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IMCTC Quarterly Magazine

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A unique launch with a new strategy

ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM

At TAHALOF

IMCTC Quarterly Magazine

التَّحَالُف الإسلامي العسكري لمُحاربة الإرهاب
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

General Directorate of Planning and Coordination

IMCTC CENTER LAUNCHES SECOND STRATEGIC CYCLE

Sultanate of Oman:
Terrorism Free

WHY IS THE SULTANATE OF OMAN FREE OF TERRORISM AND TERRORISTS?

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A unique launch
with a new strategy

✤ Terrorism per se has notoriously drawn serious attention in our time, against which many countries have carefully instituted extraordinary actions given the untold suffering it has brought about across all human communities. Sadly enough, the first victim among many others falling to terrorism is the Muslim World as it is most affected by its dire consequences.

Given the fact that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the seat of divine revelation and the cynosure of Muslims, and being fully aware of the pressing need for a well-organized collective Islamic endeavor, in concert with the international counterterrorism efforts, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, Chairman of the Council of Defense Ministers of the IMCTC Member Countries has proudly announced the formation of the IMCTC in December of 2015, mandated with coordinating ideological, media, and military efforts along with the efforts to combat terrorism financing, well supported by the Islamic solidarity of the IMCTC Member Countries and in close partnership with friendly countries.

IMCTC, which comprises of 41 Muslim countries, has become one unified and organized entity tasked with countering terrorism. As an added value, IMCTC opens the door wide for all Muslim countries desirous of countering extremism and terrorism and engaging in such unified collective efforts.

The IMCTC strategic vision is crystal-clear to realize global leadership in counterterrorism. Against this backdrop, we are the first partner in the international efforts to further maintain international peace and security, driven by the four-value springboard: determination, solidarity, adaptation and proactiveness.

While the IMCTC is taking fast-paced steps to best achieve its goals, review, evaluation and development should come into play. Well-guided and assisted, thankfully, we have now launched the Second Strategic Cycle (2020-2022), which is an extension of the successful efforts made in the First Strategic Cycle (2017-2019), which was the establishment and the launching stage thereof. It was the culmination of the extensive experiences, knowledge and lessons learned all readily gained by the IMCTC Center over the past years. This strategic plan was developed based on a well-tailored approach to achieve more promising future goals, taking into account the expansion evinced by the IMCTC in terms of mandates, tasks and responsibilities, while more countries are joining to gain the IMCTC membership. ■

Director General

IMCTC CENTER
LAUNCHES SECOND STRATEGIC CYCLE

IMCTC launched the Second Strategic Cycle 2020-2022, January 2, 2020 in Riyadh. The overarching document includes a strategic vision built on «Leadership in Countering Terrorism and the First Partner in International Efforts to Maintain International Peace and Security», and is based on «coordinating, unifying and supporting ideological, media and military efforts, and enhancing the efforts made by the IMCTC Member Countries to efficiently combat the financing of terrorism, in close partnership with friendly countries».

The IMCTC strategy of the second Cycle confirms alignment with the requirements of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and further analyzes the strategic environment of terrorism across its dimensions: political, ideological, economic, financial, social, legal, media, technical, and military security. The document examines the strategic objectives of IMCTC and strategic performance indicators:

■ Countering terrorism across the ideological domain, by countering the existing and potential terrorist theories and ideologies that distort the true meaning of Islam, while highlighting Islamic principles and values calling for moderation, tolerance and coexistence.

■ Countering terrorism through the media, by making a discreet, influential and attractive media speech to refute the propaganda of violent extremist groups and better educate and sensitize the public opinion to associated dangers.

■ Countering terrorism by reducing its financing, improving the level of prevention and detection operations, and reducing terrorist financing operations.

■ Countering terrorism in military, security, and relief coordination, by supporting the military, security, intelligence and relief capabilities of the IMCTC member countries to counter armed terrorist organizations.

■ Countering terrorism through strengthening Islamic and humanitarian solidarity among the IMCTC member countries, and ensuring that they stand united together against terrorism.

The document also addresses the IMCTC initiatives to achieve its strategic goals, including the bedrock initiatives implemented, such as the Initiative for the Rehabilitation and Social Integration of People with Extremist Ideologies and Terrorist Behavior, which seeks to rehabilitate extremists in the member countries and benefit from successful experiences. The Lexicon of Terrorism Initiative, which will serve as an original reference for international dialogue and debate on the issue of terrorism. The Case Study of Terrorist Organizations Initiative, which will strengthen ways of addressing violent extremist organizations' speeches, operations, means of financing, and communications. The IMCTC Document Initiative, which includes its vision, mission and objectives. The IMCTC initiatives proposed are 32 equally distributed across the IMCTC key domains and strategic goals. ■

GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2019

TERRORISM BECOMES LESS INTENSE WHILE MORE WIDESPREAD

Terrorism per se is an intricate phenomenon, the analysis of which requires a collective effort in order to be aware of its various dimensions. Although there are concerted efforts put in to monitor terrorism, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report remains one of the most distinguished outputs. In this regard, the seventh edition of the GTI was issued, featuring an executive summary of the main global trends and patterns in terrorism over the past fifty years, with 163 countries home to 99.7% of the world total population.

Regional Terrorism Rates

The GTI 2019 highlights a decrease in the total number of deaths due to terrorism for the fourth year in a row, as it reached 15,952 deaths in 2018, a further decrease of 15.2% compared to 2017 while 52% compared to 2014.

At the regional level, 93% of all deaths due to terrorism between 2002 and 2018 occurred in three regions: South Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region recorded the largest number at 93,700 deaths. For the first time since 2012, South Asia recorded more deaths in 2018 than any other region. Sub-Saharan Africa has the second largest number of deaths due to terrorism, and is now in third place. This is the first year since the GTI was first published in which the sub-Saharan region recorded more deaths than the countries in the immediate vicinity.

Europe and the MENA recorded the greatest improvement in terms of the impact of terrorism, as the number of deaths decreased by 70% and 65%, respectively. The largest number of deaths occurred in the MENA, with more than 4,400 deaths compared to 2017. In addition, 12 countries in the MENA recorded a decrease in the number of deaths due to terrorism, which was 83% and is less than the peak in 2014.

In Europe, the number of terrorist deaths fell for the second year in a row, from more than 200 deaths in 2017 to 62 deaths in 2018. Western Europe recorded 183 incidents, the lowest number since 2012. The number of countries in Western Europe that recorded deaths decreased in 2018 from nine countries in 2017 to five countries in 2018.

Despite the low number of deaths due to terrorism and the improvement of 98 countries in the GTI, the number of countries affected by terrorism is still high; 71 countries reported at least one death due to terrorism in 2018, which is the second largest number of countries since 2002. Again, 103 countries experienced at least one terrorist incident.

Most Dangerous Groups

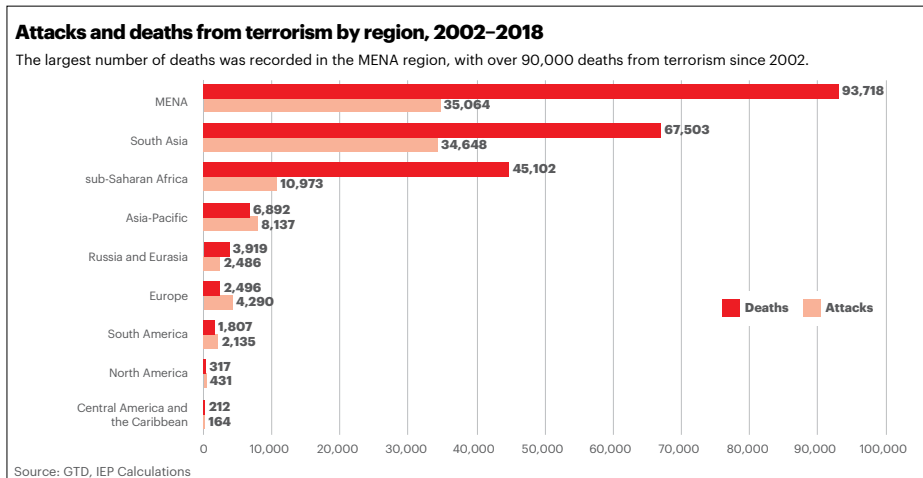The four terrorist groups responsible for most of the deaths in 2018 are the Taliban, ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant), the groups were responsible for 9,223 terrorist victims, accounting for 57.8% of all terrorism victims in 2018. The number of ISIS casualties continued to decline for the second year in a row, from 4,350 in 2017 to 1,328 in 2018, accounting for 69%. This is the first time since 2014 that ISIS has not been the bloodiest terrorist group, and its attacks have declined by 63%. However, some groups affiliated with ISIS recorded higher levels of terrorist activity, and the Organization's branch in Khorasan was the fourth bloodiest in 2018, with over a thousand deaths.

Among the ten countries most affected by terrorism are seven Arab or Muslim countries, six of which were the first six places! They are Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen respectively. Afghanistan recorded 7,799 deaths from terrorism, an increase of 59% over the previous year, of whom the It ranks the lowest after it witnessed nine of the ten largest terrorist attacks in 2018.

Iraq is no longer the country most affected by terrorism globally. For the first time since 2003, it recorded the largest decrease in the number of deaths from terrorism in 2018; it decreased from 4,271 deaths in 2017 to 1,054 deaths in 2018, by 75%, which is the lowest number of victims from terrorism in Iraq since 2003. Also, terrorist incidents decreased from 1,956 in 2017 to 1.131 in 2018.

In Nigeria, the number of terrorist deaths increased to 2,040 deaths in 2018, an increase of 33% over the previous year, due to the increase in the number of terrorist incidents from 411 incidents to 562 over the same period, accounting for an increase of 37%. Fulani extremists were behind the killing of 1,158 people, making up an increase of 308% from last year. In a similar

Attacks and deaths from terrorism by region, 2002–2018

The largest number of deaths was recorded in the MENA region, with over 90,000 deaths from terrorism since 2002.

Region	Deaths	Attacks
MENA	93,718	35,064
South Asia	67,503	34,648
sub-Saharan Africa	45,102	10,973
Asia-Pacific	6,892	8,137
Russia and Eurasia	3,919	2,486
Europe	2,496	4,290
South America	1,807	2,135
North America	317	431
Central America and the Caribbean	212	164

Source: GTD, IEP Calculations

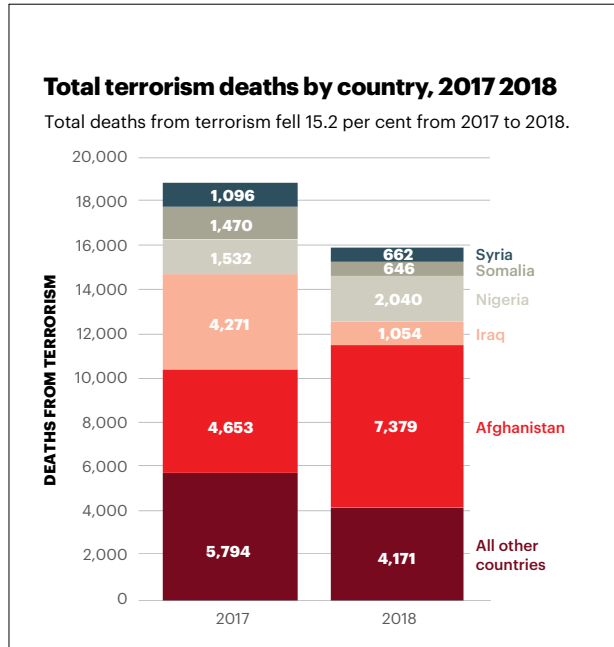Islamic State in Khorasan, and Boko Haram. These Taliban killed 83%, causing 1,443 terrorist incidents. vein, Boko Haram killed 589 people, accounting for a de-

crease of 42% from the previous year. The number of terrorist incidents it carried out decreased from 222 in 2017 to 144 in 2018.

