DE-RADICALIZATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Comparing Challenges and Approaches

edited by **Lorenzo Vidino**
introduction by **Paolo Magri**

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ISPI

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Table of Contents

Introduction........ 7
Paolo Magri

1. Italy's Lack of CVE Strategy and Initiatives........ 13
Lorenzo Vidino

2. Fighting the "Threat from Within":
France and Its Counter-Radicalization Strategy........ 21
Anina Schwarzenbach

3. Spain's Shifting Approach to Jihadism Post-3/11........ 35
Fernando Reinares, Carola García-Calvo

4. Countering Radicalization Efforts
in the Middle East and North Africa........ 59
Jenna Consigli

5. Insights Into Morocco's Approach
to Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism........ 81
El Mostafa Rezrazi

6. Radicalization in Tunisia:
In Search of a Civilian Approach........ 93
Emna Ben Mustapha Ben Arab

7. Egypt between Terrorism and Radicalization:
The State-Society Nexus........ 107
Ziad A. Akl

8. Jordan: Emerging Threats
to the Kingdom's National Security.................................. 121
Musa Shteiwi, Mohammad Abu Rumman, Jesse Marks

9. Saudi Efforts in Countering Violent Extremism.............. 139
Abdullah Khaled Al-Saud, Yousuf Zarea

The Authors.. 153

Introduction

In the past few years jihadist terrorism and radicalization have become some of the most critical threats to the Mediterranean region. Terrorist attacks in European, North African and Middle Eastern countries have endangered the thriving spirit of the area. Furthermore, conflicts in Libya, Syria and Iraq have degraded the security situation and paved the way for the emergence of new extremist groups such as the Islamic State and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham. Along with a general rise in 'homegrown' extremism, many Mediterranean countries were the source of a large exodus of foreign fighters who traveled to conflict zones and now face the danger of a return of extremist militants with combat skills and experience. Moreover, as authorities cracked down on terrorist networks, radicalization in prison has become an ever more critical challenge. Countering violent extremism (CVE) has thus become a crucial priority in the area. While the responses of local governments have been varied, with a greater focus on the use of hard-power, repressive measures, the need to add alternative actions of prevention and rehabilitation to the already existing repressive policies has been highlighted by authorities throughout the region. To emphasize this aspect of the fight against extremism, this ISPI report seeks to provide an analysis of the policies and measures adopted to counter violent extremism in different Mediterranean countries. In particular, it sheds light on the practices of the North African and Middle Eastern countries that have been affected the most by this phenomenon and have been at the forefront of the fight on terror, acquiring valuable experience throughout the years.

For this purpose, the experts brought together in this volume illustrate the policies of contrast, prevention and

de-radicalization that have been adopted by countries in the MENA region, revealing emerging trends, lessons learned and overviews of the security status of the countries in the area. Their findings demonstrate a diverse approach to CVE that attempts to match and counter the unique local conditions which drive radicalization in each state, while also seeking to provide insight and policy recommendations for CVE measures.

As shown in the report, while radicalization and extremism are a complex global phenomenon, the push and pull factors that mobilize people are usually highly localized and may differ from country to country. Furthermore, radicalization is a very individualized process, making it difficult and counterproductive to make broad generalizations about the factors that may lead to radicalization. Therefore, while extremism represents a common threat to the MENA region, it must be addressed in the manner appropriate to each country.

From this standpoint, the experiences of Mediterranean countries provide important lessons and takeaways because with the new surge of radicalization in the area governments have begun to draft and implement new national counter-terrorism strategies and policies. The ultimate goal of this ISPI report is to examine the measures that have been taken thus far, and offer points of reflection about this complex phenomenon.

In the first chapter, Lorenzo Vidino examines how, while Italy may appear to be a hub for jihadist mobilization and a target, it has not experienced the same surge in radicalization as most European countries. Nonetheless, while Italy has adopted many efficient repressive measures which have been able to address the situation thus far, several signs have emerged that suggest that the nature of radicalization in Italy is evolving and now requires the implementation of new preventive and de-radicalization policies.

Anina Schwarzenbach focuses on the French efforts to counter extremism and radicalization. Differently from Italy, France has been greatly affected by jihadist terrorism in the past few years. Twenty-four jihadist terror attacks have been carried out

in the nation since the establishment of the 'Caliphate' and around 1,700 individuals have left the country to fight in Syria and Iraq. Schwarzenbach concentrates on the ongoing social, political and legal debates in the country as well as on the measures that have been taken by French authorities, following attacks in 2014 and 2015, in an effort to prevent radicalization and rehabilitate radicalized individuals into society.

Fernando Reinares and Carola García-Calvo delve into Spain's approach to countering jihadist extremism following the 2004 Madrid train bombings. The country was equipped with a well-prepared internal security apparatus, with long experience in dealing with internal terrorist groups like the Basque *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA). Furthermore, while the country had a history of jihadist extremist activity prior to the bombings, new counter-terrorism policies were implemented to better deal with jihadist terrorism following the Madrid attacks. The chapter further analyzes how, as the phenomenon evolved in the past few years and the need to implement a soft-power approach became more evident, further policies were enacted in an attempt to stem jihadist radicalization.

Chapter 4, by Jenna Consigli, instead provides an overview of the different approaches to countering violent extremism in North African and Middle Eastern countries, which have thus far been strongly centered around the hard-power approach. Consigli presents different case studies, which explore measures taken in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Her article seeks to provide a clear picture of the recent evolution of policies on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, and examine their issues, challenges and future prospects.

Similarly, El Mostafa Rezrazi provides insights on Morocco's approach to countering violent extremism. Rezrazi analyzes the efficient Moroccan counter-terrorism policy that was enacted following the deadly bomb attacks in Casablanca in 2003. While Morocco has been successful in preventing further terrorist attacks on its soil since 2003, the threat of extremism and radicalization lingers and remains a threat to the security of the

kingdom. The chapter focuses on the various aspects of CVE in Morocco, which range from fighting poverty to security measures, religious oversight, reinforcement of the legal framework and rehabilitation instruments like the Moshala program, an initiative designed for reintegrating persons imprisoned for violent extremism and terrorist-related cases.

In her chapter, Emna Ben Arab, delves into the complex topic of counter-terrorism in Tunisia. Since the revolution in 2011, Tunisia has been one of the countries most affected by the rise of jihadist extremism, with groups like Ansar al-Sharia and the Islamic State, that have entrenched themselves in local communities. Furthermore, with the outbreak of the civil wars in Syria and Libya, Tunisia has become the country with the largest amount of foreign fighters per capita in the world. While the government's response has mainly been focused on security measures, a new national strategy adopted in 2016 refocused the fight on extremism and terrorism along four main axes: prevention, protection, judicial proceedings, and retaliation. Ben Arab analyzes the work that has been done so far and what further steps need to be taken in order to improve the country's response to the threat of jihadist terrorism.

Ziad A. Akl focuses on Egypt's approach to counter-terrorism. In the past few years Egypt has been struggling with a violent insurgency in the Sinai and has been hit by deadly terrorist attacks. In this key, Akl offers an overview of Egypt's counter-terrorism policies. While the series of terrorist attacks in 2013-2015 led Egyptian authorities to prioritize counter-terrorism policies, there was a shift of focus in 2017 that led to an initial implementation of CVE policies. While some initiatives have been launched, CVE in Egypt is still largely in the making. Akl discusses the progress that has been made and identifies possible new prospects for prevention and de-radicalization in the country.

Musa Shteiwi, Mohammad Abu Rumman and Jesse Marks focus on the emerging threats of radicalization to the Kingdom of Jordan. The focus of Jordan's counter-terrorism efforts has

mainly been concentrated on preventing any spillover effects from the Syrian Civil War. Specifically, the authors focus on measures that seek to reinforce Jordan's border security and to counter homegrown terrorism and the threat of foreign fighters in the areas of conflict.

In the final chapter, Abdullah K. Al-Saud and Yousuf Zarea examine Saudi Arabia's efforts in countering violent extremism. While the country has been historically targeted by jihadist terrorist organizations, it has accumulated a certain degree of know-how in combating violent extremism and radicalization. The authors analyze and provide valuable insight on the CVE measures which have been taken, like the programs to rehabilitate extremists in prison and to counter extremist propaganda online and the Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Center and Etidal (moderation) center.

How have Mediterranean countries reacted to the threat of terrorism? What policies have been taken to reduce the risk posed by violent extremism and radicalization? This report provides an overview of the measures that have been taken by countries on the different shores of the Mediterranean, drawing from different experiences and offering insights and future prospects.

Paolo Magri
ISPI Executive Vice-President and Director

1. Italy's Lack of CVE Strategy and Initiatives

Lorenzo Vidino

Italy's experience with jihadism presents some interesting peculiarities. At first glance, there are several overlapping reasons to consider the country a hub for jihadist mobilization and target of terrorist attacks.

Indeed:

1. Italy is close to several conflict areas in the Middle East and North Africa and has relatively porous borders making it an ideal point of arrival or transit country for militants.
2. Italy recently received a large influx of migrants, most of whom hail from Muslim majority countries. Often, migrants do not face stringent security checks, and upon entry into the country, live at the margins of society.
3. Historically, Italy has been a logistical base for various jihadist groups since the early 1990s.
4. Italy represents a symbolic target for jihadist groups. The city of Rome, in particular, has great iconic value, as the cradle of Christianity and a major symbol of Western civilization. Rome has been frequently mentioned as a target in jihadist propaganda.
5. The Italian government has played an active role in various Middle Eastern conflicts, deploying troops to Afghanistan and Iraq (both during the 2003 invasion and currently as part of the anti-ISIS coalition) as well as substantial intelligence and political capital in the current Libyan strife.

Yet, somewhat counterintuitively, Italy has not experienced the same surge in radicalization as most European countries. Levels of domestic radicalization are, by any account, significantly lower. The recent foreign fighter mobilization to Iraq and Syria provides compelling empirical evidence in this regard. According to data released by the Italian Interior Ministry in August 2017, 125 individuals with ties to Italy (only a minority of whom are Italian citizens) left the country to join various jihadist groups (mostly the Islamic State). The minuteness of these numbers is quite apparent when compared to recent estimates for other large European countries, such as France (at least 1,700 fighters), Germany (940), the United Kingdom (around 850); and even when compared to less populous countries such as Belgium (470), Austria (300), and Sweden (300). Similarly, aside from a small number of low-level plots either thwarted or failed, there have not been any successful terrorist attacks on Italian soil since 9/11, a trend that has remained true since the rise of the self-proclaimed Islamic State in 2014.

The Italian jihadist scene remains small and unsophisticated when compared to that of most other European countries, but there are reasons to assess that it will grow in coming years. In fact, recent events point to a growth of a quintessential homegrown jihadist scene similar to those of other European countries. For example, two individuals born and raised in Italy were involved in terrorism related incidents. Youssef Zaghba was one of three attackers in the June 2017 London Bridge attack, and ISIS sympathizer Tommaso Hosni attacked soldiers and policemen at Milan's Central Station in May 2017 in a potentially terrorist-motivated act. Italian authorities also discovered a mosque in Foggia where an imam was indoctrinating Italian-born children by showing them ISIS videos. The arrests of an imam in Torino and one in Udine for disseminating Italian-language ISIS propaganda online are just the latest signs that, as authorities have warned for years, Italian jihadism is not just increasing in size but also becoming less and less "imported" and more and more homegrown.

So far, Italian counter-terrorism officials have handled the threat with remarkable efficiency. Given Italy's long history of confronting domestic terrorism (the Red Brigades and other left-wing extremist groups) and sophisticated criminal organizations (the Sicilian Mafia, the Calabrese 'Ndrangheta, and the Neapolitan Camorra), Italian authorities have long developed capabilities and legal tools useful for confronting jihadist terrorism. Additionally, over the last few years, Italian lawmakers have passed various laws aimed at strengthening the country's counter-terrorism legislation and adapting it to the current threat. The Italian counter-terrorism system also efficiently shares intelligence among various actors, which manifests into both formal and informal avenues through entities like the multi-agency Strategic Center for Anti-Terrorism Analysis (CASA) and others like the National Police, the Carabinieri, the domestic (AISI) and foreign (AISE) intelligence agency, the penitentiary police (DAP) and various other actors involved in counter-terrorism.

In general, Italy prioritizes the criminal justice system in its approach to counter-terrorism. Italian authorities have ample powers to conduct lengthy surveillance operations and pre-emptive raids. Deportation of foreign suspects, in particular, has been the cornerstone of Italy's counter-terrorism strategy. In fact, two antiterrorism laws, adopted in 2005, and in 2015, expanded the hypotheses for administrative deportation of non-EU citizens. Since January 2015, authorities have deported around 300 individuals, including 34 from January to April 2018 alone.

Administrative deportations are often ordered when evidence against an individual is deemed insufficient for prosecution but sufficient enough to determine that he or she may pose a threat to national security. According to many experts, the wide use of this tool represents an important factor in maintaining low levels of radicalization in the country. The use of fast-track deportations helps prevent the formation of extremist networks on national territory.

The success of this approach is clear and has made Italy less affected by many of the dynamics contributing to radicalization in most European countries. Yet observers, including Italian counter-terrorism officials, agree the strategy suffers from two crucial weaknesses. First, it appears obvious that a system relying on expulsions can only work when most radicalized individuals are foreign nationals. So far, this has been the case in Italy. The majority of suspects are either recent or second-generation immigrants to the country who, despite having been born or raised in Italy, do not have Italian citizenship due to the country's strict citizenship laws.

However, there are indications this dynamic is changing. More and more radicalized individuals have Italian citizenship, acquired either through marriage or after the long residency period required by law. The number of Italian converts engaging in militant activities also appears to be increasing. And proposals to change Italian citizenship laws in a more liberal fashion are frequently debated in Parliament, but none have been adopted at this stage. In substance, there are clear indications that Italy cannot "expel its way out" of the jihadist threat for long.

The second weakness of the current approach is that its hard-nosed, repressive tactics have not been accompanied by an equally robust preventive approach. Unlike most European countries, Italy has not developed any counter-radicalization or de-radicalization strategies. Counter-terrorism officials have long expressed the need to introduce this kind of approach in Italy, but practical efforts lack any kind of strategy or legal foundation. As such, Italy does not do any kind of substantive preventive work.

Instead, it has taken isolated initiatives in prisons and school systems. For example, prison authorities (DAP) attempted to establish programs with select imams in the penitentiary system. Though, these initiatives suffer various setbacks and only a few are implemented in specific prisons. Italian authorities also introduced programs, albeit timidly, aimed at preventing radicalization in select schools systems in specific municipalities

across the country. These municipalities are located in the country's north including Torino, Milano, and Reggio Emilia. Though, efforts have been one-off and isolated and activities have not exclusively focused radicalization but more broadly integration, critical thinking, and inter-religious dialogue.

On a couple of occasions, Italian courts, at the request of prosecutors and law enforcement agencies, included de-radicalization and rehabilitation provisions in convictions of Italian citizens accused of terrorism-related charges. In 2017, for example, a court in Bari ordered an Italian convert undergo a rehabilitation program upon release. The program generally consisted of interactions with academics to discuss the secular nature of the Italian state and relationship between religion and politics. However, critics of this method highlighted a lack of ideological focus in the program, especially if ideology played a role in his radicalization. Moreover, such court orders are largely left to the "inventiveness" of individual magistrates and prosecutors. No clear legislation or guidelines exist to support them.

In January 2016, there was an attempt to introduce the country's first countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy. Two prominent members of Parliament, Andrea Manciulli and Stefano Dambruoso, introduced a comprehensive bill that sought to cover the many areas of CVE. Simultaneously, the Office of the Prime Minister convened an ad hoc committee of academics and experts tasked with studying radicalization trends in the country and identifying CVE measures that could be implemented, which complemented the Manciulli/Dambruoso bill.

The bill, supported by a substantial budget, introduced eleven articles for radicalization prevention that targeted key areas like prisons, schools and the Internet[1]. In line with most CVE strategies throughout Europe, it included actors from government and civil society. The bill created both a structure to implement the strategy and a parliamentary committee to

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[1] http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg17/lavori/stampati/pdf/17PDL0050830.pdf

oversee it. A body called the National Center on Radicalization (CRAD), headquartered at the Department of Civil Liberties and Immigration in the Ministry of Interior, would have been tasked with coordinating national level activities with Regional Coordination Centers (CCR) located in each of Italy's twenty regions.

In the summer of 2017, the bill was approved by the Lower House of Parliament with a relatively large and bi-partisan majority. Yet in December 2017, before the Senate had an opportunity to vote on it, Parliament was dissolved, which ended the bill's life and any chance of introducing a CVE strategy in Italy.

The March 2018 elections, created a political earthquake in Italy with unprecedented changes occurring, especially with the distribution of seats among parties. At the time of writing this paper, no coalition government has yet formed and political uncertainty reigns. It is difficult to foresee whether a new CVE bill will be introduced and, if so, by what political coalition and when.

It appears clear that the issue radicalization prevention is not on the radar for the vast majority of policymakers in Italy. The issue of terrorism and radicalization is often debated in the media and policy circles – although, since Italy has not suffered attacks or seen the same levels of mobilization as other European countries, arguably with less intensity than elsewhere. Italy lacks debate on long-term solutions for the issue, and on the importance of a preventive approach. Generally, many are pleased with the current repression-based strategy and are uninterested in or unaware of alternative approaches.

Though, the majority of Italian counter-terrorism officials hold completely different feelings about the issue. High-ranking officials at the National Police, the Carabinieri, and AISI have repeatedly voiced, in both private and public, their disappointment with Parliament's failure to pass the Manciulli/Dambruoso bill. They are disappointed with Parliament's inability to provide both a normative structure and the necessary resources to include a preventive element in the country's overall counter-terrorism strategy.

The need to complement the current approach with CVE activities is felt by most officials, who fully understand that the current approach leaves several "blind spots" and is likely to fall increasingly short in the coming years. They are keenly aware that the number of radicalized Italian citizens and minors – both categories that cannot be expelled – is on the rise. They understand that support from "untraditional" partners – be the other governmental actors like the school system or the national health system or civil society – would allow them to conduct a variety of activities, from better detecting cases of individuals in the early stages of radicalization to attempting to de-radicalize specific individuals. At this stage, most of these activities are not being implemented, and if they are, it is on a very small scale.

There is an apparent disconnect between the needs of the Italian counter-terrorism community and the policymaking community on this issue. This disconnect derives from political instability within both the executive and legislative bodies, which prevents policy makers from focusing on issues not perceived as paramount urgency or politically advantageous. And given the lack of a large radicalization problem or significant terrorist attacks, radicalization prevention is not perceived by a sizeable percentage of the public as an urgent matter requiring intervention. In substance, the lack of emergency makes both the general public and policymakers complacent and uninterested in developing a long-term strategy for what the country's counter-terrorism community identifies as a pressing need for the near future.

2. Fighting the "Threat from Within": France and Its Counter-Radicalization Strategy

Anina Schwarzenbach

France has been significantly affected by domestic extremism in the past years, and consequently, has implemented various measures to counter what some call the "threat from within"[1]. Discussions on the role of Islam in French society, relationship between the Muslim minority and French government, and hegemony of the France's secular tradition shape its approach to countering extremism and radicalization[2]. According to recent figures, around 6 million Muslims live in France mainly originating from countries in North Africa. While other countries in Europe also have a large share of Muslim populations, they originate from other countries. For example, in Germany, Muslims are predominantly from Turkey[3]. Another factor distinguishing France from other Europe countries includes its strict impartiality and neutrality to religion, which commonly referred to as French "laïcité"[4].

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[1] See, for example, P. Gurski, *The Threat from Within: recognizing Al Qaeda-inspired radicalization and terrorism in the West*, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

[2] H. Hénin, *"Prévenir pour proteger": analyse et mise en persepective du programme français de lutte contre le terrorisme et la radicalization*, 2018.

[3] D. Halm and M. Sauer, "Muslime in Europa: Integriert, aber nicht akzeptiert?", *Religionsmonitor*, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017.

[4] F. Kandil, "Der Islam in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", in F.-X. Kaufmann and B. Schäfers (Eds.), "Religion, Kirche und Gesellschaft in Deutschland", *Gegenwartskunde*, vol. 5, 1988, pp. 89-106; D. Almeida, *Laizität im Konflikt: Religion und Politik in Frankreich*, Wiesbaden, Springer-Verlag, 2016.

