community-Centric*

Third, there is the challenge of getting national governments to truly embrace a CVE agenda that focuses so much attention on prevention and the role of communities, mayors, teachers, social workers, youth, women, and religious leaders, and mental health professionals, not national security professionals, let alone national governments. Communities need to be empowered and in many cases trained and resourced by the national government to maximize impact in this arena, which is much easier said than done given the control that so many national governments continue to want to maintain over issues of national security, even while recognizing the need for local solutions. Furthermore, it is generally the case that the most highly centralized countries, where power is in the hand of a few – often corrupt – actors or institutions are also the ones facing the greatest violent extremism challenges.[282]

The historically state-centric nature of counter-terrorism strategies and cooperation can make it difficult to identify and enable sub-national actors, whether local authorities or community leaders, that have critical roles to play in identifying and intervening against early signs of support for violence. For example, although more cities are developing innovative CVE programs in

[282] For more on the relationship between governance, corruption and terrorism, see "Investing in Iraq's Peace: How Good Governance Can Diminish Support for Violent Extremism," Mercy Corps, January 2016:https://d2zyf8ayvg1369.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/Investing%20in%20Iraqs%20Peace_Final%20Report.pdf and Sarah Chayes, "Corruption: Violent Extremism, Kleptocracy, and the Dangers of Failing Governance," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 30 June 2016. http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/corruption-violent-extremism-kleptocracy-and-dangers-of-failing-governance-pub-63982 and Sarah Chayes, "Corruption and Terrorism: The Causal Link," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12 May 2016. http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/05/12/corruption-and-terrorism-causal-link-pub-63568

partnership with local communities, too many national governments remain reluctant to empower municipalities in this space.

Civil society is providing expertise and support in efforts to build resilience to violent extremism, but many governments remain unwilling to enable grassroots actors to contribute, or they seek to micromanage civil society-led CVE interventions. Some governments even label civil society groups themselves as "violent extremists," which only damages the state's credibility in the communities they are trying to positively influence. One example of this is the Kenyan government's decision to list two NGOs, Muslims for Human Rights (Muhuri) and Haki Africa, among organizations accused of supporting *al-Shabaab* in April 2015. These two NGOs work directly on building community resilience against violent extremism, and they were able to successfully appeal the court's decision, nullify the terrorist designation and unfreeze their assets.[283]

In some instances, the international push to crack down on terrorist financing has had the unintended consequence of negatively affecting the ability of legitimate civil society groups to access funding to implement community-level programs to help address the local drivers and build community resilience to violent extremism. The broad Financial Action Task Force requirement to regulate the NGO sector as a whole for greater transparency and accountability has contributed to increased surveillance and state regulation, the creation of burdensome and restrictive laws, rules, and regulations for the sector, and the cutting-back, in general, of civil society space. Some, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, have asserted that this requirement has reinforced the already existing tools in the state toolbox to clamp down further on civil society.[284]

Recently, the Financial Action Task Force has revised its "Recommendation 8 and Interpretive Note" to remove the statement that the non-profit sector is "particularly vulnerable" to terrorist abuse. The hope is that this revision and change in language will help shift the often-unnecessary scrutiny NGOs and CSOs face in the field.[285]

A related challenge that may be unique to the United States centers around the US law that prohibits the provision of "material support" to terrorism. This has left NGOs operating in conflict zones where foreign terrorist organizations operate often unable to work in the areas where the need is greatest, or partner with the most locally influential organizations, because of the risk of being charged with "material support" for terrorism by the US Department of Justice. To comply with this US statute, many NGOs receiving US Government funds are required to adopt "no contact" policies with certain groups and communities and to vet down to the individual level where those funds are landing. Major financial institutions, including many of the world's largest banks, are also constrained by

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[283] "Kenya: Court Declares NGOs Did No Wrong," Freedom House, 12 November 2015. https://freedomhouse.org/article/kenya-court-declares-ngos-did-no-wrong

[284] "Kiai To Financial Crime Body: Foster Civil Society As A Partner, Not An Enemy, In The Fight Against Terrorism," UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, 18 April 2016. http://freeassembly.net/news/fatf-recommendation-8/

[285] "The FATF Recommendations," FATF, February 2012. http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/recommendations/pdfs/FATF_Recommendations.pdf

the "material support" statute, and are backing out of conflict zones, closing accounts of (principally Muslim) charities around the world, and significantly scaling back financing in areas and with communities who need it most. This regime has had a significant chilling effect on effective engagement. As a result, actors that are well-positioned to support efforts to prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence and reintegrate them into their communities are increasingly reluctant to do so.[286] Thus, there is need to clarify the scope of "material support" and other relevant CT legislation to reverse the chilling effect they are having on civil society's ability to support CVE efforts – particularly rehabilitation and reintegration and other CVE programs that target "formers" or "defectors."[287]

Leaving the FATF and domestic requirements aside, the US and other Western governments sometimes shy away from resourcing the NGOs with the most local credibility, preferring to partner with safer NGOs that may have limited influence. Non-violent Salafists, for example, might agree with the West on the "Islamic State" but little else. These Salafists, for their part, might be reluctant to receive Western funding. In other instances, the small, local partners might not have the wherewithal to comply with the often-onerous grant or other legal requirements to receive large grants, and thus, space must be found for smaller grants for small organizations.

For Brussels, London, Washington, and other donor capitals interested in funding grassroots-led CVE interventions in third countries, there are the thorny issues surrounding the extent to which the host government should be consulted before deciding which local organizations to fund. Giving host governments a veto would seem to make it difficult to fund those groups most likely to have greatest credibility in the marginalized communities. Failure to consult with these governments, however, runs the risk of having the programs suspended or terminated as occurred recently with the EU CVE program in Pakistan. The complexity of this issue is compounded in the growing number of countries, such as Egypt, Ethiopia, India, and Israel, where governments have restricted local NGOs from receiving foreign funding in the first place.[288]

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[286] The Prevention Project: Organizing Against Violent Extremism, "Building Off-Ramps and Reintegrating Foreign Fighters and Terrorist Offenders: Challenges and Opportunities," 9 June 2016.
http://www.organizingagainstve.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Meeting-Summary.pdf

[287] Ibid.

[288] "Donors: keep out: more and more autocrats are stifling criticism by barring non-governmental organizations from taking foreign cash," The Economist, 13 September 2014. http://www.economist.com/news/international/21616969-more-and-more-autocrats-are-stifling-criticism-barring-non-governmental-organisations. On Egypt see: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/egypt-cracks-down-on-ngos-over-foreign-funding/2016/03/24/3b33b0f6-f1ed-11e5-a61f-e9c95c06edca_story.html;
On Ethiopia see: http://faculty.washington.edu/aseem/ripe2015.pdf. On India see: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/over-14000-ngos-barred-from-receiving-foreign-funds-govt-2924258/. On Israel see: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/u-s-warns-israel-over-bill-to-limit-foreign-funding-to-ngos-1.399442

*CVE: To Define or Not to Define*

Fourth, there is the challenge of ensuring the importance of having a common understanding of what "violent extremism" is, i.e., it is not views expressed by peaceful political opponents or religious or ethnic minorities, and what "CVE" is, i.e., it is not throwing bloggers in jail or shutting down civil society organizations in the name of security, which only creates more marginalization. Such clarity is particularly important given the increasing vitriol, including among some politicians, which has generated calls from some quarters for the closing of borders to those fleeing violence in Iraq and Syria and the labeling of Muslim migrants and refugees a "security threat."

In promoting the global CVE agenda, the United States will need to be mindful that governments properly target their CVE interventions and do not stigmatize the communities from whom cooperation is needed. For example, when Kenya targets entire Somali communities and paints them as a "Fifth Column," we have a problem.

While there is limited appetite for addressing the definitional deficit at the global level, the body of research on the drivers of violent extremism is rapidly growing. The data increasingly shows that marginalization, poor governance, and state-sponsored violence are among the most prevalent factors. Effective targeting of a CVE program should therefore focus on both governing institutions and communities. National governments need to acknowledge their own role in fueling grievances and advance bold policies of inclusion and reconciliation as part of an effort to prevent violent extremism. The extent to which the United States and its European partners are willing to consistently press this issue with counter-terrorism partners in the Middle East, North Africa, the Gulf, and Horn of Africa and elsewhere remains to be seen. Although, at least for the United States, the State Department/USAID CVE Strategy seems to suggest it will.

This is part of a broader challenge, which is the extent to which the global CVE agenda can in fact shape counter-terrorism policies and actions or if it will become simply a programmatic tool – including for foreign assistance and largely long-term development – with limited relevance to dealing with existing threats. Will the US, for example, be prepared to integrate core CVE messages about how governments treat their citizens into security dialogues? Or will they be kept separate for fear of jeopardizing tactical cooperation against existing terrorist threats? This tension is, of course, well-illustrated in the relationship between the West and countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia.[289] Both are often described as critical counter-terrorism partners against IS and *al-Qaeda*, while at the same time being considered as fomenters of violent extremism, the former with its

[289] Daniel Byman, "The US-Saudi Arabia Counterterrorism Relationship." Brookings, 24 May 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/the-u-s-saudi-arabia-counterterrorism-relationship/. Shadi Hamid, "Rethinking the US-Egypt relationship: How repression is undermining Egyptian stability and what the United States can do." Brookings, 3 November 2015: https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/rethinking-the-u-s-egypt-relationship-how-repression-is-undermining-egyptian-stability-and-what-the-united-states-can-do/

heavy-handed security tactics and the latter with its sponsorship of Islamic radicalism across the globe.[290]

At the multilateral level, the tension is seen in the work of the Counter-IS Coalition, where "counter-messaging" issues – particularly building the online capacity of Coalition governments and civil society actors to push against the violent narrative of the "Islamic State" – are essentially the only CVE topics being addressed. There has been a reluctance to discuss those issues, in many cases linked to how governments treat their citizens, that may push young people to violence. Among the reasons for this is the priority that is being placed on securing cooperation and military and other "hard" contributions from MENA/Gulf countries and not wanting to jeopardize these efforts.

So, as the US moves forward with the implementation of its international CVE strategy, it will need to ensure that sufficient attention is placed on the impact that security-focused interventions – whether within a country like in Egypt or a neighbor like Yemen – can have on marginalized populations most prone to radicalization to violence.

### *IV. CVE or Business as Usual*

A fifth challenge confronting the US involves adjusting its traditional approach to development and other foreign assistance programming to take into account the *sui generis* nature of CVE work. Because CVE is a nascent field and prioritizes identifying and supporting often hyper-local organizations working in complex and dynamic environments, and few rigorous metrics exist to measure the impact of CVE programs, it requires more risk-taking, risk-mitigation, and innovation than is traditionally tolerated by development or security interventions.[291] Rather than moving in this direction, CVE programming funded by the US and other Western donors aimed at supporting community-led interventions remains a bureaucratic, administrative, and risk-averse endeavor. CVE funds take months to reach the ground and are generally directed to those organizations with a demonstrated capacity to comply with the often onerous donor requirements.

Although the US and other donors underscore the importance of ensuring CVE efforts are demand-driven and locally owned, the approach they are generally taking risks undermining these objectives.[292] For example, too often, donors provide short-term project funding to implement narrowly-scoped programs, which may not be sustainable past the life of the grant. Instead, as highlighted at

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[290] Scott Shane, "Saudis and Extremism: 'Both the Arsonists and the Firefighters'," New York Times, 25 August 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-islam.html?_r=1

[291] "Lessons learned from Danish and other international efforts on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) in development contexts," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, March 2015. http://www.netpublikationer.dk/um/evaluation_study_2015_03/html/helepubl.html

[292] "Ankara Memorandum on Good Practices for a Multi-Sectoral Approach to Countering Violent Extremism," Global Counterterrorism Forum, 19 September 2013. https://www.thegctf.org/documents/10162/72352/13Sep19_Ankara+Memorandum.pdf

a youth symposium in June 2016 in Djibouti,[293] longer-term projects designed to address long-standing grievances of marginalized or alienated youth and that demonstrate the donors' sustained commitment to the cause are needed. Better yet, rather than simply providing project funding to local organizations, the capacities of which are often quite limited, the United States and other donors should consider focusing more resources on building these capacities. This will allow for greater local ownership and help grow the capacity of local civil society. Rather than fully investing in the community-level partners, however, the US and other donors are often relying on international NGOs or even private sector contractors to serve as "middle-men" to provide oversight (e.g., accounting, monitoring, and evaluation) over the local grants that donors insist upon.

### *V. A Final Challenge: Updating the Global and Multilateral Architecture*

A final challenge confronting the United States and its partners that are committed to the "whole of society" approach to CVE, which is embodied in a growing number of largely Western government CVE strategies and in the UN PVE Plan of Action, centers around ensuring that the necessary international architecture is in place to support and sustain the approach.

This comprehensive approach is one where subnational actors (mayors, researchers, teachers, social and mental health workers, psychologists, and the religious, youth, and other communities) have essential roles to play. These are not your traditional national security actors that have worked to develop a set of robust multilateral cooperation frameworks and platforms, particularly since September 2001.