In the wake of the decline in the conflict in Syria, terrorist deaths decreased to 662 people by 40% in 2018, and terrorist incidents decreased to 131 incidents in the same year, accounting for a decrease of 9% over the previous year.

In Pakistan, the impact of terrorism decreased for the fifth year in a row in 2018, with the number of deaths dropping to 537 deaths by 37% over the previous year, and 81% from the year 2013 which experienced the highest rate of terrorism victims in Pakistan. The number of accidents decreased to 366 accidents by 36% of the accidents in 2017, and 77% of accidents in 2013.

Somalia recorded the second largest decrease in the number of terrorist deaths in 2018, following the bloodiest year ever in 2017. Deaths decreased from 1.470 people killed in 2017 to 646 in 2018 by 56%, and terrorist incidents decreased from 372 incidents in 2017 to 286 incidents in 2018.

Deaths from terrorism in Yemen decreased for the fourth year in a row, by 20% between 2017 and 2018, by 80% of the number of victims in 2015, which exceeded 1,500 deaths.

Total terrorism deaths by country, 2017 2018

Total deaths from terrorism fell 15.2 per cent from 2017 to 2018.

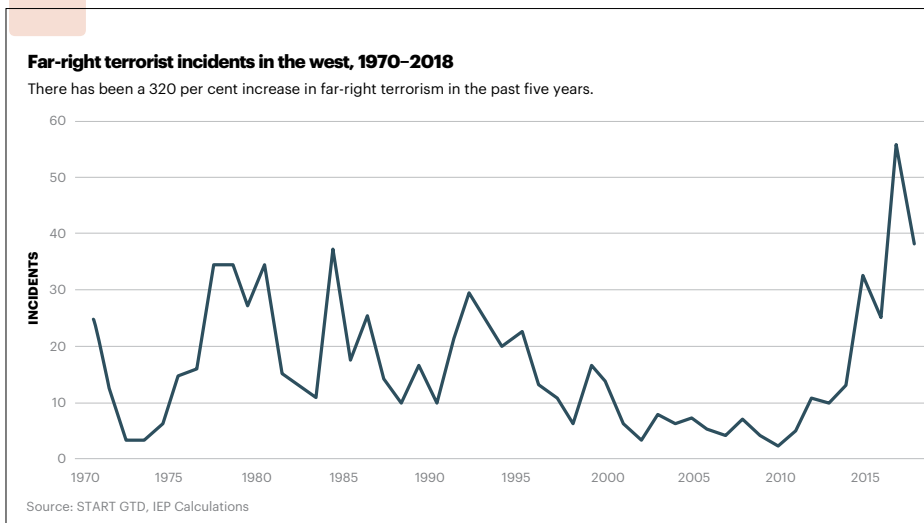| Country	2017	2018
Syria	1,096	662
Somalia	1,470	646
Nigeria	1,532	2,040
Iraq	4,271	1,054
Afghanistan	4,653	7,379
All other countries	5,794	4,171

DEATHS FROM TERRORISM

Far-Right Terrorism

One of the most disturbing trends in the GTI is the increase of far-right terrorism in the past five years. Its terrorist attacks increased by 320%, and this trend continued in 2019, with 77 deaths attributed to far-right terrorists until September 2019. The far-right carried out 38 attacks in 2018, the number of arrests related to far-right terrorism increased in Europe in 2019 for the third year in a row and the arrests included individuals and networks such as a French terrorist group and an Italian-Swiss network that possesses sophisticated weapons, including an air-to-air missile. The GTI noted that far-right terrorism is often carried out by individuals who are not related to a specific terrorist group; about 60% of its attacks between 1970 and 2018 were carried out by individuals not affiliated with organizations, unlike leftist or separatist terrorist groups that did not exceed such a percentage of this type of attack as they had 10% of its total attacks.

The GTI confirms that the interest in far-right extremism can contribute to impart neutrality and objectivity to programs to prevent and combat violent extremism that has been repeatedly criticized for its unfair interest in Islamic extremism and its stigmatization of the Muslim societies!

The escalation of far-right violence leads to practical challenges to implement some counterterrorism measures related to the

Far-right terrorist incidents in the west, 1970–2018

There has been a 320 per cent increase in far-right terrorism in the past five years.

INCIDENTS

Source: START GTD, IEP Calculations

criminal prosecution of terrorist crimes. Western judiciaries are incompent to address far-right terrorist crimes, making it difficult to prosecute their perpetrators as terrorists, many of whom are tried for their terrorist acts as hate crimes, not terrorism crimes. Over the past ten years, there were 322 politically motivated terrorist attacks in the West, compared to 1,677 attacks between 1970 and 1980, of which leftist terrorist groups carried out 93%, and 295 of which occurred in 1977 alone.

Between 1970 and 2018 in the West (Europe, North America, Australia and Oceania) 11,109 terrorist attacks occurred, of which 70% were for national or separatist reasons, 26% for political reasons and 3.4% for religious reasons. In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in terrorist political attacks at 38%, while 17.8% for religious motives, and the number of national or separatist attacks decreased to 44% of all attacks. Over the past five years, 270 politically motivated terrorist attacks occurred, and at least 84 people were killed in such a type of terrorist attack in the first ten months of 2019.

Economic Impact of Terrorism
The MENA Bears 36% of Terrorism World Direct Losses

The value of the global economic vulnerability to terrorism was $33 billion in 2018, compared to about $54 billion in 2017, accounting for a decrease of 38%. This is the fourth year in a row that the impact of terrorism has decreased economically, while its peak in 2014 was $111 billion, then it decreased to $94 billion in 2015 and $92 billion

The GTI measures the economic impact of terrorism in only four categories: deaths, injuries, property destruction, and GDP losses. The deaths resulting from terrorism represent 58% of the economic impact of terrorism, as it is equivalent to $19.3 billion in 2018, followed by GDP losses amounting to $12.9 billion, accountign

tary and armed conflict, the losses of terrorism make up no more than 0.2% of the global cost of violence, which amounted to $14.1 trillion in 2018.
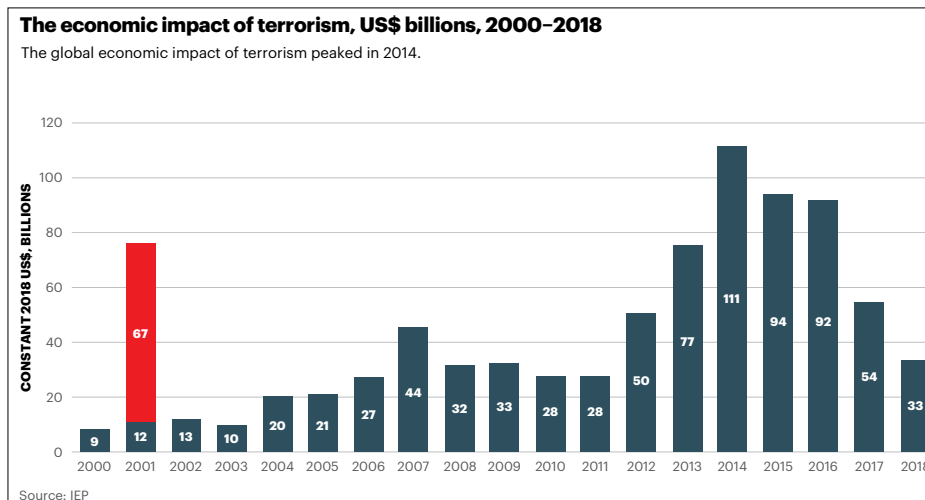
Afghanistan in 2018 was the country most affected economically by terrorism, as it cost 19.4% of its GDP, seven points higher than what it was in 2017. No other country has experienecd

The sub-Saharan region is the most affected economically by terrorism at a cost of $12.2 billion, followed by the MENA at a cost of $11.9 billion; both regions account for 73% of the total impact of economic terrorism in the world in 2018. The effect of economic terrorism in South Asia reached $5.9 billion.

■ Domestic Conflicts
95% of Terrorism Victims Are in Conflict-Worn Countries

Conflict is the main driver of terrorist activity. In 2018, 95% of deaths from terrorism were in countries that experienced violent conflict. Most of the armed conflicts over the past decades were domestic conflicts; more than 97% of which were classified between 1990 and 2018 as domestic conflicts, while 76% of which were civil wars. Terrorism per se had an effect in most of such conflicts and wars.

The GTI indicates that doemstic armed conflicts in-

The economic impact of terrorism, US$ billions, 2000–2018
The global economic impact of terrorism peaked in 2014.

Source: IEP

in 2016. Since 2014, the impact has decreased by 62% in Nigeria, 82% in Iraq and 90% in Pakistan.

for 39% of the total economic losses.

Compared to other types of violence, such as military

the cost of terrorism beyond 5% of its GDP, and the cost in Iraq came at 3.9% of its GDP.

volving groups that have had terrorist activities last for up to twice the duration of other conflicts. Between 2011 and 2014, conflict-re-

have been in countries experiencing intense conflict or civil wars. Over the past three years, the intensity of some of these conflicts has

er terrorist groups. Some prime examples of rebel terrorist groups include the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia known

ist operations are phased plans used by rebel groups. However, there were conflicts in which terrorist activity occurred ahead of

The global spread of terrorism and internal armed conflict, 1970–2018

The number of countries experiencing a significant amount of terrorism moves in line with the number of ongoing internal armed conflicts.

Source: START GTD, UCDP, IEP Calculations

lated deaths increased by 318%, and terrorism-related deaths increased by 353%. Between 2014 and 2018, conflict deaths decreased by 49%, and terrorism deaths decreased by 52%. Since 1970, 93% of terrorism deaths have occurred in countries experiencing domestic armed conflicts, of which 88%
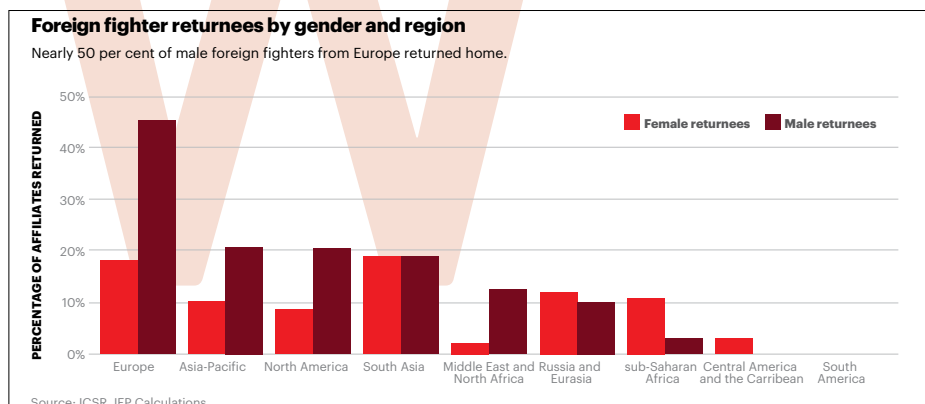
further decreased. Consequently, the number of conflict and terrorism deaths has decreased by 50% compared to 2014.