This chapter discusses French efforts to counter extremism and radicalization. It focuses on ongoing social, political, and legal debates in France, and highlights policies and programs to prevent radicalization among individuals deemed "at risk," to deter disaffected individuals from committing terrorist acts, and to reintegrate already "radicalized" individuals into society.

Based on the idea that "[t]he power of terrorism is through political legitimacy, winning acceptance in the eyes of a significant population and discrediting the government's legitimacy"[5], the counter-radicalization strategy implemented in France is analyzed through the "legitimacy lens". According to this line of thought, in order to be successful in countering domestic radicalization and extremism, government measures need to gain legitimacy in the eyes of citizen. Max Weber (1956) points to the constituent elements of a "legitimate rule" ("legitime Herrschaft")[6]. Citizens evaluate government actions based off of their neutral and transparent decision-making as well as their fair and respectful treatment. Neutrality, transparency, respectfulness, and fairness enhance a citizen's trust in government, which is a key element for state legitimacy. Conversely, citizens who question the trustworthiness of government and its actions are likely to question a state's legitimacy.

In more recent times, the concept of "legitimacy" gained popularity in research on counter-terrorism and violent extremism[7]. The research emphasizes that for governments to succeed in their fight against the threat from within, they need to implement measures that meet Weber's (1956) standards of a "legitimate rule". Those are, for instance, measures that address macro-level grievances assessed to have a role in prevention

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[5] M. Crenshaw, *Terrorism, Legitimacy, and Power: The Consequences of Political Violence*, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press Middletown, 1983, p. 25.

[6] M. Weber, *Staatssoziologie*, edited by Johannes Winckelmann, Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1956.

[7] See, for example, M. Crenshaw, "Theories of Terrorism: Instrumental and Organizational Approaches", *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1987, pp. 13-31.

of terrorism and radicalization such as structural and cultural inequalities and the marginalization of individuals or groups. Biased, unintelligible, unfair and disrespectful counter-terrorism policies bare the threat to induce radicalization and animate political violence[8]. If governments fail to implement a legitimate strategy, there is potential for individuals, or groups, to become "at risk" to fall for "more radical or extremist positions involving a dichotomous world view" over "mainstream or status quo-oriented positions" and question the existing political order[9].

After a brief historical review of violent extremism in France, the chapter focuses on two distinct dimensions: socio-legal policy discussions and program implementation. The report will discuss recent policy decisions and programs concerned with extremism and radicalization, which are publicly available on the websites of Parliament and the Ministry of Interior. The author selected documents for this study based on two criteria. First, they discuss policies and government initiatives after France implemented its first National Action Plan against terrorism in 2014. Second, they focus on Islamist radicalization. The report uses case studies from counter-violent extremism programs and information on state-based programs cited in official sources[10]. This report will conclude with some final

[8] G. LaFree and G. Ackerman, "The Empirical Study of Terrorism: Social and Legal Research", *Annual Review of Law and Social Sciences*, vol. 5, 2009, pp. 347-374; R. Coolsaet, *All Radicalization Is Local. The Genesis and Drawbacks of an Elusive Concept*, Egmont Paper no. 84, Egmont, Royal Institute for International Relations, 2016.

[9] A.P. Schmid, *Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature review*, Report 97, The Hague, Netherlands, International Centre for Counter-terrorism Research, 2013, p. 18.

[10] See, for example, E. Benbassa and C. Troendlé, Report no. 633 of 12 July 2017 of the French Sénat on "Désendoctrinement, désembrigadement et réinsertion des djihadistes en France et en Europe", 2017a, http://www.senat.fr/; Idem, Report no. 438 of 22 February 2017b of the French Sénat on "Désendoctrinement, désembrigadement et réinsertion des djihadistes en France et en Europe", http://www.senat.fr/; and Comité Interministériel de Prévention

remarks on whether counter-radicalization strategies and programs in France comply with the standards of legitimate state rule: neutrality, transparency, respectfulness, and fairness.

A brief historical review of violent Islamist extremism

France's first major experiences with international religious extremism movements date back to the 1980s in response to the French involvement in Lebanon civil war. In the 1990s, individuals linked to the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) executed a series of terrorist attacks on French soil, which brought the fight against religious extremism to the forefront of the political agenda. GIA operations forced the French government to address the issue at the national level and started France's struggle to counter Islamist extremism[11].

Over the past 20 years, France faced repeated terrorist attacks linked to international jihadist movements including the bloody attacks carried out by Mohammed Merah in 2012. Merah, of Franco-Algerian origin, killed three children and a teacher in a Jewish school in Toulouse. Days earlier, Merah killed three French soldiers and wounded another.

The 2015 terrorist attacks, linked to the Islamic State, left a deep imprint on French society and made the fight against radicalization a core challenge of the French government. On January 7, 2015, assailants attacked the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo killing 12 reporters. Days later, a gunman shot five people dead at a kosher supermarket in Paris. In November 2015, Islamic State linked terrorists attacked France

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de la Délinquance et de la Radicalisation – SG-CIPDR (2018). Ministère de l'Intérieur. Accessed 2 May 2018, https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/SG-CIPDR

[11] M.-A. Adraoui, *Radical Milieus and Salafist Movements in France: Ideologies, Practices, Relationships with Society and Political Visions*, Working paper no. 13, European University Institute, 2014; P. Conesa, *Quelle politique de contre-radicalisation en France?*, Report, Fondation d'aide aux victimes du terrorisme, 2014.

again with by far the deadliest attacks on French soil since 1945. Gunmen in various locations in Paris and St. Denis attacked cafés, restaurants, the national stadium as well as the well-renown concert hall "Bataclan." The attack caused the death of 130 people and wounded 350[12].

Since then, attacks associated to the Islamic State continued, which keeps French society in a prolonged state of emergency[13]. A 2016 attack in Nice on France's national day was among the deadliest attack: a truck drove into a crowed killing more than eighty people and wounding several others. Several of the terrorist attacks carried out on French soil occurred by terrorist fighters that previously traveled to conflict zones in Syria[14]. Indeed, France experienced the largest exodus of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq in Europe. In 2013, more than 700 French citizens[15], and by 2016, almost 2,000 joined the jihadi movement[16].

Currently, French intelligence monitors around 11,000 persons with suspected ties to radical Islamism[17] (Ministère de l'Intérieur 2018). France has been sentencing a high number of individuals for acts linked to terrorism, which has created an increased prison population. Thus, radicalization in French prisons is a major issue, particularly because it can hardly be prevented by formalized Muslim chaplaincies[18].

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[12] G. Kepel, *Terreur dans l'Hexagone. Genèse du djihad français*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 2015.

[13] F. Ragazzi, *L'évolution de la politique anti-terroriste en France depuis les attentats de 2015: anticipation et mise au pas du corps social*, SciencesPo, April 2017.

[14] G. Kepel (2015).

[15] R. Sèze, *La fabrication d'une menace. Ou comment l'Etat affronte la radicalisation*, Paris, Seuil, forthcoming October 2018

[16] Ministère de l'Intérieur, "Plan d'action contre la radicalisation et le terrorisme", 2016.

[17] Ministère de l'Intérieur, "Prévenir Pour Protéger. Plan national de prévention de la radicalisation", 2018.

[18] See, for example, F. Khosrokhavar, "The constrained role of the Muslim chaplain in French prisons", *International Journal of Politics Culture and Society*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2015, pp. 67-82.

A vivid debate is currently ongoing surrounding the root causes of violent extremism, and how religious extremist ideology found fertile soil in the "Republique française." Prominent scholars have engaged in the debate taking, at times, contrasting positions[19]. Whilst Gilles Kepel points to cognitive radicalization within Islam as a major root cause of Islamist extremism[20], others, e.g. Olivier Roy, believes that structural inequalities promote radical, and thus also Islamist, ideologies[21]. Some, e.g., François Burgat, think Islamist radicalization is mainly a consequence of identity conflicts and is highly intertwined with the history of French colonialism[22]. For others, e.g. Fethi Benslama, psychological factors are main triggers to Islamist radicalism[23].

Counter-radicalization policy discourses and developments

Radicalization in the public agenda and the effects of the 2015 attacks

The deadly 2015 attacks mark a turnaround in France's counter-radicalization strategy. Islamist radicalization suddenly became more than a mere security threat but also a social problem. The former French President François Hollande and Prime Minister Manuel Valls saw fundamental institutional values of the "Republique française" challenged and spoke of an attack against the French "laïcité," the "elucidation", the "democracy" and "what makes us who we are"[24].

[19] See J. Klausen, "Terror in the Terroir: The Roots of France's Jihadist Problem", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2017, vol. 96, no. 5, pp. 166-172.

[20] G. Kepel (2015).

[21] O. Roy, "EuroIslam: the jihad within?", *The National Interest*, vol. 71, 2003, pp. 63-73.

[22] F. Burgat, *Comprendre l'islam politique: une trajectoire de recherche sur l'altérité islamiste, 1973-2016*, Paris, La Découverte, 2016.

[23] F. Benslama, *La psychanalyse à l'épreuve de l'Islam*, Paris, Flammarion, 2012.

[24] R. Sèze (2018).

In the aftermath of the attacks, the French government implemented a variety of pre-emptive and reactive measures to counter Islamist extremism and radicalization[25].

At first, radicalization was mainly seen as linked to delinquency of "vulnerable" young people living in the French working-class districts. It became assumed that individuals living at the margins of society are more inclined to break with the French institutional values and norms. In line with France's centralized tradition, the French government implemented a top-down management system, supervised by the Ministry of Interior, to counter-terrorism and radicalization. This ensemble of initiatives attempted to restore national unity and revivify fundamental French values. Nowadays, the fight against domestic terrorism ranks high on France's political agenda[26].

Policy actions and institutional changes to confront the threat of radicalization

After the 2015 terrorist attacks, the French government responded by targeting the population at "risk" to fall for extremist ideologies. It launched the campaign "stop-djhadisme", started an operation to instill values of the French "République" in schools, and improved its efforts to strengthen the "Islam of France". The government also adopted new legal measures and introduced reforms in prisons[27].

France's first attempt to confront violent Islamist extremism started in the beginning of 2015 with the implementation of the "Stop Jihadism" website ("stop-djihadisme") under the authority of the Information Service of the Government (Service d'information du gouvernement - SIG). The online platform includes resources and recommendations that assist citizens identify and report terrorist suspects, and trains them on how

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[25] See D. Hellmuth, "Countering Jihadi Terrorists and Radicals the French Way", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 38, no. 12, 2015, pp. 979-997.

[26] F. Ragazzi (2017); R. Sèze (2018).

[27] D. Hellmuth (2015); R. Sèze (2018).

to behave in the event of an attack[28].

The school campaign ("Grande Mobilization") directed by the Ministry of Education and the Interministerial Comitée of equality and citizenship (Comité Interministériel Égalité et Citoyenneté – CIEC) intends to address the "roots of terrorism" and includes measures which aim to reduce inequalities and promote secular, republican values[29].

For a long time, the French government viewed terrorism solely as a crime punishable by law. Consequently, France hosts a large number of Muslim prisoners which, according to some experts[30], facilitates radicalization "behind bars"[31]. Preventing prison radicalization requires a series of measures to detect and manage prisoners. In an attempt to contain the spread of Islamist radicalization among prison inmates, the French government tried isolating inmates deemed radical from the rest of the prison population. Concerns arose, however, if the practice would deepen radicalization among extremists. In France, all judicial, prosecution, and sentences for terrorists occur in Paris. As a result, knowledge and expertise for terrorist affairs centralize in Paris, which makes judges and prosecutors specialized in these affairs[32].

National Action Plan to counter-radicalization and its updates

In 2014, the French government drafted the first National Action Plan to fight radicalization and terrorism. The plan includes a wide variety of measures covering areas such as detection, prevention, and de-radicalization. The plan also led to the implementation of a national center for assistance and prevention, which includes a telephone alert hotline and an Internet

[28] Stop-Djihadisme.gouv.fr. Agir contre la menace terroriste (2018).

[29] R. Sèze (2018).

[30] See, for example, J.-L. Marrett, *Prison De-Radicalization and Disengagement: The French Case*, France, Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, 2009.

[31] D. Hellmuth (2015).

[32] E. Benbassa and C. Troendlé (2017b).

website for individuals, parents, and relatives seeking help or to alert authorities. Since 2014, the government updated the plan several times intending to redress issue raised by practitioners[33].

The latest update February 23, 2018 involved 20 ministerial departments. The plan contains 60 measures and aims at: (1) sensitizing citizens to the issue of radicalization, (2) strengthening cooperation between detection and prevention, (3) understanding and preventing the evolution of radicalization, (4) professionalizing local actors and (5) evaluating measures and redesigning the disengagement[34].

Critics claim the plan is too ambitious and includes measures that are difficult to put into practice. Experts believe it also fails to address how measures implemented will be evaluated. The plan also does not consider the role of religion in countering extremism. French President Emmanuel Macron has, however, announced measures to reorganize and redesign "French Islam" and thereby, intends to address the relationship between religion and radicalization[35].

Implementations of counter-radicalization strategies on the ground

National level

At the national level, the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention of Delinquency and Radicalization (Comité Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance et de la Radicalisation - SG-CIPDR) directs the French counter-radicalization strategy. As part of its mandate, the SG-CIPDR established good practices and implemented communication and information campaigns. The center also delivers training

[33] See Ministère de l'Intérieur (2016), (2018).

[34] Ministère de l'Interieur (2018).

[35] N. Hénin (2018); Europe1 le JDD, "Macron veut 'poser les jalons de toute l'organisation de l'islam de France'", 12 February 2018.

sessions to professionals, including association leaders and public servants from various administrative units on the issue of radicalization and offers assistance to those that monitor "affected" young people and their relatives. Finally, the SG-CIPDR coordinates with partner associations in its network to prevent delinquency and radicalization[36].

The French counter-radicalization strategy has focuses on the implementation of "de-radicalization centers", or "Centres for Prevention, Integration and Citizenship (CIPC)", which aim to reintegrate youth convicted of terrorist offenses back into French society. Yet, many see the centers as a desperate effort to respond to the waves of terrorist attacks on French soil. In September 2016, the first CIPC opened its doors in Pontourny (Indre-et-Loire) in central France. Months later, in February 2017, the center stopped hosting inmates and was declared a failure by a parliamentary fact-finding commission leading investigations on French's counter-radicalization strategy[37].

In 2015, following an initiative by the French government, the "Instance de dialogue avec l'Islam de France" was established, which is a formal dialogue between representatives of the French government and Muslim communities. This intercultural dialogue is important because it is among the few government supported religious initiatives that allows formalized discussions between government and religious actors on counter-radicalization[38].

Regional and local level

Following the example of other European countries, such as Germany and the United Kingdom, the French government began funding "softer" counter-radicalization measures at local

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[36] See Comité Interministériel de Prévention de la Délinquance et de la Radicalisation – SG-CIPDR, 2018.

[37] E. Benbassa and C. Troendlé (2017b).

[38] Instance de dialogue avec l'Islam de France, *Compte-rendu de la deuxième réunion de l'Instance de dialogue avec l'Islam de France*, Ministère del l'Intérieur, Gouv.fr, 21 March 2016.

levels. These include vocational training, family counseling, psychological consults, civic education in schools, and efforts to promote dialogue within Muslim communities in France[39].

Most current programs in France are not specifically designed to countering Islamist radicalization. For the most part, the French programs are apolitical and lay, which is in line with the French Republican model that strictly confines religion to the private sphere[40].

For example, the government finances the Center of Action and Prevention against the Radicalization of Individuals (CAPRI), a lay and apolitical association. The center advises families and social workers and proposes counter narratives to radical arguments[41].

Conclusion

France's counter-radicalization strategy is shaped by the peculiarity of its centralized political system as well as past experiences with terrorist violence and the separation of state and religion. For some[42], the occurrence of Islamist radicalization is strongly intertwined with the country's colonialist past. In an effort to counter the "interior enemy"[43], France has implemented a wide variety of measures and securitized its social politics[44]. However, little knowledge on the legitimacy and effectiveness of these initiatives exists.

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[39] R. Sèze (2018).

[40] E. Benbassa and C. Troendlé (2017a).

[41] See Centre d'Action et de Prévention Contre la Radicalisation des Individus – CAPRI, 2017.

[42] See, for example, F. Burgat (2016).

[43] R. Sèze (2018).

[44] N. Hénin (2018).

Effectiveness of French strategy to counter-radicalization

Several recently issued national and regional reports from fact-finding commissions in charge of planning and developing strategies reviewed public policies in place to counter radicalization in France. The reports unanimously concluded that despite the long list of measures funded and implemented on the ground in the past years, France lacks a network of competent associations to deal specifically with Islamist radicalization[45]. The reports urge the French government to expand the numbers of civil society structures that offer competent assistance to radicalized individuals[46].

Legitimacy of French strategy to counter-radicalization

The government's overall strategy to counter-radicalization is accurately documented in the 2014 French National Action Plan. Compared to other countries, such as Germany, the French government has so far been more reluctant to publicize detailed information on measures and programs implemented to address radicalization. In line with the French central-state approach, a wide-range of government measures to counter-radicalization fall under the SG-CIPDR, which is attached to the Ministry of Interior and law enforcement institutions. The fact that so much power is concentrated in the hands of few raises concerns about transparency and fairness of decision-making in counter-radicalization.

The French government is keen on respecting core values of religious neutrality and state secularism within the concept of "laïcité" when designing counter-radicalization measures. As a result, French programs to counter-radicalization center on

[45] É. Pellon, *Politiques publiques de prévention de la radicalisation*, Report, Institut d'aménagement et d'urbanisme (IAU île-de-France), 2016; J.-M. Bockel and L. Carvounas "Collectivités territoriales et la prévention de la radicalisation", Report no. 483, Sénat, 2017.

[46] See, J.-M. Bockel and L. Cavournas (2017).

enhancing the French understanding of citizenship and the values related to it. Unlike other countries in Europe, the French government generally designs its initiatives without specific reference to religion. Consequently, with few exceptions, France has omitted any discussion on the role of religion in the field of preventing radicalization[47]. This approach avoids disproportionally targeting religious minorities and is fair and respectful towards the Muslim community favoring integration of Muslim minorities into French society[48].

The above discussion has pointed out some "legitimacy pitfalls" of the French strategy to counter-radicalization. It is still to be seen whether the newest version of the National Action Plan to prevent radicalization has the ability to improve deficiencies of previous plans and improve the legitimacy and effectiveness of the French strategy to counter-radicalization.

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[47] See also D. Almeida (2016); Ministère de l'Intérieur (2018).

[48] See also G. Kepel (2015).

3. Spain's Shifting Approach to Jihadism Post-3/11

Fernando Reinares, Carola García-Calvo

Introduction

The presence and activity of jihadist actors in Spain can be traced back to a decade before the 2004 Madrid train bombings, or 3/11 attacks. In 1994, an important cell belonging to al-Qaeda was established in the country, its members residing mainly though not exclusively in and around that capital city. In 1996, the Algerian Islamic Armed Group (GIA), then an al-Qaeda affiliated organization, founded another cell in the province of Valencia. This latter GIA cell was dismantled on 1997 as a result of a police operation, but that former al-Qaeda cell in Spain was not dismantled until November 2001, as evidence emerged about its connections with the al-Qaeda cell in Hamburg, Germany, whose members were involved in the planning and execution of the 9/11 attacks on United States soil. It was out of the remnants of the dismantled al-Qaeda cell in Spain that the network behind the 2004 Madrid train bombings formed, alongside a component which was introduced by the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) and the late addition of a gang of ordinary criminals turned into jihadists. This 3/11 network was connected to al-Qaeda's external operations command[1].

[1] On the origins and evolution of jihadism and jihadist terrorism in Spain in the decade between 1994 and 2004, see chapter 1 in F. Reinares, *Al-Qaeda's Revenge. The 2004 Madrid Train Bombings*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2017.

In the nine years preceding the Madrid train bombings, that is between 1995, when a jihadist was for the first time arrested in Spain, and 2003, slightly over one hundred individuals were detained in the country for offences related to terrorist activities inspired by a bellicose version of Salafism. This means an average of twelve arrests per year. Over a similar period, but after the 3/11 attacks, that is from 2004 to 2012, the number of arrests exceeded 470. Thus, the annual average of detentions climbed to fifty-two, more than four times higher than during the previous nine years. In the nine years before the Madrid train bombings and throughout the nine years following the attacks, Spain enforced essentially the same antiterrorist legislation, as we shall again remark later on in this text. Therefore, even if counter-terrorism efforts understandably intensified following 3/11, figures on detentions should be considered a reliable indicator of the extent to which jihadism and the jihadist terrorist threat persisted in Spain beyond the Madrid train bombings.