Encouragement from capitals and multilateral bodies for greater involvement of these stakeholders is important but not sufficient for building and sustaining the "whole of society" approach. Facilitating and ensuring collaboration and cooperation among these local actors so they can share experiences and learn from each other is also critical. This will require, among other things, an updating of the international architecture for addressing terrorism and violent extremism, which has been focused almost entirely on national governments. It has been strengthened over the past decade to facilitate deeper and broader practical cooperation among an array of national officials (such as border security guards, prosecutors, judges, and parliamentarians from countries of every region) and to mobilize resources to support strengthening the counter-terrorism capacities of national institutions. However, this architecture is dominated by multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations and Global Counter-Terrorism Forum, and regional organizations like the African Union and Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which are driven by the interests and needs of national governments and are ill-suited to facilitate and sustain cooperation among local CVE actors.

Although local officials, professionals, and community leaders are occasionally involved in the work of these intergovernmental fora, it is generally as second-

[293] "Symposium on Youth and CVE in the Horn of Africa," EU CT-MORSE, June 2016. http://ct-morse.eu/global-counterterrorism-forum-horn-of-africa-working-group-co-chaired-by-turkey-and-the-eu/

class citizens. They are not treated as full partners. For example, they do not have a voice in determining the priorities, which can differ – often dramatically in the case of counter-terrorism and CVE – depending on whether one is looking at the issue from a national or local perspective, or shaping the agendas. At the end of the day, for the multilayered approach embodied in the State/USAID CVE Strategy and the UN Plan of Action to thrive, the cities, communities, and civil society activists on the front-line of CVE efforts need more from the multilateral system. For starters, the traditional fora can and should do more to engage local actors on an ongoing basis. They should promote the meaningful involvement of subnational stakeholders in national counter-terrorism and now CVE discussions that have generally been limited to national officials. They should mobilize resources to support the strengthening of subnational capacities – whether municipal authorities or civil society. However, more is required. Subnational stakeholders need their own platforms to facilitate networking at the local, national, regional, and global levels to allow them to learn from each other and collaborate without giving national governments or intergovernmental bodies control over a cooperation agenda that is no longer limited to national actors. These subnational platforms can press national governments to create the necessary legal and policy space, which is all too often shrinking, to enable greater involvement of subnational actors in addressing the increasingly localized threat of violent extremism.

The US has played a role in encouraging and, in some cases, funding the development of new platforms to facilitate the sharing of challenges, best practices, and information among subnational stakeholders. Over the past 18 months, new global and regional CVE networks focused on bringing cities and local researchers together and regional platforms to connect youth, women, and other civil society players, including those working on the rehabilitation and reintegration of former terrorist offenders and returning foreign fighters, have been launched.[294] These platforms need to be scaled up and sustained in order to ensure that the "whole of society" approach being championed receives the necessary oxygen to survive. Governments and intergovernmental bodies need to support and mobilize funding for them without micromanaging or undermining their independence or credibility. In addition, they need to promote the space for subnational actors and other nontraditional stakeholders within national counter-terrorism strategies and the traditional, state-driven multilateral system, where far too many states continue to view issues of national security as belonging exclusively to national security officials.

## Conclusion

As this study highlights, one of the legacies of President Obama's time in office will be the broadening of the United States' approach to addressing terrorist

[294] The US funds and supports a number of these platforms, examples include: The Strong Cities Network http://strongcitiesnetwork.org/; The Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE) Network http://www.resolvenet.org/; The Youth Civil Activism Network (YouthCAN) http://www.youthcan.net/; and the Women and Extremism Network http://www.waenetwork.org/

threats both at home and abroad and spearheading international efforts to do the same. New strategies, frameworks, policies and programs are now in place in the US (and elsewhere) that look beyond the role of the military, intelligence, and law enforcement services and even governments themselves. Increasing attention is now being given to the role that sub-national actors, whether in the US or overseas, need to play in identifying and preventing radicalization that leads to violence. Yet, as this study has also revealed, there are a number of challenges – including political and institutional, both in the US and elsewhere – that will need to be effectively addressed in order to maximize the impact of these efforts. Among other things, national security officials will need to figure out how to best build durable partnerships – based on trust – with local communities, while the multilateral system, which was designed to facilitate inter-state cooperation, will need to figure out how to ensure that the sub-national actors with the local solutions are integrated into global conversations about how to reduce the threat of terrorism around the world. Much as US leadership was critical to catalyzing the global CVE conversation, US leadership is likely going to be required to overcome these challenges to ensure that the talking moves to walking.

# The Nationwide Counter-Terrorism System in the Russian Federation

*Nikolay Sukhov*

At the end of the 20th century, terrorism became a global social phenomenon. The Russian Federation was one of the first countries to encounter its manifestations, and suffered considerable human and material losses. There was a real threat to the territorial integrity of the state. In the early 2000s, Russia witnessed a series of catastrophic terrorist incidents connected to the insurgency campaign in Chechnya and the broader North Caucasus region. The campaign began with the siege of the crowded Dubrovka Theater in Moscow on 23 October 2002 by armed Chechen insurgents, which resulted in 129 casualties during the rescue attempt by Russian security forces. This was followed by a series of suicide bombings in the Moscow subway that killed almost 80 civilians in February and August of 2004. In the same year, a group of mostly Chechen and Ingush militants carried out a successful raid on the Russian Interior Forces in Nazran, Ingushetia, killing 80 troops. Furthermore, two Russian passenger planes were blown up almost simultaneously on 24 August 2004.

The most shocking in a series of deadly attacks by secessionist and Islamist militants seeking to "liberate" the North Caucasus from Russian presence was the capture of over 1,100 hostages in a school in Beslan, North Ossetia, on 1-3 September 2004 by Chechen and Ingush militants. Branded as Russia's 9/11, the terrorist attack resulted in more than 342 deaths, including 186 children who perished in the rescue operation provoked by powerful explosions at the school and the following gunfire.

These attacks required the leaders of the country to act urgently and resolutely in order to create an adequate system for countering terrorism. The President of the Russian Federation decided to dramatically change the approaches to antiterrorist activity, including the involvement of all ministries, agencies and the civil society of the country in order to address this problem. "Fighting terrorism must become a fully nationwide activity and that is why it is so important for all institutions of our political system and for the entire Russian society to actively participate in it," the President said at the Government extended session in September 2004.

As a result, the Federal Law "On Countering Terrorism" and the Russian Federation President's Decree "On Measures to Counter Terrorism" created the completely new nationwide system of countering this dangerous phenomenon at the beginning of 2006. It was based on the transition from the primary use of force in combatting terrorism to multilevel activities in countering the phenomenon. The system includes measures of detecting, preventing, suppressing, exposing and investigating terrorist attacks and activities aimed at preventing terrorism, minimizing and eliminating its consequences.

On 10 March 2006, the National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC) was created as the main organizational and coordination center for these activities, while the Federal Operational Coordination Center (FOCC) was created within it to

organize interagency cooperation during the prevention of terrorist attacks and to control counter-terrorism operations. These government authorities include the heads of the Federal Security Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Health and other government organizations.

An important peculiarity of the Committee is that it includes not only the heads of the federal executive authorities, but also representatives from the leaders of both Houses of the Russian Parliament, the Presidential Administration, and the Government of the Russian Federation. The Director of the Federal Security Service assumes the position of Chairman of the National Antiterrorism Committee.

Counter-terrorism activities are organized in all 83 regions of the country that have corresponding antiterrorism commissions (ATC) headed by the heads of the constituent territories, and the Operational Coordination Centers (OCC) headed by the directors of the territorial security services. Currently, formation of counter-terrorism organizations on the basic administration level (municipal divisions) is being finalized, which will allow the Government to complete the single antiterrorism line of command from the federal level to the local one.

The National Antiterrorism Committee (NAC) Central Office was created within the Federal Security Service to ensure the permanent operation of the Committee and FOCC, analyze the condition of the nationwide counter-terrorism system, prepare necessary propositions for its optimization, and also to control and render practical and methodological help to the antiterrorism commissions (ATC) and the operational coordination centers (OCC) in the Russian regions. Thus, the organizational basis for countering terrorism is currently represented as two interrelated lines of command operating antiterrorist activities in the Russian Federation.

The first one is comprised of structures that coordinate the activities of the executive authorities concerning the prevention of terrorism and the minimization and elimination of the effects of terrorist acts: the NAC and ATCs. The second line consists of structures that control the activities related to combatting terrorism: FOCC and OCCs.

The most significant features of the new system are:

1. A complex solution to problems involving all three aspects of countering terrorism: preventing terrorism, detecting and then eliminating the causes and conditions contributing to committing terrorist attacks; combatting terrorism; and minimizing and eliminating the consequences of terrorism manifestations. Lately, the main efforts have been focused on the prevention of terrorism, including counteraction against its ideology.

2. Clear division of competence in the field of countering terrorism between different executive authorities.

3. Giving the necessary amount of authority to the heads of all coordination structures (NAC, FOOC, ATCs, and OCCs). They have the right and obligation to make decisions on the local level and implement them within the frames of their authority independently with no prior agreement with the federal authorities.

4. The staff of the National Antiterrorism Committee and the Federal Operational Coordination Center include only the heads of the relevant ministries and agencies have the right to make final decisions independently.

5. Enhancing the personal responsibility of the corresponding leaders (the heads of the Russian Federation constituent territories in the field of *countering* terrorism and the heads of the territorial branches of the Federal Security Service in the field of *combatting* terrorism).

6. Developing the procedures and plans of antiterrorist activities beforehand and ensuring their practical implementation during training sessions (no fewer than four per year for each constituent territory). Regularly conducting international antiterrorism exercises, with representatives from various foreign countries and international organizations being invited as observers.

The specified changes resulted in eliminating the system drawbacks of the previous antiterrorism legislation and developing the legal institution of terrorism prevention that has been earlier considered as an auxiliary means during the suppression of terrorist attacks. It became obvious that terrorism is a complex social and political phenomenon instead of just a regular crime, and that force could not prevail in countering it.

In order to develop the current legislation, on 5 October 2009, the President of the Russian Federation approved the Concept of Countering Terrorism in the Russian Federation, which is the basic document supplementing the provisions of the Federal Law "On Countering Terrorism" and formulating our country's key approaches to the further organization of antiterrorism activity. In formulating the Concept, the following fundamental factors were taken into account: the geographical spread of terrorism and the international nature of terrorist organizations, the increased level of organized terrorist activity, the emergence of large terrorist units with elaborated infrastructures, the intent of terrorist units and organizations to take possession of weapons of mass destruction, attempts to use terrorism as a means of intervention into the internal affairs of countries, among other factors.

Taking into account that the use of force can produce only temporary effect in combatting terrorism and does not make it possible to eradicate this phenomenon completely, the Concept pays special attention to preventing terrorism by the following means:

a) Creating a system for countering the ideology of terrorism;

b) Taking legal, organizational, operational, administrative, security, military and technical measures aimed at protecting potential targets of terrorist attacks;

c) Enhancing control over adherence to the administrative and legal security measures. Considering the people who suffer from a terrorist attack is deemed equally significant.

The following tasks are being addressed in order to minimize and/or eliminate the effects of terrorist attacks:

a) Providing urgent medical help;

b) Medical and psychological assistance during rescue and fire emergencies;

c) Social rehabilitation for people who were victims of a terrorist attack and people who participated in its prevention;

d) Restoring the normal operation and ecological safety for the targets of the terrorist attacks;

e) Recovering moral and material loss for people who suffered from a terrorist attack.

A significant part of the Concept is dedicated to resources supplied for antiterrorism activity. The concentration of technical and financial supplies for the activities of counter-terrorism forces is achieved through the Federal Target Programs (FTP). FTPs fully implement activities that make it possible to: establish a unified system for training employees from various counter-terrorism agencies; improve special technical complexes and methods of obtaining preventive information about the actions and intentions of terrorist groups; develop new equipment and weapons for preventing terrorist attacks; considerably increase the antiterrorist protection of vitally important targets; and also solve other not less important tasks.

Creating a system of levels for situational response to terrorist threats based on the world practice became an important stage in the further improvement of antiterrorism legislation. The system provides three levels of terrorist threat: raised – blue; high – yellow; critical – red. The decision to set, change or cancel the raised and high threat levels within the territories of the Russian Federation is made by the chairman of the antiterrorism commission of the affected territory together with the head of the local branch of the security service.

The critical terrorist threat level can be set exclusively by the Chairman of the National Antiterrorism Committee after the chairman of the antiterrorism commission in the affected region submits the corresponding request. The terrorist threat level can be set for a period of up to 15 days. After a certain threat level is set, additional measures concerning the safety of people, society and the state must be undertaken according to the previously elaborated plans.

In this regard, the head of the local branch of the security service is responsible for: organizing and verifying information about possible terrorist attacks (when the raised threat level is set); providing additional training for operational groups in municipal divisions and also manpower and equipment used in counter-terrorism operations (when the high threat level is set); and ensuring that measures for getting the manpower and equipment used in counter-terrorism operations are ready (when the critical threat is set).