Terrorist groups in conflict-worn countries are often categorized as (rebel groups) involvd in open conflict with the government, attacking more traditional military targets than oth-

as (FARC), in Colombia, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, and the Basque Country in Spain, Boko Haram in Nigeria, ISIS in Iraq and the Levant, the Houthis in Yemen, and the National Democratic Front for Podoland in India.

In conflict-worn countries, a large percentage of terror-

domestic conflict, enabling such terrorist groups to be born and then turned into rebel movements. They continued to instrumentalize terrorism as a strategy. Over the past five decades, 34 terrorist groups in 20 countries have become active parties to a domestic armed conflict against their respective governments.
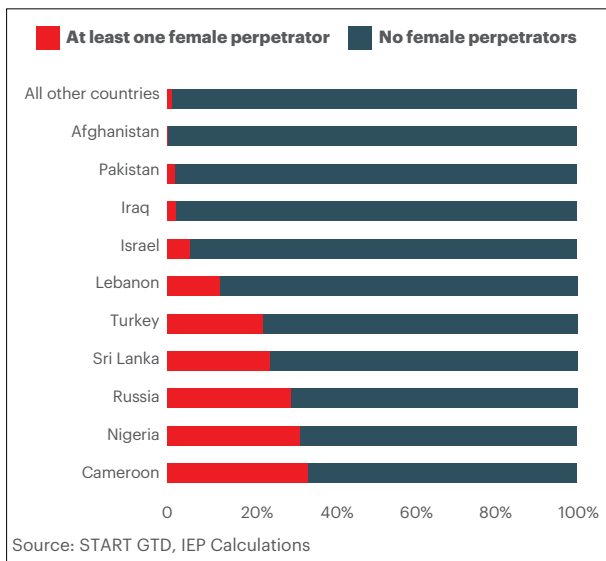
Women's Involvement in Terrorism
Female Suicide Attacks Have Risen 450% Since 2013

Foreign fighter returnees by gender and region

Nearly 50 per cent of male foreign fighters from Europe returned home.

Source: ICSR, IEP Calculations

The rates of women's involvement in terrorist activities have glaringly increased, since women have carried out more than 300 suicide attacks since 1985, killing 3071 people, accounting for 5% of suicide attacks globally, while making it up to 7% in 2018. The Russian-Chechen war, and the Sri Lankan Civil War wit-

nessed high levels of female suicide attacks; women were involved in 30% of suicide attacks in Russia, most of which occurred during the Russian-Chechen conflict. In the Sri Lankan Civil War, women carried out 25% of suicide attacks.

Between 2013 and 2018, female suicide attacks increased from four to 22, while men's suicide attacks decreased by 47% over the same period.

Since 2014, female suicide attacks have moved from relatively non-recurring incidents to a prominent feature in some terrorist organizations, especially the Boko Haram group, which has carried out 80% of all of these attacks over the past five years, with at least 146 female suicide attacks that have killed nearly 900 people, at 87% of all deaths of such a type of attack.

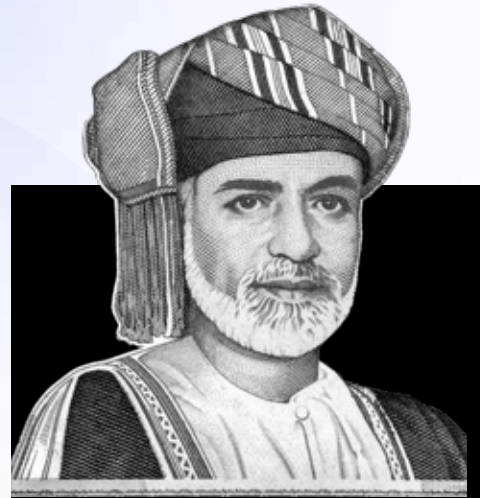Female suicide attacks are deadlier and more fatal than male attacks, as the female attackers were smarter when it came to avoid detection. However, the security forces have adapted to such situations, and female attacks have become less fatal than those of men. In 2018, the percentage of deaths of deadly attacks for males was 10.2 deaths per attack, compared to females, the percentage of whose attacks was 3.3 deaths.

Daesh (ISIS) Women

Since 2013, more than 50,000 people from 83 countries have traveled to Iraq and Syria to join Daesh (ISIS), of whom 6,902 are women. By July 2019, about 8,820 people had returned, accounting for 16% of the foreigners who joined Daesh (ISIS), while the female returnees had not exceeded 7%. The percentage of returnees to Europe was reportedly varied: 50% men and 18% women. In Al-Hawl camp, the largest refugee camp in Syria, there are about 12,000 Daesh (ISIS) followers, including 4,000 women and 8,000 minors. ■

At least one female perpetrator | **No female perpetrators**

All other countries
Afghanistan
Pakistan
Iraq
Israel
Lebanon
Turkey
Sri Lanka
Russia
Nigeria
Cameroon

0   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

Source: START GTD, IEP Calculations

Sultanate of Oman:

Terrorism Free

WHY IS THE SULTANATE OF OMAN FREE OF TERRORISM AND TERRORISTS?

Sadly enough, January 10, 2020 marks the dolorous loss of Sultan Qaboos for the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab world and Islamic states after an impressive progress strewn with prosperity and success; Sultan Qaboos made a quantum leap in development, peace and stability and achieved much headway for his idyllic country. Until the middle of the twentieth century, Sultanate of Oman ranked second of the world least developed countries, socially and economically. In 1970, there were only three schools with 900 students, while the number of schools today reached nearly 1,800 schools with more than 750 thousand students.

In a region rife with conflicts and wars, the Sultanate of Oman remained an oasis of peace and security. It did not experience a single terrorist incident for years, distanced itself from conflicts and disputes, and served as a mediator for peace between the warring parties. Last year, the World Economic Forum ranked the Sultanate of Oman the fourth most secure country in the world.

The Sultanate of Oman has become early aware of the danger of regional conflicts. At the end of the seventies, the Sultanate of Oman placed a travel ban on Omanis to conflict areas. Over the past two decades, the Sultanate of Oman was free of Al-Qaeda extremists, ISIS, or other terrorist organizations. the Sultanate of Oman ranked at the forefront in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019, ranked 138 globally, and only two countries were ahead of it, while it was the only country in the Middle East among the 26 countries in the world that were free of terrorism. In 2015, the International Center for the Study of Extremism and Political Violence at Kings College in London confirmed that the number of individuals enrolled in ISIS exceeded 20,000 foreign fighters, not including any Omanis.

the Sultanate of Oman enjoys a distinct social composition with its cultural, religious and sectarian components.

Although Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is heavily deployed in the state of Yemen, with which the Sultanate of Oman shares borders of 288 kilometers, Al-Qaeda has not succeeded in attracting any Omanis, or in transferring its operations to Omani territory. Likewise, terrorist organizations did not target any of the interests of foreign countries in the territory of the Sultanate of Oman.

What has made Oman immune to extremist organizations and terrorist movements, and impregnable to

the ideologies of extremists? We can explain this by examining a number of factors:

■ Domestic Politics

The stability and domestic peace realized by the Sultanate of Oman are the result of a sound policy planned by Sultan Qaboos. The Sultanate of Oman experienced two civil wars in the twentieth century, namely the Green Mountain (Jebel Akhdar) War that erupted in 1957 and ended in 1959, in which the Sultanate successfully unified its territory. The Dhofar War, which lasted from 1962 to 1975. The Sultanate of Oman contained all the dissidents and fighters who participated in the civil war in Dhofar, and Sultan Qaboos pardoned the former rebels, and returned to the Sultanate of Oman all those exiled.

Sultan Qaboos's tolerance has contributed to achieving a national fracture that is difficult to divide, and in avoiding domestic strife, which is considered a suitable environment for terrorism. This happened in 1975, decades before experts, politicians and decision-makers currently fighting terrorism understand that domestic conflicts make up an environment favorable for terrorism.

■ Foreign Policy

The Sultanate of Oman adopted a neutral foreign policy regarding the differences in the region, and it has realized a great success over the past decades, making it immune to terrorism and from entering into alliances with countries against each other to avoid complicating the situation. By doing so, it has established a neutral position towards all parties to gain influence as a reliable peace broker.

For instance, the Sultanate of Oman mediated the completion of the Peace and National Partnership Agreement in Yemen in September 2014, mediated between Iran and Western powers to complete the nuclear agreement, mediated between the United States and the Houthis to release US citizens in October 2016, and mediated between Iran and the United States after Iran arrested the three Americans who crossed its borders in 2009, and released them by virtue of the Omani diplomatic efforts in 2011.

However, this neutrality is positive, not negative, because the Sultanate of Oman joined regional and international efforts to counter terrorism. In December 2016, the Sultanate was the 41 country that joined the IMCTC, and is a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, and is a member of the TFTC in Riyadh, and participates in the US Department of State's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (ATA).

■ Legal System

In 1996, Sultan Qaboos enacted laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion; Article 130 of the Omani Penal Code approves imprisonment for a period not exceeding ten years for anyone who promotes sectarian conflict, or seeks to spread hatred. Remarkably, Oman has not conducted any population statistics based on ethnicity in order to enhance the principle of citizenship among Omanis. In 2007, Oman enacted Law No. 8 authorizing the execution or imprisonment of any person who had established or participated in the creation and management of any terrorist entity, or had participated in associated activities in any way. Likewise, Law No. 7 of 2018, which made the criminalization of terrorism not only limited to the perpetrators of specific crimes, but also includes persons who incite, finance, or facilitate any terrorist crimes. To tighten the legal deterrence tools for terrorism, the Sultanate of Oman issued a law in August 2014 allowing the withdrawal of nationality from Omani citizens if they are involved in any act that harms the interests of the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman is fully aware that the fight against terrorism requires drying its financial resources in addition to the ideological and security confrontation. Therefore, in 2016, it issued Royal Decree No. 30 that tightens restrictions on electronic and cash transfers, and criminalizes anyone who supplies or collects money and realizes that it will be implemented in whole or in part in a terrorist act. According to Chapter 3 thereof, the National Committee to Combat Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing was established.

In the implementation of the 40 recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism, Oman is assessing the risks of money laundering and terrorist financing. In light of its last joint assessment FATF report in 2011 related to the implementation of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing standards in Oman, the Sultanate of Oman was assessed as compliant with 3 recommendations, and largely consistent with 24 of the FATF (FATF 40 +9).

