



IMMINENT MENACE

CHILDREN OF REFUGEE CAMPS AND CHILDREN BORN TO PARENTS IN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

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Islam along with Muslims is maligned and wrongfully accused of all manifestations of terrorism. The bitter reality is that the followers of Islam fall victim to terrorism, extremism, militancy, enmity and racism, stemming from cross-border sectarian policies that instrumentalize religion to materialize various political goals. Such an internecine war breaking out widely is simply the inevitable corollary of terrorist organizations against the lives of Arabs, Muslims, and more all over the globe.

The whole world is now in a state of ongoing relentless conflict with terrorism, its organizations, ideas, media, and machinery. Against such a backdrop of belligerency, people are therefore still in complete perplexity brought about by constant substantial funding funneled by terrorist organizations; the magnitude of such financing has become the backbone and bedrock of terrorism. The true financiers of terrorism are still immune from prosecution regardless of the substantial efforts made to dry up the sources of financing terrorism, including money laundering, human trafficking, drug trafficking and smuggling, while being in control of energy sources and treasuries of banks in some countries.

When cracking down on terrorism at all levels is taken for granted, the inner mind of the leaders and government institutions does not use one of the soft powers to confront the terrorists before using armed force; simply put, all the countries concerned, along with their authorities and institutions, do not adopt any deterrence tools before using force, which is deemed most appropriate to achieve urgent and fruitful results in defeating organizations and their terrorist clusters. Although this makes sense to confront such implacable enemies perpetrating appalling atrocities, horrendous massacres and large-scale destruction, this has not been efficient to eradicate terrorism once and for all.

Given such critical importance, we well recognize and understand the compelling logic of the IMCTC, which laid down its strategic mandate according to projects based on real practical initiatives concerned with ideology as food for thought, programming, media programs and cooperation with countries and organizations of the world to dry up the financing of terrorism. The IMCTC has not turned a blind eye to the military domain, which includes supporting the IMCTC Member Countries with the various counterterrorism training and logistical programs in addition to supporting any joint operations to realize stability and security.

It is true that great international efforts have been made and are still being made to overcome terrorism. However, most indicators do not promise to achieve this soon; rather, everyone is faced with a strange and dangerous scene.

Although terrorist organizations are temporarily in full retreat, they are highly resilient, can rapidly adapt, morph and mutate, and can reposition in various unprecedented fashions. Such tactical metamorphosis, so to speak, is a major challenge for the intelligence services that counter terrorism.

While we recognize and agree that the war against terrorism is legitimate for all countries, the G8 alone are supposed to assume their responsibilities in a much broader way, including military, financial, security and information without any restrictions. The cogent reason is that the G8, through their factories, giant companies, information and technical advancement, especially cyberspace, have unwittingly created favorable spaces and opportunities that support terrorists; terrorist groups are now enabled to instrumentalize semi-free communication networks to recruit, train, communicate and carry out operations by air and land. Such availability of cyberspace has become an ongoing challenge of catastrophic dimensions in the short and long term for all communities.

If we go beyond the successes notched up, or the crushing defeats suffered, at the international level while countering terrorism, thwarting associated plans and blocking sources of financing, some of such efforts and the intersection of international interests channeled unethically have brought about a dangerous social and family reality to the Arab and Muslim world that will echo down for generations to come if it is not soon and well addressed by continued international efforts, and direct support from the G8.

Such an imminent menace lies in the emergence of several generations still under the legal age, who are the children of terrorists who were doomed to bite the dust in the Levant, Iraq, Africa and other conflict zones. Such “time-bomb” children have no identity: they have not integrated into a peaceful civil society; they have received

education for revenge and hate against all those who do not embrace the ideologies of their parents. This is no surprise as they were born in the hotbeds of terrorism, with their mothers joining the militias and terrorist groups and getting married to terrorist fighters willy-nilly; such generations believe only in committing genocidal massacres and recruiting youth for fatal battlefields.

Since all terrorist organizations have not been completely eradicated across the region, the main force of these organizations, which will gradually regain momentum, depends on the recruitment of male and female youth to form a mercenary army that has one single affiliation which is absolute loyalty and full readiness to fight tooth and nail for these organizations. With thousands of male and female youths readily willing to be recruited, they look at their parents as an example to follow although they have not seen them at all while left in the lurch. Against a backdrop of loss, such generations will create imminent menaces, inheriting many of their parents' terrorist qualities breathing terrorism into existence again.

Of great note, a research study, issued in 2019 by Jessica Trisco from the American Enterprise Institute, titled "Tackling Terrorist Exploitation of Youth", indicates that the youth represent a vital source of support for many terrorist organizations. 12% of 40,000 ISIS members in Iraq and Syria are children less than 18 years old. There are no less than 5,000 children of minors in addition to about 800 babies born to foreign terrorist fighters in the territories that were once controlled by ISIS from April 2013 to June 2018. While overall estimates indicate the number of children born in the territories that were once controlled by ISIS is more than 5,000 children and even beyond, given that terrorists get married at a high rate, depending on the conditions of their presence and their recruitment of women, based on their *fatwas* of rape and kidnapping female minors.

The large number of children born to parents in terrorist organizations shows the magnitude of future menaces, which can stem from recruiting such children in a different way, given the lack of poor international attention to integrate such children into their communities, while being excluded from the environment that drums up for extremism and terrorism. Such children are definitely time bombs, so to speak, in their communities.

The valid question still goes unanswered: what about thousands of children born to parents in miserable refugee camps accommodating thousands of refugees rendered helpless by terrorism and politics in their countries? Sadly enough, they have also given birth to generations of children in the worst environments, some of which are uninhabitable; they have grown up deprived of education, homeless, stateless; they

live in ostracized refugee camps, with foul-smelling sewage sludge running through an uncivilized and inhuman environment.

Admittedly, the birth rate increases in such adverse circumstances, stigmatized by lack of institutional work, formal education and decent human life. Through such a terrible danger, poor generations are doomed to trudge and suffer from the shadow of violence and oppression in the refugee camps, lacking a sense of belonging and decent life. Such generations will become unintegrated and stick out in safe and civilized communities seeking knowledge-based development and prosperity. Such a reality makes their recruitment much easier to join terrorist groups, or they will possibly be used by entities that support terrorism and mobilize the general public for more support and sympathy.

Against such a backdrop of uncertainty, the world will remain trapped in a vicious circle and caught up by such a long challenge to counter terrorism, while trudging to shore up itself. The world has not been fair so far to defuse the causes of terrorism planted by countries, while others still turn a deaf ear to such practices, with the Arab and Muslim world razed and beset by the woes of war.