It should be particularly mentioned that setting levels of terrorist threat does not restrict the rights and freedoms of citizens, but implies the necessity for the authorities to take additional measures in order to prevent a possible terrorist attack. Besides, this system sets high requirements for the interaction between the heads of the operational coordination centers and the antiterrorism commissions in the constituent territories.

Overall, these measures have resulted in a systematic decrease of terrorist activity (1030 terrorist crimes were committed in 2009, 779 crimes in 2010, 365 crimes in 2011, 316 crimes in 2012, and 218 crimes in 2013). Terrorist groups no longer engage in open confrontations that used to result in large-scale armed

assaults on civil objects, federal forces and local authorities. First and foremost, this progress results from the proper implementation of the antiterrorism legislation regulations and the effective operation of the counter-terrorism system in the Russian Federation.

The significant results of antiterrorism measures are mainly due to the cooperation and coordination of actions taken by all interacting structures; this is evident in the Russian experience. Indeed, the prevention of terrorism, including the counteraction against its ideology, the proactive organization and training of manpower and equipment used in counter-terrorism operations and also the effectiveness of counter-terrorism activities all in all are the main conditions for the improved results shown by the entire system of countering terrorism.

## Countering the Ideology of Terrorism in the Russian Federation

The efforts of Special Forces allow the Russian state to keep the increase of terrorist activity in check to some extent, but the strategic victory in the war on terrorism cannot be achieved without the victory over terrorist *ideology*. That is why, currently, countering terrorism implies active protection against its ideology, which is constantly growing in circles of underground gangs and their accomplices. The threat of the spread of terrorist ideology is currently a major issue of concern on the international level. The "Islamic State" terrorist organization (IS) has already long been aiming at not just carrying out specific acts of terror, but the global spread of its terrorist ideas and the technologies of recruiting new members. In fact, similarities in ideologies of terrorist groups are a main factor in uniting them in various part of the world (IS, *al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula*, *al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb*, *Boko Haram*, a*l-Shabaab*, the *Caucasus Emirate* and others). Organizations such as the *Caucasus Emirate*, *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and certain other criminal movements are most active in promoting terrorist and extremist propaganda in Russia. To that end, they use both traditional channels, such as religious organizations and institutions, and modern means of communication (social networks, websites dealing with the topic such as KavkazCenter.com, Kavkaz.org.uk, Guraba.info, Hunafa.com and others) to attract new followers to extremist ideas and then recruit them remotely.

Taking into account that the Russian Federation has considerable experience in fighting the actual threat of terrorism, the country has developed a complex approach to preventing the ideas of violence from spreading. In accordance with the Federal Law "On Countering Terrorism" adopted in 2006, terrorism is defined as the "the ideology of violence and the practice of influencing the adoption of a decision by public authorities, local self-government bodies or international organizations connected with frightening the population and/or other forms of unlawful violent actions." The inclusion of the term "ideology of violence" in the concept of "terrorism" actually constitutes a legal and theoretical basis for the necessity of not only institutions combatting terrorism, but also institutions preventing it.

Meanwhile, the ideology of violence or the ideology of terrorism means the entire scope of ideas, concepts, beliefs, goals and slogans justifying the necessity

of terrorist activity and aimed at attracting people to participate in it. Many terrorists primarily use the ideology of Islamism (so-called radical Islam) to create the ideological platform for their activity. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that terrorism was promoted before and is being promoted now by many other non-Islamist movements: neo-fascist, national-separatist, religious, etc.. Therefore, no matter which of such ideologies you consider, each of them is lethally hazardous to society and requires an adequate response from the government.

Terrorist ideology is being counteracted in Russia on the federal and local levels of government authority with the use of local self-government. Regional antiterrorism commissions (ATC) do this job in constituent territories of the Russian Federation, while municipal antiterrorism commissions deal with it on the local level. Their practical role is especially prominent because it works in everyday contact with the population and can address particular citizens influenced by radical ideologies.

While the federal level committee is mainly engaged in developing plans and coordinating the efforts of all authorities, creating proactive techniques, specialized training programs and training specialists, the commissions on the regional level organize the work in the particular territory, adapt the nationwide methods to the local conditions, and maintain proactive public relations campaigns in mass media outlets.

As for the direct implementation of planned measures, it is done on the local municipal level: sports and public events are held making it possible to integrate vulnerable categories of citizens into public life; personal interventions are carried out (including those that explain where radical religion movements are wrong); meetings with people who have respect and authority are organized for students; people from problem families get help in finding jobs and in solving everyday problems that provoke radicalization. Furthermore, some measures are taken to reintegrate militants and their accomplices who have not been involved in violent crimes to peaceful life, and persuade them to give up criminal activities. This system allows us to integrate the efforts of authorities both vertically from the federal to municipal level and horizontally by reinforcing the capabilities of not only military ministries and agencies, but civil ones as well.

Indeed, it is the authorities that implement the policy in the fields of education, culture, sport and youth guidance that have the leading role in countering the ideology of terrorism. The goal of this everyday work is to create in the society such a system of ideas and views, as well as channels and ways for the distribution of these ideas, that would allow for fundamentally changing the mentality of people influenced by terrorist ideology, so that the overwhelming majority of people would reject even the idea of using violence in order to achieve political or any other goals.

Nevertheless, the government alone cannot tackle the task of countering the ideology of violence in the modern world. The ideology of violence is a complex of ideas that reproduces itself inside the society and is introduced into collective consciousness from the outside. The reception of such ideas is instigated by a whole range of factors both objective (economic situation, crime rates, population employment, etc.) and subjective (mental deviations, personal

failures and inconsistency, jealousy, complicated life situations). That is why it is very important to employ the healthy resources of the society itself in opposing terrorist ideology, in an effort to strengthen the immunity of society. For that purpose, Russia puts a special emphasis on including civil society institutions, the scientific and business community, educational organizations and mass media in antiterrorism efforts.

Representatives from scientific and educational communities as well as civil society are more often involved in the development of strategies and programs aimed at preventing and countering the ideology of terrorism, and also in preparing and holding public relations events, such as speeches on TV, direct communication with young audiences, explanatory lectures in penitentiaries, etc.. These public organizations receive the necessary support for their activities aimed at increasing the level of interfaith and international trust. Such organizations are active in every region and their significance cannot be overestimated, examples of these organizations include The Union of the Stavropol Territory Nations for Peace in the Caucasus, The Supreme Council of the Ossetians, and many others.

Every constituent territory in the Russian Federation has its own unique projects. For instance, the ATC working in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic has been implementing the interregional youth project "Kunachestvo" (Brotherhood) for several years now. It involves all kinds of public events with children from North Caucasian republics. In the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, the Nykhas National Cultural Center actively participates in the Peace to Caucasian Children project and organizes friendship visits for schoolchildren from neighboring republics. Furthermore, commissions for adapting and reintegrating people who decide to give up terrorist activities to peaceful life were created in some republics of the North Caucasus. These organizations, which include representatives from various authorities including law enforcement agencies, reflect that the government is actually ready to communicate with people who realize how wrong and hopeless their extremist activities are and assist them in actually returning to peaceful life. The NAC suggested that the commissions should more actively engage informal leaders (well-known athletes, successful businessmen, authoritative religious leaders, etc.) in their activities, enhance media coverage of the results of their work, and expose the criminal essence of gang activities.

The lack of qualified personnel who could effectively work in this field was and continues to be the key problem facing the National Antiterrorism Committee. In order to solve it, the following three aspects were accomplished: establishing a theoretical basis for carrying out effective counteraction against propaganda activities that targets the audience influenced by the ideology of violence; formulating scientific, methodological, and practical recommendations on the prevention of terrorism and the spread of religious and political extremist ideology; and developing information products and visual aids for practical use in the everyday ideological counteraction, including organizing training courses in various educational institutions, which are regularly attended by antiterrorism commissions employees. For instance, a two-year training course was organized for employees working in executive authorities in constituent territories of the Russian Federation and in local self-governing authorities who

are engaged in the coordination of activities against terrorist ideology, and was held at the Southern Federal University and at the State University of Nizhniy Novgorod.

Another educational challenge is to prepare specialists in counteracting terrorist ideology who can work not only with adults, but also with the youth. It goes without saying that in this case the main area of activity is the school, where the most important goal comes down to not only imparting the attitude of unacceptability of violence for achieving one's aims, but also contributing to establishing a consistent personality and being aware of his or her place in life and society. More than 500 teachers took further education courses dealing with religious and moral guidance of the youth in the leading higher education institutions of the country. The two-week training courses entitled "Terrorism Prevention in the Russian Federation" are regularly held for directors and deputy directors of secondary schools in the Moscow State Linguistics University. Furthermore, the state cooperates with Muslim religious organizations and religious educational institutions in creating a multi-level system of preparing certified specialists in Islamic history and culture for future work in religious and secular educational institutions, religious and secular organizations, and in national and local authorities. Nevertheless, these efforts unfortunately fall short of meeting the needs in this field.

Other efforts taken within the framework of countering terrorist ideology include: More than 250,000 materials dealing with the topic of antiterrorism were disseminated through federal and regional mass media between 2010-2012; more than 2,000 video materials (feature films, documentaries, public service ads) were created; and over 240,000 events (meetings, tutorials, conversations) were held with citizens from social categories vulnerable to influence by terrorist ideology, including school and university students, people from Muslim countries, representatives of clans, people who are in prison for extremist and terrorist activity, and former gang members. Law enforcement bodies revealed that in the period between 2008 and 2012, there were more than 2,500 information sources that spread extremist propaganda materials (websites, videos, books, leaflets, etc.). The necessary measures for suppressing their illegal activity are carried out within the framework of the current legislation.

Currently, the second stage of developing the terrorist ideology counteraction system is being implemented, with events scheduled up to the year 2018. We have taken into account the drawbacks detected during the first stage and reached conclusions on the need to enhance efforts related to addressing social groups that are most vulnerable to terrorist propaganda, and better restrictions on terrorist ideology distribution channels. Taking into account that terrorist organizations' propaganda activity is constantly becoming more and more intensive and varied, we also ensure that our countermeasures continue to be more and more sophisticated. These proactive efforts are getting more intensive not only in traditionally unstable regions of the federation, but also in relatively quiet republics and regions. The preventive measures we take are getting more diverse, specific and, as already mentioned, targeted towards particular audiences.

By analyzing how terrorist organizations recruit new followers, we classified and segmented groups of the population from the point of view of vulnerability to terrorist propaganda. We singled out territories and categories of people who require special attention, such as the youth, relatives of gang members, students of religious educational institutions, the unemployed, etc.. With that in mind, the NAC adjusted the methods of preventive activities for each of these categories, and determined the measures that should be taken by the government to support this work. The following measures have been planned and are now being taken: developing explanatory radio and television shows; meetings with corresponding audiences; social rehabilitation for citizens who were in prison for terrorist and extremist crimes; preventing extremist content from getting into the religious education system; detecting and eliminating extremist materials on the Internet; training teachers, psychologists, and social workers specializing in this field; and monitoring public opinion, etc..

In order to prevent youth radicalization and the spread of religious and political extremism, which are among the main factors of developing terrorist threats, the following issues are currently being actively addressed: with the capabilities of religious leaders and civil institutions taken into account, launching a long-term and widely spread propaganda campaign aimed at keeping the population adherent to the traditional religious values and principles; ingraining the antiterrorist mentality in the youth; continuing the civil and inter-confessional dialogue in society based on condemning terrorism and any other forms of violence and extensively involving all the constructive resources of civil society in this process; actively utilizing information resources of major media outlets in order to explain the criminal misanthropic essence of extremist religious ideology and preventing its dissemination on the Internet, including efforts to create alternative online resources targeted at the youth and capable of developing trust and popularity among them. One of the main aspects in the latter case is the understanding that the Internet is the main source of information for young people, who are the most vulnerable group to the influence of terrorist ideology propagated over the Internet.

In order to prevent the spread of terrorist and extremist ideas as well as information about methods and tools of committing terrorist attacks in the Russian segment of the Internet, a number of initiatives were already implemented in the form of industrial self-control during the first stage of establishing the terrorist ideology counteraction system. For instance, the non-commercial partnership, the Russian Association for Electronic Communications, developed the Internet Professional Activity Code containing requirements for publishing information in the abovementioned information environment. The Declaration for the Children and Youth Security on the Internet was also prepared. Its provisions are based on the corresponding international and Russian legal documents and recommendations, and it has already been signed by more than 60 Russian organizations.