The Sultanate of Oman has adopted a package of internal and external policies in the fight against terrorism, the goal of which is to create internal immunity. It has thus addressed the problems of underdevelopment, poverty and ethnic divisions by implementing ongoing initiatives to promote education, foster community development and meet social and economic needs without uprooting the Omani culture and heritage. ■

AMERICAN STRATEGY

TO COUNTER TERRORISM

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

■ Dr. Faleh Fuleihan Al-Ruwaily[(*)]

It was on October 4, 2018 that US President Donald Trump announced a new and fully articulated strategy to counterterrorism, stating that: «It defines the US approach to countering evolving terrorist threats, and represents the first clear-eyed strategy to counterterrorism since 2011.» The strategy adopts «more resilient and wider methods, and addresses the whole gamut of terrorist threats to the United States, including enemies abroad, and people who seek to influence the United States with violence. It uses full American power, and every tool available to counter terrorism at home, abroad, and in cyberspace.» The strategy prioritizes a wide range of non-military capabilities, such as preventing terrorist recruitment, reducing the appeal of terrorist propaganda via the internet, and building the community capacity to counterterrorism.

* Researcher in Extremism Issues

The most important foci include:

First: The Terrorist Adversary

The strategy considers extremist Islamist terrorists the main transnational terrorist threat to the US and its interests, "because they have violent extremist ideologies that create a common identity to be harnessed to persuade new recruits of the goals and trends of terrorist groups, while maintaining cohesion and providing justification for the use of violence to achieve their goals."

Notorious terrorist organizations, especially ISIS and Al-Qaeda, have repeatedly demonstrated the intention and ability to attack American interests, plot new attacks and enthuse individuals to commit acts of violence in America. Such groups exploit poor government, instability, and political and religious grievances.

Despite the ongoing civil and military efforts by the US and IMCTC, which have reduced the impact of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the Organization still remains the most serious transboundary threat. It maintains the financial, material and physical resources and expertise needed to launch external attacks, and its senior leaders continue to advocate targeting the US. It has eight official branches, and more than 24 networks.

For the strategy, Iran is the most notorious state sponsor of terrorism. More so, it supports armed and terrorist groups throughout the Middle East, and operates a network of agents who threaten the US and the world. Such groups, most infamous – Hezbollah – exercise terrorism and other means to expand Iran influence in Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria and Yemen.

There are many revolutionary, nationalist and separatist movements abroad that, often by their violence, jeopardize the stability of the American communities, including the Northern Resistance Movement, which is a widely known socialist nationalist organization, hostile to the West, which has carried out violent attacks against Muslims, leftist groups, and several others. These include the New Nazi National Working Group in Europe, and Babbar Khalsa International in India.

Second: Prioritization and Resourcing

The threats of terrorists vary based on the degree of risk, in relation to organizations, groups and the region. Therefore, the tools and methods used in countering terrorism are generally directed to regional and functional plans, and priority is given to terrorist groups that most threaten vital national interests.

Hence, counterterrorism efforts should be carefully balanced by all the tools of national power, hence should include the efforts of traditional and non-traditional supporters. While the US should maintain the ability to counter and strike terrorism worldwide, non-military tools, such as law enforcement agencies, intelligence, diplomacy, financial measures, stabilization and development, prevention and intervention and reintegration, are equally essential to prevent and counter terrorism.

Third: Monitoring Terrorist Threats

Terrorists instrumentalize the free and open society of the US to target civilians. For instance, they take advantage of cutting-edge technology such as the internet and encrypted communications to further promote their goals and spread their extremist ideologies. Outside the US territory, they thrive in countries of poor governments.

Priority Actions

1- Use military and non-military capabilities to target terrorism that threatens American citizens and interests.

2- Promote access to densely populated areas abroad to which physical access is impossible in order to protect direct interests, and innovative methods should be developed.

3- Detain more terrorists in such a method as to best counter terrorism and tackle the dangers of terrorists, while enhancing the ability to collect intelligence information, pending transfer to the US for criminal prosecution.

Fourth: Isolating Terrorists from Source of Support

It has become now a practical reality that technological developments have created interconnectedness all over the world, hence have facilitated the transportation of people, money transfer, shipment of materials and communication of information around the world. The backbone of such interconnectedness is the information technology (IT) that terrorists instrumentalize to manage their organizations.

Priority Actions

1- Define the identity of the terrorists, and take legal measures against them in their countries of origin, while respecting privacy and protecting civil rights.

2- Continue to collect and exchange information on the travel of terrorists and their movements, while collaborating to enhance travel security and protect borders.

3- Cooperate between the public and private sectors to exchange information on the financial transactions of terrorists, while applying law enforcement.

4- Prevent terrorists from acquiring knowledge or obtaining materials that assist them in developing weapons of mass destruction and other advanced weapons.

5- Some countries continue to use terrorism as an overt tool of their foreign policy, while clandestinely support terrorists, taking advantage of legitimate

commercial networks. Therefore, the US continues to acquire evidence of the deceptive practices of such countries.

Fifth: Modernizing Tools and Authorities to Counter Terrorism

We should necessarily stay ahead of terrorist attacks by advancing our detection capabilities and share early indicators with those who can piece together plot information and take necessary actions.

Priority Actions

1- Secure borders from terrorist threats, and coordinate with partners.

2- Adopt data processing technologies and enhance the ability to access terrorist communications.

3- Establish a database of terrorist identities to support and employ counterterrorism, especially watchlists and biometric information.

Sixth: Protecting Infrastructure and Enhancing Preparedness

Proudly enough, the critical infrastructure of the United States, much of which is owned by the private sector, provides the essential goods and services that well drive American prosperity.

Priority Actions

1- Enhance defensive measures for infrastructure and soft targets, and put in action measures for a rapid recovery of systems if an attack should occur.

2- Promote partnering with organizations, individuals, and all levels of government, to ensure that society is ready to resist and recover from any terrorist attack quickly, including the possibility of an attack with weapons of mass destruction.

3- Develop and coordinate a general communications strategy to counter terrorism, and training federal and local interlocutors in meaningful dialogues with the public to foster a cul-

ture of preparedness, readiness and resilience.

Seventh: Countering Terrorist Radicalization and Recruitment

A robust and fully articulated counter-terrorism architecture to put a halt to attacks and eliminate terrorists was built over the past seventeen years. However, a prevention architecture to thwart terrorist radicalization and recruitment has not been so far developed. Unless otherwise countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment is well realized, fighting a never-ending battle against terrorism in the homeland will still be an everyday reality.

Priority Actions

1- Support local solutions, empower stakeholders and equip them with the knowledge and resources they need to address terrorist threats.

2- Undermine the ability of terrorist ideologies, offering alternatives to exit

Priority Actions

1- Establish large anti-terrorist groups that include the allied countries, the technology sector, financial institutions and civil society.

2- Raise the capabilities of the main foreign partners by professionalizing military services, law enforcement and judicial agencies, intelligence and security, so that they can conduct counterterrorism operations effectively and fairly.

3- Expand the network and the exchange of information with the partners to deepen understanding of the emerging terrorist methods and improve the ability to exchange information and work with the partners.

4- Work with local stakeholders and civil society to alleviate grievances exploited by terrorists, and work with partners to encourage positive narratives that promote tolerance and security.

■ Continuum and Interruption

US President Donald Trump has described the US strategy as a "shift in the approach of the United States of America to countering and preventing terrorism". In reality, however, it is a continuation of the approach of the Obama Administration Strategy based on the adaptation of President George Bush in his strategy to counter terrorism in his second term. US President Trump's strategy accommodates new developments such as the rise of ISIS, the increased use of social media by terrorists, and the challenges of returning foreign fighters. However, most of the goals and action plans are very similar to those that former US President Obama issued in the 2011 National Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Donald Trump's strategy adopts a cooperative approach to fighting terrorism, and highlights "cooperating with foreign governments so that they take

from violence, preventing individuals from becoming more involved in and committed to these violent ideologies and methods.

3- Increase the ability of civil society to prevent terrorism, fostering awareness of extremist activity and recruitment.

4- Support anti-terrorist intervention efforts by identifying signs of violent extremism, with a special emphasis on them in the real and virtual world to prevent terrorist attacks.

5- Fight the use of terrorism in cyberspace where they commercialize and showcase their violent ideologies.

6- Create a common operating picture of terrorist propaganda activities and narratives.

Eighth: Strengthening the Abilities of International Partners

It is critically important to strengthen the partners of good resources, such as expertise, wide relations across various geographical areas, to further support the countries that lack the resources and capabilities to internationalize counterterrorism efforts, while reducing dependence on US assistance.

the lead when possible, and working with others to take responsibility for countering terrorism, so that they can ultimately address terrorist threats." It is an ongoing approach before US President Donald Trump came to office, as it was clear following the 9/11 Attacks that the major American military campaigns have not had a successful and sustained impact on eliminating terrorism. As Al-Qaeda expanded in the wake of the US invasion of Iraq, the Bush Administration began to pay more attention to building the capabilities of cooperating forces to help it fight Al-Qaeda and counter terrorist threats. Former US President Obama continued this approach, and made working with partner countries a cornerstone of his strategy to counter terrorism. The new US strategy emphasizes cooperation in fighting terrorism. However, many observers believe that the real practices of the Trump Administration have blown up any opportunities for this cooperation! The discourse of cooperation contained in the strategy is far from the common speech of US President Donald Trump, especially with the NATO, and in rebuking and calling on the allies and partners to do more! It expressly contradicts the opposition to all the multilateral things this administration embodies. This created uncertainty for the allies and partners of the United States. The anti-terrorism policy makers in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia have expressed concern about whether the US still works in tandem with them on this mission, although the strategy affirms that "America first, does not mean America works in isolation"; many US allies plan for the possibility of "America first" actually becomes "America works in isolation".

The recent annual report issued by the European Law Enforcement Agency (EUROPOL) revealed the reality of terrorism and its associated trends in the European Union about these concerns.

■ The Cooperation Path to Victory

The strategy did not turn a blind eye to what the US should do with the cooperating countries to address community risk factors for extremism and recruitment by promoting political reforms and economic development, which are costly matters, and require substantial investment from the US and its partners which is not expected to be made by the US in light of Donald Trump's policy of cutting development aid. One of the weaknesses of the strategy is its inability to fully recognize the requirements of the lesser reliance on the military to counter terrorism.

■ Domestic Terrorism

The strategy focused on the threats from domestic terrorists who were not motivated by extremist ideologies, and it indicates that "domestic terrorism represents a real threat", but because US President Donald Trump has made Islamist militants the focus of his attention, courting the far-right in the US, his administration is not expected to take measures consistent with the requirements to counter such a threat. Dr. Stephen Tankel, a former Pentagon consultant and a fellow of the new US Security Center, cites two challenges that prevent the application of what is contained in the strategy about confronting the threats of domestic terrorism. The first challenge is legal. American law defines domestic terrorism, but it does not specify any associated sanctions. This is why Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bombing perpetrator, was convicted of murder, and Dylan Storm Roof, an attacker on a black church in Charleston, South Carolina, was convicted of federal hate crimes, even though the two perpetrators' crimes

clearly fulfill the American definition of terrorism.