In the nine years following 3/11, 90 per cent of all jihadists convicted in Spain were still foreigners, mainly from Morocco, Pakistan and Algeria[2]. Seven out of every 10 resided in or around the metropolitan areas of Madrid and Barcelona. A vast majority were involved as part of cells integrated in or linked to organizations such as al-Qaeda and its then existing Iraqi branch, or to the GICM, the Algerian-based Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which had replaced the GIA, and Therik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)[3]. Many of those individuals radicalized at least in part inside Spain, though outside the country as well[4]. Their radicalization took typically place in top-down or to

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[2] F. Reinares and C. García-Calvo, *Los yihadistas en España: perfil sociodemográfico de condenados por actividades terroristas o muertos en acto de terrorismo suicida entre 1996 y 2012*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, DT 11/2013, 26 June 2013.

[3] C. García-Calvo and F. Reinares, *Pautas de implicación entre condenados por actividades relacionadas con el terrorismo yihadista o muertos en acto de terrorismo suicida en España (1996-2013)*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, DT 15/2014, 17 November 2014.

[4] C. García-Calvo and F. Reinares, *Procesos de radicalización violenta y terrorismo*

a lesser extent in horizontal processes, which in a majority of cases started between the mid-teens and the late twenties. Private homes, business shops or worship places were the main radicalization settings. Prisons also played a role, as did the immediate influence of charismatic or religious figures and previously existing kinship, friendship, or neighborhood ties[5].

As from 2013, already in the context of the worldwide mobilization prompted by jihadist insurgencies in Syria and Iraq, jihadism in Spain transformed and since then can no longer be so overwhelmingly associated with foreigners. As data on jihadists arrested (233) or dead (8) in the country between 2013 and 2017 shows, four out of every 10 of these individuals were Spanish nationals and three out of every 10 were born in Spain[6]. Though most of the rest had Morocco as country of nationality and birth, these findings, coupled with a predominance of second generation individuals, born or raised in Spain but having immigrant parents, prove the rise of homegrown jihadism in the country[7]. This homegrown dimension of the phenomenon has its main focus among Moroccan descendants residing in the North African cities of Ceuta and Melilla, both under Spain's sovereignty[8]. However, Catalonia became the leading jihadists scenario overall in Spain, with the province of Barcelona, one of the four which make up that autonomous region northeast of the country, becoming a particularly salient area of jihadist activity in the whole country[9].

Yet, there are other facets of jihadism in Spain which denote continuity with respect to the previous periods. For example,

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yihadista en España: ¿cuándo? ¿dónde? ¿cómo?, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, DT 16/2013, 18 November 2013.

[5] Ibid.

[6] F. Reinares and C. García-Calvo, *Marroquíes y españoles entre los yihadistas en España*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, ARI 61/2018, 27 April 2018.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] F. Reinares and C. García-Calvo, *Actividad yihadista en España, 2013-2017: de la Operación Cesto en Ceuta a los atentados en Cataluña*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, DT 13/2017, 14 November 2017.

95 per cent of all jihadists arrested or dead in the country between 2013 and 2017 were, like before, involved in the company of others, though now embedded into newly or reconstituted cells, groups and networks mainly connected with organizations such as then known as Al Nusra Front, based in Syria, but above all with the former Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda, which morphed throughout 2013 and 2014 into the so-called Islamic State (IS)[10]. Likewise, a large majority of those individuals radicalized jointly with other people, following a path during which face-to-face interaction with a radicalizing agent and preexisting affective bonds with relevant others who were already radicalized became key factors. Mixed radicalization environments, that is at the same time offline and online, or basically offline radicalization environments prevailed[11]. Ripoll cell members, who executed the August 2017 vehicle ramming attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils, even if they had far more ambitious plans, reflected these features of jihadism in Spain[12].

In addition to the above-mentioned figure on jihadists arrested or dead in Spain between 2013 and 2017, that is in the context of the most recent international wave of jihadist mobilization, the country produced, up to November of the latter year, some 223 foreign terrorist fighters (FTF)[13]. It is also estimated that there are no less than 1,000 radicalized Muslims living inside Spain's national boundaries[14]. Meanwhile, the

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[10] Ibid.

[11] F. Reinares, C. García-Calvo, and Á. Vicente, "Differential Association Explaining Jihadi Radicalization in Spain: A Quantitative Study", *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 10, no. 6, 2017, pp. 29-34.

[12] F. Reinares and C. García-Calvo, "'Spaniards, You Are Going to Suffer:' The Inside Story of the August 2017 Attacks in Barcelona and Cambrils", *CTC Sentinel*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1-11.

[13] F. Reinares and C. García-Calvo (2017).

[14] Figure provided by the European Union Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Gilles De Kerkove, in the course of an interview given to a Spanish newspaper shortly after the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks. See P.R. Suances, "El coordinador antiterrorista de la UE: Lo de Barcelona volverá a pasar, hay 50.000 radicales en Europa", *El Mundo*, 31 August 2018,

propaganda disseminated by the main jihadist organizations or through relevant jihadist channels, has continued to persistently make specific aggressive references to Spain. Among the most frequent mentions, which in terms of threat analysis arguably have a cumulative effect, are those alluding to Al-Andalus as a Muslim land under infidel occupation, Ceuta and Melilla or the Madrid train bombings, in addition to explicit threats to the country and Spaniards in general[15]. How is it, then, that Spain dealt with this evolving terrorist threat which emanates from violent Salafism, and what efforts have been made to prevent jihadist radicalization leading to involvement in terrorism?

Countering jihadist terrorism following the 3/11 attacks

At the time of the 2004 Madrid train bombings Spain was equipped with well-developed internal security structures that were highly efficient in the fight against the terrorism of *Euskadi ta Askatasuna* (ETA, Basque Honeland and Freedom), the armed outfit of Basque nationalism. Actually, ETA was forced to give up violence in 2011, following a terrorist campaign that lasted over forty years[16]. But Spain's internal security structures were not as well adequate to dealing with a different kind of terrorism, the kind related to the so-called global jihad movement which developed following the formation of al-Qaeda in 1988. The reason for such inadequacy is to be found not so much in this global jihad phenomenon being unknown to the few police experts dealing with this matter, but rather in the fact that only these very few officials had been dedicated to this task, indeed

[15] M.R. Torres-Soriano, "Jihadist Propaganda as a Threat Indicator: The Case of Spain", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, published online 27 October 2017, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2017.1374255; and M.R. Torres, *Al Andalus 2.0.*, Granada, GESI, 2014, pp. 18-55.

[16] F. Reinares, *Patriotas de la Muerte. Por qué han militando en ETA y cuándo abandonan*, sexta edición, Madrid, Taurus, 2011; F. Domínguez, *Las claves de la derrota de ETA*, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Centro Memorial de las Víctimas del Terrorismo, 2017.

with very limited resources to carry out their work, basically inside the central intelligence unit of the Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP, National Police)[17]. CNP and the Guardia Civil (GC, Civil Guard) are the two law enforcement agencies in Spain having nationwide counter-terrorism competences.

Things likely would have been different if the problem of jihadist terrorism had been given the importance and resources it deserved since at least the mid-1990s, especially after the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States and the 16 May 2003 attacks in Casablanca, Morocco, when the Casa de España (House of Spain) restaurant and social club became one of the targets. But the Spanish executive, then formed by the liberal conservative Partido Popular (PP, Popular Party), did not do so. Its leader, former President of the Government José María Aznar, acknowledged shortly after leaving office in March 2004 that "the very successes achieved in the struggle against ETA in recent years may have led us to lower our guard against the fundamentalist threat"[18]. Indeed, the Madrid train bombings made it clear that the fight against jihadist terrorism had not received due priority from the government of Spain and that, as a consequence, the police information and intelligence services were not able to cope with the existing challenge. Intelligence deficiencies facing the threat jihadist terrorism prior to the 3/11 attacks were largely the result of policy underestimations.

In spite of the previous knowledge that several specialized members of the CNP and GC, as well as of the Centro Nacional de Inteligencia (CNI, National Intelligence Center), had, for instance, of a substantial portion of those who belonged to the Madrid bombing network, even to the point where the authorities were keeping tabs on several of these individuals, the terrorists showed a remarkable ability – surely derived from the skills

[17] F. Reinares, "Tras el 11 de marzo: estructuras de seguridad interior y prevención del terrorismo global en España", in C.T. Powell and F. Reinares (Eds.), *Las democracias occidentales frente al terrorismo global*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2008, pp. 103-139.

[18] J.M. Aznar, *Ocho años de Gobierno. Una visión personal de España*, Barcelona, Planeta, 2004.

that some of them had acquired in al-Qaeda's Afghanistan training camps prior to 9/11 – to conceal their true intentions and deceit law enforcement and intelligence officials. It also became clear that there were serious problems of coordination, among security agencies but also inside each one of the police bodies themselves. Adequate coordination between the corresponding sections of the CNP and the GC that were dedicated to combating terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and the illegal trade in explosive substances likely would have enabled them to share information, to sound the alarm, and possibly even to thwart the preparations to perpetrate the 3/11 attacks in Madrid[19].

In April 2004, the new authorities that took charge of the Ministry of Interior, Spain's central institution for antiterrorist policy, within the new central government formed by the social-democratic Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers Party) as a result of the general elections which took place on 14 March 2004, three days after the Madrid train bombings, understood from the very beginning that jihadist terrorism posed a lasting threat to the Spain and quickly adopted decisions aimed at correcting observed counter-terrorism weaknesses[20]. A soon as May 2004, a wide-ranging counter-terrorism plan was adopted, centered on the threat from jihadist terrorism. Over the four-year legislature that began a few weeks after 3/11, about a thousand more CNP and GC agents were added to central units and local brigades now to be focused on jihadist terrorism. Based on the initial number of police agents dealing with international terrorism at the time of the Madrid bombings, the increase in personnel may be in the order of six-to tenfold, depending on the criteria used to calculate[21].

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[19] F. Reinares (2017).

[20] F. Reinares (2008), p. 107. But to do so, they were not able to refer back to the electoral program on which the PSOE had campaigned in the general elections, because it contained no specific proposals in this regard. Initially, decisions involving the changes that subsequently would be made to Spain's internal security structures were shaped by the security forces themselves. Ivi., 108.

[21] Ivi, pp. 110-115.

Likewise, two months after 3/11, and more than a quarter of a century since the Spanish democracy was faced with ETA terrorism, two other important institutional innovations were introduced in the country's internal security structures, in order to strengthen counter-terrorism coordination among national security forces and between them and the Intelligence service, in light of the serious deficiencies in this area that became clear on examination of events leading up to the Madrid train bombings. On the one hand, both CNP and GC were granted, for the first time since they exist in Spain as separate law enforcement agencies, joint and shared access to each other's different and specialized police databases, all of them equally relevant in connection to the fight against jihadist terrorism[22]. On the other hand, a Centro Nacional de Coordinación Antiterrorista (CNCA, National Center for Counter-terrorism Coordination) was established, within the Ministry of Interior stuructures, as an innovation inside Spain's long existing counter-terrorism arrangements[23].

International cooperation didn't help preventing 3/11. Yet, a number of red flags should have been raised earlier, since the individuals directly or indirectly involved in the plot were resident or nonresident foreigners, mainly Moroccans[24]. A good number of them were known to the security services in their countries of origin and several had even been previously arrested in countries such as France, Morocco, or Turkey[25]. Increasing and diversifying intergovernmental cooperation against jihadist terrorism thus became another main goal of Spain's internal security after the 3/11 attacks[26]. Though the first cooperation partners were Spain's immediate European neighbors, within the EU context, developments also led to increased cooperation with the United States. Further priorities for counter-terrorism

[22] Ivi, pp. 115-119.
[23] Ivi, p. 116.
[24] F. Reinares (2017), pp. 161-165.
[25] Ibid.
[26] F. Reinares (2008), pp. 125-130.

cooperation were the predominantly Muslim countries where al-Qaeda, its territorial extensions and associated entities were based, and from which could penetrate Spanish territory, mainly though not only the Maghreb. Morocco would as from then on receive Spain's top attention.

Efforts to enhance intelligence capabilities, foster counter-terrorism coordination, and advance international cooperation combined, after the 2004 Madrid train bombings, with a number of other initiatives adopted as from 2005 within Spain's internal security structures. Such additional initiatives included the elaboration and implementation of a Plan de Prevención y Protección Antiterrorista (Terrorism Prevention and Protection Plan) according to different threat levels, a Plan Nacional de Protección de Infraestructuras Críticas (National Plan for the Protection of Critical Infrastructures), and a Prevention and Reaction Plan to deal with possible terrorist incidents involving nuclear, radioactive, bacteriological, or chemical components[27]. Other developments in Spain have included, in the years following the 3/11 attacks, new interdepartmental measures in the domain of terrorism financing surveillance, and the application of a special disciplinary and monitoring regime, already used with respect to imprisoned members of other terrorist organizations such as ETA, to penitentiary inmates charged with, or already convicted for, jihadist terrorism offences[28].

But police and other counter-terrorism measures to fight the terrorism threat related with global jihadism are conditioned, in the rule of law context of a liberal democracy, by existing legislation. The Spanish antiterrorism legislation, crafted prior to 3/11 in response to ETA terrorism, was inadequate in the face of the new jihadist threat. Different individuals linked to jihadist cells and groups in Spain had been able to evade detention or conviction, which ultimately enabled some of them to involve themselves in the preparation and execution of the Madrid

[27] Ivi, pp. 120-124.

[28] Ibid.

attacks. Yet no significant modifications were introduced in the legislation, except for an increase in penalties for trafficking and illegal use of explosive substances, until December 2010. It was only then, almost seven years since 3/11, that the provisions on terrorism offences included in the Spanish Criminal Code were revised. New provisions took effect as from the beginning of 2011. Even so, the reform was done to comply on time with the amended EU Council Framework Decision on combating terrorism, approved on November 2008, which provided for the criminalization of certain individual and group activities related to violent radicalization, terrorist recruitment, and terrorist training[29].

Interestingly, in the fallout of the Madrid train bombings, leading authorities from both the law enforcement agencies belonging to the Ministry of Interior and the public prosecution office at the Audiencia Nacional (AN, National Court) rather informally agreed on a common anticipatory style concerning the decision to launch operations against known jihadist cells, groups or networks. This counter-terrorism style, to be understood as a result of the unexpected 3/11 attacks, was meant to disrupt undetected possible terrorist plots being developed at different stages in their planning and preparation. It was probably a decisive move which explains why Spain experienced no more acts of jihadist terrorism between the episode of suicide blast in Leganés on 3 April 2004 and the attacks of 17 and 18 August 2017 in Barcelona and Cambrils. It was also valued as a style of counter-terrorism having a deterrent effect at least over radicalized individuals with still a limited degree of terrorist involvement. But the approach is not without shortcomings. Anticipating counter-terrorism operations tend to provide less solid incriminating evidence than would otherwise be the case

[29] M. Ponte, "La reforma del código penal en relación a los delitos de Terrorismo", Granada, Grupo de Estudios Estratégicos (GESI), Análisis GESI 3/2010, 16 July 2010. A law against the financing of terrorism was also approved in 2010. See, "Ley 10/2010 de prevención del blanqueo de capitales y de la financiación del terrorismo", *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, 29 April 2010.

after longer investigations, thus affecting the type of criminal offence and prison term of eventual convictions.

Only two years after the Madrid train bombings, 16 per cent of Muslims living in Spain exhibited positive attitudes toward suicide terrorist attacks in alleged defense of Islam or toward al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden[30]. Yet, following the Madrid train bombings, radicalization was neither defined as a domestic social problem nor incorporated to the national political agenda beyond broad statements about intercultural dialogue, the socioeconomic integration of Muslims living in Spain or the fostering of official relations with the country's Islamic entities[31]. Actually, the government of Spain didn't go beyond reaching out to Muslims living in the country by mean of intensifying and improving exchanges with leaders of the Comisión Islámica de España (CIE, Islamic Commission of Spain). This was mainly done through the ministries of Interior and Justice. As part of this latter department, the Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia (Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation) was created, in October 2004, as broad multi-confessional framework to avoid political incorrectness but with the principal aim of becoming instrumental in the regulation of Islam inside Spain, particularly with respect to the myriad of small and unregistered worship places which existed at the time of 3/11[32].

All in all, the action that the government of Spain has taken against jihadist terrorism since 3/11 is both multifaceted and

[30] The Pew Global Attitudes Project, "The Great Divide: How Westeners and Muslims View Each Other. 13-Nation Pew Global Attitudes Survey", Washington, D.C., Pew Research Center, 22 June 2006, pp. 4, 25, 57 and 60.

[31] See, for instance, "Texto aprobado por el Pleno del Congreso de los Diputados, en su sesión del día 30 de junio de 2005, resultante del Dictamen de la Comisión de Investigación sobre el 11 de marzo de 2004 y de los votos particulares incorporados al mismo", *Boletín Oficial de las Cortes Generales*, *Congreso de los Diputados*, *VIII Legislatura*, no. 242, 14 July 2005, pp. 103-104.

[32] Still, dialogue between Muslim leaders and authorities was bounded by deficits of representation and internal cohesion among Islamic entities articulating the interest if Muslims living in Spain, often as a consequence of interferences from outside the country.

multi-departmental and goes beyond the measures adopted in the internal security sector, the legal framework and the relations with Muslim communities[33]. In the domain of external action, Spain has been, for instance, very active in international collaborative efforts to fight global terrorism advanced in the framework of, on the one hand, the European Union as well as the United Nations and, on the other hand, the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, but also contributing since the aftermath of 9/11 to military missions in conflict zones out of which jihadist organizations operate, such as Afghanistan, Mali or Iraq[34]. However, the most unique and distinctive feature of Spain's antiterrorism policy over the past two decades undoubtedly corresponds to the development of an advanced model to acknowledge the moral and political significance of the victims of terrorism and effectively protect their rights and the rights of their families in the case of dead victims, including material compensation[35].

However, even when other European and Western countries have been formalizing integrated, national strategies to deal with this issue, in Spain's case the need to deal with two simultaneous terrorist threats – ETA on one hand and terrorism related to al-Qaeda on the other – was an actual obstacle to developing

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[33]A survey carried out by Elcano Royal Institute in June 2006 showed that, on the whole, the adoption of these measures enjoyed a great deal of public support among Spaniards. F. Reinares, *Coinciden el Gobierno y los ciudadanos en qué medidas adoptar contra el terrorismo internacional?*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano, ARI 78/2006, 10 July 2006.

[34] On the fight againts terrorism as part of Spain's external action, see: http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Portal/en/PoliticaExteriorCooperacion/Terrorismo/Paginas/LuchaContraElTerrorismoDesdeLosForosInternacionales.aspx; also, J.A. Moliner, "La política de defensa de España ante la amenaza del terrorismo yihadista", *Revista de Estudios en Seguridad Internacional*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2015, pp. 1-16, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18847/1.1.1

[35] By the end of 2016, EU countries with specific legislation on victims of terrorism were limited to Spain, France and Italy. See M. Pagazaurtudúa (Ed.), *Libro blanco y negro del terrorismo en Europa*, Brussels and Madrid, ALDE, 2017, p. 56; also, see *Ley de Reconocimiento y Protección Integral a las Víctimas del Terrorismo* (*Act on The Recognition and Comprehensive Protection of Victims of Terrorism*).

a national and comprehensive strategy. It was not until 2010, with ETA in real decline, that the government of Spain, then still under the control of the PSOE, approved an Estrategia Integral contra el Terrorismo Internacional y la Radicalización (EICTIR, Integrated Strategy against International Terrorism and Radicalization), ratified in 2012, after ETA had declared a ceasefire, under a new central executive again under the leadership of PP. The issue of radicalization appears now as a distinctive one in the context of a much broader antiterrorist strategy, where subsequent developments were nevertheless announced. However, an explicit broad political consensus concerning the fight against jihadist terrorism did not exist in Spain until a decade following the Madrid train bombings. Known as the Pacto contra el Yihadismo (Pact against Jihadism) but officially called the Acuerdo para Afianzar la Defensa de las Libertades y en la Lucha contra el Terrorismo (Agreement to Strengthen the Defense of Freedoms and Fight against Terrorism), this agreement was signed on February 2015, over a decade after 3/11.