Nevertheless, it is still difficult to counter the spread of terrorist ideology via the Internet. First of all, this is due to its global and international nature. Practice shows that it is not enough to have only national regulatory and prohibitive laws in order to counter the ideology of terrorism on the Internet. Generally, terrorist sites are created in the domain extensions that belong to other countries and

they do not belong to the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation. That is why, in order to eliminate terrorist and extremist propaganda on the Internet, it is necessary to enhance international cooperation in this field to create a corresponding international legal base and to work out effective mechanisms for this interaction, and also to get rid of the so-called double standards. Clause 12 of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy could serve as a basis for this work. It calls on all countries "...to work with the United Nations, with due regard to confidentiality, respecting human rights and in compliance with other obligations under international law, to explore ways and means to: a) coordinate efforts at the international and regional level to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations on the Internet; b) use the Internet as a tool for countering the spread of terrorism, while recognizing that States may require assistance in this regard...".

Thus, increasing the efficiency of countering Internet use for terrorist purposes requires improving the legal base of its use; managing active information exchange between law enforcement agencies; enhancing the interaction of government authorities with communications service providers and organizations assisting in fighting Internet crimes; and working out the methodological recommendations for creating a unified procedure of the relevant authorities' response to publishing illegal information.

Operationally, Russian security forces have increased their efficiency to deter terrorist attacks and incursions in the broader North Caucasus region, and make potential targets outside of this tumultuous area unattractive to terrorists by increasing their security and protection. The Russian government continued to make Russia's counter-terrorism efforts a priority during all these years. This was especially true in light of the incident-free February 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic Games, organized in proximity to areas of the North Caucasus where ongoing violence and violent extremist activity had occurred, resulting in heightened concern over potential terrorist activity targeting the Games. Nevertheless, terrorist attacks related to problems in the North Caucasus continued to occur in Russia. Separatists and violent Islamist extremists calling for a Pan-Islamic Caliphate within the North Caucasus constituted the main terrorist threat.

Moreover, there are still many problems associated with the non-professionalism of law enforcement personnel. Unfortunately, these practices affected the situation of human rights and freedoms and the right of expression. The broad definition of terrorist activity provided by the 2006 law, which includes among other things "informational or other types of assistance" to terrorism, as well as the "propaganda of terrorist ideas, dissemination of materials or information, which urge terrorist activity, substantiate and justify the need for such activity" has had a chilling effect on the freedom of speech and open debate concerning terrorism. Broadcasting organizations are deterred from circulating unofficial information about terrorist attacks by the criminal liability for "justification of terrorism," which was established by an amendment to Russia's Criminal Code in July 2007. Furthermore, the regime of counter-terrorism operation, which does not require the declaration of a state of emergency and is not subject to either international accountability or parliamentary oversight, grants enormous surveillance powers to security forces

and ultimate discretion to the chief of the counter-terrorist operation in determining the area and duration of the operation. In this way, the new law opens up possibilities for infringing on the basic rights of people.

The Russian government continued to use its "anti-extremism" legislation to prosecute peaceful individuals and organizations, including the political opposition, independent media, and certain religious minorities. Despite having counter-terrorism as its ostensible primary purpose, the law criminalizes a broad spectrum of activities, including incitement to "religious discord" and "assistance to extremism," yet does not precisely define what is meant by "extremism." The law includes no stipulation that threats of violence or acts of violence must accompany incitement to religious discord, for example. The threat of prosecution under Russia's "anti-extremism" legislation has an intimidating effect that results in restriction of freedom of speech and religious freedom under the guise of countering terrorism.

On the other hand, in terms of success stories, we can cite that Russia issued passports compliant with the International Civil Aviation Organization/ European Union (ICAO/EU) with enhanced security features, such as holographic images on the hard plastic biographic data page. Russian citizens have the option of receiving a five- or ten-year version. Although ICAO/EU-compliant passports were introduced in 2010, the previous style of passport (containing a photograph laminated to a bio-data page) continues to be issued and remains in widespread use, despite having fewer and less sophisticated security features. Recently, the Russian government moved to further strengthen security features, passing a bill that mandates the inclusion of fingerprint data in Russian citizens' foreign travel passports.

In conclusion, more analytical work needs to be done in order to improve understanding of complex scientific and methodological tools for the systematic processing and evaluation of data with the purpose of assessing strategic situations in the country, identifying patterns of crimes, as well as the causes and consequences of criminalization. Such endeavors would serve the development of counter-terrorism strategies at both the national and international levels.

# Working Together against Terrorism – A Perspective on the Collaboration of the German Authorities

*Belinda Hoffmann*

Germany is a federally structured nation that includes 16 states and almost 82 million inhabitants. In 2014, almost 16.4 million people in Germany had an immigration background either as first, second or third generation. However, the year 2015 saw an unusually high number of refugees coming to Germany and seeking asylum. The Federal Office of Statistics reported that nearly two million people had entered Germany by the end of the year. Meanwhile, another 860,000 non-German citizens had left the country. This means that in 2015 alone, about 1.14 million non-German citizens had come to seek shelter and a new future for themselves and their families, which is the highest number for any given year in the history of post-World War II Germany.

Current estimates report that about four million inhabitants in Germany are Muslim.

The German police organization is deeply rooted within the national constitution (or Fundamental Law), and placed within the responsibility of the German states. Each police force directly answers directly to its own state Ministry of the Interior, and consequently, every German state has its own State Criminal Police (Landeskriminalamt – LKA). In addition, the Federal Government can make use of the Federal Criminal Police (Bundeskriminalamt – BKA) and Federal Police (Bundespolizei). These police forces belong to the federal authorities and are placed under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of the Interior.

Currently, German authorities are focusing on about 7,000 high-risk individuals who are considered to pose a substantial threat to national security, including about 820 foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), of which about one-fifth are females. The majority of these individuals are younger than 30 years old, and at least 140 have been killed in action in Syria or Iraq. At this time, German authorities estimate that about 250-300 individuals from this group have returned to Germany so far.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Federal Ministry of the Interior announced that 11 Islamist attack plots have been foiled.

## Research Unit for Extremism and Terrorism (FTE)

As a consequence of the 9/11 attacks, the Federal Criminal Police developed and implemented its own interdisciplinary research unit focused on violent extremism and terrorism in 2003. As a joint academic and criminal police institution, the goal of the unit is to combine researchers from various fields along with police officers in their analytical work regarding individual crime cases, as well as professional research on topics of high interest for the police and authorities. Using the highest academic standards, the output of this unit is directed at improving the police forces' understanding of specific criminal phenomena and helping to develop appropriate counter-measures.

One of the main goals of this research unit is to answer the question: Why and how do certain individuals interact in a terrorist or extremist environment the way they do?

Serving the purpose of improving Germany's counter-terrorism measures, the FTE is also the main coordinator for crime prevention in the areas of terrorism and violent extremism. The unit is active in various federal and local working groups and research projects in the field of crime prevention, and adds its own scientific expertise to the development of specific and effective preventive tools and methods.

Currently the FTE is developing a handbook focusing on a national strategy for countering violent extremism (CVE). However, and due to the federal structure of the country, the FTE handbook can only function as a recommendation character for the other states.

### The "Joint Counter-Terrorism Center" (GTAZ)

Jihadi-inspired terrorism has created previously unknown challenges for German authorities. The 9/11 attacks of 2001 demonstrated the high threat level posed by Jihadi terror groups and the need for highly specialized and detailed knowledge and expertise for effective counter-measures. In addition, the combination and quick exchange of relevant information within the different agencies was highlighted as absolutely essential.

Consequentially, in 2004, the Federal Government introduced the new Joint Counter-Terrorism Center (Gemeinsame Terrorismusabwehrzentrum – GTAZ) as a tool to ensure communication and collaboration between the authorities and different agencies. Located in Berlin, the GTAZ is not an independent agency, but a joint cooperation and communication platform of 40 national security institutions, which means that no extra law had to be passed in order to create it. Each involved agency decides on their own level of cooperation based on their own state-level legal framework and sends a representative to cooperate on an equal level with the other institutions, such as:

- Federal Domestic Intelligence (Office for the Protection of the Constitution/ Bundesamt für Verfassungssschutz – BfV)
- Federal Criminal Police
- Federal (foreign) Intelligence Service (Bundesnachrichtendienst – BND)
- Federal Prosecutor General
- Federal Police
- Customs and Border Protection
- Federal Office for Immigration and Refugee Affairs
- Military Intelligence
- State Intelligence Agencies (Landesämter für Verfassungsschutz – LfV)
- State Criminal Police

In the last two or three years, a number of German states have acted upon a resolution of the Conference of Interior Ministers from 2012 and started to build their own coordination and competence centers to guide and steer their local deradicalization and prevention measures in the field of Islamist extremism and terrorism. These state centers are very different in their structure and nature; some are located within Social Ministries, some within Interior Ministries, some are fully governmental, while others are based on public-private-partnerships. Ultimately, comparative research found that it is not as relevant for the success of these coordination centers where they are located and what their specific structure in detail is, but rather that they are designed to be interdisciplinary, sustainable and able to develop customized solutions. In addition, a robust network of reliable partners along with consistent funding is essential for the effectiveness of these centers.

Currently, the Federal Criminal Police is developing a CVE handbook for those working in prevention in Germany. Aiming to help establish quality standards and necessary basics for evaluation – which are missing in the German landscape – the authorities hope that in this way, a step forward can be taken to assure quality output.

Germany is one of the few Western countries without a national prevention or counter-terrorism strategy. German politicians and experts in this field are indeed debating if this might be necessary or not. Whether or not a national strategy will come to life any time soon, it is important to recognize that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions or perfect strategies to counter terrorism. It is necessary to analyze and understand the specific threat, as well as the feasibility of prevention measures and tools, and to build sustainable networks between all relevant actors. This requires a road map for the development of binding quality standards for all German states in order to guarantee effective and comprehensive prevention and CVE work in this highly important and risky field.

# France vs. Jihadism: The Republic in a New Age of Terror

*Marc Hecker and Elie Tenenbaum*

The terrorist threat in France has dramatically increased since 2012, and especially over the past two years. Several fatal attacks occurred during this period: 17 people died in January 2015, 130 in November 2015 and 86 on Bastille Day 2016. Other attacks, though less lethal, have also attracted significant media coverage. In June 2015, a man claiming to be part of the "Islamic State" organization (IS) beheaded his boss and attempted to blow up a chemical plant. In June 2016, a policeman and his wife were killed in their home. A month later, an 85-year-old priest was executed by two men during a church ceremony in a small provincial town. In addition, at least a dozen attacks had failed or were thwarted, but which demonstrated that Jihadis could strike anywhere, at any time.

There are several reasons why France has become a prime target for Jihadi groups. In the past, groups such as the Algerian-based Islamic Armed Group (GIA), the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and later *al-Qaeda* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) all blamed France for its colonial history and its ties with Algiers' perceived infidel government. They also criticized the French for being impious and perverted. Today, IS puts a heavier emphasis on these kinds of essentialist remarks. Furthermore, this organization targets France specifically for three reasons: First, Jihadis condemn France for its "anti-Muslim policies" at home. The "Islamic State" has repeatedly used the 2004 law prohibiting religious signs in schools and the 2010 law banning face covering in public spaces – both voted on according to the French principle of *laïcité* – to underline how Muslims are consistently humiliated in France. Second, Jihadis fault France for intervening militarily in the Muslim world. France's operations in Mali, Iraq and Syria have predominantly been pointed out, assumptions that prompt IS to claim that France is waging a war against Islam. Consequently, they view terrorist attacks on French soil as just reprisal. Finally, Jihadis target the French population – of which Muslims represent approximately 8% – because they view French society as weak and extremely divided. Jihadis hope to create chaos, enabling them to extend their influence and eventually carry out their order.

## The French Way of Jihad

Over the summer of 2016, several municipalities across France cancelled popular events out of fear of an attack. For example, the city of Lille cancelled its annual garage sale and Nice cancelled the European road cycling championship. In turn, IS exploited these preventive measures to bolster its propaganda messages, insisting on having successfully spread fear across the country.[295]

[295] See the second edition of IS's Francophone online magazine, *Dar al-Islam*, August 2016, pp.26-27.

Local authorities based their decision on their inability to protect huge crowds given the breadth of the threat.

Jihadism looming over France may be outlined in the following four threat categories:

**The most immediate threat originates from the wars in Syria and Iraq.** Among Western states, France has the highest number of nationals that have joined Jihadi groups in Syria and Iraq. The French Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, presented alarming figures before the National Assembly on July 19, 2016,[296] noting that 680 French adults – a third of which were women – and 420 minors were living in Syria or Iraq at the time. He added that 187 more had died in combat there. When people return from war zones, authorities struggle to distinguish those who present a genuine threat from those who can integrate back into French society. For now, anyone returning from Syria is prosecuted, and most individuals are put into pre-trial custody. In June 2016, the Minister of Justice, Jean-Jacques Urvoas, revealed figures that highlight how France's judiciary system is facing an unprecedented challenge, stating that currently there are 317 legal proceedings being processed concerning people returning from Syria.[297]

In addition to the returnees identified by authorities, there is also the risk of terrorists clandestinely infiltrating French borders. The November 2015 attacks exemplify this menace. The nine terrorists that coordinated these attacks had trained with IS in the Middle East, returned to Europe unidentified, and then traveled freely within the Schengen area. Some of them arrived with the hundreds of thousands of refugees that had fled to Europe over the course of 2015.[298] Such a large influx of people proved difficult to manage. Later, investigators discovered that two of the three suicide-bombers that blew themselves up outside of the *Stade de France* had arrived on the Greek Island of Leros with fake passports, along with about 200 refugees.