The other challenge is political, and specifically the policy of US President Donald Trump, whose most prominent supporters are far-right extremists. A number of active actors operating under the umbrella of far-right extremism or participating in extremist violence in the US have been active or have increased their activity by electing US President Donald Trump, as members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), far-right militia members and neo-Nazis march side-by-side in pro-Trump rallies.
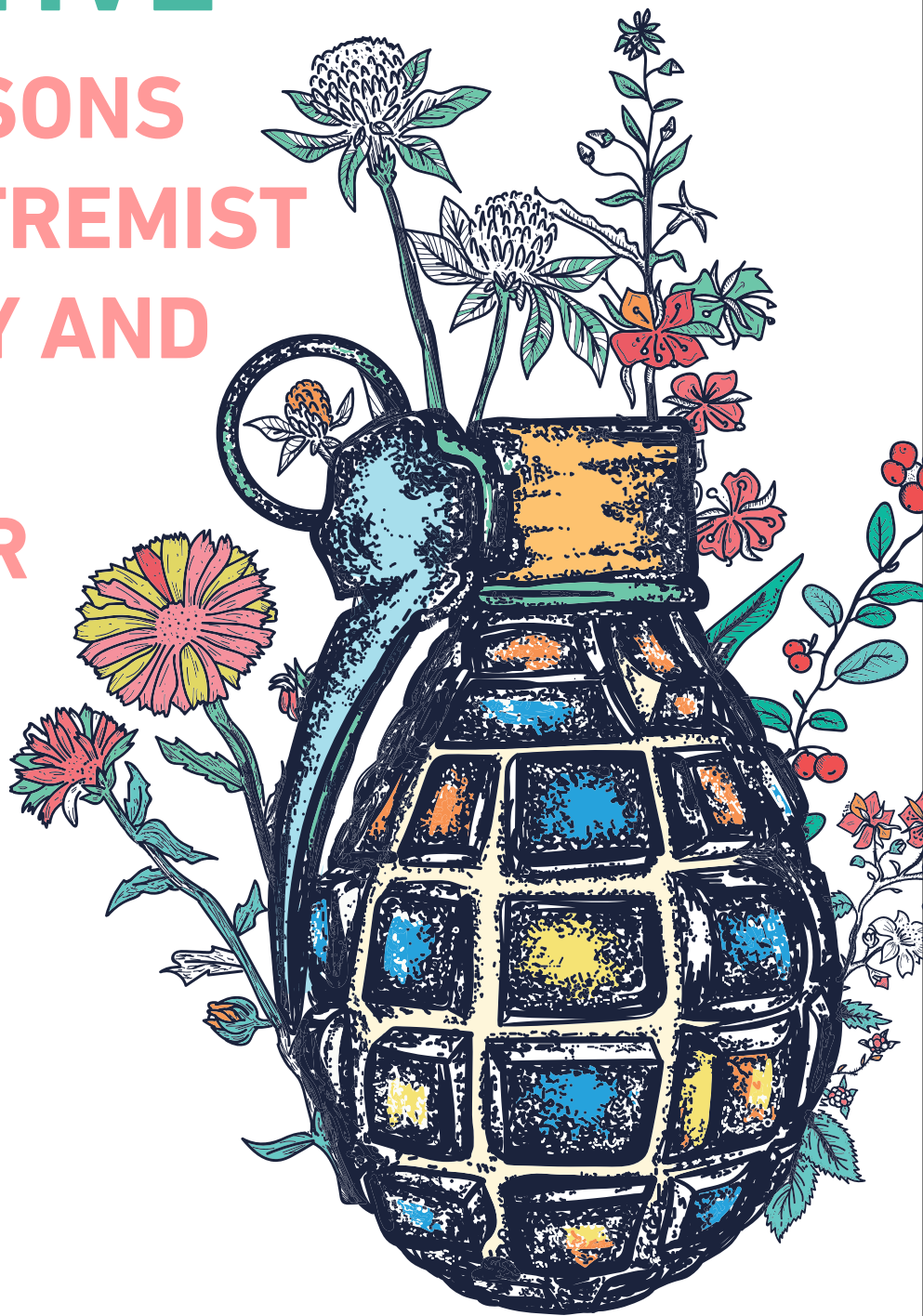
■ Conflicting Paths

The strategy takes conflicting paths when it makes the war on terror like the Cold War, as a war against what it describes as "evil, totalitarian ideas that challenge the American way of life." Another part of the strategy highlights preventing terrorism, and the need to build a broader coalition to counter terrorism. "It is difficult to reconcile these two perspectives in the fight against terrorism," states Dr. Jessica Trisko Darden, visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute. She explains that the biggest flaw in the strategy is its excessive attention to ideologies.

Darden emphasizes that the strategy's great interest in political Islam alone is a problem for several reasons: First, the strategy overestimates the degree to which American citizens and national interests are threatened by terrorist groups. Second, when the strategy sees counterterrorism as part of a broad cultural conflict, it overestimates the impact of propaganda and communications. Third, explicit targeting of Islamic groups is likely to complicate cooperation in combating terrorism in a number of countries, as Islamist groups perform an important action in the political process. ■

REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION INITIATIVE

FOR PERSONS WITH EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

In light of the interest evinced by IMCTC in the initiatives that render highly valued services to the IMCTC member countries, IMCTC has adopted the initiative of 'Program of Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration of Persons with Extremist Ideology and Terrorist Behavior' to rehabilitate and reintegrate the youth involved in violent extremism into community.

Power Alone Won't Thrive

Given the multiplicity of root causes and motives of violent extremism, it becomes critically important to have myriad methods to combat or remedy violent extremist ideology and violent behavior. Some still believe that power only can defeat terrorist organizations! Yes, it is true that power may defeat such terrorist organizations militarily, but power does not eliminate the root causes and motives of the problem and it is one of the most important factors that revitalize and bring such terrorist organizations back to life and regeneration.

> **Given the multiplicity of root causes and motives of violent extremism, it becomes critically important to have myriad methods to combat or remedy violent extremist ideology and violent behavior.**

Hence, it is inaccurate to describe violent extremism merely as a security issue in that extremism is a multifaceted problem that requires an effective solution from different social institutions. Reliance on security force or military solutions alone in the face of extremism and terrorist behavior is futile

The international awareness of the infeasibility of the military solution or security force has been a driving force for seeking more successful methods; there seems to be unanimity that dialogue and discussion of ideological roots will be useful in reducing the risk of violence associated with fundamentalist ideologies.

Integrated Initiative

That's where the IMCTC initiative has come from; It is an integrated project for rehabilitation and reintegration, and a practical plan for the rehabilitation of persons involved in extremism. The initiative represents a road map in combating the ideology of extremism along with the associated solutions. It is concerned with social context by putting into action preventive and awareness-based plans, in addition to remedial plans for those who fall into the ideological incubator of extremism, whether such persons display violent behavior or don't transcend the confines of extremist ideology.

> **The initiative represents a road map in combating the ideology of extremism along with the associated solutions, by putting into action a preventive and awareness-based plan, in addition to a remedial plan for those who fall into the ideological incubator of extremism.**

The IMCTC initiative has taken into account that it is conducive for the IMCTC member countries as well as supporting and friendly states. Therefore, the rehabilitative project has been constructed through tiered stages supported by multiple programs of various disciplines and methods of implementation. The project is characteristically based on flexible implementation; it accommodates one program or stage without the remaining ones if it comes short and becomes impossible to implement the full scale of the whole project. That means that each program adequately achieves its objectives according to the capabilities and needs of each beneficiary state.

Project Components

The project is based on programs to be implemented according to gradual phases. The project also includes three parts: the first part addresses the principles of developing rehabilitation programs and related concepts. The second part relates to the assessment of rehabilitation and reintegration programs and associated methods. The third part relates to the proposed administrative system and organizational structure.

The initiative program has been professionally formulated to achieve rehabilitative reform, the process of social inclusion and averting the potential risk of relapse. Therefore, it was based on gradual steps through stages. The first steps begin from the first day of arresting the accused, through the primary social care programs, followed by a rehabilitation journey through a long series of programs, which continues after their release and reintegrating them into their communities and their families. Here, the targeted prisoners are converted from being violent extremists to good citizens who observe and honor the law, and become engaged in the performance of social developmental roles and responsibilities. This plan is divided into phases, because the initiative has taken into account the independence of each stage, and the implementation of one stage does not require the fulfillment of a previous one.

Feasibility of Ideological Rehabilitation

IMCTC strongly believes that the reintegrative ideological rehabilitation is the most effective method to best eliminate extremism, or at least can do well in mitigating severity of extremist ideology. Likewise, IMCTC well realizes the importance and relevance of remedial reintegration of extremist ideology, as it is critically significant for the security and ideological trends to work in tandem simply because they make up the springboard for any successful settlements. Upon the completion of the manual of procedures thereof, the IMCTC member countries will be duly provided with the initiative. ■

HATE GROUPS
FAR-RIGHT TERRORISM

■ Abdul Sattar Abdul Rahman [*]

Far-right terrorism in the West, especially in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania, has become a critically rising trend in global terrorist activities. As reported by the Global Terrorism Index 2019 (GTI), terrorism crimes committed by such trend have increased by a further 320% over the past five years. The GTI report noted that the far-right attacks "were not taken as seriously as should be by the security and intelligence services in the West."

* Journalist and Researcher

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) in the United States of America revealed that "far-right extremists committed more than 217 killings between 1990 and 2018. Excluding the 9/11 Attacks in the USA in 2001, the far-right extremists outperform Islamist extremists in their terrorist activity in the USA. From September 12, 2011 until 2014, far-right extremists carried out 81 terrorist attacks, killing 131 people, while Islamist extremists carried out 28 incidents, killing 51 people. Such notoriously escalating terrorism is fueled by the hate groups for which the USA is the main base, and from which it is spread in most of the western countries.

Hate crimes in the USA were reported to reach 7,775 criminal incidents in 2017, and the total number of hate groups increased to 1020 groups in 2018.

As the US Census Bureau published its forecasts that the white will not be the majority by 2044, the fury of far-right extremists boiled up and mounted in 2018 inflamed by such deadly emotions, animosity, hostility and enmity bubbled up to a higher level, and the total number of hate groups infamously rose to 1020

in 2018, at about 7% from 2017, as revealed by the statistics released by the Year in Hate and Extremism: Rage Against Change. The annual report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) revealed that hate crimes reached 7775 criminal incidents in 2017, in comparison with 6121 incidents in 2016.

In the 2018 midterm congressional elections, white extremists released their wrath and indignation and carried out three far-right terrorist attacks, killing 15 people, as well as a foiled attack attempt. The violence was so shocking that opinion polls conducted by CNN concluded that three-quarters of the electorate voiced that race was an important and effective factor in their vote.

Among the most notorious new far-right supremacist white groups in the United States is the Rise Above Movement (RAM), whose members declare that they are fighting a modern world corrupted by the destructive cultural influences" of liberals, Jews, Muslims and non-white immigrants." The movement announced its establishment in March of last year, in a gathering in support of US President Donald Trump near Huntington Beach in California, and the RAM has propensity to use violence. The RAM members promote the neo-Nazi doctrine on various social media. Some of

them have criminal records for the use of violence. Some of its members participated in several marches such as "A March Against the Law" in San Bernardino, California in mid-June 2017, organized by the anti-Muslim hate group known as "ACT for America" founded by Brigitte Tudor, known as Brigitte Gabriel in 2007, with 750 thousand members and more than 1000 branches. "ACT for America" is the largest anti-Muslim group in the United States of America.