A shift towards the prevention of jihadist radicalization

As the most recent and unmatched wave of international jihadist mobilization started with the onset of the war in Syria in 2012, the basic features and dominant style of Spain's counter-terrorism remained, though a few adaptive developments became particularly relevant. At the same time, though, a shift in Spain's official approach to jihadism and jihadist terrorism was observed. Concerning the until then dominant counter-terrorism scheme, the CNCA created shortly after the attacks of 11 March 2004 in Madrid, it merged with the existing Centro de Inteligencia sobre Crimen Organizado (CICO, Center for Intelligence on Organized Crime), also within the ministry of Interior, to establish, in 2014, the new Centro de Inteligencia contra el Terrorismo y el Crimen Organizado (CITCO, Center for Intelligence against Terrorism and Organized Crime). The

merger decision was justified by the authorities as resulting from the reality of a nexus between terrorists and other type of criminals, as well as from functional considerations.

Provisions on terrorism offences in Spain's Criminal Code were likewise revised once again, in the light of new or vigorously reemerging facets of the jihadist terrorism phenomenon but also according to decisions adopted both in the framework of the United Nations and at the level of the European Union. This time, changes in antiterrorist legislation aimed at criminalizing previously unspecified illegal behaviors ranging from self-radicalization, with the purpose of joining or supporting terrorist organizations, to cybercrime if with terrorist ends, or traveling to a conflict zone as a foreign terrorist fighter (FTF). The legal reform was introduced on March 2015, three years after the Syria-related jihadist mobilization started, a mobilization which had a significant impact over Muslim communities in Spain[36]. In the field of international cooperation, counter-terrorism cooperation between the authorities of Spain and Morocco became more important than ever before. Between 2013 and 2017, law enforcement agencies from the two countries conducted up to eleven joint counter-terrorism operations against cross border jihadist cells and networks.

But, aside from new counter-terrorism developments in the areas of internal security, legal framework and international cooperation, Spain's approach to jihadism and the threat of jihadist terrorism exhibited, since 2012, a remarkable shift from an essentially counter-terrorism approach, within which all these developments took place, to one incorporating a prevention of violent radicalization scheme. This shift happened as corollaries of the already mentioned worldwide jihadist mobilization became evident inside Spain, even if the country's population as a whole or its Muslim population in particular were not affected as intensely as those of other nations within the same Western

[36] M. Ponte, "La reforma de los delitos de terrorismo mediante la Ley Orgánica 2/2015", Granada, Grupo de Estudios de Seguridad Internacional, Universidad de Granada, Análisis GESI 11/2015, 15 April 2015.

European context. This is likely due to the comparatively different composition of the Muslim population in Spain, within which first generation migrants largely prevail, as opposed to those of other nations within the same region where Muslim populations are predominantly made out of second generation cohorts, considered to be particularly vulnerable to current processes of radicalization and recruitment[37].

In this context, Spain's Government approved, on 30 January 2015, a Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (PEN-LCRV, National Strategic Plan to Fight Against Violent Radicalization)[38]. Nearly eleventh years had passed since the Madrid train bombings claimed by al-Qaeda and almost four after ETA announced the end of its decades-long campaign of domestic terrorism. The PEN-LCRV was however elaborated over a two-year period, during 2013 and 2014, under the coordination of Ministry of Interior's already mentioned CITCO, and in line with European Union guidelines[39]. As many as twelve ministries, plus the CNI, and entities such as the Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia (FPC, Pluralism and Coexistence Foundation, linked to the Ministry of Justice) or the Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP, Spain's Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) participated in the drafting of the PEN-LCRV. The PEN-LCRV was built upon the previously existing EICTIR.

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[37] F. Reinares, "Jihadist mobilization, undemocratic Salafism, and terrorist threat in the European Union", *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, Special Issue, 2017, pp. 70-76; A. Rabasa and C. Benard, *Eurojihad. Patterns of Islamist Radicalization and Terrorism in Europe*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2015, chapter 5; P.R. Neumann, *Radicalized. New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*, London, I.B. Tauris, 2016, chapters 4-5.

[38] Full text (in Spanish): http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/plan-estrategico-nacional-de-lucha-contra-la-radicalizacion-violenta/plan-estrategico-nacional

[39] The PEN-LCRV follows, in particular, the 2005 European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the European Strategy for Combatting Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism, first adopted in 2008 and subsequently revised in 2014.

Even when predicated to deal with every kind of violent radicalization, it is based on the assumption of jihadist terrorism is one of the main sources of terrorism threat to Spain and Spaniards[40].

The PEN-LCRV indicates where and how to act by establishing a basic distinction between broad domains of action and functional areas of action. It contemplates three broad domains of action: domestic, meaning the whole territory of Spain; external, that is outside Spain and concerning the External Action of the State on the matter and that of the Armed Forces deployed abroad; and, finally, the cyberspace, referring to sources and contents of radicalization on Internet[41]. On functional areas of action, the plan likewise separates between the acting before (*Prevenir*, literally prevent), during (*Vigilar,* meaning monitoring) and after (*Actuar,* undertake action properly) processes of violent radicalization, indicating which particular action is relevant in any of these phases[42]. The PEN-LCRV also specifies who has the responsibility to develop actions, once again distinguishing between the Administration, collectives considered to be vulnerable or at risk, and civil society[43]. It establishes a national structure of interdepartmental nature and centrally coordinated from the Ministry of Interior by means of the Grupo Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (GN-LCRV, National Group for the Fight Against Violent Radicalization)[44].

This GN-LCRV is endowed with coordinating the Grupos Locales de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (GL-LCRV, Local Groups to Fight Against Violent Radicalization)

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[40] Ministerio del Interior, Secretaría de Estado de Seguridad, CITCO, "Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (PEN-LCRV). Un marco para el respeto y entendimiento común", p. 3. See also: Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DNS), *National Security Strategy 2013*, pp. 23, 25 and 32.

[41] "Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (PEN-LCRV)"..., cit., p. 7.

[42] Ivi, p. 8.

[43] Ivi, p. 9.

[44] Ivi, p. 17.

established across Spain[45]. These local groups are composed with delegates from the corresponding local police, competent autonomous regional police when appropriate, City Hall officials, judicial authority if existing, schools, social affairs, social entities and collectives at risk in the designated local zone. A specific system for the information exchange connects the local and the national levels. The PEN-LCRV details three different types of situations to be dealt with[46]. The first situation refers to a concrete incident observed in a given municipality, to be communicated to the FEMP. Advice will then be provided by the GN-LCRV. A second situation comes when a reported incident affects a vulnerable collective, in which case the incident is to be communicated to the Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia, again to receive advice from the GN-LCRV. A third situation relates to the detection of a possible radicalization issue, individual or collective, by any member of a GL-LCRV, so that the local group itself is expected to deal with the case. If the issue is not solved, the possibility exists for the case to be dealt with at the provincial or regional level. Should the problem spread, its treatment will then become a direct responsibility of the GN-LCRV.

The mechanisms of oversight and control incorporated to the PEN-LCRV are regulated by means of annual management agendas, which identify specific types of threat and the people likely to be affected from a national security risk perspective, as well as the measures to be given implementation priority. As established, the PEN-LCRV is meant to be revised on a yearly basis and aims at being under continuous evaluation of procedures, objectives and impact, although the methodology of evaluation is not yet developed[47]. Finally, the PEN-LCR does not count with its own budgetary resources for its implementation and is therefore dependent on contributions from the

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ivi, p. 10.

[47] Ivi, p. 26.

governmental departments involved[48]. Despite its emphasis on acting at the local level, throughout the formula of the GL-LCRV, the PEN-LCR remains, and is widely perceived as, a top-down initiative. This is not in itself a problem, but it may become so in a highly de-centralized country such as Spain. Moreover, while the PEN-LCRV is designed nationwide in scope. Yet, regional plans have been adopted in autonomous communities like Catalonia or the Basque Country[49].

Since the Ministry of Interior, the central institution in Spain's antiterrorist policy, is the coordinating institution of the PEN-LCRV, municipalities and actors concerned – especially those from the civil society – may sometimes assess negatively the securitization scheme of the plan, a factor which, combined with a notable degree of officially imposed secrecy over its actual development, is likely to affect the trust needed to adequately implement its provisions on the different domains and areas of radicalization prevention. The actual number of municipalities where a GL-LCRV has been established was still very limited by the Spring of 2018, which means the pace of PEN-LCRV implementation is slow. In February 2018, some 20 municipalities in Spain have constituted its own GL-LCRV. Málaga – a coastal city located in the southern region of Andalusia – was designated, in this context, as pilot city for the implementation of the plan[50]. Nevertheless, a reconsideration of municipalities as the site of GL-LCRV may be advisable, particularly when it comes to smaller towns or contiguous localities.

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Gobierno Vasco, "Plan de Actuación del Gobierno Vasco frente al terrorismo internacional de pretexto religioso", November 2017.

[50] In the case of Malaga, this Local Group is made up of representatives of the City Council, Social Services Department, Local Police, schools, social organizations, risk groups and the University of Malaga. Other institutions and civil society entities are expected to be added in the next future. See "I Plan Transversal por la Convivencia y la Radicalización Violenta en la Ciudad de Málaga 2017-2020", Ayuntamiento de Málaga and Universidad de Malaga, 2017.

Currently, the most visible outcome of PEN-LCRV is a concrete program known as Stop Radicalismos (Stop Radicalisms)[51]. This program was launched in December 2015 with four basic tools – namely, a website, an email address, a free telephone number, and a cellular phone application – aimed at providing safe and confidential channels for citizens or residents of Spain to collaborate with the authorities in helping to detect, prevent and neutralize cases of violent radicalization taking place inside the country. The Stop Radicalismos program is managed from the Centro de Coordinación de Información sobre Radicalización (CCIR, Center for Coordination of Information on Radicalization), in turn articulated inside the CITCO and therefore, once again, within the structure of Spain's Ministry of Interior. Its results are held as very satisfactory by the Ministry of Interior authorities. From December 2015 to January 2018 a total of 5,590 communications were received (2,368 through the website; 1,300 by means of the telephone line; 1,239 by email, and 693 via app)[52]. About one third of these communications on violent radicalization were considered "of interest" for law enforcement purposes[53].

The GN-LCRV is also connected to authorities in charge of penitentiary institutions, on the issue of preventing radicalization among inmates[54]. In Spain there are two specific programs for the prevention of violent radicalization in prisons. One such programs corresponds to the Ministry of Interior which, through a General Secretariat, manages most of the penitentiary system in Spain. Concerning all those penitentiaries under the general administration, national authorities introduced on 2014 a specific program to prevent radicalization which initially emphasized monitoring but was developed in 2016 with a

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[51] Stop Radicalismos Program's website is https://stop-radicalismos.ses.mir.es

[52] Figures provided to the authors by the CCIR on a communication dated 24 January 2018.

[53] Ibid.

[54] "Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta (PEN-LCRV)"..., cit., p. 16.

more focus on intervention and supplemented in 2018 with a risk assessment tool. In February 2018, it was estimated that 79 individuals, incarcerated as a consequence of common criminality, had initiated processes of jihadist radicalization inside prisons under the state general administration[55]. This is about one third of the total number of inmates then being monitored for actual or potential jihadist radicalization in these same domain. In turn, the Justice Department of Catalonia's autonomous government has developed its own program on violent radicalization inside penitentiaries located in the region[56].

Independent of the mentioned programs, it is widely considered among penitentiary system practitioners that, the experiences of undergoing arrests and being imprisoned, may in themselves have an effect on the disengagement and perhaps even the deradicalization of jihadist detainees. Indicator would be the fact that nearly half (actually, 45) of the 92 individuals arrested in Spain between 2013 and 2017 as a result of their participation in activities related to jihadist terrorism who already faced trial by May 2018 (most of the remaining 145 detainees were then awaiting trial, though several arrested jihadists had already been expelled or extradited), received convictions after defendants and attorneys reached a plea agreement[57]. Still, it is among the relatively small number of jihadists who, as juvenile offenders, were placed during the same five-year period under individualized treatment by order of a special judge for juvenile

[55] Previous known figures are 59 inmates in 2014, 59 in 2015, 95 in 2016, and 76 in 2017. Secretaría de Estado de Relaciones con las Cortes, (684) Pregunta escrita Senado, *Respuesta del Gobierno 684/40518* of 21 February 2018.

[56] The main characteristics of this Catalonian program were presented by Manel Roca, Head of the Area of Information and Security, Directorate General of Penitentiaries Services of the Catalonian Government, at the 4th Elcano Forum on Global Terrorism, "Prevention of Violent, Radicalization, De-radicalization and Terrorist Rehabilitation", held in Madrid on 15 November 2016, see from 00:02:48 to 00:26:00.

[57] A similar number, that is 43, were convicted in the absence of agreement; only 4 individuals, of the 92 who detainees who had faced trial by 6 May 2018, were absolved.

offenders within the Audiencia Nacional, that experiences of disengagement and, in particular, deradicalization, seem particularly promising. By the end of April 2018, nine of them were convicted, at least four of whom showing signs of cognitive and behavioral deradicalization[58].

Also, radicalization prevention efforts from Spain's civil society are starting to becoming visible, developed in connection to official frameworks or independently. These efforts include activities on the part of the different associations of victims of terrorism, in schools as well as in other public settings, which contribute to raising awareness on radicalization and to preventing radicalization as a result of their focus on the promotion of democratic values, the defense of human rights and the support of victims of terrorism[59]. Another initiative, established on October 2017, is known as "Somos Más, contra el odio y el radicalismo" (We are More, against hatred and radicalism). Part of a global move present in other Western European countries, this initiative aims at preventing radicalization among children and adolescents in schools and among the wider society. The project, promoted by YouTube, involves, in Spain, organizations such as such as the Red AWARE (Alliance of Women Against Radicalisation and Extremism), FeSP-UGT and Jóvenes y Desarrollo, and is supported by several Ministries[60]. Another interesting experience is that of the Fundación Al Fanar (Al Fanar Foundation), known as "Kif-Kif", which aims at "fomenting interculturality and the integration of Muslim communities and fighting against islamophobia and jihadist radicalism" by means of creating educational tools, using the

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[58] Information shared with the authors by Álvaro Vicente, a colleague from the Program on Global Terrorism at Elcano Royal Institute.

[59] All these associations, which bring together victims of ETA terrorism, victims of jihadist terrorism, and victims of other ethnonationalist, leftwing or rightwing expressions of terrorism, are incorporated into the Fundación de Víctimas del Terrorismo, established in December 2001. See http://fundacionvt.org

[60] About the "Somos Más, contra el odio y el radicalismo" initiative, see: www.somos-mas.es

format of comics, that can be used in schools across Spain. This initiative has been welcomed in high school of the autonomous region of Catalonia, Madrid's metropolitan area as well as the cities of Ceuta and Melilla[61].

Conclusion

Though the global phenomenon of jihadism and jihadist terrorism exists since the founding of al-Qaeda in 1988 and became a threat in Western Europe shortly thereafter, Spain's response to this menace was very limited until the 11 March 2004 Madrid train bombings, or 3/11 attacks, took place. Both the political priority consistently given by consecutive central governments to combatting of ETA terrorism as well as an underestimation of the Islamic extremism threat explains the previous relative narrowness of such approach to jihadism in the case of Spain. Since the Madrid train bombings, however, and despite a lack of political consensus on the matter which took over one decade to be built, counter-terrorism institutions and agencies were adapted, even to include some significant innovations, to better fight jihadism and combatting the jihadist threat. These reforms had incidence mainly though not exclusively in the domains of internal security and legal provisions, thus adapting institutions and measures in line with the classical Western European criminal policy approach to counter-terrorism.

Yet, measures intended to prevent violent radicalization leading to terrorism were not included as part of Spain's approach to jihadism and jihadist terrorism until 2015, seven years after the European Union first adopted the European Strategy for Combatting Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism and more than three years after the onset of an internal war in Syria prompted, as from 2012, unprecedented levels of international jihadist mobilization with affected in particular a number of

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[61] On the project by the Fundación Al Fanar, see: http://www.fundacionalfanar.org/presentacion-kifkif-comics-por-la-inclusion

Western European nations. Spain was also significantly affected by this more recent wave of worldwide jihadist mobilization. The already described PEN-LCRV, formally approved in 2015, three years after the beginning of this latest wave of jihadist mobilization, certainly evidenced a shift in Spain's approach to jihadism and jihadist terrorism. Even when it resulted more from the influence of intergovernmental initiatives adopted at the European Union level than from a national debate on radicalization inside representative institutions and concerned entities within the civil society.

This background would explain a number of functional problems and resources constrains in the design of the PEN-LCRV, having a negative incidence on its actual implementation. In addition to difficulties arising from the lack of specific financing and the inadequate position in the state bureaucracy of the body endowed with coordinating the PEN-LCRV, its implementation becomes particularly difficult in municipalities of interest where local authorities, often uninformed and unknowledgeable about the issue, tend to be concerned that public knowledge about the creation of a local group to prevent violent radicalization may arouse alarm among people or uneasy within Muslim residents, not to mention the perceived costs when the actual or potential number of cases to deal with is very limited. The same background would also explain why the ECTIR awaits revision since 2015, even if survey data shows that awareness with respect to violent radicalization does exists within Spain's public opinion[62]. This social awareness is not adequately matched with political determination at

[62] According to an Eurobarometer survey conducted on April 2016, one year and four months ahead of the August 2017 Barcelona and Cambrils attacks, 39 per cent of Spaniards considered the chances of a terrorist attack in Spain to be then of a "High risk" and 49 per cent of "Some risk", but 44 per cent thought about "the fight against the roots of terrorism and radicalization" as the most urgent measure to fight against terrorism. Special Eurobarometer of the European Parliament, "Europeans in 2016: Perceptions and expectations, fight against terrorism and radicalization", Brussels, European Parliamentary Research Services, 2016.

different levels of government. Despite a recent shift in Spain's approach to jihadism, strong reliance on the counter-terrorism scheme adopted and developed post 3/11 contrasts with weak implementation of initiatives aimed at the prevention of violent radicalization.

4. Countering Radicalization Efforts in the Middle East and North Africa

Jenna Consigli

Since the Arab Spring revolutions swept across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2011, the region has experienced widespread instability. Civil wars erupted in Syria, Libya, and Yemen, the Muslim Brotherhood ascended and quickly descended from power in Egypt, Tunisia underwent a fragile democratic transition, and governments in Jordan and Morocco attempted to provide citizens with more political, economic, and social reforms. The changing landscape challenged long-held relationships between states and citizens and opened previously closed spaces for Islamists. At the same time, the ongoing civil wars allowed the Islamic State to establish footholds in Syria, Iraq, and Libya.

Weak state-citizen relationships, unmet political, economic, and social expectations of the Arab Spring not only fostered an opening for Islamists movements, especially in North Africa, but also created an atmosphere ripe for terrorist recruitment. Whether through appealing to the unemployed and disillusioned or to an individual's personal religious dogma, the Islamic State succeeded in garnering support among citizens in MENA. While radicalization is not a new phenomenon in the region, the number of citizens traveling to Iraq, Syria, and Libya to join the Islamic State noticeably increased from previous flows of citizens to places like Afghanistan.

As the Islamic State became an international quagmire not only operating from territory in Iraq and Syria but also conducting attacks across the world, MENA governments rushed to respond. Immediate responses included implementing austere security measures, increasing border controls, and tightening

control over religious spheres. Governments began prioritizing security over reform, and Arab Spring demands for more freedoms, political representation, and economic opportunity, quickly faded from agendas.

MENA Governments dedicated counter-radicalization efforts to addressing ideological pull factors used by extremist groups. They took measures to control both the content and method religious messages reached citizens. Since part of the Islamic State's success derives from its online presence, this occurs both online and offline. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and al Azhar University in Egypt opened the Etidal, Sawab, and Observatory for Combating Extremism centers to target content advanced by extremist groups online.

The centers remove and challenge extreme content, collect demographic information on IS users, analyze trends, and spread counter narratives. On occasion, they work together to spread hastaqs over social media. For example in November 2017, to commemorate the prophet Mohammad's birth, the Sawab Center and Observatory for Combating Extremism spread the hastaq #mercytotheworlds. Messages posted under the hastaq advocated for moderation, tolerance, and acceptance in Islam while detesting violence and extremism[1].

Offline, governments, to varying degrees, closed mosques deemed extreme, revoked licenses from radical imams, and suggested Friday prayer sermons. State-run religious institutes began conducting outreach by hosting religious dialogues with local communities and spreading campaigns of tolerance and moderation within Islam at schools, mosques, and sports events. They also opened training centers to teach imams ways to design fatwas and confront extreme interpretations of Islam at mosques and within communities. In addition to these measures, they expanded anti-terrorism laws, which gave broad powers to arrest and convict suspected terrorists.