The perpetrators of the November 13th attacks had obviously trained in a terrorist sanctuary. On that day, 3 commandos acting simultaneously killed dozens using suicide belts. This level of sophistication could not have been reached had they only trained in France, where firearm sales are heavily controlled and it is nearly impossible to practice shooting without catching the attention of French authorities. Thus, so long as Jihadi groups have sanctuaries at their command around the Mediterranean Sea, the threat will remain high in Europe. Today, the "Islamic State" is the organization most likely to send fighters to carry out more attacks. This is reinforced by the fact that a Frenchman, known by the *nom de guerre* Abou Souleiman al-Firansi, allegedly holds an important position among those responsible for organizing attacks abroad.[299]

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[296] Full transcript of July 19, 2016 National Assembly session, http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2015-2016-extra/20161015.asp, page visited on August 24, 2016.

[297] Jean-Jacques Urvoas, hearing before the National Assembly, June 1, 2016. All hearings referenced in this article took place under the inquiry commission on the government's measures implemented since January 7, 2015 to fight terrorism.

[298] Philippe Chadrys (deputy director in charge of anti-terrorism for France's judiciary police), hearing before the National Assembly, March 9, 2016.

[299] "Abou Souleiman: l'émir français de Daech", *TTU*, n°1016, April 13, 2016.

The threat of an attack operated by *al-Qaeda* should not be underestimated either. By committing a spectacular attack in a Western country, *al-Qaeda* would prove that it still competes against IS for the leadership of global Jihadism. Moreover, several former French residents, such as David Drugeon and Said Arif (both killed by Western air strikes in Syria in 2015) had joined the Khorasan group, which is allegedly responsible for *al-Qaeda*'s foreign operations. Finally, many Frenchmen who decided to join Jihadi organizations abroad have chosen *al-Qaeda* over IS. For instance, the main French-speaking recruiter, Omar Omsen, has successfully recruited dozens of young Frenchmen into *al-Qaeda*'s networks. He was very active in the region around Nice before he left for Syria. He is also the author of propaganda videos that were widely circulated across the Internet.

**The second type of threat emanates from the reactivation of older Jihadi networks.** Before the civil war in Syria, France already had a 30-year-long history of confrontation with Jihadism. Dozens of Frenchmen had trained in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Chechnya, Iraq, Sahel, Somalia or Yemen. However, French authorities only recently became conscious of the risks these men engender. In the past, jail sentences rarely exceeded a few years for men who were caught as they returned from Jihad fronts, and only a few months if they were arrested before leaving. For example, in January 2009, Walid Othmani was intercepted at Charles De Gaulle airport when he returned from Turkey. The authorities later found out he had spent five months in a training camp on the Afghan-Pakistan border. During the investigation, he confessed to having learned how to shoot automatic weapons and build explosives. He was sentenced in February 2011 to five years of imprisonment, 30 months of which was suspended**.** Judges were lenient as they thought Othmani was "becoming increasingly respectful of public order."[300] He was released soon afterwards, given that he had already spent a significant amount of time in pre-trial custody. No later than April 2011, he visited Said Arif, who was under house arrest in a small provincial town. Both men disappeared but were later identified in Syria, where Othmani was purportedly killed in early 2016.

Boubakeur el Hakim is another Jihadi who served time in French prisons before leaving for Syria. This Franco-Tunisian man was handed over to France by the Syrian authorities in May 2005. The investigation disclosed that el Hakim had fought in Iraq and recruited other Frenchmen, such as his brother who died in the Battle of Fallujah in 2004. El Hakim told investigators that "attacks against Americans or Iraqi police forces were legitimate" and that "Jihad should eventually result in the establishment of an Islamic State."[301] He was sentenced in 2008 to seven years in prison. After he was released in 2011, he joined the Jihadi group *Ansar al-Shari'a* in Tunisia. In 2015, el Hakim gave an interview to *Dabiq*, IS's English-speaking online magazine, in which he took credit for killing the Tunisian Member of Parliament, Mohamed Brahmi, before heading to Syria.[302]

[300] "Ministère public contre Othmani, Aziri, Ghamri et autres", Paris District Court, sentenced February 18, 2011.
[301] "Ministère public contre El Ayouni, Bouchnak, Benyettou et autres", Paris District Court, sentenced May 14, 2008.
[302] "Interview with Abu Muqatil", *Dabiq*, No. 8, March 2015.

Chérif Kouachi was prosecuted at the same time as Boubakeur el Hakim. They were both part of the "Buttes Chaumont" Jihadi network, which was named after the Parisian park where the group used to workout. Kouachi was arrested the day before he had intended to leave for Iraq in January 2005. In addition to finding his flight tickets, the police discovered documents on Jihadism and suicide attacks. The group leader, Farid Benyettou, told investigators that Kouachi was ready to die in combat. Despite this confession, Kouachi was only sentenced to three years of imprisonment, of which half was suspended. Ten years after this arrest, he and his brother Said – who trained with *al-Qaeda* in Yemen – committed the attack against *Charlie Hebdo*.

A year and a half after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, Larossi Abballa broke into a policeman's home in Magnanville, located in the suburbs of Paris. After killing the police officer and slaughtering his wife, while streaming it live on Facebook, Abballa questioned whether he should also kill the couple's 3-year-old son. He too was a former convict of terrorism. In 2013, he had been sentenced to three years of imprisonment, with 6 months of it suspended, for being part of a French Jihadi network that sent fighters to Pakistan.

**Thirdly, France faces the threat of people who did not receive training abroad but were radicalized at home.** These individuals are often referred to as "lone-wolves." Yet, police investigations have shown that, in fact, they often retain ties with other radicals through the Internet or in real life. The "home-grown" threat has become an increasing concern over the past two years as it has gradually become more difficult to leave Europe for Syria. What's more, Jihadis have encouraged their supporters to take up action independently. These messages have been broadcast by important leaders such as IS's spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani – killed in August 2016 – as well as foot soldiers. For example, in February 2015, two francophone fighters broadcast a video, from Salah al-Din's *Wilaya* in Iraq, urging French Muslims to perpetrate attacks at home. They claimed "Defend the honor of your Prophet! Fight them, kill them! […] Spit at them, burn their cars, burn down their police stations, don't ever pity them."[303]

The French government has tried to identify the people who may be receptive to this kind of message. In 2015, a national database of suspected radicalized individuals was created, listing 13,000 persons by mid-2016.[304] Cases of radicalization have been reported throughout the country. Through the Internet, IS has been successful in reaching big cities and their *banlieues* as well as remote rural areas. Radicalization does not only affect marginalized Muslims with poor backgrounds and lacking prospects for the future: all levels of society are concerned. The French Member of Parliament, Sébastien Pietrasanta, wrote a report on deradicalization, in which he sampled 2,281 individuals tagged for radicalization. He highlighted that 25% were minors, 42% were women and 56% were converts to Islam. According to him, "the new Jihad candidates are

[303] Marc Hecker, "Web social et djihadisme. Du diagnostic aux remèdes", *Focus stratégique*, No. 57, June 2015, p. 21.
[304] Olivier de Mazières (head of the general staff for the prevention of terrorism), hearing before the National Assembly, May 23, 2016.

increasingly young, come from various social backgrounds and many have no criminal record."[305]

Security forces do not have the means to constantly monitor the individuals who have been tagged for radicalization. The level of surveillance depends on how dangerous the individual is presumed to be. Of course, such measures can never be completely reliable. For example, the two men who slaughtered the priest in July 2016 were included in the list. In addition, some resort to '*taqqiya*', an Arabic word that refers to an act of dissimulation, in order to prevent them from being tagged as 'radicalized'. This seems to be the case for Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, who ran over the crowd with a truck in Nice on July 14, 2016. The police only knew of him for assaulting another driver but never suspected him to be radicalized.

**The fourth threat comes from what French intelligence specialists call 'oblique attacks'.** This refers to attacks committed in France by foreign nationals. France particularly fears two scenarios. The first consists of European nationals, taking advantage of free movement of people within the Schengen area, committing attacks on French territory. This is what some of the assailants of the November 13th, 2015 attacks did. Among the nine terrorists who were killed, two had Belgian citizenship and two others were residing in Belgium. The head of the French Domestic Intelligence Agency (DGSI), Patrick Calvar, stated that the attackers had only come to France from Belgium the day before the attacks.[306] Thus, it was nearly impossible for the DGSI to identify and prevent the terrorists from perpetrating the attacks.

The second scenario France fears is the cultural and geographical proximity of the francophone world. Calvar openly acknowledged that "We should no longer think in terms of French nationals or residents, but rather in terms of French speakers. Thousands of Tunisians, Moroccans and Algerians could be sent to our country." Tunisia is a particularly worrying case, given that around 6,000 of its nationals are thought to have fought in Syria. Calvar added, "My problem is that we have no way of monitoring French speaking people coming from Northern Africa."

In sum, Jihadis use a full spectrum of terror tactics to try and undermine France. They range from individual violence inspired by IS's propaganda to much more sophisticated attacks planned from war zones. In light of these security threats, France's measures to combat terrorism have constantly evolved since 2014.

## The French War on Terror

The January 2015 attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* caused great tremor within French political life. Although this was not France's first encounter with Jihadi terrorism, it prompted stronger reactions within civil society than any other in the past. In the days following the attacks, millions of people marched the streets of France – along with dozens of leaders from all around the world – in opposition to

[305] Sébastien Pietrasanta, *La déradicalisation, outil de lutte contre le terrorisme*, report drafted for the Minister of the Interior, June 2015, p. 8.
[306] Patrick Calvar, hearing before the National Assembly, May 24, 2016.

terrorism and unconditional support for liberal values such as freedom of expression, which many had interpreted as being the Jihadis' target.

The unprecedented scale of the movement incited French political leaders to widely adopt the '*Je suis Charlie*' slogan. This was originally used to show solidarity with the magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, which had been the first target of the attacks. Although this motto was supposed to unite all strata of society, it was perceived by some as conveying a secularist – and even antireligious – message. It was particularly true for a portion of French Muslims, who already felt stigmatized by the media and discriminated against in the economy, and thus could not feel they were part of this union.[307]

Despite these unresolved tensions within French society, the Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, delivered a warlike speech before the Parliament. He declared that France was, from then on, engaged in a "war against terrorism." The use of this Bushian phrase by a French leader came as a surprise, as it had long been castigated by most French politicians. In 2006, the expression was even formally rejected in the *White Paper* on Internal Security and Terrorism. However, the warring rhetoric slowly crept in as France increased its interventions abroad. Nicolas Sarkozy's decision to step up French troops in Afghanistan in 2008 and François Hollande's choice to go to war in Mali against AQIM in January 2013, both contributed to bolstering the idea of a French war on terror. Hollande's Defense Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, was the first official to speak of a "war against Islamic terrorism," without it attracting much attention from the press at the time.[308]

But it was the November 13th attacks that really tipped the balance. These were immediately qualified as "acts of war" by President Hollande. In a dramatic address to the Nation, he declared a "state of emergency," which had only been declared twice since the end of the Algerian war. In his speech before Congress in Versailles on November 16th, the President offered to amend the Constitution in order to strip any French national convicted for terrorism of their citizenship. This suggestion triggered endless political and media debates, which eventually convinced the executive to give up its attempted reform.

In France, unlike in the United States after the September 11, 2001 attacks, the threat was not only coming from abroad, but also from within, given that French nationals had turned against their own country. The expression 'war on terror' was therefore somewhat associated with the idea of a 'civil war.' This domestic dimension to Jihadism is actually part of the strategy, as it has been stated by Jihadi ideologues such as Abu Musab al-Suri or Abu Bakr Naji, under the terms of waging a "war of enclaves."[309] This led some right-wing politicians to refer to Jihadis as France's "fifth column." The Army's Chief of Staff did not hesitate to talk about an "enemy within," while the Chief of General Staff warned French MPs against "a comprehensive project of political and religious subversion." Jihadis, and especially the "Islamic State" organization, were referred to by the

[307] Emmanuel Todd, *Qui est Charlie ? Sociologie d'une crise*, Paris : Le Seuil, 2015.
[308] David Revault d'Allonnes, *Les guerres du Président*, Paris: Le Seuil, 2015.
[309] Gilles Kepel, *Terreur dans l'Hexagone*, Paris: Gallimard, 2016.