The National Front was founded in August 2017 in Virginia by Thomas Rousseau, and at the time he was 18 years old! The National Front took over the old website of Vanguard America, which was previously known as www.bloodandsoil.org, a slogan inspired by a Nazi poet.

■ Let the Numbers Speak for Themselves

Empowered by a structural matrix, Identity Evropa successfully burgeoned, with the number of affiliated branches increasing from one branch in 2016 to 15 branches in 2017, then to 38 branches in 2018. Identity Evropa, rebranded as American Identity Movement in March 2019, is at the forefront of recruiting white youth and inculcating indoctrination of white supremacist superiority, making the headquarters in the universities the springboard for its activities. The

number of Identity Dixie branches established in 2017 was seven. Atomwaffen Division with its German name and violent Nazi practices, whose members have been accused of being associated with five notorious and heinous killings since May 2017, has grown from one branch in 2017 to 27 branches in 2018.

■ The Internet Is Under a Cloud of Suspicion

Hate groups instrumentalize social media to spread their ideologies and recruit their followers. For instance, Cesar Sayoc, born 1962, a fervent supporter of President Trump who rattled the country when he mailed 14 homemade pipe bombs to President Trump's critics, used the internet to broadcast hate speeches against Muslim minorities, illegal immigrants and Democrats.
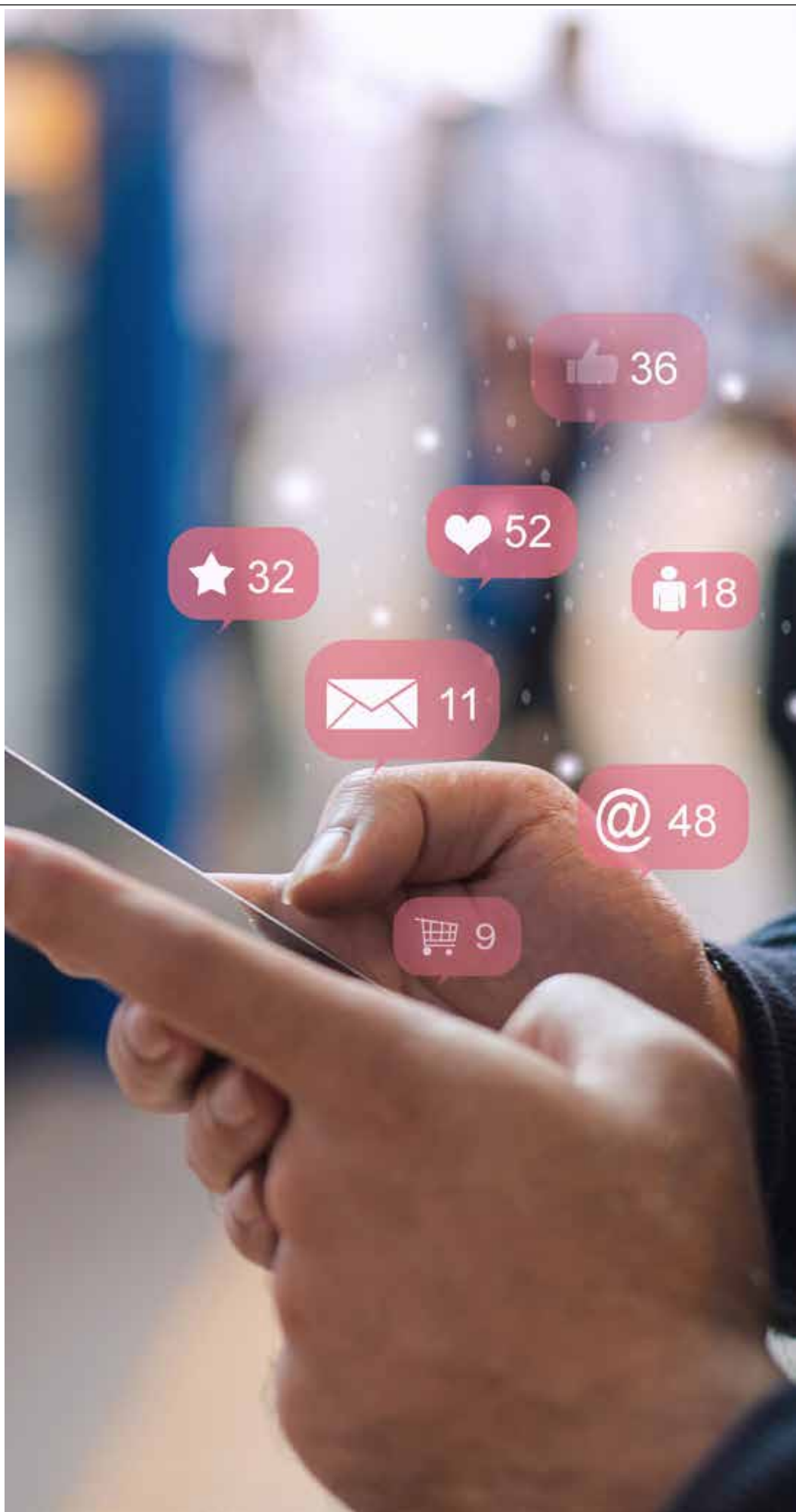
Most far-right extremist nationalist groups are no longer traditional groups under one leadership; rather, such groups formed organized networks that rely mainly on advertising via websites.

Although the American authorities managed to arrest him five days after he sent the booby-trapped parcels, charging him with several accusations, the most notorious and hideous of which was the threat of former

presidents and possession of illegal explosives, such charges did not include a charge of misusing social media, and it took only five days after the arrest of Caesar for Twitter to close his account.

In most cases, technology companies do not take hate crimes seriously; this is what is agreed upon by most of the research studies addressing far-right terrorism. Most websites of far-right extremists and groups, especially unofficial ones, are spread on communication platforms camouflaged under freedom of speech. Such companies wait until physical violence happens against the victims then take a meaningful action. This was the case after Dylann Roof killed nine African Americans in 2015, in the wake of the riots that claimed the life one person and nearly 20 others were injured in Virginia in 2017 in the largest protest of white supremacists in one generation as aroused by far-right groups across the Facebook. More notoriously, most far-right extremist nationalist groups are no longer traditional groups under one leadership; rather, such groups formed organized networks that rely mainly on advertising via websites.

With the rapid growth of the number of users of social media platforms, hate groups from the far-right have managed to cross ge-

ographical boundaries and spread their propaganda to millions of users. While technology companies have closed many official accounts of some groups, we see that they have left the webpages of unofficial groups under leading figures in groups, the accounts of which are blocked! For instance, Facebook rejected the Proud Boys website that targets immigrants and Muslims, and is a gathering point for those who later join white supremacist groups. Although the group carried out a violent protest in Portland in June 2018, which experienced acts of riot, the Facebook administration released a statement, explaining that the group did not violate standards, and allowed it to remain active on the website, ignoring videos that documented the group's abusive battering.

In August 2018, Jack Dorsey, CEO and co-founder of Twitter, announced that his company would not ban Alex Jones's account, one of the most notorious far-right leaders, despite other major companies, such as Facebook, YouTube and Apple, taking action against Jones. YouTube faced problems in 2019 after a CNN investigation revealed that the company was displaying ads for more than 300 major brands on channels that promote extremism.

Avaaz in New York, which

fights hate on websites with offices and employees in 40 countries, has revealed more than 500 suspicious groups operating throughout France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland and Spain, and the webpages that Facebook has closed have received more than 500 million views.

■ Cross-Border Hate

The US has an enormous ability to influence the countries of the world, because of its political, economic and ideological influence. The emergence of a political, cultural or ideological trend can echo throughout the world; therefore, the impact of American hate groups and white supremacist far-right has spread across Europe and Japan. Far-right peoples fueled by anti-immigrant enthusiasm has spread around the world. In the same vein,

research conducted by the British newspaper, The Guardian, in association with more than 30 political pundits, has shown that one in every four Europeans is now voting for populist parties.

American far-right extremists are helping their allies around the world with international influence networks. For instance, the far-right, anti-immigrant Lega party came to power in Italy in March 2018

> **One third of the white supremacist extremist killers who carried out nearly 350 extremist terrorist attacks in Europe, North America and Australia between 2011 And 2017 were a source of inspiration for others who committed similar attacks.**

within the ruling coalition, and is an ally of the World Congress of Families (WCF) headed by American far-right activist Brian Brown. Matteo Salvini, the leader of the Lega Party, became Minister of Interior and Deputy Prime Minister of Italy, and opened the doors of the country more broadly to American far-right extremists such as the leader of the far-right media, Steve Bannon. Salvini, far-right Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Moldovan President Igor Dodon worked with the WCF and sent their speeches to be recited at the annual conference of the group that embraces a large number of far-right extremists. The official report of the Observatory for Security against Acts of Discrimination (OS-CAD) in Italy revealed that these crimes increased

three times between 2017 and 2018, from 92 to 360 crimes.

In Japan, members of a far-right extremist group called Zaitokukai took to the streets of the Japanese capital Tokyo in 2007, shouting: "Kill good and bad Koreans." This group has now formed a political party whose leader Makoto Sakurai visited the United States of America in 2018. He met the leaders of the white movements, and upon his return to Japan the party marketed its relations with American white nationalists. Unlike previous groups, the Zaitokukai group is very similar to European far-right groups; i.e., that they target ethnic minorities with violent attacks.

Figures in the annual report on the protection of the democratic constitution in Germany, compiled by the intelligence services to monitor anti-constitutional activities, show that there were 24,100 far-right extremists in the country in 2018, including approximately 12,700 people who were classified as targets of violence. Far-right violence increased by 71% between 2017 and 2018.

The report by the research and consulting firm IPSOS regarding the amount of unreported hate incidents against Ukrainians, Muslims, and sub-Saharan Africans living in Poland, showed that of 269 crimes, only 19 crimes were reported to the police!

A study published by the New York Times based on the GTI database issued by the START at the University of Maryland revealed that at least one third of the white supremacist ex-

tremist killers who carried out nearly 350 extremist terrorist attacks in Europe, North America and Australia between 2011 And 2017 were a source of inspiration for others who committed similar attacks. In the mass shooting incident in Texas in August 2019, the perpetrator, Patrick Crusius, (21), published a statement minutes before he committed the crime explaining that he was inspired by the attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, whose perpetrator was referred to by Brenton Tarrant, 28, in a statement he posted on the internet to Anders Behring Breivik, a far-right extremist who killed 77 people in

> **The challenge facing law enforcement to tackle hate crimes in the West is the myopic view of focusing on Islamic extremism as the only driver of international terrorism.**

Norway on July 22, 2011. More critically, Behring inspired four other white supremacist extremists, unlike Tarrant, who also praised a Canadian, who opened fire in a mosque in Quebec City in 2017. At least four white supremacist extremist killers made online statements praising Elliot Rodger (22 years old) who shot dead six people while injuring 14 other peo-

ple near the University of California campus in Santa Barbara, before killing himself in his car on May 23, 2014.

This circle of white supremacist far-right extremists from Norway to the United States, New Zealand and Canada indicates that they are going beyond their national affiliations and see themselves as part of a global network.