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[1] "Sawab Center, Al Azhar Observatory to run joint campaign", *Gulf news*, 30 November 2017.

The UAE also entered into a partnership with the Global Counter-terrorism Forum (GCTF) to open the Hedayah center in Abu Dhabi, which is dedicated to countering violent extremism (CVE)[2]. The center opened in 2013 with the goal of conducting CVE research and analysis, creating capacity building programs, and improving dialogue and communication within societies. Hedayah also focuses on improving the role of underrepresented communities such as youth, women, educators, and community leaders in CVE[3]. It puts forth recommendations for important societal reforms such as the Abu Dhabi Memorandum published in 2014. The Memorandum stresses the importance of CVE in the education sector and offers good practices for adapting CVE programming at primary and secondary school levels without secularizing educational systems[4].

Algeria, with noticeably less foreign fighters in the Islamic State than other countries in the region, adapted many of the above-mentioned strategies in the decade after its 1992-1998 civil war[5]. Following the end of the civil war, and subsequent emergence of al Qaida in the Maghreb, the Algerian government consolidated control over religion in the country[6]. It banned extremist rhetoric from schools, mosques, and media, created a national observatory for the struggle against religious extremism, and began promoting messages of religious moderation over the radio and television[7]. The government also co-opted the quietest Salafist group Dawa Salafiya. Religious leaders from the group promote messages of tolerance and moderation over social media, TV, and radio, teach in universities, preach at

[2] "History", Hedayah Center.

[3] A. Reed, J.I. Haroro, and J. Whittaker, "Countering Terrorist Narratives, Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs", Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union, November 2017.

[4] Ibid.

[5] "Algeria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism", Counter Extremism Project.

[6] D. Ghanem-Yazbeck, *Why Algeria Isn't Exporting Jihadists*, Carnegie Middle East Center, 11 August 2015.

[7] "Algeria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism"…, cit.

mosques, and reject religious interpretations originating outside the country. They also advocate for complete silence on political matters and discourage engagement in political activities[8]. To monitor adherence to reforms, Algeria grew its police force to 209,000 officers, which is one of the largest in the region[9].

While these efforts minimize access to extreme narratives in societies, they also rely on the assumption that religion plays an exclusive role in radicalization. And while there is a high likelihood religion is a factor, without empirical studies to understand the complex drivers of radicalization across the region, and within individual communities, creating an approach based on an assumption is misguided. Long-term solutions require knowledge of the interrelated drivers, a strategy to address them, and commitment to implementing necessary reforms. To highlight the remaining gaps in existing CVE strategies, and areas of opportunity for subsequent policy design and implementation, this discussion surveys MENA countries and their respective strategies. After clarifying the context for this discussion, this paper delves into approaches adopted by five countries, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan. These assessments are followed by a discussion that identifies some marked challenges to developing sustainable and comprehensive counter-radicalization strategies in the region.

Context

According to a 2017 Brookings Institute report, an estimated 30,000 foreign fighters traveled from the MENA region to fight for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria[10]. Compared to the number of foreign fighters from Europe, 5,000 or the United States, 295, foreign fighters from MENA countries contributed a

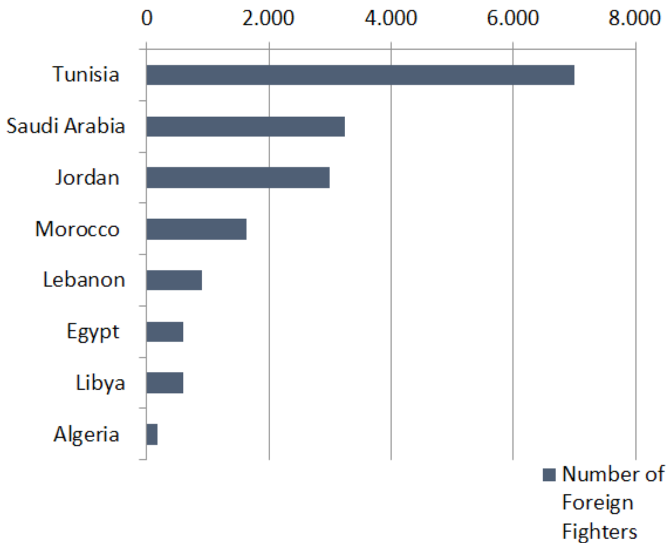
[8] D. Ghanem-Yazbeck (2015).

[9] Ibid.

[10] D.L. Byman, *Frustrated Foreign Fighters*, Washington D.C., Brookings Institute, 13 July 2017.

significant force to the Islamic State[11]. Noticeably, citizens from Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon represented the highest per capita number of Islamic State foreign fighters.

Fig. 1 - Estimated number of foreign fighters that traveled from Middle East and North African Countries to Syria



Experts estimate that around 7,000 Tunisians[12], 3,244 Saudis[13], 3,000 Jordanians[14], 1,623 Moroccans (and 2,000 Moroccan-Europeans)[15], 900 Lebanese[16], 600 Egyptians, 600 Libyans, and

[11] E. Schmitt, "Thousands of ISIS Fighters Flee in Syria, Many to Fight Another Day", *New York Times*, 4 February 2018.
[12] D.L. Byman (2017).
[13] R. Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees*, The Soufan Center, 24 October 2017.
[14] Ibid.
[15] *How the Islamic State Rose, Fell and Could Rise Again in the Maghreb*, The Crisis Group, 24 July 2017.
[16] R. Florida, "The Geography of Foreign ISIS Fighters", *CityLab*, 10 August 2016.

170 Algerians[17] traveled to Iraq and Syria to join the Islamic State and other terrorist groups, represented in graph 1.1. Not only have these countries contributed significant numbers of foreign fighters, but they have also experienced an increase in terrorist attacks at home, and in some cases, as in Egypt and Libya, the creation of Islamic States or "waliyats" within their countries.

Despite increased support for extremist groups by citizens in MENA countries, efforts to curb, understand, and prevent radicalization are nascent and limited in scope. Most countries in the regions lack a systematic approach to CVE outside of confronting religious extremism. While security measures and more restrictions over religion address more immediate threats posed by already radicalized individuals, and groups; they fail to face socio-economic conditions that contributed to the radicalization of citizens in the first place.

Researchers, practitioners, and academics generally agree that a variety of push (socio-economic, political, cultural) and pull (individual level rewards, sense of belonging, adventure, personal empowerment, glory, fame) factors contribute to an individual's radicalization[18]. Studies fielded in Tunisia between 2016-2018 highlighted the relevance of these push and pull factors. One assessment conducted in 2017 by the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies of 82 terror-convicted individuals revealed disappointment with the revolution, and a strong feeling of injustice as factors of radicalization[19]. Many felt economically and socially marginalized within Tunisia, and that feeling of injustice permeated most aspects of their lives and future plans[20]. They also felt world powers were conspiring against the

[17] "Algeria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism",…cit.

[18] *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency Policy*, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), September 2011.

[19] E. Ben Mustapha Ben Arab, *Radicalization in Tunisia: A security Issue That Requires A Civilian Approach*, Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies, University of Sfax, April 2018.

[20] Ibid.

Islamic nation[21]. Another study with friends and family of 13 Islamic State fighters from Tunisia described foreign fighters as unemployed, bored, and disillusioned with government[22].

The MENA approach to radicalization

In the MENA region, international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and various development agencies, take lead roles in encouraging countries to adapt CVE strategies. UN-led entities like the Counter-terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and United National Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) help MENA governments develop approaches to CVE, build trust with local communities, and better understand the drivers of radicalization.

However, outside of UN encouraged initiatives, MENA countries responded to radicalization through the lens of countering religious misinterpretations. Countries focus on ideological pull factors used by extremist groups to design ways to counter them. However, the approach lacks basis in empirical evidence and, as a result, largely ignores socio-economic push factors. Today, efforts to address push factors remain nascent and driven by outside organizations like the UN. Religion remains at the forefront of MENA approaches to countering radicalization. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan adapted initiatives similar to Algeria's after the Black Decade. They include 1) attempting to exercise control over the content and method religious messages reach citizens, 2) opening centers to both counter the Islamic State's narratives online and train imams, 3) having religious figures conduct community outreach, and 4) expanding anti-terrorism laws.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] G. Macdonald and L. Waggoner, "Analysis | Why Are so Many Tunisians Joining the Islamic State?", *Washington Post*, 27 January 2017.

Cases

Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, the government pursued a number of initiatives to centralize religious discourse in the country and promote religious moderation. It created two government-led institutes to counter extremist ideology, launched public awareness campaigns, announced intention to reform religious curriculum in its 2030 vision, restricted proselytization efforts abroad, and expanded upon its counter-terrorism law in both 2014 and 2017.

In 2016, the Saudis opened an ideological warfare center within its Ministry of Defense to confront narratives put forth by terrorist organizations; and in 2017, began the Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (GCCEI), also called "Etidal", which means moderation in Arabic. The center seeks to bring together countries across the world to engage in a unified effort to combat extremism online. The center's vision is "to be the global reference in combating extremist ideology and moderation", and the mission is "to actively and proactively combat, expose, and refute extremist ideology, in cooperation with governments and organizations concerned"[23].

The government also launched public awareness campaigns aimed at educating citizens about the dangers of joining terrorist organizations[24]. Campaign advertisements aired over television, in schools and mosques, and at sporting events to dissuade citizens from joining the Islamic State[25]. The government also placed restrictions on travel by Saudi imams abroad for charitable and proselytization activities, requiring them to receive government permission beforehand[26]. Even more specifically,

[23] "Mission and Vision", ETIDAL.

[24] L.P. Boghardt, *Is Saudi Arabia's Counter-terrorism Approach Shifting?*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 9 January 2018.

[25] Ibid.

[26] U.S. Department of State, Country Reports: "Middle East and North Africa", Country Reports on Terrorism, Bureau of Counter-terrorism And Countering

after recognizing the role Saudi charities played in exporting extremism, it placed restrictions on charitable giving. Saudi charities are now prohibited from transferring money abroad and collecting cash contributions at mosques[27].

Simultaneously, the Saudi government changed its counter-terrorism law. In 2014, it expanded upon its definition of terrorism creating ambiguous language, which some argue allows the government to silence critics and imprison activists. And in February 2014, the government issued a royal decree threatening to jail any citizen fighting abroad for a span of 3-20 years, and those who endorse or provide moral and or material support to terrorist organizations inside or outside Saudi Arabia could receive a sentence of up to 5-30 years in prison[28]. In 2017, the Saudi government again expanded the law, which made penalties for supporting terrorist operations more severe[29].

Egypt

Since coming to power, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has called for significant religious reforms. Under his leadership, the government has pushed for changes within Egypt's three leading religious institutions – Dar Al-Iftaa, the Ministry of Endowments, and Al Azhar University. In 2015, Dar Al-Iftaa, an educational institute known for issuing fatwas in the Muslim world, launched an initiative to establish a Secretariat for Fatwa authorities worldwide. By creating a global center, the entity aims to reduce and counter extreme fatwas issued by radical religious clerics[30].

Furthering the desire to control fatwas, in the coming months, Egypt's Parliament is set to vote on a draft law that

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Violent Extremism, 2016.

[27] "Saudi Arabia and Counter-terrorism, Fact Sheet - Combating Terror Financing", Saudi Embassy, May 2017.

[28] "Saudi Arabia to Jail Citizens Who Fight Abroad", *Reuters*, 3 February 2014.

[29] F. Al Dibais, "New anti-terror laws include the death penalty", *Saudi Gazette*.

[30] M.S. El Din, "Dar Al-Ifta Aims to Control Fatwas Worldwide", *Mada Masr*, 19 August 2015.

only allows Islamic clerics from Al Azhar's Council of Grand Scholars, Dar Al-Iftaa, and the General Fatwa Department at the Ministry of Endowments to issue fatwas in Egypt. The draft law also penalizes imams that do not issue fatwas through licensed media outlets[31].

Dar Al-Iftaa also trains personnel on issuing new fatwas and aims to establish a global training center. In addition to these efforts, it sends Islamic scholars into communities considered vulnerable to radicalization to hold religious discussions and run rehabilitation sessions for those considered violent extremists[32]. Egypt's Ministry of Endowments also standardized Friday prayers requiring Imams to recite government-approved sermons, and closed mosques considered to have radical views. It also bars more hardline clerics from preaching[33]. By 2015, the Ministry had revoked upwards of 55,000 licenses from Egyptian imams[34].

Al Azhar University, considered a leading university for Islamic jurisprudence in the Muslim world, also began a number of efforts to counter radical ideologies and promote religious moderation. In June 2015, al Azhar launched the Observatory for Combating Extremism, funded by the UAE. Similar to efforts by Saudi's Etidal, the center monitors extremist groups and counters their radical ideology in twelve different languages. Staffers at the center deconstruct Islamic State messages and send regular notes to Al Azhar's executive committee, which in turn issues rebuttals[35].

Al Azhar also conducts community outreach initiatives. It organizes meetings between local residents and Al Azhar

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[31] M. Gamil, "Fighting Odd Fatwas: Egypt to Rule out Unlicensed Preachers", *EgyptToday*, 14 March 2018.

[32] U.S. Department of State, Country Reports: "Middle East and North Africa"…, cit.

[33] "Muslim Clerics Dispense Religious Rulings in Cairo's Subway", 1 August 2017.

[34] M.S. El Din (2015).

[35] E. De Lavarene, C. Williot, and N. Bletry, "Top Muslim Body Al-Azhar Faces Criticism in Fight against Extremism", *France 24*, 7 June 2017.

religious scholars to discuss essential topics within Islamic jurisprudence[36]. The university even launched, albeit short-lived, a program to install Fatwa kiosks in Egypt's underground stations. The Fatwa kiosks intended to provide easily accessible answers to pressing issues within Islam targeting "people on the street ignorant of religious matters, and [to] put them on the correct track of moderation"[37].

In 2014, Sisi approved a new anti-terrorism law, which the Egyptian government expanded in 2015. Similar to Saudi Arabia, the law uses broad language to describe a terrorist act, allowing for wide interpretations. Some important provisions within the law include the death penalty for crimes related to terrorism and life in prison for forcing individuals to join a terrorist organization[38]. It also grants police the right to arrest suspects without warrants and imprison journalists who publish material about terrorist attacks contrary to state reports[39]. Moreover, the law stipulates that promoting a terrorist crime, whether verbally or in writing, is punishable by five years in prison. It also penalizes using websites or social media to encourage terrorist ideas or call for the perpetration of terrorist acts[40].

Morocco

In Morocco, the government developed a national strategy to institutionalize widespread adherence to the Maliki-Ashari school of Sunni Islam[41]. It reformed religious education by updating textbooks removing passages from the Quran deemed

[36] Ibid.

[37] R. Michaelson, "Egyptian Islamic Authority Sets up Fatwa Kiosk in Cairo Metro", *The Guardian*, 1 August 2017.

[38] S. Farid, *Egypt's New Anti-Terror Law: An In-Depth Reading*, Washington D.C., Atlantic Council, 10 July 2015.

[39] Ibid.

[40] EgyptSource, *Egypt's Anti-Terror Law: A Translation*, Washington D.C., Atlantic Council, 3 September 2015.

[41] U.S. Department of State, Country Reports: "Middle East and North Africa",… cit.

too violent. Religious textbooks now have 24 lessons compared to 50 in the past[42]. It also runs regular religious programming through the radio and TV that promotes messages of tolerance and moderation[43]. Religious leaders also conduct outreach to communities to reinforce these messages. The government also banned proselytization efforts. In 2015, Morocco opened the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, which aims to counter extremist interpretations of religion and instill values of moderate Islam in the next generation of religious leaders[44]. The center not only brings together Moroccan students but also those from across the region including from Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Tunisia, France, Niger, and Chad to train them in Islamic moderation[45].

In 2015, Morocco changed its 2003 counter-terrorism law. The expanded law makes it illegal to join, attempt to join, or recruit others to join and fight abroad[46]. It also extends the definition of terrorism to include acts or attempts to join a terrorist group and involvement in terrorist recruitment and training activities[47]. The law widens the jurisdiction of national courts allowing them to prosecute foreign nationals who commit crimes outside of Morocco[48]. It created a new agency, the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations (CBJI), which is similar to the U.S. FBI, and prioritizes counter-terrorism and transnational crimes[49]. The CBJI now leads efforts to coordinate Morocco's

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[42] S. Doublier, J.-M. Lemaire, and J. Vardey, "Morocco Reforms Religious Education to Fight Extremism", *France24*, 13 December 2016.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Imam Training, Key Instrument of Morocco's Religious Diplomacy", *The North Africa Post*, 21 October 2017.

[45] Ibid.

[46] "Morocco: Extremism & Counter-Extremism", Counter Extremism Project, 9 June 2017.

[47] "Morocco Combats Terrorism at Home and Abroad", Morocco On The Move, July 2016.

[48] I. Saliba, "Morocco: Bill to Amend Counter-terrorism Law", Global Legal Monitor Library of Congress, 13 February 2015.

[49] "Morocco Boasts Most Efficient Counter-terrorism Strategy in the

approach to counter-terrorism, and since 2015 claims to have dismantled 49 terrorist cells, including 44 groups loyal to ISIS, and arrested 772 people for terrorism-related charges[50].

Tunisia

In Tunisia, despite a brief relaxing of religious restrictions from 2011-2013, the government resumed former Ben Ali era policies aimed at controlling religious discourse in the country. In 2014, through the new constitution and penal codes, the Tunisian government established oversight of Islamic prayer services. It declared the government would subsidize mosques, appoint Imams, and pay salaries- mosques are now considered government property. It also stipulates that the President appoints the grand mufti who is responsible for representing Tunisia abroad[51]. Government officials also have authority to replace Imams deemed extremist. It additionally prohibits public deliverance of religious sermons and proselytization efforts[52].

In 2015, Tunisia changed its outdated 2003 anti-terrorism law. The new law expanded the definition of terrorism to include the destruction of property during a demonstration, added a provision that included the death penalty for terrorism, and lengthened the time authorities could hold suspects from 6 to 15 days without access to a lawyer[53]. The law also established the National Commission on Counter-Terrorism, tasked with developing a counter-terrorism and extremism strategy, which focuses on four main pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution and response to attacks[54]. The new law gives authorities

Maghreb- Crisis Group", *The North Africa Post*, 10 August 2017.

[50] "Moroccan FBI Dismantles 49 Terrorist Cells", *Asharq al Awsat*, 7 February 2018.

[51] U.S. Department of State, Country Reports: "Middle East and North Africa"…, cit.

[52] E. Ben Mustapha Ben Arab (2018).

[53] B. Bouazza and P. Schemm, "Tunisia Passes New, Controversial Anti-Terror Law", *The Times of Israel*, 25 July 2015.

[54] A. Dworkin and Z. El Malki, *The Southern Front Line: EU Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with Tunisia and Morocco*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 15

extensive surveillance powers such as tapping communications and installing surveillance materials[55].

Jordan

Jordan's government responded to growing radicalization in the country by controlling messages in Jordanian mosques and reforming its anti-terrorism law. Jordan's Ministry of Religious Endowments regulates mosque sermons through certifying imams[56]. And ahead of Friday prayers, officials temporarily revoke licenses and close mosques. Notably, the number of mosques closed ahead of Friday prayers each week represents over a third of the country's mosques[57]. Other measures taken by government officials include requiring Imams to recite sermons approved by the government[58].

Jordan also revised its 2006 anti-terrorism law in 2014. The law expanded the definition of terrorism, which similar to Saudi Arabia and Egypt's gives the government sweeping powers to arrest and detain adversaries and activists. The law widened the scope of nonviolent offenses, such as using information networks to support, promote, or fund terrorism, as well as acts to harm Jordan's relations with a foreign country[59]. This law includes using the Internet, creating websites, or publishing any materials that support, encourage, or facilitate terrorist activities, which the law classifies as terrorism offenses[60].

February 2018.

[55] S. Mersh, *Tunisia's Ineffective Counter-terrorism Law*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 6 August 2015.

[56] S. Yom and K. Sammour, *Counter-terrorism and Youth Radicalization in Jordan: Social and Political Dimensions*, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, 14 April 2017.

[57] "Muzzling Mosques - Extremism in Jordan", *The Economist*, 18 September 2016.

[58] Ibid.

[59] "Jordan", Freedom House, 6 July 2016, https://www.justice.gov/eoir/file/873556/download

[60] R. Omari, "Press Association Says Anti-Terrorism Law Loosely Worded", *Jordan Times*, 4 June 2014.