Ministry of Defense, as a "terrorist army," a "militarized threat," which would have to be responded to in kind.[310]

Yet President Hollande did not wait for the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks to happen to start his "war on terror." In January 2013, the French Army deployed 4,000 troops to Mali to halt Jihadi armed groups advancing toward Bamako. In less than six weeks, the French "liberated" the northern part of the country, which had been living under rigorous *Shari'a* law for six months. Paris knew, however, that a one-shot military victory would not put an end to endemic Jihadism in the region. In agreement with its local allies, France decided to adopt a "low-cost, long-endurance" approach in order to contain – rather than eradicate – terrorism. Operation *Barkhane* started in 2014 and still comprises about 3,500 troops today. They are spread throughout the Sahel region (Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) forming a small but highly mobile force. They are supported by jet fighters, MQ-9 *Reaper* drones and attack helicopters, which can strike quickly on locally implanted terror groups such as AQIM, *Al-Mourabitoune* or *Ansar al-Dein*. France is working hard, at the diplomatic-level, to encourage a frustratingly long peace process in Mali. While doing so, it is also taking on a key military assistance role in helping local forces build sustainable security. However, the situation in the Sahel region is deteriorating, which is why the French government is now considering a possible widening of the *Barkhane* operation. They intend to hold back *Boko Haram*'s northern expansion around Lake Chad and contain the looming threat in southern Libya, which has become a new sanctuary for all kinds of Jihadi movements.

However important Africa is to French strategy, the Middle East is certainly the theater most immediately connected to the domestic threat in France. Ever since an international anti-ISIS coalition was formed under American patronage over the summer of 2014, France has participated in air operations over Iraq. A couple months before the November 2015 attacks, President Hollande received intelligence regarding terror cells planning to attack France from IS-held ground in Syria. He then unilaterally decided to extend the strikes to Al-Raqqah, invoking its right of self-defense. After the November attacks, the number of air strikes nearly doubled for the French *Rafales* deployed in Jordan and the UAE. As the *Charles de Gaulle* carrier battle group is deployed in the Persian Gulf, over 3,500 French soldiers are directly involved in the fight against the "Islamic State" organization. The French operation includes up to 40 jet fighters as well as approximately 500 soldiers on the ground, conducting artillery fire support and training missions with the Iraqi army in Baghdad and with Kurdish *Peshmerga* in Erbil.

But of all military missions, homeland security has been the most consuming in terms of personnel. A few days after the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*, François Hollande decided to launch the *Sentinelle* operation. This led to the deployment of 10,000 soldiers – 15% of the French Army's operational land force – to perform internal security missions. Over time, *Sentinelle* has had a tremendous impact on capabilities. To make up for the numbers, the High Command had to reduce training time by up to 30%. Although the government adapted quickly

[310] *Conditions d'emploi des armées lorsqu'elles interviennent sur le territoire national pour protéger la population*, Report of the Ministry of Defense to the Parliament, March 2016.

and had the Parliament vote on new credits for the Army, additional resources will only partially fill the gap.

Beyond this numbers game, there have been recurring debates around the genuine purpose of the mission. Due to judicial constraints, soldiers are not allowed to conduct intelligence missions, make arrests, or engage in kinetic counter-terror operations on metropolitan territory. What is left of their mission is lenient street patrolling, and occasional static guard duties. This has been all the more frustrating because the police, on its part, has become increasingly militarized. This, in turn, generated the strange feeling of role reversal within the military.

The police is certainly the one French institution that has attracted the most political attention since the anti-terror campaign started. While the institution had been reducing its numbers under former President Nicolas Sarkozy, the police has again become a priority for the current socialist president. After November 2015, President Hollande committed to safeguard the "security pact" – labeled after his own pre-electoral "growth pact" promise – by hiring 5,000 new personnel to join the 240,000 French *gendarmes* and police personnel already employed.

Special intervention teams (RAID, GIGN and BRI) have been on the rise as they were allocated additional resources and are now distributed throughout the country. They should be able to get anywhere within less than 20 minutes. Regular police units are now also being equipped with assault rifles and bullet-proof vests. This militarization trend is well-known in the United States, but is quite new to a country like France where there are strict regulations on firearm sales. A new law was passed in June 2016 that extends the security forces' right to use deadly force beyond self-defense in the specific circumstances of a terrorist attack.

The most spectacular transformation, however, has happened within the intelligence community, which has grown 10% in the past three years. The sector has finally recovered from the 2008 reform that seriously harmed its efficiency. French domestic intelligence has particularly suffered from the 2008 disbanding of the century-old *Renseignements Généraux*, the police intelligence institution which retained a thorough knowledge of French civil society. It was re-founded in 2014 under the label of *Renseignement Territorial.* Its mission consists of establishing a tight surveillance grid throughout the territory. Overall, the French intelligence community has been paying increasing attention to early warnings and weak signals detection. In the counter-terrorism field, these are usually tagged under the "radicalization" banner. France's major domestic intelligence agency, the DGSI has also benefitted from extended surveillance powers on personal data thanks to a law passed in July 2015. To many human rights activists, this law amounted to a "French Patriot Act."

The number of preventive actions skyrocketed after the state of emergency was declared. Born out of the Algerian war, this regime of exception temporarily transfers judicial attributions to the executive power. Although it renounced the authority to press censorship (present in the 1955 version), the updated 2015 law gave authorities the right to summon suspects to house arrest, and order police searches without judicial warrant. In its first six months of application, the

state of emergency authorized nearly 3,500 searches, 400 house arrests and the closure of a dozen mosques. These measures have led to nearly 600 legal proceedings. However, only 5 individuals were charged with terrorism. Emergency procedures have not only been criticized by human rights activists but also by the National Ombudsman Jacques Toubon. The latter, who is a former Minister of Justice, claims that these measures encroach on civil liberties and jeopardize "social cohesion in the country."

Operational efficiency has also been an issue. It would seem that emergency measures have a destabilizing impact on Jihadi networks in France, however, their efficiency has been rapidly dwindling because the terror cells they were targeting quickly adapted to the new context.[311] Doubts regarding their effectiveness grew bigger as people found out that Adel Kermiche, one of the authors of the July 28 attack, was under both house arrest and electronic tagging but was still free to come and go at certain times of the day.

Despite these shortfalls, French domestic intelligence services have thwarted at least 15 terror plots since January 2015. One should also note that 69 counter-terrorism operations have been conducted from abroad since January 2013 by France's external intelligence service, the DGSE. Many of these operations have helped prevent attacks on French soil.[312] And, France is not alone in the fight. It coordinates closely with the United States, especially since the signing of a bilateral agreement regarding intelligence sharing in February 2016. European cooperation is also improving. Europol has been empowered and created new databases regrouping Foreign Fighters. Though slow in its enactment, the European Union is adopting the European Passenger Name Record. With hundreds of thousands of people illegally crossing the European Union's borders in 2015, the current refugee crisis also presents a formidable security challenge, which France cannot deal with alone.

However, counter-terrorism measures in a democracy cannot solely depend on police and intelligence operations. To counter the current Jihadi wave, France also needs to cope with its judicial issues. Terrorism as a criminal offense entered French law in 1986. A specialized public prosecution office, responsible for leading investigations, was also created at that time. Although this anti-terrorist section was sufficient to handle a relatively scarce quantity of cases until 2012, it is now overwhelmed because of the massively increasing French Jihadi threat. The number of cases has quintupled since 2012, and lawsuits have become increasingly complex. For example, the lawsuit pertaining to the November attacks already has a list of 500 plaintiffs. The saturation has worsened with the series of anti-terrorist laws, all of which created new charges and modified others such as "individual terrorism" (specially directed at "lone wolf" profiles), "apology of terrorism" (especially online), or even "repeated visits to terrorist websites." This piling up of new offenses contributed to the saturation of the under-resourced judicial system that comprises only nine anti-terrorism judges for the whole country.

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[311] Sébastien Pietrasanta, *Rapport fait au nom de la Commission d'Enquête relative aux moyens mis en œuvre par l'État pour lutter contre le terrorisme depuis le 7 janvier 2015*, National Assembly, July 5, 2016, p. 263.

[312] Bernard Bajolet (head of the DGSE), hearing before the National Assembly, May 24, 2016.

Relatedly, prisons may in fact be the weakest link in the security chain. French jails are faced with new challenges with more than 260 terrorism convicts and at least 1,500 "radicalized" inmates incarcerated. Beyond the previously mentioned problem tied to the length of sentences, the penitentiary system is confronted with a major radicalization problem due to the wide circulation of pro-Jihadi media content within penitentiary establishments and the proselytizing behavior of some convicts. The latter try to convert petty criminals into Jihadis within the prisons. Therefore, French prisons are increasingly perceived as the number one incubator of Jihad.

To curtail this trend, the Ministry of Justice has engineered an evaluation grid to help detect convicts that have already been, or are being, "radicalized." After this stage, prisoners are to be closely monitored by special penitentiary intelligence services that received additional resources since January 2015. Small teams of social workers, psychologists and imams acting as Muslim chaplains have also been hired to help deal with these convicts. The Ministry of Justice is also conducting an experiment in five prisons, which consists of separating terrorism convicts so they can no longer preach their extremist views to other inmates. Some convicts are also invited to attend a tailored program made up of individual interviews and thematic seminars intended to help them question their views regarding issues such as faith, geopolitics, citizenship, etc.. Although the program was launched recently, it has already been severely criticized. In a June 2016 report, the chief prison inspector stressed the great disparities between the different programs and the failure to effectively isolate the targeted convicts.[313] At the end of October, the Minister of Justice announced the suspension of this experiment.

Despite these shortcomings, prisons seem to have served as laboratories of "deradicalization" for policies applied to the rest of society. In May 2016, Prime Minister Manuel Valls announced a new "anti-radicalization plan," which announced the inauguration of 10 "reinsertion centers" by the end of 2017. These facilities were created for individuals who are not subject to imprisonment, because they either did not commit any crime or against whom no reliable evidence was found. In the future, they might also serve as an "airlock" for ex-convicts at the end of their sentence time. The first pilot facility opened last summer in Indre-et-Loire. It should be able to host, on a voluntary basis, around thirty former aspiring Jihadis who sought to join Jihad in Syria. Another center should be operational before the end of the year, which should host individuals returning from foreign theaters of operation who were not found to have taken part in combat or violating human rights.

This almost "medicalized" approach to counter-radicalization is heavily influenced by a long history of French anti-cult policies. It has already been vigorously criticized for being a naïve, patronizing and hopeless attempt to "cure" – some may say "brainwash" – Jihadis as if they were the abused victims of some sort of mental indoctrination. Specialists on Islam and some security experts have called, on the contrary, to acknowledge the ideological consistency of the Jihadi discourse. They have advised their audience to consider

[313] *Radicalisation islamiste en milieu carcéral*, Rapport du Contrôleur général des lieux de privation de liberté, June 7, 2016.

radicalization as a serious challenge for Western democracies. Such a perspective would give way to a more traditional view of "ideological struggle" or a "war of ideas" as witnessed in the past.[314]

A good example of this more political approach is *stop-dJihadisme.fr*, which was launched at the end of January 2015. It is a governmental website aimed at deconstructing the Jihadi discourse. It has used video clips to target a wider audience through social media. Civil society and/or clandestine service activities may be participating in this new psychological warfare by engaging in more covert forms of "grey" and "black" counter-propaganda. Moderate Muslim leaders are also being solicited to join the fight against violent extremism.

This ideological approach to counter-radicalization also raises concerns about the possible continuum between Jihadism and other rigorist branches of Islam, and especially the Salafi school of thought. There is a risk in fighting Jihadi ideas that may overlap with those of other non-violent fundamentalist movements. This may further marginalize a wider spectrum of French Muslims who already feel stigmatized by an allegedly anti-Muslim climate. With this perspective in mind, "radicalization" may become a central political issue, functioning as multiplier of existing social tensions.

## Conclusion

The current French Administration has certainly been the most active in fighting terrorism. However, the threats originating from both within and outside the country remain extremely high. As the "Islamic State" organization in Iraq and Syria is slowly dwindling, the flow of returning Jihadis will likely increase. IS may be tempted to make up for its territorial loss by committing spectacular attacks in the West. France is also challenged internally. It must deal with unrelenting social and religious tensions, but also, more pragmatically; it must deal with the fact that 80% of terrorism convicts will be released over the next five years.[315] This undoubtedly casts an ominous shadow over the future.

Jihadis intend to trigger a spiral of violence that will allow them to convince French Muslims that they have been rejected by their very own government and society. This spiraling scenario has been pointed out by the head of France's main domestic intelligence agency. He fears that the next attack will foster violent reaction on the part of far-right hate groups. At the other end of the spectrum, the far-left has also become increasingly violent, as they are upset by the emergency measures and obsessed with their fear of a rising "police-state" in the country. The answer to these challenges obviously lies in a strong national resilience. However, given the upcoming May 2017 presidential election, with the far-right on the rise and the divisions within parties, national cohesion will be seriously tested.

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[314] Philippe-Joseph Salazar, *Paroles armées: Comprendre et combattre la propagande terroriste*, Paris : Lemieux, 2015.

[315] Didier Le Bret (National Intelligence Coordinator), hearing before the National Assembly, May 18, 2016.