"They don't see themselves as Americans or Canadians … they may have acted in ways that seemed local, but the line of thinking was always about building an international white movement," states Heidi Beirich, leader of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project, which issues periodic hate reports in the United States of America about such extremists. Given these international ties, it is important to review the nature of the threat". "There is a common framework for far-right terrorism as a type of terrorism that is not a threat," states Irene Miller, database manager at START.

Wei Kay and Simon Lyndon, who wrote the aforementioned New York Times research study, refer to the challenge facing law enforcement to tackle hate crimes in the West, which is the "myopic view represented by the focus on Islamic extremism as the only driver of international terrorism." ◼

YOUTH AND EXTREMISM

WHY YOUTH JOIN VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS IN CONFLICT ZONES

■ Dr. Mansour Saeed Al-Qarni(*)

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The stagger-ing number of Muslim youth in gen-eral and the Arab youth in particular flooding into conflict zones and volatile areas since the eruption of the war against the So-viet Union in Afghanistan followed by the interne-cine war against America, as well as other conflicts in Chechnya, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia and several regions of Africa, and most notoriously is the aftermath of the full-scale war in Iraq, let alone the ongoing bitter conflict and the devastating war machine in Syria, which since the outbreak of the Syrian revolution has be-come a haven for the youth driven only by their emo-tive enthusiasm and sym-pathy; all have brought about a whole host of se-curity, social, cultural and ideological risks and con-cerns. The youth who have once made up the first nucleus have also helped to fuel and generate many extremist groups and cells that have adopted violence and carried out terrorist acts, while committing ap-pealing atrocities at home and across most Arab and Islamic countries.

■ **Appeal of Extremism**
Sadly enough, with the Arab and Muslim youth flooding into brutal and bloody con-flict zones and volatile ar-eas, especially to war-torn countries such as Syria, many questions are being raised about the reasons and motives for such ap-peal, and whether there are psychological, social or cultural characteristics that distinguish such Arab and Muslim youth from others. Again, it has become wide-ly known that travelling to such regions is strictly banned, and being engaged there for fighting purposes is also prohibited and crim-inalized by legal institutions and fatwas made by schol-ars.

Shockingly enough, terror-ist organizations can effi-ciently attract and tempt the youth, generating more organizational strength and the means for survival. The newly recruited multination-al members are enthused with the mandates and are tasked and entrusted with new roles and responsi-bilities. With a backdrop of clandestine recruitment, terrorist organizations have done well in widely spread-ing their ideology and be-havior. The pointed question remains unanswered: what is it that makes the youth more attracted to joining such terrorist organization and feel irresistibly tempt-ed?

■ **Psychological Emptiness**
Given this problematic situation and the probing questions left unanswered, it was necessary to conduct an objective scientific study in line with the security and rehabilitation dimensions in such a method as to come up with a vision that helps to accurately diagnose the current situation, providing more insights into combat-ing extremism and coun-

tering terrorist behavior. This also helps to realize a higher degree of ideological security and develop plans that prevent the youth from slipping into such milieus rife with terrorism, while evincing readiness to receive the returnees from such areas through rehabilitation programs in terms of ideology and behavior. Tailored as such, such youth can no longer be a cog in the machine operating against their communities. The findings of the study reveal that the secret lies in the youth themselves and in the surrounding circumstances, making them ready to be an easy victim for such terrorist groups. Admittedly, they are trapped into such a vicious circle due to the social isolation towards them in comparison with the deceitfully smart activity displayed by such terrorist organizations that seize such opportunities to be an ideal alternative in their lives and fulfill their aspirations. Hence, violent behavior snowballs initially as a feeling within an extremist. By time, the psychological state of an extremist becomes the basis for all his or her actions that respond to external influences.

Therefore, we find that these groups, especially Daesh (ISIL), seized the opportunity of some bad conditions – be it political, economic, social or otherwise expressed – for some youth in their communities, spiritual emp-

tiness, and psychological shock. As such, the rhetoric that touches their feelings is an attempt to fill the existing emptiness by promoting broadly worded promising slogans. They deceive and manipulate the youth to make them believe that to join the ranks of these groups or support them is the right path to restore dignity and uphold the essence of faith, now that injustice and corruption have become notoriously rampant and the persecution of Muslims and committing transgression against their wealth and property abound.

Such groups powerfully use fiery rhetoric, which stirs up and arouses emotions through eloquence, elaborate professional photography, rousing chants and battle hymns that inflame passion before the mind, using high-quality digital technologies to promote their socially acceptable ideas and goals albeit unreal. They instrumentalize such emotive tools to publicize battles in which they claim that they achieve victory over Allah's enemies, all with the aim of influencing the hearts and minds of the youth, who are mentally, emotionally and psychologically prepared and ready.

Stimuli and Responses

Two key reasons explain the appeal of extremist and violent groups to the youth and the raison d'être of their presence in countries that experience armed conflict. The two reasons are the factors relating to one's personal life and the factors of social milieu. The two reasons work in tandem in that one factor represents a stimulus while the other one represents a response to such a stimulus. When the two factors work in harmony, the youth evince much readiness and preparedness to joining extremist and violent groups. The different trends and research centers of different disciplines that address the investigation of the root causes of the phenomenon of extremism and terrorist behavior point to many and interrelated factors, which interact with each other in the long run, and ultimately create extremist and violent ideology. Trends also differ in categorizing these causes and factors, and there is a multiplicity of visions and insights towards their ideological effects. Based on field experience, there is an unshakable conviction that the root causes of extremism stem from two main factors or causes: internal and external. Subsumed under these two key factors are many other secondary yet contributory factors.

Personal causes are inherent in the same person, which can be called self-motivation. They are internal stimuli that represent the force that pushes the individual to display a behavior to satisfy his or her needs or goals. The source of such stimuli is the person himself or herself; such a person is stimulated externally based on an internal desire aimed at self-actualization.

As such, a latent potential force lies inside, which is always pushing towards self-actualization that puts pressure on the self. These pressing desires of the group heading for extremism are manifested in escaping from the painful and bitter reality for various reasons, such as mental disorders, and various social problems, making it difficult to resist such a powerful force, and ending up in joining violent groups, especially in volatile and conflict-torn areas.

Milieu of Extremism

It is critically necessary to consider the power inherent in the youth joining extremist and violent groups as psychological motivations from the psychology point of view. Latent power differs from one person to another and is different across motives. It is also important to draw attention to the fact that the psychological motives that drive towards escaping from reality are an important precondition for extremist and violent groups; therefore, they are concerned with psychologically disorganized youth, and seek to include and recruit them because they poorly unaware of the stark reality.

As for environmental factors, they are all external stimuli surrounding a person, and they represent a group of external conditions or influential factors that have a great impact on human life, contributing to the construction of lifestyles in terms of natures and behaviors, line of thinking, methods of achieving goals and satisfying needs, in addition to the functional role that affects a person being a natural result of being under impact.

Given the external factors that represent stimuli or causes that require a response from internal or personal factors to transform into behavior, regardless of whether this behavior is positive or negative, we find it mostly in everything that has to do with human life, and affects the way it deals with ideology, behavior and method. The impact varies from one person to another, but it is often represented in the social milieus.

The surrounding environment and the different social conditions in which some youth live, in addition to psychological suffering make them more vulnerable to extremism; rather, they may see that joining groups of violence along with pursuing the means of violence is the irreplaceable way, because if they are not happy in their lives, and they live under stressful life and bitter pressures, they may resort to escaping this painful reality.

It is striking that the external causes that contribute to joining extremist and violent groups despite their similarities are not in all circumstances of the same degree, type and impact in all communities, as they differ from one community to another, between one social class and another, as well as over time. Nevertheless, in addition to the ever-changing ideas of extremism over decades, there is often one common reason, which is the loss of the multiplicity of ideas, locked opinions, and their unilateral nature, which all make extremism permissible. Multiplicity of ideas, freedom of putting them forward and discussion of developing them within the framework of jurisprudence of reality help in countering and eliminating extremism. It is also remarkable that it cannot be asserted that there are certain causes or even specific motives that can be claimed to lead to the emergence of violent behavior among the youth, because the reasons are different, multiple and intertwined, and differ from one environment to another, between one community and another, and between one person and another. However, this does not prevent the emergence of a basic cause among the youth, and that these causes and factors are recurrent.

■ Daily Reality

It is appropriate to draw an example to display the cogency and telling evidence of reality: "One of the detainees recounts that he was always at odds with his father at the secondary school stage, (a family social factor), as the father wanted his son to study a specific academic specialization, but the boy did not want this specialization; he wanted to study another major (educational factor). To fulfill his father's preference and end the disagreement with him, he studied the specialization that his father preferred. Unfortunately, his dispute with his father (family social factor) did not end, so this young man thought about escaping from this reality as a result of the psychological struggle that he experienced (psychological factor.) He had the idea of going to Iraq for jihad, and he asked the teacher of Islamic Education to help him out and find a way to get him to Iraq (social, religious and educational factor). After some days, the teacher managed to deliver him to people practicing terrorist acts inside, and he had no previous knowledge of them. The beginning of his involvement with them was that they asked him to buy a car in his name. They paid him the price for it. He did not tell his father about all of these things because of his weak personality (psychological factor). The next stage was to indoctrinate extremist ideology and persuade him to disbelieve in the government power! He was not aware of the meaning of takfir, and he complied with them in their extremist views and takfiri beliefs. Then the third stage followed, which was funneling weapons and training, on the pretext of the necessity of self-defense. In the last stage, he was injured in one of the confrontations. It is noted that in the previous example there are multiple and intersecting causes and factors. It was also found that the student has a weakness in personality, lack of self-esteem, and that he depends on others in deciding his future and taking important decisions. The student also has religious unawareness and cultural shallowness; the student was unsuccessful in choosing a cleric for consultation, trust and knowledge. The student relied on the scholastic relationship with a teacher who he is ignorant with regard to whether that teacher is truly religious or not! Likewise, the lack of trust between the student and the family was demonstrated, because they did not inform the family of anything that happened to him.

It is noted that the family insisted on its preference, in response to the custom or social reality that is highly appreciated for those with scientific specialties, without respecting the capabilities, preferences and inclinations of the student. Then comes the impact of the teacher, who is considered a pillar of the educational environment. Therefore, it is evidenced that there exists more than one influential cause and factor to this problem, which first snowballed as educational, then familial, then social, then psychological, then religious, then ended up with extremism, recruitment and joining a violent terrorist group.

■ Conclusion and Lesson

The bottom line is that extremist ideology and violent terrorist behavior espoused by a great number of youth did not come arbitrarily out of nowhere and did not come to existence aimlessly; rather, both have their motives, causes, conditions and factors. Terrorism per se is ideology and behavior, regardless of its goals and means, and it is the result of many different factors, the main slogan of which is intertwining psychological and social factors. It is commonly agreed that investigating these factors (motives and causes) is a difficult task to accomplish, either because terrorism with its ideological and behavioral conditions is a complex phenomenon given its intricate elements and methods, or because it requires an in-depth analysis of most of

the complex problems. Hence, the issue of the youth heading for conflict-locked areas and joining violent and extremist groups should be critically addressed. Therefore, reliance on ideology or religiosity is the basic motive for travelling on the pretext of jihad, which lacks a lot of accuracy and evidence; rather, it may even be ravaging Islam, and this is what many enemies of Islam seek to achieve, regardless of their religion, orientations or goals.