Conclusive analysis and discussion

Despite decreasing the proliferation of extreme material across society, the approach taken by MENA governments to counter-radicalization is narrowly focused and based on an assumption. A complex mix of push and pull factors radicalize individuals, and with limited empirical evidence to understand them, countries are not addressing fundamental issues. The 2011 Arab Spring revolutions brought MENA citizens to the streets calling for increased freedoms, political representation, and economic opportunities. Many were dissatisfied feeling their governments failed to provide them with basic services. For some, the same malaise that manifested itself into protests during the Arab Spring transformed into support for the Islamic State after. Yet, governments continue to ignore the need for reforms to create better state-citizen relationships.

Despite pushes by the UN for MENA countries to develop comprehensive CVE strategies, consolidating control and increasing security capabilities remain at the forefront of government efforts. Governments underestimate the importance of building positive state-citizen relationships based on the rule of law, good governance, and trust. Research fielded in Tunisia to understand the drivers of radicalization reflects a poor government relationship with vulnerable communities. Citizens in more impoverished regions of Tunisia feel they have little economic opportunity, lack an outlet to express grievances, and feel the government is corrupt[61]. Beja residents, where a large number of foreign fighters are from, described bitterness towards the police saying "cops humiliate you if you are unemployed, they can accuse you of anything and use it against you even if you did nothing"[62]. Those convicted of terrorism-related charges also expressed that a strong feeling of injustice played a

[61] *IRI Experts Look at Drivers of Terrorism in Tunisia in the Journal of Democracy*, Washington D.C., The International Republican Institute, 12 January 2018.
[62] Ibid.

vital role in their radicalization[63].

The animosity felt by citizens towards the state creates an environment for extremists to exploit. The Tunisian government responded to radicalization by restricting religious spaces while failing to address main environmental drivers. It has taken limited efforts to improve the government's relationship with vulnerable communities. Important areas to focus on are building more trust in the political system and fostering positive relationships between police forces and local communities. For example, professionalizing the police force has the potential to mitigate radicalization.

Religious divides

Government attempts to control religious spaces face push back from religious scholars across the region. For example, scholars at Al Azhar University are divided over reform and seek to avoid an image of being co-opted by the Egyptian government. Despite outward efforts to promote moderation, some scholars detest and oppose initiatives to change religious discourse at the university. They are adverse to state interference in a long practice of independence in the realm of Islamic jurisprudence. Critics of reforms traditionally argue that religious material is taught in a way students understand the context in which educators present the material. The internal divide between scholars makes it difficult for the Egyptian state to unify religious messaging and limit exposure to material deemed extreme, something Sisi repeatedly highlights in public statements when talking about the university.

In Saudi Arabia, well-known religious scholars also found themselves against state initiatives to control religious discourse. In September 2017, Saudi Arabia arrested 30 clerics, including religious scholar Salam al Awdah[64]. Awdah has a large following

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[63] E. Ben Mustapha Ben Arab (2018).

[64] "Saudi Arabia Arrests Prominent Cleric -Social Media", *Reuters*, 10 September 2017.

on social media, which includes 14 million Twitter followers. In recent years, the Saudi government has cast Awdah as an ally. However, broad anti-terrorism laws led to his imprisonment over stances he was taking publically not aligning with those of the government. His arrest further divides the religious community and creates distrust of government intentions among his followers[65]. Government efforts to control religious discourse have the potential to bring unwanted consequences. Arresting Awdah galvanizes support for him and lessens the legitimacy of state-led religious initiatives in the eyes of citizens.

Perpetual cycle

While Algeria contributed the least amount of foreign fighters to the Islamic State, the model Algeria used to tighten control over religious spaces ignored important socio-economic factors of radicalization. Those same factors now worry experts as a transition of power from ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to a new President becomes more necessary. Bouteflika, in deteriorating health at 81 years old, intends to run for a fifth presidential term to avoid a potential vacuum and bout of instability[66]. Algeria, like many countries in the region, faces unemployment, poverty, housing shortages, corruption, and lack of governance, which are breeding unrest among the population[67]. And while Algeria succeeded to reduce the threat from extremists in the short-term, potential for future instability could allow them to rise again.

The same socio-economic factors plaguing Algeria existed in Tunisia prior to the 2011 revolutions. In Tunisia, Ben Ali relied on a robust security apparatus to push extremists underground and prevent the spread of radical ideas. When Islamists came close to winning elections in 1992, Ali's regime began

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[65] Ibid.

[66] R. Allahoum, "Algeria: President Bouteflika and the Army's Political End Game", *Al Jazeera*, 25 April 2018.

[67] D. Ghanem-Yazbeck, *Algeria on the Verge: What Seventeen Years of Bouteflika Have Achieved*, Beirut, Carnegie Middle East Center, 28 April 2016.

imprisoning Islamists and forcing others into exile[68]. At the same time, he ignored the necessity for key societal reforms. After the 2011 revolution, where citizens demanded more political, social, and economic freedoms, the new government led by the Ennhada party released Islamists from jail. Those previously suppressed by the political system has newfound freedoms freely and more radical views. This led to increased proselytization efforts by Salafists, especially Ansar al-Sharia, and the mass exit of others to join the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The Algeria and Tunisia cases demonstrate that ignoring key socio-economic drivers of radicalization creates a reoccurring trend. Governments suppress Islamists with extreme views in the short-term under the pretext of security, and in the long-term face demands by citizens for more freedoms and economic opportunities. These demands precipitate more social, political, and economic openings, or in the case of the Arab Spring, the fall of governments, which opens the door for the reemergence of Islamists. Government control of religious spaces may push Islamists underground or into exile but without building communities resistant to extremist narratives, when they reemerge citizens will continue to radicalize.

Building communities resilient to terrorist narratives necessitate better education systems that teach students to think critically about important issues, improved socio-economic conditions such as employment opportunities and strong civil societies, and respect for the rule of law, especially between police forces and citizens. One person interviewed in Tunisia said he would fight anywhere with promise of salary, and would go to feed his wife and kids[69]. This statement alone proves that radicalization is not just about religion. Unless governments change their mindset towards radicalization, the trend is likely to continue into the future.

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[68] K. Piser, "The Mainstreaming of Tunisia's Islamists", *Foreign Policy*, 17 August 2016.

[69] *IRI Experts Look at Drivers of Terrorism in Tunisia*…, cit.

Exacerbates drivers

Expanding counter-terrorism laws and including broadened definitions of terrorism such as "disrupting public order", "harming national unity", or "harming the reputation [of the country]", also exacerbates conditions that lead to radicalization. The sweeping powers governments now have to arrest, convict, and detain those in violation of broadly defined laws, leads to the arrest of more than just terrorists but also critics and activists. In Egypt, the government now has the power to arrest people without warrants, and in Tunisia, authorities can hold suspects from 6-15 days without access to a lawyer. Governments are further impeding upon the rights and freedoms of individuals, which solidifies feelings of injustice and distrust with government. Upholding the rule of law and ensuring each citizen has the right to representation is essential to building trust. Arbitrary detention without arrest warrants or probable cause increases animosity between citizens and governments, which in turn contributes to underlying causes of radicalization.

Larger prison populations

MENA prisons have long been incubators for radicalization. And expanded powers to arrest and imprison citizens anywhere from 5 years to life for acts such as expressing radical views online or providing moral support to terrorist groups increases prison populations. Governments will face difficulties preventing the spread of radical ideas, de-radicalizing those with already extreme views, and reintegrating them into society. Larger prison populations are harder to manage and mismanagement has the potential to exacerbate extremism in the long-term.

De-radicalization programs such as Saudi Arabia's Mohammad bin Nayef Counseling and Care Center require significant financial and personnel resources, and the success of such initiatives remain unclear. Countries with limited budgets and untrained personnel will likely encounter difficulties

releasing formerly radicalized individuals into society without mass recidivism. Broadened anti-terrorism laws that include individuals with even the most remote sign of extreme views have the potential to radicalize them fully in prison. Expanded anti-terrorism laws allow for an immediate removal of individuals with extreme views from society; however, present serious challenges for reintegration, especially in countries without strong and organized de-radicalization programs.

Education

Many education systems in the MENA region do not include critical thinking in their curriculums. Yet, critical thinking skills allow citizens to conceptualize and reject ideas deemed outside of reason. With growing support for terrorist groups, and outside actors seeking to manipulate populations, providing citizens with an education dedicated to developing skills necessary to understand and analyze ideas and material is important. Instead of state-led initiatives to control religion, governments need to equip citizens with the analytical abilities necessary to reject extreme narratives themselves. Building a resilient population requires governments to allow citizens to question, evaluate, and assess important topics within society without negative repercussions. Allowing this to occur enables citizens to withstand narratives put forth by terrorist groups.

The United Nations, international development agencies, and institutes like Hedayah play key roles helping MENA countries improve responses to CVE. Together these organizations work with many MENA countries to address gaps in countering radicalization efforts. However, progress remains slow and CVE efforts nascent. MENA countries continue to operate under the assumption religion is a leading cause of radicalization. Many lack studies to understand radicalization in their societies and the intertwined push and pull factors, which contributes to misguided approaches.

Successful counter-radicalization or CVE programs require a mentality shift by MENA governments. Without

understanding and accepting that religion is not the only factor contributing to radicalization, governments are unlikely to take CVE initiatives pushed by international organizations seriously. Implementing CVE strategies require an organized institutional structure, commitment to reform, and financial resources to allocate to CVE programs. For CVE programs to succeed, they will need to be balanced with security approaches. Perceived injustices caused by expanding security apparatuses will be hard to remedy through CVE.

5. Insights Into Morocco's Approach to Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism

El Mostafa Rezrazi

Moroccan efforts in fighting terrorism and violence extremism

In the aftermath of the 2013-2016 terrorist attacks that occurred across Europe, experts began questioning both the effectiveness of security cooperation and ability of conventional means to confront non-conventional threats. Over this time period, they failed to prevent several terrorist attacks in major capitals across the world.

In the case of Morocco, after a terrorist group bombed several sites in Casablanca in 2003, the government created a counter-terrorism policy. The approach aimed to address political, economic, social, religious, security, and human rights conditions. It combines policies to improve socio-economic conditions and the government's capacity to anticipate terrorism risks. Morocco's efforts to prevent and counter-terrorism also include religious reforms, which focus on promoting moderation within Islam. Luckily, in the past five years, despite limited financial and logistical resources, Morocco remained immune from terrorist attacks.

Despite increased terrorist attacks in Europe, North Africa, and Sahel from 2011-2017, Morocco only experienced one terrorist attack during this time period, which occurred in April 2011 in Marrakech. Statistics released by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to

Terrorism (START) highlight this immunity. According to START, terrorist attacks in the Maghreb region multiplied by 47 times between 2011-2014, increasing from 15 to 1,105 attacks. Of these attacks, only one targeted Morocco.

Components of Morocco's counter-terrorism approach

The 2003 terror attacks in Morocco promoted the government to react to the growth of domestic terrorism. Many responses focused on confronting social and economic problems facing vulnerable populations, such as unemployment. Over the past two decades, Morocco allocated significant resources to reducing radicalization pull factors, or misplaced "sympathy" for extremism by youth.

Counter-terrorism experts often highlight Morocco as a success story for its approach to combating terrorism. Its multidimensional strategy includes preventive, proactive, and reactive measures to extremism. The government has targeted terrorist groups' financing and their extreme doctrines directly. The three most important components of the CT strategy are its aggressive security initiatives, religious reforms, and progressive social approach. It aims to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized of Moroccan society. The processes used by Morocco to prevent and counter violent extremism include eradication, de-radicalization, and rehabilitation.

The eradication strategy aims to eliminate potential threats against the public. Morocco's law enforcement and intelligence agencies lead these activities with the objectives of combating 1) terrorist recruiters, combatants, and facilitators, 2) terrorist financing, and 3) terrorist weapons. The de-radicalization strategy is three-dimensional as well. It deconstructs extremist discourse and structures religious doctrine in a clear and integral manner. It refutes extremist thinking and removes extreme content from curriculum, places of worship, and media outlets. And provides training for religious scholars to improve their

ability to confront extremist ideology within different intellectual, social, and virtual spaces.

The third component of the Moroccan strategy is rehabilitation and reintegration. Authorities construct cognitive-emotional processes for inmates convicted of terrorism related issues with the goal of reintegrating them into society. The strategy aims for inmates to become resilient against radical ideas and to reconcile differences in values. Implemented, the program takes the form of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR).

Eradication

Even if the Islamic State is operationally overwhelmed and other terrorist activities contained, terrorism will continue to challenge international peace and security. Despite territorial loses, the Islamic State's doctrine will persist[1]. Returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) pose a serious threat to many countries, and it is necessary to assess national, regional, and international responses to mitigate threats. Within this lens, Moroccan security authorities focus on:

Increased security posture: In light of terrorist threats in North Africa, Morocco tightened border controls and reinforced its military presence in the southern Sahara. Authorities took measures to secure public spaces and improve security for commercial spaces. The government even created a new security unit named "Hadar", or vigilance in Arabic, which brings together officials from the Royal Armed Forces, Royal Gendarmerie, Police, and Auxiliary Force to protect Moroccan citizens and visitors. Hadar's goal is to prevent terrorists from targeting Morocco's infrastructures.

Intelligence: A distinguishing characteristic of Morocco's approach to intelligence gathering is that it does not depend on technology. Morocco makes full use of human assets. The use

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[1] M. Rezrazi, *Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Combating Threats and Managing Resilience*, UN C.T.E.D., New York, 16 November 2017.

of human assets helps authorities anticipate attacks, dismantle terrorist cells, and eradicate grassroots level radicalization. According to the Ministry of Interior, between 2002-2015 Moroccan security services broke-up 132 terrorist networks. During the same period, authorities foiled 276 terrorist plots and arrested 2,720 suspected terrorists. While these achievements are impressive, the Moroccan intelligence service must continue to evolve as the threats change.

Terrorist financing: Morocco firmly believes it needs to make the fight against terrorism a top of priority. As such, it works to eliminate financial resources of terrorist groups and dismantle their communication capacities. In 2007, the Moroccan government passed an anti-money laundering law to target terrorist finances.

The Financial Information Processing Unit (UTRF): Morocco's UTRF acts on domestic reports of suspicious financial activity. It receives requests from international authorities to freeze assets of parties linked to terrorism offences. Morocco amended its money laundering law in 2013 to include funding terrorism outside of Morocco.

Cyber-terrorism: As a part of its strategic advancements, Morocco created structures to prevent and secure critical infrastructures from cyber-threats. The largest initiative was a joint project between several ministerial departments, which led to the creation of 1) Morocco's Strategic Committee of Security of Information Systems and 2) General Directorate of Security of Information Systems.

- The General Directorate of Security of Information Systems (GDSIS): is a structure under the direction of national defense.
- The Strategic Committee of Information Security Systems (SCISS): is a structure under the state department of national defense. It is charged with creating strategic policies for Morocco's information security system to ensure the security and integrity of Morocco's critical infrastructures.

Reinforcing legal framework: Following United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions 1368 and 1373 on the fight against terrorism, Morocco ratified international and regional counter-terrorism laws harmonizing them with domestic legal codes. On October 14, 2001, the Moroccan government ratified the Arab Convention against Terrorism, created by the League of Arab States in April 22, 1998. On November 13, 2001, Morocco ratified four international treaties, and after the 2003 attacks, Parliament approved two bills focused on the fight against terrorism and entry of foreigners into Morocco. Then, in 2015, Morocco's House of Deputies approved draft law 86.14, which amended the anti-terrorism law to criminalize joining a terrorist organization. It also expanded the definition of terrorist acts and extended the jurisdiction of national courts to prosecute terrorist crimes committed inside and outside Moroccan territories.

Constitutional guarantees for good governance: Following a referendum on July 1, 2011, Morocco passed a new constitution that protects universally recognized human rights. Article 20 identified the right to life as "the first right of every human being". And article 21 details the right "to the security of the person and his family and the protection of his property", and for authorities to ensure the "security of the population and national territory". The constitution prohibits injury to life and physical or moral integrity, inhumane or degrading treatment, and treatment detrimental to human dignity. It also prohibits torture, arbitrary or secret detention, disappearance, presumption of guilt, unfair trials, and other measures of unjustified coercion (art. 23).

Strengthening security governance: Following the passage of the anti-terrorism bill, Parliament voted for concrete steps to criminalize torture. It furthered the initiative by ordering judicial and disciplinary investigations into violators. The unprecedented increase of FTF seeking to join ISIS or other terrorist groups, motivated the latest amendments of the 2015 anti-Terrorism law. It established the Central Bureau of Judicial

Investigations (BCIJ), which serves as a coordinating structure between intelligence agencies and law enforcement.

The BCIJ improves the ability of security officials to track and monitor terrorist cells and protect public spaces from potential attacks. The coordination unit helps combine human intelligence with intelligence gathered through technological and electronic surveillance. Officials then use collected information to construct courses of action against terrorist cells.

The process of de-radicalization

Fighting poverty at its source: In 2005, Morocco launched the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) to fight poverty and social exclusion and provide youth in marginalized areas with opportunities. According to a report released by the Word Bank in 2015, four million Moroccans have benefited from the INDH since it was launched. The INDH initiative was accompanied by an unprecedented number of projects across the country aiming to foster job creation and create a balance between different regions of the kingdom. Moroccan authorities also invested heavily in infrastructure and social sector projects with the goal of fighting poverty and reducing regional inequalities. According to a study published by the Carnegie Middle East Center in 2010, Morocco succeeded to lift 1.7 million people out of poverty between 2000-2010. The same study shows that poverty rates in the country decreased by more than 40 per cent during the same period.

Religious oversight: Morocco authorities believe regaining control over religious institutes is an important step in the fight against violent extremism. As such, Morocco has:

- Reformed the functions of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous;
- Strengthened the role of the High Council of Ulemas and its regional affiliates;
- Empowered the Rabita Mohammediya of Ulema to produce strategies to fight extremism;
- Improved communication tools and channels used to

reach vulnerable populations, especially youth;
- Ensured Moroccans possess a better understanding of Islamic values by highlighting Moroccan religious traditions based on moderation and tolerance.

In October 2004, the government started the Mohammed VI TV channel and Mohammed VI radio station. It also launched a large-scale program to turn mosques into venues for fighting literacy and teaching moderate Islam based on Maliki jurisprudence. A 2014 religious support program accompanied these efforts; it trains imams across Morocco and neighboring countries on way to protect against the extreme ideologies.

Part of this strategy included the establishment of the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams and the Mohammed VI Foundation for African "Ulemas" in 2015. Since its launch in 2014, several European and African countries such as Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Tunisia, Spain, France, and Belgium requested assistance in the area of instructing imams. In addition, Morocco began reviving the role of the al-Qarawiyyin educational institute in Fez to promote toleration in Islam. The Rabita Mohammediya of Ulemas also initiated its own education programs. It is led by peers seeking to build the capacity of young Imams to promote messages of moderation and confront extremists through the new communication tools[2].

Morocco's version of Islam draws on the Maliki school of thought, which is a more moderate form of Islam. It relies on the practices of the Prophet's companions in Medina as a source of law. Furthermore, Morocco's King serves as the Commander of the faithful, a historic title based on his religious heritage and legitimacy. In this capacity, he serves as the protector of religious affairs. Morocco's King Hassan II began practicing moderate Islam early by launching religious reforms in 1980.

[2] Ahmed Abaddi's statement, in: "Morocco Fights Radicalism: Raising a New Generation of Islamic Scholars, Advocates", Morocco on the Move, 28 June 2013.

His successor, King Mohammed VI, continued the trend by using education to promote moderation.

Rehabilitation Instruments: The phenomenon of recruitment inside prisons generates a need to combat violent extremism inside prisons. Countries across the world have used different approaches to fight against prison radicalization. Some imprison violent extremists with common law prisoners and others separate and isolate them from common prisoners. Though, both strategies failed to address the issue or prison radicalization. Fighting violent extremism in prisons mandates the elimination of channels prisoners maintain with terrorist groups outside.

A "violent extremist" detainee is distinguished from a "violent criminal" because the former justifies violence through religion. An interactive approach is needed to stop violent extremists. There is growing interest in the role prisons play in dealing with violent extremism. Prisons bring together convicted terrorists and become places for recruitment and radicalization.