# Building Local Capacity on a Global Scale: Collaboration through the Strong Cities Network

*Jonathan Birdwell*

This paper sets out an argument for collaboration between local authorities and practitioners to prevent and counter violent extremism on a global scale. After more than a decade of policies and approaches to tackle recruitment to violent extremism, the view among experts and policymakers in Europe has coalesced around the importance of locally coordinated, multi-agency approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism.

This paper outlines the role of local authorities, focusing on the UK as a case study. Local authorities have played a critical role in the implementation of the UK's 'Prevent Strategy' for nearly a decade. Local authorities lead the government's 'Channel' program, in which a multi-agency team that receives referrals of people thought to be radicalized, makes an assessment of risk, and designs and implements interventions that often involve one-on-one mentoring.

While the experience of the UK may not be directly comparable, the experience and lessons learned by UK local authorities over the past decade of Prevent can still hold value for municipalities across the world. It is with this need for global collaboration at the municipal level that the Strong Cities Network was established in 2015.

The Strong Cities Network is the first ever global network of local political leaders and practitioners working together on the prevention of violent extremism. The Network is run by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and seeks to increase on-the-ground, active collaboration between municipalities across all global regions. As an example of this, the Strong Cities Network is facilitating a two-year pilot project currently in its initial stages, which will establish partnerships and exchanges between municipalities in Denmark and municipalities in Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia, in the effort to support the development of municipality-coordinated, multi-agency approaches to prevention.

## The Threat: Global and Local

Recruitment to violent extremism continues to be the primary security concern of governments around the world. *Al-Qaeda*, *al-Shabaab*, *Boko Haram*, and most recently the "Islamic State" organization (IS or Da'esh) are different manifestations of the same violent ideology which has seduced thousands from all regions of the world. The Soufan Group has estimated that at the end of 2015, between 27,000 and 31,000 people from at least 86 countries traveled to Syria and Iraq to join IS and other violent extremist groups. While Tunisia (6,000), Saudi Arabia (2,500), Russia (2,400), Turkey (2,100) and Jordan (2,000) were identified as the largest source countries for foreign fighters, over 10,000 people from Western Europe and the former Soviet Republics have travelled to Syria and Iraq to join IS as foreign fighters, and it is believed that 20-30 per cent of

these individuals have returned to their home countries, presenting a complex security challenge.[316]

In addition to threats from IS attacks, Europe is also contending with xenophobic, far right extremist individuals and groups. While there has yet to be the same level of terrorist violence from the far right, with the exception of the attack in Norway in 2011 by Anders Breivik, social media is full of violent, racist propaganda and 'echo chambers' espousing violence towards Muslims, Jews and other ethnic and religious groups; and hate crimes, violence and arson attacks are on the rise across Europe. This has been exacerbated by the so-called refugee / migrant crisis in Europe emanating from the wars in Syria and Iraq. The interplay between Islamist extremism and far right extremism has prompted the concept of 'cumulative extremism', with both groups and ideologies reinforcing and exacerbating the other.

The challenge of extremist groups and foreign fighters is not evenly spread throughout countries and municipalities. Some municipalities have significantly higher levels of extremist groups and numbers of foreign fighters. Social media has enabled the recruitment of isolated individuals, but the majority tend to be clustered in physical areas – often communities on the outskirts of large municipalities. The Soufan Group points to 'hotbeds of recruitment', including the Lisleby district of Fredrikstad in Norway, Bizerte and Ben Gardane in Tunisia, Derna in Libya, the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, and the district of Molenbeek in Brussels.[317]

This underlines the need for developing local approaches – within the context of a national framework and strategy – in areas of high concern. In particular, across Europe there are examples of multi-agency prevention teams operating at a local level, often coordinated by the local government and involving education, social services, youth services and community police officers. Known as SSP (Stabilization and Security Policy Department) in Denmark or Channel 'panels' in the UK, these teams train frontline workers – including teachers, social workers, youth workers, and community groups – on how to spot signs of vulnerability to radicalization and what to do if there are concerns. Once a referral is received, the local multi-agency team makes an assessment, decides whether an intervention or further support or action is required, and helps to design and manage that intervention if it is deemed necessary. Interventions often take the form of one-on-one mentoring, but can also include holistic approaches that can include support in education, employment and housing.

In the UK, the Conservative Government introduced a new Prevent statutory duty for all frontline workers to report concerns about radicalization as part of their safeguarding requirements. This has led to a rise in the number of referrals to Channel, and arguably, more individuals receiving support before they've been drawn into an extremist ideology. The Government contends that Channel has

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[316] The Soufan Group (2015) *Foreign Fighters – An updated assessment of the flow of foreign fighters into Syria and Iraq.* December 2015. Online: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate3.pdf.

[317] The Soufan Group, *Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, TSG, December 2015, available at: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate_FINAL.pdf

turned around the lives of hundreds of people at risk of being drawn into radicalization. Below is an outline of the evolution of the UK Prevent Strategy, including Channel and the role of local authorities in the UK.

**Case Study: UK 'Prevent' and Channel**

The UK was the first country to launch a national strategy to prevent 'homegrown' violent extremism, introduced by the Labour Government following the attacks on the London Underground on 7th July 2005. The Government's counter-terrorism strategy, known as CONTEST, was published in 2006 with various measures aimed at prevention. This included the *Preventing Violent Extremism: Winning Hearts and Minds* strategy, which was instituted by the Department for Communities and Local Government, a police *Prevent Strategy and Delivery Plan*, and the introduction of Channel, a multi-agency approach to 'identify those at risk from violent extremism and provide help to them'. The Prevent Strategy was revised in 2007 'based on a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving radicalization in the UK and overseas', and included efforts to challenge the ideology, disrupt those who promote it, support individuals vulnerable to the ideology, increase the resilience of vulnerable communities, and address real or perceived grievances, both international and local. These changes were outlined in the revised CONTEST strategy, published under then Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Government in 2009.[318]

Since its inception, the Prevent Strategy has been controversial and faced accusations of treating all British Muslims as 'suspects' and being used as a vehicle for spying. The inclusion of programs aimed at social cohesion – or 'building the resilience of vulnerable communities', as the then-government put it in the 2009 CONTEST strategy – led to criticism that the strategy was securitizing issues of integration and social cohesion and damaging relations between the government and British Muslims.

In 2010, the Coalition Government initiated a review of the Prevent Strategy. A revised Prevent Strategy was published in 2011. This version aimed to address previous criticisms by removing social cohesion and non-violent extremism programs from Prevent. According to the 2011 Strategy, 'Prevent must not assume control of or allocate funding to integration projects which have a value far wider than security and counter terrorism: the Government will not securitize its integration strategy'.[319]

Conservative policy makers also instituted further changes to the Prevent Strategy. They criticized Prevent for working with individuals and organizations with questionable views, for example regarding gender segregation and attitudes

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[318] Her Majesty's Government, *Pursue Prevent Protect Prepare: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism*, HMG, March 2009, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228644/7547.pdf

[319] Her Majesty's Government, *Prevent Strategy*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, June 2011, available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

towards homosexuals and other groups. The 2011 Strategy thus instituted a requirement for organizations working under 'Prevent' to abide by 'values of universal human rights, equality before the law, and democracy and full participation in our society'. There was also a greater emphasis placed on the need for organizations receiving government funds for 'prevention' and 'deradicalization' to demonstrate evidence of the impact of their programs.

The guiding principles of Prevent as outlined in 2011 include:

- The need to address all forms of terrorism and violent extremism, but to allocate resources proportionate to the threat.
- Commitment to freedom of speech, but also efforts to challenge extremist – including non-violent extremist – ideas that are seen as part of a terrorist ideology.
- Policies to deal with non-violent extremism, as well as issues of integration, are not part of Prevent and are coordinated by a separate government department.
- Community and local authorities have a key role to play, but must be coordinated with central government departments due to violent extremism being a national security issue.
- There are three main areas of Prevent expenditure, including local projects (coordinated by local authorities), policing and Prevent work overseas.
- Local projects funded by Prevent need to be more rigorously evaluated, and should not involve organizations with extreme beliefs and views.

The 2011 Strategy also focused on three core pillars of work: 1) responding to the ideological challenge and those who promote it; 2) preventing people from being drawn into terrorism; and 3) working with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalization.

The work of the first strategic aim is led by the Research, Information and Communication Unit (RICU) within the Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism within the Home Office. It was recently revealed publicly that RICU has been supporting community organizations in producing and running communication campaigns involving 'counter-narratives' and 'alternative-narratives' that explicitly and implicitly undermine the arguments of extremist groups. According to the Government, community groups producing and disseminating counter-narratives with the assistance of RICU have generated over 25 million views since January 2014.

In terms of the second and third strategic aims of Prevent, the Government introduced a new statutory duty for all frontline workers – including teachers, social workers, psychologists and doctors – to report individuals who were perceived to be at risk of radicalization. With their election in 2015, the Conservative Government introduced the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, including this new duty on public-facing bodies to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'.

In the UK, frontline workers including teachers, childcare providers, social workers, youth workers and mental health specialists have legal requirements to 'safeguard' children by reporting concerns regarding physical or sexual abuse,

for example. The Prevent statutory duty requires public institutions and frontline workers to include radicalization into their safeguarding duties and to undergo training on the risk indicators of radicalization. According to the Home Office, 450,000 frontline workers have been trained to date in spotting signs of radicalization. The Home Office has also produced an e-learning tool and an online portal called 'Educate Against Hate' with advice and curriculum materials for teachers at www.educateagainsthate.com.

While some critics of Prevent have argued that the new statutory duty has had a chilling effect on free speech and debate on these issues in schools, the government explicitly states in their strategy that schools should be safe spaces where children and young people can understand, discuss and debate sensitive topics, including terrorism and extremism. There has been no research released publicly to date about the impact of the Prevent duty on free speech and debate in schools.

**Is Prevent Working?**

Prevention of recruitment to violent extremism is a new and controversial policy area. Measuring the impact of policies and programs in this area and determining if they are 'working' is extremely difficult.

Aside from isolated instances such as the killing of Army Drummer Lee Rigby in 2013, the UK has not suffered a large-scale attack since the 7/7 bombings. Multiple plots have been disrupted and hundreds of people have been arrested and charged with terrorism offenses. However, estimates suggest that approximately 700 people have travelled from the UK to fight and live with the "Islamic State" and other violent extremist groups in Syria and Iraq. While some critics use these figures to suggest that Prevent is not working, it is possible that the number of foreign fighters could have been substantially higher if not for the actions undertaken through Prevent.

Part of the difficulty of determining whether Prevent is effective is that much of the data is highly sensitive and is thus tightly controlled by the UK Home Office. Freedom of Information requests have recently revealed the number of referrals that have been received by Channel, the UK's multi-agency program for supporting those vulnerable to radicalization, and how this has been affected by the statutory duty.

The data provided by the National Police Chiefs' Council in response to a Freedom of Information Request shows that a total of 4,007 people were referred to the Channel program in 2015. The number of referrals, including age breakdowns, is presented in Table 1 below. The data also reveals the number of referrals who were deemed to need support or an intervention.

The data shows a notable increase in the number of referrals received after the statutory duty was made law in June 2015: suggesting a 50 per cent increase in referrals. However, the data also reveals that while the number of referrals rose substantially, the number deemed as needing support decreased – from 116 to 91.

*Table 1. Data from the Channel Program for 2015, provided by the National Police Chiefs' Council on 10 May 2016 in response to Freedom of Request of Information.*

| | **Number of referrals** | | | **Number of referrals assessed as needing support** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Jan–Jun 2015** | **Jun–Dec 2015** | **Total** | **Jan–Jun 2015** | **Jun–Dec 2015** | **Total** |
| **Total** | 1,602 | 2,405 | 4,007 | 116 | 91 | 207 |
| **Total under-18** | 819 | 1,251 | 2,070 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **0-9** | 93 | 169 | 262 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **10-14** | 296 | 575 | 1,133 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| **15-17** | 430 | 507 | 937 | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Overall, only 5 per cent of those referred to Channel in 2015 were deemed sufficiently radicalized or at risk of radicalization in order to receive support. While government sources have recognized that there are efforts underway to improve this conversion rate, the government also argues that it is proof that the system is working and is sufficiently careful and discerning: that Channel experts who assess cases are not over-prescribing radicalization interventions.

While the low conversion rate suggests that more work is needed to train frontline workers in spotting the signs of radicalization correctly, it could be that, with a phenomenon as complex as radicalization, an expert multi-agency panel is inevitably better placed to make an in-depth assessment.

More data is needed to make a full assessment of Channel's effectiveness and impact. For example, further research is needed into the impact on individuals who are falsely referred to Channel – that is, the 95 per cent assessed as not needing further support. However, often due to age, the details of these individuals are understandably highly sensitive and not available to researchers.

The 2015 data does however present a potentially useful baseline from which to measure the UK's approach over time. Data from 2016 will shed further light on the effect of the statutory duty and the operation of Channel and its effectiveness.

Nonetheless, while there is a limit to what data can be released publicly, facilitating local authorities in the UK to share their experiences regarding the operation of Channel directly with local authorities from other countries and regions is essential to building capacity for prevention of violent extremism on a global scale.