It should be noted that this does not mean to ignore ideology or religiosity, or to exclude both permanently, or to deny the fact that they both exist, as such existing components go in line with other factors; however, with other factors both represent the causes that provoke the internal psychological motives pressing on the personality that is seeking to alleviate both components, by escaping towards ways that reduce these pressures, such as the use of drugs or drinking alcohol, or heading for countries experiencing bloody conflicts and violent fighting. ◼

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN COMBATING EXTREMISM
CASE STUDY: **ITALY**

■ **Mohammed Khalid Al-Ghazali**(*)

Violent extremism is today a potential threat to social cohesion in Italy; while, in other European countries, the impact of which seems to be more severe and far-reaching. Although cross-border jihadism has not affected this country yet, we find that public institutions have sounded the alarm calling for the development of appropriate preventive plans. The current article aims to explain the method in which the problem of training Islamic clerics in Europe has been raised, while clarifying the original elements of the Italian approach to preventing extremism, which emerges in a pioneering project funded by the Italian government. The project considers that the solution lies with the academic bodies and websites of knowledge and sciences of universities, making up a network of Italian universities and private universities in certain countries in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Prevention First

Unlike repressive and intelligence measures, the Italian authorities attached great importance to the preventive measures spearheaded by counter-narrative that refutes extremist propaganda. Furthermore, alternative visions for the propositions of terrorist groups also came into play. Simply put, an approach that adopts these goals should consider seriously adopting a multi-level and active multi-party formula (Battistelli, 2013) in that not only does it facilitate better coordination among government institutions, but also among important sectors of civil society.

Hence the need for extensive consultations among the influential institutional bodies, specialists in the humanities and social sciences and representatives of civil society closest to the environment that is likely to be affected by the phenomenon; they are well able to propose a concept that links events with the factors that have contributed to their production, and stimulates overcoming reactions and adopting cautious and open positions towards the issues that shape the social scene.

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The importance of religious communication and the impact of religious authorities in this field are now taken for granted in addressing extremism, which claims to have a true interpretation of Islam. Twenty years ago, the influence of imams, their scholarly, cultural and social presence and their relations with politics became issues that were worth of studying. With the emergence of the jihadist threat, what they do against this phenomenon has become very crucial.

> **Violent extremism is today a potential threat to social cohesion in Italy. Therefore, the training of Muslim clerics is an important question in terms of the positive development of the reality of Islam in Europe.**

Imamship in Europe

Training imams in Europe seemed to be important before the 9/11 Attacks, 2001, and the first experiences of training sessions for religious guides were reported in the eighties in England and Belgium (Peter, 2018), where the percentage of Muslims is high. The issue became then critically important in the past twenty years. The impact of imams on the development of Muslim communities is constantly seen as a topic that requires intervention to promote the integration of Muslims into host societies (Peace, 2018; Ghazali, 2018), prevent problems and most significantly properly present Islam, in such a manner that is different from what is shown in propaganda of extremist groups.

When Muslim countries send imams to help their citizens, or when they come from the immigration communities themselves, such imams begin offering services that gradually lead them to leave the purely religious sphere, ad-

dress wider problems such as helping patients and prisoners, manage family conflicts and represent their religion and society in official and popular forums (Hashas, de Ruiter, Valdemar Vinding, 2018). It seems that such development gradually provides an unprecedented room for the empowerment of women (Ghazali, 2017). In the context of the multiple functions of the imam in the fields of social, scientific and cultural mediation, the female guides confirm their role in this area, and in some cases criticize the male model exclusively for the leadership of society.

Hence the need to adapt to the new cultural and social reality seems necessary, and training religious staff and community leaders is also urgent. This affects the positions that the Islamic presence requires naming in European institutions, relating to respecting the principles of freedom of worship guaranteed by law, and responding to the currently established roots of Islam in the social and cultural realities of these countries.

> **Unlike repressive and intelligence measures, the Italian authorities attached great importance to the preventive measures spearheaded by counter-narrative that refutes extremist propaganda.**

Therefore, training Muslim employees (Schiavinato, 2017) or mentors should be understood as an issue of concern to the independence of the Muslim community. The state should remain neutral, but on the other hand, it has implications that seem to go beyond the borders of Muslim societies that attract the attention of public opinion and overlap with the interests of political institutions and departments.

Universities and Combating Extremism

The Group of Seven Interior Ministers meeting was held in Ischia on October 20, 2017, with the participation of the European Commissioner for Migration, Internal Affairs and Citizenship, the European Union Security Commissioner, the Secretary-General of Interpol. The field of university scientific research and the internet identified a major area for counterterrorism in cooperation with major technology companies to exchange technologies and experiences, use the best innovative technologies to suppress terrorist content and enable civil society partners to develop alternative speech.

Hence, the recommendations of the European Union and the Study Group Committee Report on extremism and jihadist extremism were distinguished by the call for the establishment of specialized programs to combat violent extremism (CVE), through a multidisciplinary and a multi-party approach, with the participation of a group of public and private entities, in addition to the bodies of the system, intelligence, the judiciary and public entities and other active civil society destinations. The Italian government launched an initiative in 2019 to establish projects undertaken by the Italian Ministry of Education, universities and scientific research centers (MIUR Call – OIC, 2018), with the aim of encouraging university training and higher studies projects between Italy and the countries participating in the OIC to understand extremism and to develop social integration in Italy (Executive Decree No. 3089 of 11/16/2018, ID 82382). This project includes the (prevention and interaction) project in the trans-Mediterranean region. Interestingly enough, this measure is unprecedented, as it is the first time in Europe that a ministry has allocated for

universities and research public resources to finance a project to prevent violent extremism, which is an area usually within the competence of the Ministry of Interior or the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

National and local public institutions and players active in civil society have

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long experimented with a number of projects in cooperation with Islamic associations in society (training religious workers, courses for clerics, intercultural courses) and outside the community (interfaith initiatives in schools and prisons).

■ Italian Experience

In line with the work produced by universities, the Italian experience is distinguished by providing advisory and consultation to institutions on this phenomenon, through cooperation with local communities on the basis of their experience gained in this field. This also includes producing areas of public facilities that allow institutions to implement projects aimed at promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence among the social groups that make up Italian society. Universities produce active and essential work in this framework, and they have become an important reference in the diverse international scientific community, as well as for Muslim religious active actors, through the FIDR, which includes eight research units, and is now the nucleus of the PriMED network that includes 22 universities, including 12 Italian universities, and 10 universities

of the OIC countries: Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco ranked first in the MIUR-OCI ranking.

Two university majors were established: Master Degree in "Studies on Islam in Europe: Knowledge and Practices", and an "Advanced Training Course for Imams and Guides" for individuals working in Italian Islamic societies. Among the innovations that characterize and feature the PriMED project, related to the training activities chosen in the field of FIDR, including more than one hundred users in recent years, there is much related to the education and methods envisaged for Islamic sciences. Along with the presence of a large international network of researchers in issues of religious sciences, an important nexus was developed between the scientific cooperation and the training of religious staff. This was achieved by conducting religious scientific research in Muslim countries in neutral academic environments.

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Building an Islamic incubator in Italy is a very complex process, with various competitors, and those working in the academic research field cannot do without the need for training based on the complex context in which they move and act, even if they enjoy full support and participation for organized Muslim citizens (de Matolli, 2017).

These courses were developed to be part of the postgraduate training for employees active in this field. Such development was initiated from the early stages of project preparation and implementation, assisted by the main active Islamic organizations in Italy that actively participate in the development of science and knowledge. In addition to this basic section, the educational project provides an analysis of the participation of Islam in Europe and Italy, especially in the general development of society, and examines critically the concepts and theoretical systems that have enabled it to represent its society so far.

> **Training imams in Europe seemed to be important before the 9/11 Attacks, 2001, and the first experiences of training sessions for religious guides were reported in the eighties in England and Belgium where the percentage of Muslims is high.**

■ Conclusion

The training of Muslim clerics is an important question in terms of the positive development of the reality of Islam in Europe. If the presence of religious guides is culturally inconsistent with the speech and practice of violent extremism, then it appears to be a critical element to counter the spread of propaganda of violent extremism. The associated contributions to the general growth of the religious and civil quality of the societies in which it operates and to integrate it better in its broader context may shape and make the success of the first goal. To this end, the problem of training should be placed in a broad and long-term perspective, so that the process of prevention and interaction with jihadist abuses is in a generally coherent context. ■

Quotes about Terrorism

Terrorism can be defeated only through a twofold condition: carrying out military operations and making massive investments in the social and economic domains to dry up the sources of terrorism.
Idriss Déby
President of the Republic of Chad

The peoples of Africa stand on the frontline of efforts made to counter terrorism and the spread of violent extremism. There is a pressing need for the international community to support Member States across this region.

Antonio Guterres
United Nations Secretary-General

Ongoing terrorist threats call for concerted and sustained efforts to counter terrorism.

Dr. Youssef Ahmed Al-Othaimeen
OIC Secretary-General

We all have a common goal, which is to fight and counter extremism and extremism, and to end and eliminate hatred.

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Karim Al-Issa
Secretary-General of the Muslim World League

Hate has no religion and does not respect borders, and fighting terrorism is a shared global responsibility.

Moussa Fakih Muhammad
Chairperson of the African Union Commission

MEDIA AND THOUGHTFUL SPEECH

Colonel Hassan bin Suliman Al-Amri

Media and terrorism are hardly separable. While terrorism per se is the scourge of the present time, the media through various outlets and fast-paced development that has exponentially generated a constant flow and flux of information has become the talk of the town. Most of the research studies and analyses reveal that terrorist organizations have successfully instrumentalized modern media for propaganda purposes, while influencing public opinion. Of great note, the media across the public and private sectors has contributed to promoting such organizations, coupled with the barefaced lies, wiles and ruses and methods of criminality. This also includes exposing ideologues, theorists and criminals through press releases and scoops!

Thankfully, the IMCTC is fully aware of all these disconcerting issues; the media domain is one of the four cornerstones of the IMCTC, being mandated with defending and protecting Islam and Muslims by thoughtful media speech, which monitors, analyzes and informs about the events through traditional and state-of-the-art media.

To this end, ALTAHALOF Magazine (Issue No. 2) highlights the resounding experiences, research studies, articles, strategies, initiatives, issues and global indicators in combating and countering extremism and terrorism, supported by explanatory annotations and in-depth analyses to further spell out action plans, shed fresh light on specific issues and identify the root causes of extremism and terrorism.

Equally important, the IMCTC releases other publications addressing counterterrorism through different methods showcased in three monthly issues: Allied Bulletin, Book Review and Special Reports.

Hopefully, as repose absolute trust in Allah, and as we have gone into overdrive at the IMCTC, we will always be firing on all four cylinders as long as the IMCTC is headquartered in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, much blessed by Allah, with the undivided support of all the Member Countries. Highly valued readers, we hold out the binding promise of closely following up all the developments and updates through thoughtful and objective speech. ■

At TAHALOF

IMCTC Quarterly Magazine

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ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

General Directorate of Planning and Coordination