Prisons are often referred to as "hotbeds" for terrorist recruitment. In 2006, an American publication concluded that prisoner radicalization posed "a major threat to the domestic security of the United States". The report is one of the first reports examining public policies on radicalization in prisons. The sample of countries included Egypt, Algeria, Pakistan, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Israel, Yemen, France, Spain, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Based on field research, the report conceptualizes, examines, and compares policies and practices of countries with prison systems.

It also remains important to recognize the role prisons play for the narratives of radical and militant movements. Egyptian Islamists, German Marxists, and Irish Republicans used the imprisonment and negative treatment of members for rallying points for their movements.

Prisons also provide spaces for inmates to explore new beliefs and associations, including radical narratives. Confronted with existential questions about life and deprived from social

networks, prisoners become vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment. Prisons therefore represent "places of vulnerability" where radicalization has the potential to flourish.

An adaptive approach to new forms of radicalization: Today we face new forms of recruitment by extremist narratives. The resilience of jihadist ideology, recidivism by former inmates, and radicalization in prisons challenge many governments. Prison recruitment presents an even larger danger. Without comprehensive programming to combat it, radicalization in prisons will continue to be an issue not just in Morocco but also across the region. Many countries face constraints by prison and criminal justice systems; especially with inflicting new sentences on detainees perceived to have further radicalized.

The general profile of Moroccan violent extremists: Despite the fact that jihadists lack one profile, it remains useful to identify those vulnerable to extremist ideology, especially to better understand the way terrorists recruit and target. In order to establish a profile, officials need to evaluate educational, social, professional, and socio-economic conditions as well as psychological traits. Six ways to evaluate the vulnerability of an individual include:

- The theory of collective narcissism;
- The theory of social belonging being more important than economic affiliation;
- The theory of repression that produces violence;
- The theory of environmental support;
- The theory of culturally and sub-culturally marginalized groups;
- And the conventional theory that associates extremism to poverty.

Morocco identified three categories of personality types captivated by violent extremism[3], these include those that seek

[3] M. Rezrazi, *The psychological Dynamism of Jihadist Suicide bombers. Doctoral Thesis in Clinical Psychology*, Laboratoire de psychologie Clinique pathologique, FLSH, University Mohammed V., Rabat, 2014.

revenge, prefer militancy, and exhibit suicidal behavioral. In a field study conducted between 2007-2014 of 150 jihadists, results demonstrated that 39 per cent of extremists suffer from a social disorder, 29 per cent show emotional disorders and seven per cent demonstrate cognitive deficits[4]. The results lead us to conclude that violent extremists lack mental illness; instead they carry psychological vulnerabilities.

In Morocco, prisons host 966 detainees, of which 768 detainees affiliate with ISIS and other Syrian and Iraqi jihadist organizations while only 198 affiliate with Jihadist Salafists (closed to al-Qaeda). With regards to age, officials consider 936 detainees adults while only 30 are juveniles. Morocco's rehabilitation and reintegration programs include religious supervision, psychological counseling, literacy training, and professional development. The output of some these programs over the past three years show a positive evolution.

The Moroccan experience in de-radicalization and rehabilitation in prisons: Morocco focuses significant resources to rooting out radicalization among vulnerable prison detainees. Morocco's penitentiary administration collaborates with the Rabita Mohammadiya of Ulemas to connect religious leaders with detainees to engage in religious discourse with detainees. It also operates a reintegration program to ensure prisoners effectively reintegrate into society once released. The Mohammed VI foundation for the reintegration leads these efforts with former prisoners, civil society actors, and religious leaders.

A key component of the program centers on the economic and social welfare of prisoners after reintegration. In a pilot project, Morocco set up seven professional centers for four prisons providing 400 male and 100 female prisoners with vocational training to help them find work upon release. To improve the social aspect of inmates' lives, the Rabita Mohammediya created peer education programs in prisons in Meknes, Salé, Agadir, Safi, Kenitra, and Fez. Educational workshops included

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[4] Ibid.

Tab. 1 - Number of detainees who profited from those programs during last three years

Programs	2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017	
	Number of detainees	%	Number of detainees	%	Number of detainees	%
Professional development	27	3.53	57	6.22	51	5.01
Education	196	25.65	202	22.07	201	19.76
Literacy training	23	3.08	43	4.69	40	3.93
Total	246	32.26	302	32.98	292	28.7

Source: The Annual Report of General Directorate of Prison Administration and Reintegration (DGAPR), 2017

trainings for prison personnel, religious counselors, and peer educators on international laws on prison conditions. The peer educators then conducted additional workshops for others. The peer educators reached over 22,000 detainees, which magnified the potential impact of the program.

On July 19, 2017, Morocco also introduced new elements to prison programs including e-learning centers and addition vocational training centers. The government aims to reinforce good governance in prisons. The program on prisoner reintegration is part of a 2016-2020 strategy seeking to improve prison conditions. It is a part of a broader reform process led by King Mohammed VI focusing on the penal justice system in the kingdom. Beyond prisoner reintegration, the strategy looks to humanize incarceration, guarantee the safety and security of detainees, and modernize prison administration and governance.

A new approach for rehabilitation, "Mosalaha": The Mosalaha program created by the Penitentiary Administration (DGAPR), was designed for detainees sentenced for violent extremism and terrorist-related cases. DGAPR designed the program on three ideas: reconciliation with self, reconciliation with religious text, and reconciliation with society[5] The program intends to steer jailed violent extremists towards reconciliation with themselves, with the fundamentals of Islam, and with Morocco's ethics, values, and ideals.

The Rabita Mohammadiya of Ulemas, National Council for Human Rights, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Habous, Attorney General's office, Magistrate Department, and subject matter experts play significant roles in the program's implementation. The Mosalaha rehabilitation program is included in DGAPR's new strategy, which was announced in March 2017. The goal of the DGAPR is to promote a culture of tolerance that fights violent extremism in prisons. The strategy individualizes sentences and provides just detentions. The DGAPR also tasked a research committee with developing an operational methodology for the implementation of the rehabilitation program[6]. The Mosalaha program centers on six pillars:

1. Religious teachings and seminars aiming to deconstruct extremist interpretation of religious text,
2. Human rights workshops,
3. Legal seminars,
4. Socio-professional mentoring,
5. Testimonies from victims of terrorism, which are videotaped,
6. Debate groups.

[5] "Prisons: le programme 'Mossalaha' au profit des condamnés pour terrorisme expliqué par la DGAPR", Le360 (avec MAP), 24 August 2017.
[6] Ibid.

6. Radicalization in Tunisia: In Search of a Civilian Approach

Emna Ben Mustapha Ben Arab

The 2011 Tunisian revolution precipitated high expectations regarding the alleviation of widespread poverty and unemployment, and the creation of political and socioeconomic opportunities. But social and economic challenges persisted, and in some cases, worsened in the post-revolutionary period. This has fueled disillusionment with the revolution, weakened an already fragile relationship between the state and its citizens, and created a fertile recruiting atmosphere for Salafi jihadist groups that capitalized on the permissive post-revolutionary environment.

In fact, in the first years after the revolution, the Tunisian government gave broad leeway to Salafi jihadist groups like Ansar al-Sharia by allowing them to engage in *dawa* (religious proselytization) and provide social services to local communities. By the time the government cracked down on Ansar al-Sharia in 2013, the group had entrenched itself in local communities, propagated its worldview to thousands of Tunisian youth, and built a robust organizational structure that included extensive recruitment networks.

This convergence of factors has contributed to a massive radicalization campaign that led to Tunisia's foreign fighter crisis. According to a report published by the Soufan Group in 2015, between 6,000 and 7,000 radicalized Tunisians are believed to have traveled to Syria to join jihadist groups, making Tunisia the single largest exporter of foreign fighters per capita in the world[1].

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[1] *Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq*, New York, The Soufan Group, December 2015.

The Tunisian government's response to the foreign fighter crisis and to the broader jihadist threat has, for the most part, been reactive and security-focused. In the wake of the terrorist attacks that struck the country in 2015, the government implemented a number of punitive measures, which included closing mosques believed to be run by Salafi jihadists, suspending over 150 civil organizations with alleged links to terrorism, and making mass arrests of suspected militants[2]. Most notably, the government declared a state of emergency after the June 26, 2015 Sousse attack that killed 38 people of whom 30 were British citizens. And after a suicide bombing on November 24, 2015 in Tunis that killed 12 members of the Tunisian presidential, the government announced another state of emergency, which is still in place today and was recently extended to September 2018. In July 2015, Tunisia also passed a new counter-terrorism law imposing stringent punishments, including the death penalty, for convicted terrorists.

Tunisia's approach to foreign fighter returnees has similarly focused almost exclusively on punitive measures. In 2014, the Tunisian government considered the establishment of a reintegration program for returnees who had not fought with jihadist groups, but this initiative did not gain traction. Instead, in November 2015, then Tunisian Foreign Minister Taieb Baccouch explained that the government "*would not accept a pardon for legal accountability*"[3]. Tunisian President Beji Essebsi, after declaring that the Tunisian Constitution guarantees the right of return to all Tunisians and that Tunisian prisons were overcrowded, backtracked days later declaring a repentance law for returnees was not an option[4]. This position also appears to

[2] H. Malka, "Tunisia: Confronting Extremism", in J.B. Alterman (Ed.), *Religious Radicalism after the ArabUprisings*, London, Rowman and Littlefield, 2015, p. 109.

[3] S. Souli, "Tunisia: Why Foreign Fighters Abandon ISIL", *Al Jazeera*, 3 March 2016.

[4] "L'UGTT se prononce contre la Loi du repentir et pour la poursuite judiciaire des terroristes!", *Business News*, 14 December 2016.

enjoy the support of Tunisian CSOs and Unions[5].

Indeed, in January 2017, a call was launched by Tunisian citizen groups to demonstrate against the return of terrorists who fought in Syria, Libya, and Iraq. The General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), the major Union in the country, also declared its rejection of a repentance law for terrorists who, it argued, must be prosecuted before Tunisian courts. These positions reflect the absence of a societal debate in relation to radicalization and the Tunisian government's shift towards a more security-centric policy regarding returning foreign fighters.

The National Strategy for Counter-terrorism adopted by Tunisia's National Security Council in 2016 announced a change in the strategic direction needed to tackle the problem as it stipulates that fighting extremism and terrorism requires a multidimensional approach built around the four main axes of prevention, protection, judicial proceedings, and retaliation.

In prioritizing prevention, there appears to be a consensus among political actors to tackle this security challenge by addressing the root causes of radicalization and enhancing the capacity of security forces to anticipate the threat and react accordingly.

But, so far there has been no operational preventive strategy in place to counter a growing jihadist threat that goes beyond security in the narrowest sense. This lack of a preventive strategy, due to poor institutional coordination, numerous administrative obstacles, fragmentation of stakeholders (the ministries and the multiple *ad hoc* counter-terrorism commissions) and resources, is leading to underperformance in preventing and countering radicalization. It is hampering effective integration into a clear strategic vision of the financial and technical support that Tunisia receives as part of its collaboration with regional and international partners.

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[5] Y. Bellamine, "Des citoyens appellent à manifester contre le retour de terroristes tunisiens en Tunisie", *Huffington Post*, 13 December 2016.

A viable preventive strategy should reflect a deep understanding of jihadist groups, and their surprising capacity to morph into various shapes and forms and to change their strategies of propagating their extremist ideologies and attracting young people to their rows. For this strategy to be effective, a thorough understanding of the characteristics, motivations, and pathways of radicalized Tunisians is critically important. Within this context, and in response to the needs of Tunisian authorities, the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies (ITES) undertook a research project from January to April 2017 aimed at exploring pathways to radicalization and understanding primary motivations that prompt Tunisian youth to fight in foreign wars. The project seeks to provide Tunisian authorities with an important starting point for the development of counter-radicalization measures separate from reactive and exclusively security-focused approaches.

Based on interviews conducted with convicted foreign fighters, which includes an overall terror-convicted population of 82, among whom 58 individuals attempted to travel, traveled, or expressed their intention to travel to conflict zones, or perpetrated a terrorist attack on Tunisian soil from 2011-2016, ITES research reveals a wealth of socio-demographic information on Tunisian foreign fighters[6].

Young people are the group targeted by the rhetoric of terrorist organizations. Over 55 per cent of the sample population aged between 20-29 years. Radicalization seems to affect primarily the category of unmarried young people the most. This highlights that the absence of social bonds, and a relatively low

[6] Due to legal constraints, only convicted FFs were interviewed. A systematic identification of convicted FFs was conducted in all high-security prisons where terrorism offenders were dispersed (this offender category is integrated into the mainstream inmate population and not segregated in separate detention facilities. They are, nevertheless, subject to a restrictive regime and to specialized security measures implemented on the basis of individual risk assessment). All identified FFs were subjected to individual face-to-face interviews, which were based on voluntary informed consent (Nuremberg Code 1947/ Belmont Report 1978). These interviews took place between January and April 2017.

level of responsibility within the family context facilitates the indoctrination of this social category. The population sample belongs to the most vulnerable social groups in terms of material resources, lower social status (they generally have independent jobs such as sole traders, with insecure and fluctuating incomes) and the marginalization of their neighborhoods (*i.e.*, localities, towns, governorates).

Looking at their backgrounds, most of the interviewees do not appear to have a particular set of moral convictions and, therefore, cannot be placed within a particular radical or extremist context, at least not prior to their involvement in jihadist extremism. However, just over half of those examined for this study participated in the 2011 revolution, and many had high expectations for the revolution's ability to overcome injustice and bring about far-reaching social, political, and economic change in Tunisia. Ultimately, most of these individuals came to see the 2011 revolution as a failure, and this appears to have led some, including previously uninvolved individuals, on a path to extremism.

Other factors that have likely pushed those young people toward extreme radicalization include low school attainment and a strong feeling of injustice.

Limited academic attainment is a recurring variable. Many interviewees had not graduated beyond primary school, 40 per cent of respondents dropped out of secondary school while a further 25 per cent quit before graduating junior high school. Twenty-five per cent reported that academic failure spurred their dropout, 4 per cent were dismissed and 14 per cent regarded schooling as a "useless process". Finally, 9 per cent were unable to afford their education. This seems to represent a cause of radicalization indicating that indoctrination targets a social category that is easy prey to manipulation.

The injustice experienced by interviewees is another statistically significant factor. Ninety per cent of the sample associated Tunisia, either totally or partially, with the image of "the country of injustice". Despite their different life trajectories, all of

them voiced feelings of what they consider grievances inflicted on them directly or indirectly. Their account of incurred acts of injustice covers almost all the phases of their personal life trajectories and features as the main trigger of their inducement to embrace extremism. Their view of injustice can be categorized into two subcomponents:

- Injustice at the national level
- Injustice at the international level

The participants define “injustice at the national level” as the sum total of exclusive measures and obstacles to which they have been presumably subjected, including economic and social exclusion, restrictions on freedom, and the lack of opportunities.

The feeling of economic and social exclusion is particularly strong among the interviewees since, for them, integration into society is unattainable without the prerequisites of decent living conditions. Indeed, most participants mentioned the absence of opportunities for leading a decent life, the lack of economic development in their localities, and the marginalization of their neighborhood. This sense of economic insecurity along with its associated mood of mistrust and fear are among the most important drivers that enticed them into adopting the extremist dogma. In addition, their insistence on the existence of a systematic exclusion policy and their emphasis on the state’s intention to further eliminate them, render their outlooks for reality melancholic and incite them to demonstrate more proclivity for extremism.

Participants assume that the state restricts their individual freedom, especially the freedom of religious practice. Most of them affirm that the state restricted their freedom of movement by depriving them of their passports or preventing them from obtaining the necessary authorizations to launch their personal businesses because of their religious affiliation. They explain that the state is hostile to religion, since it prevented them from gathering in mosques, delivering religious sermons, and wearing clothes that reflect their religious affiliation. They also decry

the state's continuous attempts to prevent their womenfolk from wearing what they call "prescribed religious garments".

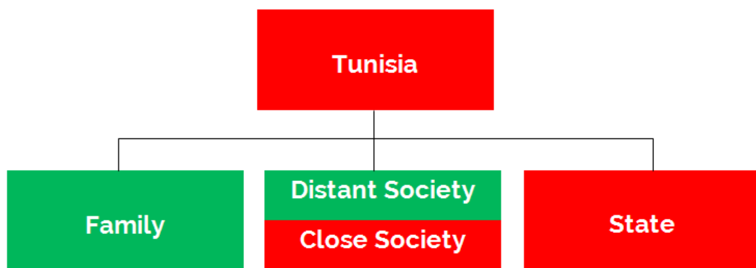
The participants consider the period extending between 2011 and 2013 as an exception. They believe that it is the only period during which they were able to exercise their freedom without restrictions and pressures. They also maintain that the state resumed repression against them and restrictions on their freedom after 2013 when it prevented them from preaching religious precepts (*i.e.*, delivering religious sermons in public, openly inviting people to embrace their religious doctrine, etc.) and joining organized proselytizing groups (such as the ban on the organization of Ansar al-Sharia).

This view is founded on the idea that the state and its institutions conspire against them and deprive them of their rights. This category of people believes that the extremist way of life and its associated rhetoric has become an integral part of freedom of expression and religious practice, and that society, or at least part of it, should be constructed on these values, and that the revolution period with its absolute freedom should be the norm.

Related to this point is the interviewees' perception of their homeland to which they express a weak sense of belonging. The links that exist between them and their homeland are restricted to a set of communal bonds: family, friends, neighborhood, and society. On the other hand, they point out that Tunisia belongs to the greater nation, the Arab nation, or the Muslim community. This negative view of Tunisia is based essentially on a sense of disappointment, injustice, and lack of opportunity. This conflicted relationship with the state is clearer among the radicalized participants, who speak about state injustice and place particular emphasis on the abusive behavior of police forces. Tunisia is also described as a country that fights Islam and Muslims. Thus, injustice seems to be a pivotal issue influencing respondents.

The relationship between the detainees and their homeland is based on the detainees' personal success in general. According

to the participants' own judgment, the strength of this relationship depends primarily on the quality of life and the availability of resources and opportunities offered to them. This utilitarian view of "homeland" is based on the notion of cronyism, which breeds a feeling of being the target of injustice and a victim of the system[7]. As there is, in their view, a total fusion of the homeland and the regime, there is, therefore, no sense of citizenship and patriotism, nor is there a culture of identity. They categorize it (*i.e.*, Tunisia) into three parts, according to the concept of "close vs. distant" (see graph below):



Their relationship with the "homeland" is two-faceted. On the one hand, they show a positive attitude toward whatever is close to them, such as their family, which supports them regardless of their conditions, or their immediate communal circle as represented by neighborhood residents and friends. On the other hand, they take a confrontational stance toward the rest of society including the state and its institutions.

The interviewees vehemently emphasize injustice felt at the international level. It revolves around the idea that world

[7] Quotes from some of the respondents: "...Tunisia did not provide me with anything...One of my biggest mistakes is that I remained in this country...I had the opportunity to leave, but I missed it..."; "An unjust country...an unjust regime... a system devoid of justice"; "Tunisia is a country of injustice... a country of confinement/imprisonment... It prosecuted us for our ideas".

powers are conspiring against the Islamic nation. Therefore, all the problems and disappointments experienced by the Arab and Islamic world are assumed to be caused by the external machinations plotted by the "infidel West" against Muslims or through the exploitation of allies among "traitors and mercenary agents" in the Arab world to crush the Muslim world. They, therefore, see themselves as victims of a global conspiracy.

This conspiratorial plot is headed by the United States as is evidenced, according to them, by the "Gulf War", the "war in Afghanistan", and the "war in Iraq", as well as their unconditional support for Israel in its religious war against Muslims. The list of enemies involved in this conspiracy also includes the Shiites, the Alawi regime in Syria, Russia, and other countries.

This view, which lays the blame on others and portrays them as the source of all-evil, has fueled the respondents' sense of victimization. It has equally generated bonds of affiliation and identification with extremist groups, which are seen by these young people as having "revolted" against this plot in their quest for "dignity" found neither in their homelands nor elsewhere in the Arab-Islamic world. Consequently, they embarked on this search for heroic role models embodied by extremist groups, especially if these heroic stereotypes happen to adopt the sanctified apparel of religion.

These perceived injustices reinforce the idea among those ideologically committed individuals that "fighting such injustices" in any country around the world and deploying all possible means to that end falls within the category of "sacred jihad", notwithstanding civilian casualties.