The experience in the UK highlights the need for strong coordination and collaboration – both between national and local governments, but also between agencies and stakeholders at the local level that may have little experience working together. These experiences can help other municipalities address the following issues:

- How do you create and encourage multi-agency work, across agencies including social services, employment and education, housing, mental health and police? What potential cultural clashes exist across these different agencies, and who should lead?
- How do you create a referral system for those who may be vulnerable to radicalization that has the confidence of frontline workers, as well as community groups and parents?
- What are the most effective approaches to building trust between local authorities and communities, which may feel marginalized and mistrustful towards government policies – particularly with respect to prevention?
- What do real-world examples and case studies, derived from the experiences of local authorities, reveal about the phenomenon of radicalization and what types of interventions are most effective?

While the power and role of local authorities may be radically different across different cultures and global regions, the belief in the need for local, preventive approaches – tailored to the context and the local threat – is beginning to be more widely spread.

**Building Local, Multi-Agency Approaches through the Strong Cities Network**

Experiences in the UK and elsewhere have led to the firm belief that local governments must play a key role in preventing and countering violent extremism in all its forms. While the work of police, security and intelligence services is indispensable, increasing investment in 'soft' preventive measures can ultimately reduce the need for 'harder', more coercive interventions by law enforcement and intelligence services which are ultimately more expensive and could do further harm to the relationship between the state and its citizens.

'Soft' prevention efforts often involve everything from engagement with faith communities and NGOs, to government strategic communications, and one-to-one interventions with those already radicalized or in the initial stages, as with the Channel Program. While there is a consensus on the need for prevention strategies, fundamental arguments remain on topics such as: the role of ideology and religion in the radicalization and deradicalization processes; whether 'deradicalization' or the changing of one's beliefs is possible and something the government should try to do, rather than emphasizing 'disengagement' from potential harmful activities; whether communications and counter-narratives to dissuade individuals by governments or NGOs are effective; and how to provide support for NGOs and grassroots organizations to work on these issues without undermining their credibility. Nonetheless, there is a great deal that all countries and cities can learn from each other in this fight.

In recent years, a variety of international networks have been established to facilitate a process of global information exchange on countering violent extremism between national governments, such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF).[320] Yet, it is vital that information and expertise shared between

[320] https://www.thegctf.org/home

nation-states trickles down to the cities and municipalities which are being increasingly tasked with designing, implementing and measuring local preventive approaches.

The Strong Cities Network was launched to provide a direct network for sharing and capacity-building between cities and local authorities on a global scale. With a current membership of fifty cities and regions, the Strong Cities Network draws on a diversity of local experience dealing with everything from Islamist extremism and foreign fighters to left- and right-wing extremism, gang violence, ethnic and inter-communal conflict, animal rights and other forms of single-issue violent extremism. Across these challenges, the focus of the Strong Cities Network is on 'soft' prevention measures that can build social cohesion and resilience to violent and harmful activities. While the Network only launched in September 2015, lessons learned from this collaboration are already starting to emerge.

For example, our interviews with other city members suggest that municipality-driven prevention efforts are most successful when they are able to harness existing institutional knowledge, whether from crime prevention, health, education or social work sectors. While there may be need for specialist knowledge about the ideology at the heart of a violent extremist group, effective interventions with individuals at risk of radicalization can delivered by trained mentors, psychologists, youth workers, religious leaders and social workers. The most important thing is developing a trusting relationship with the individual identified as needing support, and finding the right support package to fit their circumstance.

A second insight to emerge is that building trust within communities, and producing effective local communications strategies is a challenge almost ubiquitous to local and municipal efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism. Often cities have particular communities where this is most sensitive, and even cities with well-established strategies still consider a lack of trust to be a significant barrier to implementation. This is where local approaches are often best placed to change attitudes and build positive and inclusive messaging. Insights from cities and regions across the world suggest that engagement must first begin by addressing the grievances of marginalized communities through tangible and visible programs. Only once trusting relationships are built can the more difficult conversations around prevention of violent extremism be fruitful.

A third challenge concerns the relationship between national and local government stakeholders. Cities have varying levels of political autonomy in preventing violent extremism, but it is important to recognize where national policy can impede local practice as much as it is to demonstrate how it can be supportive. To this end, the Strong Cities Network provides the space for empowering cities to take the initiative and better understand how they can adapt national or international demands to their local settings and in turn inform national policymaking on these issues.

It remains to be seen how far approaches now accepted as best practice in Europe – for example, involving the role of municipality-led 'multi-agency teams', such as Channel in the UK or the SSP model in Denmark – can be adapted to regions like the Middle East or North Africa, where the powers of municipalities

tend to be more limited. Efforts are underway, such as a Strong Cities Network two-year pilot project supported by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that will facilitate on-the-ground exchanges of best practice between municipalities in Lebanon, Jordan and Tunisia, and municipalities in Denmark.

The aim of the Strong Cities Network is not to provide a 'one-size-fits-all' blueprint to prevention at the local level. Rather, the aim is to enable and galvanize cities to learn from one another and be better placed to tailor their own approaches to the needs and challenges facing their respective communities.

*For more information on the Strong Cities Network, including how your city or town can become a member, please visit www.strongcitiesnetwork.org.*

# Collaborating against Terrorism in Europe

*Kristian Bartholin*

In 2015 and 2016, countries in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe faced a series of extremely violent terrorist attacks perpetrated on the orders of, or inspired by, the so-called "Islamic State", and mainly directed at "soft", civilian targets. Many more terrorist attacks were under preparation, but were stopped in their tracks before being brought to fruition through the intervention of law enforcement agencies of various countries.

The instinctive and understandable response to terrorist attacks on this scale is a call for visibly increased security at borders, on the streets of cities, and in public transportation, but even though such measures may provide an immediate feeling of security, there is no real guarantee that they will prevent future terrorist attacks from being carried out by determined assailants, prepared to die. However, if imposed indefinitely and taken to their extreme, such security measures will gradually restrict the freedoms of everyone and profoundly change society.

Balancing the legitimate need for the state to provide security for its citizens with the equally legitimate need to protect fundamental human rights and safeguard the principle of rule of law is as difficult as it is vital to any country.

Terrorism constitutes one of the most serious threats to the peaceful enjoyment of human rights and, through its destabilizing effects, to the very workings of democracy.

The response to terrorism should therefore be firm, but targeted and proportionate. Terrorists must, whenever possible, be brought to justice. Only by observing human rights standards and scrupulously applying the rule of law in the fight against terrorism can the fallacies of terrorism be exposed and those forces that want to intimidate people into submission to their apocalyptic tyranny be defeated.

Terrorism has been around for a long time, and the Council of Europe has been active in the counter-terrorism field since the mid-1970s. In 1978 the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism entered force. It is essentially a technical treaty on the provision of mutual legal assistance in terrorism cases.

In 2002, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted "Guidelines on human rights and the fight against terrorism." These guidelines deal with all aspects of counter-terrorism measures, from detention of suspects to asylum law, and are still the cornerstone of the Council of Europe's counter-terrorism policy.

2005 saw the addition of three new instruments, namely the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism; the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism; and Recommendation Rec(2005)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the use of "special investigation techniques" in relation to serious crimes including acts of terrorism. The

convention on the prevention of terrorism and the recommendation on special investigation techniques are the only legal instruments in their field globally, and are as such being widely referred to and used as inspiration in other parts of the world.

The convention on the prevention of terrorism deals with national and international measures to prevent terrorism, protect and compensate victims, the provision of mutual legal assistance in terrorism cases, the exchange of information between Parties, and equally important, the criminalization of the acts of "public provocation to commit a terrorist offense," "recruitment [of others] for terrorism," and "training [of others] for terrorism." The convention also provides for human rights safeguards to be observed by Parties in its application.

On October 22nd, 2015, the Council of Europe opened an Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism for signature in Riga, Latvia. So far, 22 states and the European Union have signed this Protocol. The European Union, at this occasion, also signed the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism itself.

The additional protocol supplements the mother convention with a series of provisions criminalizing acts related to the phenomenon of "foreign terrorist fighters," in particular the acts of "travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism," "funding travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism," and "organizing or otherwise facilitating travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism." All of these criminal law provisions are based on the UNSCR 2178 of September 24th, 2014. However, unlike the UNSCR 2178, the provisions are not aimed only at travel to particular regions or conflict zones, but to all travel undertaken for the purpose of terrorism.

Moreover, the additional protocol provides for the criminalization of the acts of "participating in an association or group for the purpose of terrorism" and "receiving of training for terrorism," thereby closing a loophole in the international legal framework governing counter-terrorism measures.

Like the mother convention, the additional protocol obliges Parties to observe human rights safeguards when applying the protocol.

The additional protocol also foresees the establishment of a network of contact points operated on a 24/7 basis for the exchange of police information concerning confirmed or suspected "foreign terrorist fighters." The aim is to strengthen the ability of Parties to intercept such persons before they reach their destination, and to obtain due warning of their return.

In dealing with the danger posed by "foreign terrorist fighters," time is of the essence, and the entry into force and subsequent application of the additional protocol must be considered as a *conditio sine qua non* for dealing effectively with the threats to all European and neighboring states posed by the criminal activities of "foreign terrorist fighters."

On May 19th, 2015, The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Council of Europe member states adopted an Action Plan for the "fight against violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism" covering the period 2015-2017.

The Action Plan enumerates a series of targeted measures that the Council of Europe will take to assist its member states in preventing and suppressing radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism while respecting human rights.

First among these measures is the additional protocol, described above, but other measures are foreseen:

Closely related to the issue of "foreign terrorist fighters" is the phenomenon of "terrorists acting alone." The recent terror attacks in Europe and in the US perpetrated by persons affiliated with the "Islamic State" organization amply demonstrate a change in tactics among Jihadi groups from traditional cell-based activities to attacks carried out by more loosely connected groups or even couples or individuals.

Terrorists operating outside of traditional cell structures are obviously more difficult to detect at an early stage (this was also the case for the right-wing terrorist, Anders Behring Breivik, in Norway in 2011). The Council of Europe is committed to assist its member states in providing guidelines on how to efficiently prevent and suppress this particular *modus operandi* of terrorism. The Council of Europe Steering Committee on counter-terrorism matters, the CODEXTER, will at its next meeting in May 2016 discuss the terms of reference for a drafting group to be established with a view to elaborating a recommendation on terrorists acting alone.

As doctors proverbially say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! In addition to criminal law measures, there is need to increase the focus on preventing radicalization in the first place.

For example, European prisons are considered hotbeds of radicalization, and experts stress the urgent need to involve prison and probation services in identifying and dealing with radicalized offenders susceptible to joining violent movements and ideologies.

The Council of Europe has accordingly developed a set of "Guidelines for prison and probation services regarding radicalization and violent extremism" aimed at providing a framework for member states to devise appropriate counter-radicalization policies in conformity with the Council of Europe standards and principles related to the rule of law and human rights protection.

The Guidelines, which are expected to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2016, contain definitions of the terms "radicalization," "violent extremism," and "dynamic security." They also state that inadequate detention conditions and overcrowding can be factors that increase the risk of radicalization in prison.

While implementing the measures foreseen in the Council of Europe Action Plan, the CODEXTER is simultaneously undertaking a series of other complementary actions for the years 2016 and 2017.

Firstly, the CODEXTER is currently engaged in revising the 2005 Council of Europe recommendation on the use of "special investigation techniques" in relation to serious crimes, including terrorism. The revision will look into the use of new technologies and special investigation techniques on the Internet,

including on financial matters. The work is expected to be finalized by the end of this year.

Indeed, the abuse of the Internet and social media for terrorist purposes is a real problem, which requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account both the need to provide security and the need to protect privacy and freedom of expression. The CODEXTER intends to examine these issues in depth and attempt to identify equitable solutions. Among the issues to be covered are the problems pertaining to encryption, the blocking and taking down of websites or social media accounts used by terrorist groups, as well as how to identify and bring to justice the persons behind the IP addresses used for terrorism purposes. Obviously, the successful outcome of this exercise will depend on bringing together all interested parties to discuss how best to overcome the many problems currently being experienced.

Secondly, the CODEXTER will examine the problems related to the lack of an internationally agreed upon legal definition of terrorism. Experience shows that not having an agreed legal definition of terrorism is a huge obstacle for international cooperation on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and extradition of suspects.

Finally, another legal problem concerns the application of criminal law provisions on terrorism and international humanitarian law, in tandem, in situations where a terrorist group operates in the context of an armed conflict. The *modus operandi* of the "Islamic State" organization, *al-Shabaab* and *Boko Haram* has brought this problem to the fore, blurring the lines between armed conflict and terrorism. The CODEXTER intends to examine this problem with a view to ensuring that as many avenues of prosecution as possible are open to States, and that "foreign terrorist fighters" will not be able to hide from criminal prosecution behind the privileges of combatant status. The aim, as always, remains to ensure that terrorists are brought to justice.

# About the Authors

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