According to the survey, two basic types of individuals are targeted by ideological activists: socially frustrated and marginalized youths often traumatized and with a criminal background in quest for friendship, identity, and a better future (22 per cent of the respondents said they traveled abroad for "jihad", while 32 per cent said they traveled to find a job) and adventurers who are in it for the thrills. This typology based on the above-mentioned motivations may be used as an aid

to develop more specific and targeted strategies for preventing violent radicalization and facilitating disengagement.

Indeed, a purely state-centric approach is insufficient for combating these non-state security threats emanating from the complex process of radicalization. Rather than using kinetic force, efforts to mitigate underlying conditions that facilitate radicalization must be emphasized. Prevention depends largely on identifying people of risk of violent extremism and diverting them away from that course of action through investing in knowledge (education) and developing counter narratives that emphasize non-violence, tolerance, and a modernist interpretation of religion.

If a society wishes to permanently stave off Salafi jihadist ideology, it must possess the necessary tools and aptitude of critical thought to resist and challenge extremist narratives. An adequate education may help individuals to more easily disengage from recruiters who distort religious narratives. For this purpose, increasing investment in education across the board is a means to reduce the high dropout rates and would likely return substantial security dividends. According to a MYPRC policy brief[8], the number of dropouts in Tunisia in 2016 is around 96,000, which corresponds to 5 per cent of the total school population. Between 1980 and 2016, the number of dropouts reached 4.5 million among which 2.5 million was present at the job market in 2014. That is more than 70 per cent of the workforce; and 1.5 million out the 2.5 were elementary school dropouts. Since the 1980s, between 25 and 50 per cent of the Ministry of Education budget has been spent on youth who end up leaving school without a proper education. These dropouts, once on the job market, hardly integrate or persist in the formal sector. This impacts the ability of Tunisia to integrate a world economy characterized by Artificial Intelligence, weakens the capacity of these individuals to accumulate revenues,

[8] J. Nizar and F. Zidi, *Le décrochagescolaire en Tunisie: les coûts invisibles que la nation paye*, Mena Youth Policy Center, Policy Brief no. 1, January 2018

which affects their economic and social conditions and hampers the state's effort to mobilize fiscal resources while required to provide further services.

Empathizing with grievances and addressing them is key in the prevention strategy. If dire socio-economic conditions are reversed, insurgents' appeal and potency will wither away. The key to weakening insurgents capabilities to recruit and mobilize youth is to dismantle the insurgents' social base by winning over the hearts and minds of local communities and working with them to rebuild trust, that is to adopt a "bottom-up approach that requires considerable material and ideological investment"[9].

A potential policy response to the extremist threat is to develop systems of gradual rehabilitation and disengagement for inmates and convicted terrorists. The institutionalization of a formal de-radicalization program for convicts serving prison time and a rehabilitation program for individuals nearing the end of their sentences through the multi-actor support of psychological counseling, mobilizing religious authorities, and vocational training could help alleviate problems of recidivism and further radicalization in incarceration facilities. Non-governmental entities, religious leaders, and civil society organizations can play a critical role in addressing both the terrorist threat and the root grievances of the communities in which they operate and therefore diminishing the resonance of violent ideologies. Families also could play a positive role in this effort, as a majority of respondents identified family as being very important to them (92.7 per cent of respondents reported that their families are a source of stability and protection). Rehabilitation programs should take advantage of tight-knit families to better reintegrate ex-prisoners into society.

As many of the respondents identified government repression after 2013 as the source of their radicalization, the Tunisian

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[9] F.A. Gerges, "ISIS and the Third Wave of Jihadism", *Current History*, December 2014.

government should reconsider some of the alternative policies that encourage militants to abandon violence, such as amnesty for non-violent offenders for efficacy and success. As an alternative to repression, Morocco has been at the helm in institutionalizing seemingly effective de-radicalization programs in North Africa. The Moroccan government tackles underlying factors that may push individuals toward extremism by coopting religious affairs and structures, embracing political reforms (albeit just enough to appease the population), preventing radicalization within the prison system, initiating societal reintegration programs for prisoners, and engaging in rapprochement with former radical Salafists[10].

By repressing Salafi organizations, regardless of the degree of militancy, Tunisia may be unintentionally reinforcing a narrative of persecution and pushing certain individuals to identify with the more militant wing. The survey identified that many inmates justify their radicalism based upon feeling oppressed by the government; relaxing some restrictions on non-violent Salafi organizations might reduce the potential for radicalization among vulnerable populations.

Radicalization will remain a major threat to national security. However, by addressing the underlying and catalytic factors of political, economic, social, and cultural terrorism, vulnerabilities will be mitigated. Proactivity in which divesting terrorism of any capacity to take the initiative will have to be prioritized.

Due to the fact that the treatment of the underlying factors of terrorism cannot yield results except in the medium term, the objective will then consist in sending to the nation strong indications of tackling such factors through setting up voluntaristic and efficient public policies, which could spark off palpable results.

This approach, though inevitable, takes hard work, resources and time which all play to the recruiters' advantage. It is fatal to

[10] M.S. Tamek, *Morocco's Approach to Countering Violent Extremism*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 16 May 2014.

assume that radicalization is squarely framed by a local context with only limited implications for other countries. It is rather a regional and global problem that requires a regional and international front. Until this is taken seriously, extremists will continue to entrench themselves in our cities and provinces.

7. Egypt between Terrorism and Radicalization: The State-Society Nexus

Ziad A. Akl

Egypt has faced a significant terrorist threat over the past few years. Since 2011, domestic and regional terrorism-related events in Egypt have been in constant transformation. Regionally, the Arab Spring created a vacuum in the Middle East and North Africa, specifically in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. The various implications of these vacuums, and the new security challenges, and shortcomings they created made Egypt more vulnerable to terrorist threats. Domestically, the revolutions of 2011 and 2013 gave birth to new grounds for radicalization within Egyptian society. Simultaneously, post-revolutionary political environments in Egypt changed significantly over the past seven years. The various dimensions of each of these environments created a different pattern of terrorism and different grounds and platforms for radicalization.

Therefore, the terrorist threat Egypt faces has to be evaluated within a dual track that separates terrorism from radicalization, and addresses both the context and approach towards countering the threat. At times, Egypt has confused the two, leading it to give full attention to designing counter-terrorism (CT) policies. It could be argued that the extensive terrorist attacks Egypt witnessed in the period from 2013-2015 were a reason to prioritize CT policies. However, recently, mainly in 2017, the focus started to shift towards developing policies and taking initiatives focused on countering violent extremism (CVE) and radicalization. While some CVE initiatives were launched in 2017, and some stirred positive feedback within society, it

would be fair to say that on the level of policy, Egypt's CVE policies are still in the making.

Contextualizing the threat

Both terrorism and radicalization have very different contexts in Egypt. Terrorism in Egypt has two main frameworks in which it revolves: a political framework and a military and security framework. Egypt's post June 30, 2013 regime has always regarded countering terrorism as one of its most essential political tools to pass a post-revolutionary politically contentious phase. Moreover, the *raison d'etre* of the regime, and its repertoire is built on saving Egypt from political division, civil violence, and widespread terrorism. After the Egyptian government officially recognized the Muslim Brotherhood as a banned terrorist group, undoubtedly more political aspects were added into the equation. Countering terrorism to the current Egyptian regime is not a mere process of national security and official duty; it is also one of the pillars upon which the regime stands. Therefore, CT strategies are not only given national priority within state planning and expenditure, they also have a very crucial political value.

The military and security framework of the terrorist threat in Egypt entails new patterns of terrorism, new violent groups, and a change in the geopolitics of the threat[1]. Since 2015, Egypt witnessed the brand of terrorism ISIS introduced to the region. Terrorist groups declared their allegiance to ISIS under the name "Wilayet Sinai" (The Sinai Province). The group used the Sinai Mountains and remote locations to try and exercise control over geographic territory to establish a province for the caliphate. The territory controlled by Wilayet Sinai never reached a significant parameter, but allowed for a temporary quasi-control of territory due to counter-terrorism operations

[1] Z.A. Akl, "Non-Territorial Terrorism: Implications for Egypt", *Ahram Online*, 24 January 2016.

orchestrated by the armed forces and police. However, targeting territory entails a specific pattern in both attacks and CT operations. With extensive military presence and more comprehensive CT operations since early 2017, ISIS no longer controls land in Sinai. But this is not to say that they are no longer present in Egypt, it only means that the pattern of non-territorial terrorism is different, and requires equal transformation within CT strategies and operations.

On the other hand, radicalization that results in violent extremism must be seen within the context of the various push and pull factors that compose platforms for radicalization within Egyptian society[2]. Egypt suffers from structural push factors that drive individuals towards adopting more radical thought, primarily socioeconomic ones. It is no surprise that Egypt's number one terrorism spot is Northern Sinai, a city marginalized over the years, underdeveloped, and inhabited by a majority of Bedouin population that suffers from exclusion and lack of equal opportunities. Pull factors also evolved. Over the past 5 years, post-revolutionary trauma was used as ground for attracting potential recruits into radicalized thought and violent extremism. Post-revolutionary trauma, either related to encountering violence, losing a loved one, or even the mere feelings of frustration and disappointment due the change in the political environment pull individuals towards radicalization. Unlike the majority of Egyptian researchers working on radicalization in Egypt, I would argue that factors related to post-revolutionary trauma, specifically ones related to violence, have been more influential in forming platforms for radicalization than the attraction or appeal of Jihadist ideologies. However, radicalization responses in Egypt still give priority to the components of radical ideologies rather than the context that gave them appeal in the first place.

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[2] "Advancing CVE research: the roles of global and regional coordinating bodies", European Commission, CT Morse, June 2016.

Egypt's counter-terrorism policies[3]

With varying degrees of priority, Egypt's counter-terrorism policies could be divided into three main dimensions that constitute Egypt's overall CT approach. The first dimension is the hard-core security policies designed to operationally target terrorist groups and dismantle the networks on which they rely. This dimension is translated into several practical decisions like declaring a state of emergency in the country, organizing military comprehensive CT operations, and working on implementing a safe zone between Egypt and the Gaza Strip to intercept terrorist networks. The second dimension is concerned with the victims of terrorist attacks. Medical services and financial compensations are the most common interactions between the state and the victims of terrorism, specifically civilians. However, the lack of any institutional framework to organize the state-victim relationship points to the fact that this dimension is not equally prioritized.

Finally, the third dimension of Egypt's current CT approach is the one concerned with CVE in order to apply preventive measures and protect society from potential terrorists. However, the Egyptian state has been seeing this process as one that is based upon revising the religious discourse and teachings that breed of religious extremism. The Egyptian President has publicly spoken more than once about the necessity of reviving the religious discourse, pointing out that it is a crucial duty religious institutions need to assume. Going back to the idea of the push and pull factors of radicalization, the main focus of the state has been on one aspect – ideology related pull factors while fairly ignoring the others. As a result, religious institutions like Al-Azhar, Dar Al-Iftaa – the state institution responsible for issuing religious fatwas – the Ministry of Endowments, and the recently established high council for countering terrorism and

[3] E. Ragab, *Counter-terrorism policies in Egypt: effectiveness and challenges*, 30PapersIeMed, Euromesco, European Institute of the Mediterranean, 2016.

extremism, carry out Egypt's CVE approach. In the following section, the role of those institutions in CVE, their initiatives, activities, and vision towards de-radicalization and CVE will be discussed at length.

Al-Azhar

Al-Azhar, the most important, influential, and resourceful religious institution in Egypt has for a very long time been one of the tools of the state to monitor Islamic discourse in Egyptian society. As both a religious and educational institute its reach within society is unparalleled by any other state institution in Egypt. Meanwhile, the institution enjoys high levels of credibility among average Egyptians as a legitimate source of "fatwa". These various factors allow al-Azhar to work on different levels and with different approaches towards CVE.

Al-Azhar dialogue center

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, in an address to the nation on January 1, 2015, said that "the terrorism Egypt is witnessing is because of a mistaken understanding of a proper religious discourse, and that he has asked Al-Azhar to hurry in reaching a new religious discourse that matches current transformations yet maintains the moderate true spirit of Islam". In February 2015, Al-Azhar launched the dialogue center with the purpose of promoting diversity and intra-religious dialogue. During this time, in early 2015, Egypt witnessed an upsurge in terrorist attacks, an increase in violent groups, and direct threats made to Copts as potential targets by those new groups. It is also important to note that between 2011-2013 saw significant religious polarization within Egyptian society and politics. Therefore, the philosophy behind the initiative was both socially and politically motivated.

Although the philosophy expressed in 2015 by Al-Azhar officials and scholars in Egyptian media about the center was

appropriate and timely, the effect of the dialogue center remained minimal for a variety of reasons. The first is how politically motivated the decision was after the President bluntly said that he is asking Al-Azhar to hurry. The politically oriented response came without sufficient time to actually envision the needed functions that this center was expected to perform.

In July 2015, Al-Azhar's Grand Imam, Dr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb admitted in an interview to the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* that the center was originally called "the committee of religions' dialogue", and that the committee is an old initiative between Al-Azhar and the Vatican[4]. The center's activities were mainly ceremonial, and its board witnessed a re-shuffle of its members in February 2018. The new board is headed by the same old head (a member of the grand scholars committee of Al-Azhar), the President of Azhar University, the President of Cairo University, the director of the Alexandria library, a former minister of culture, a professor of Islamic Jurisprudence and a professor of philosophy[5]. New members have stated that the center will assume its role in CVE through being opened to all different opinions and preaching moderation through dialogue. Unlike the case in 2015, the dialogue center did develop a clear mandate that is directed towards the Egyptian inside that it did not have the time to reach when it was renamed in 2015.

Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism[6]

In June 2015, Al-Azhar Grand Imam opened the observatory with a website operating in eight different languages and a new range of outreach for the institution. The philosophy behind establishing the observatory was to closely monitor radical

[4] A. al Tayib, "The Grand Imam in an interview with al-Ahram: "we are not a priestly institution that does not accept criticism", *Al Ahram Online*, 20 July 20 2015.

[5] S.A. Al Haadi, "The Grand Imam reshapes the Center for Dialogue and emphasizes the need to open to bright minds in the West and in the East", *Al Ahram Online*, 1 May 2018.

[6] *Al-Azhar*, "About al-Azhar Observatory".

Islam all over the world, and respond to those ideas in different languages and within different contexts. This approach reflects a change within the pattern in which Al-Azhar was operating. The main difference is that the observatory shows that the institution is no longer satisfied with responding to radical claims or pointing fingers at Islam when a Jihadist terrorist performs an operation. Through the observatory, Al-Azhar is thoroughly and meticulously searching for radical content and responding to it, which means that the observatory allows Al-Azhar to take initiative and not just assume a responsive role.

The observatory performs a range of tasks that are mostly research related, but its operational strategy is quite systematic. The process starts with daily monitoring of a diverse range of sources for data gathering. The data gathered is then divided into categories depending on its priority, with news of terrorist groups as category "A". Other categories include news about Islam or Muslims around the world, news that have to do with Islamic academia around the world, and news concerning the domestic state of affairs regarding Islam. The data observed and gathered is then filtered to determine radical ideas and essential issues that Al-Azhar needs to respond to through the observatory's website. Further data analysis takes place in order to determine issues needing collective analysis through workshops and reports. Moreover, the observatory works systematically on translating counter-extremism material produced by Al-Azhar into 7 different languages.

It would be fair to say that the observatory is the first institutional CVE effort in Egypt. The institutional efficiency that the observatory works with has positively reflected on the results it has achieved so far. Through systematic data gathering, the observatory has created a database that is very beneficial for further analytical and qualitative research into radicalization. At the same time, providing a CVE platform that is available in seven different languages is indeed a plus. Domestically, the interactive responses the observatory offers on faith related questions and the awareness campaigns it organizes through the

extremely geographically widespread networks of the Al-Azhar all over Egypt. Finally, in measuring the observatory's efficiency as a CVE initiative or tool, it must be realized that the observatory's institutional structure has proved more viable and more capable of maintaining a long-term presence.

Fatwa Kiosks

In July 2017, a CVE initiative appeared by Al-Azhar through its Islamic Research Academy. The idea was to set up small kiosks in Cairo's underground stations where scholars from Al-Azhar were present to answer any questions from metro passengers[7]. The initiative, like other Al-Azhar initiatives was built on the idea that countering extremism is done primarily by rectifying misperceived notions of the faith and replacing those with the Al-Azhar's moderate discourse. In theory, and from on the surface, the philosophy of the initiative was no different than the core beliefs of Al-Azhar's role in countering extremism. It even provided the institution with direct interactions with citizens and became more accessible to them.

However, the practice introduced Al-Azhar to a new area within the sphere of Egyptian society, public space. Countering religious extremism somehow contradicts making religion occupy more spaces within society. It eventually leads to religion being taken out of its original faith-oriented context and into a more populist context where it's officially and institutionally allowed to invade public space, leading eventually to creating new grounds for radicalization.

The Fatwa kiosks received fierce criticism from Egyptian social media users; especially since the Cairo underground is used every day by millions. Egyptian liberal and leftist intellectuals attacked Fatwa kiosks on the grounds it decontextualized religion and misunderstood the essence of comprehensively countering extremism. In less than three months, Al- Azhar did not renew its contract with the Cairo Metro Authority and the

[7] Rada al Qahara, "Fatwa kiosk in Cairo's Metro", *BBC Arabic*, 20 July 2017.

kiosks were closed down. Al-Azhar then stated that the idea was never intended to be long-term and was a mere experiment[8]. Whether the kiosks were an actual experiment or a long-term project does not make much difference. Countering religious extremism contradicts allowing religion into more areas if society, even with a moderate discourse. Moreover, the initiative not only allowed Al-Azhar as a religious institution into public space, but also allowed the state into public space. In the end, the experiment showed that institutional comprehensive work is a must for successful CVE initiatives in Egypt.

The World Organization for Al-Azhar Graduates

The World Organization is not an institutional part of Al-Azhar's structure. The organization was in fact started in 2007 as an Egyptian non-governmental organization (NGO). As the name suggests, the organization is composed of Al-Azhar Alumni with 13 branches in Egypt and 15 branches abroad including in countries like Somalia, Chad, Mali, Kenya, Mali and Libya[9]. Due to its tight connection to the state through Al-Azhar, the organization is given more access than other NGOs. The organization has far reach in Egypt and Al-Azhar alumni witness growing threats of violent extremism. One of the organization's most important CVE initiatives in Egypt is its counter-radicalization work with young people from border cities in Egypt in cooperation with the Egyptian Ministry of Youth.

Throughout 2017, the organization launched an initiative to conduct training courses to youth from border cities to counter the influence of extremist thought. Border cities in Egypt are the most marginalized, very underdeveloped with high unemployment rates, and vulnerable to radicalization due to an overall abundance of presence of push and pull factors to extremism. The initiative targeted youth from Northern Sinai, Al-Wadi Al

[8] "'Fatwa Kiosks' to close: Cairo Metro authority", *Egypt Today*, 4 October 2017.

[9] Azhar Graduates, "The World Organization for al-Azhar's graduates".

Jadeed on Egypt's Western borders, Matrouh (North-East border with Libya), Red Sea, Halayeb and Luxor[10]. In 2107, the organization worked with 10,000 young men and women, with the aid of the Ministry of Youth, and also organized discussions between experts from military academies and youth about to teach them about national security strategies.

It is too early to measure the effectiveness of an initiative that ended months ago, in December 2017, and is supposed to continue through 2018. However, there are some positive remarks that should not go unnoticed within this specific case of CVE initiatives in Egypt. First of all, the interaction between the organization as an NGO and the Ministry of Youth is a model needed within CVE initiatives in Egypt. Second, reaching out to youth from border-marginalized cities reflects an awareness of push factors; issues that drive people to radicalization or make them more vulnerable to extremist ideas. Border city youth are the perfect target group in Egypt for this matter. Third, organizing training courses that include curricula combining citizenship, national security, and religious moderation is a model of CVE approaches that could be called "multi-sectorial". Due to the nature of the radicalization and extremism threat in Egypt, a multi-sectorial approach would be appropriate for an effective CVE approach.

The High Council for Countering Terrorism and Extremism (HCCTE)

Al-Azhar is not the only entity within Egyptian state institutions concerned with countering extremism and radicalization. During the first ten days of July 2017, Egypt witnessed two days of terrorist operations against its forces in Northern Sinai, Ismailiya, and Gizeh[11]. Two weeks later, on July 26, the

[10] "Strong progress for al-Azhar graduates' organization in the fight against extremism in 2017", *Youm7*, 27 December 2017 (in Arabic).

[11] "Egypt: two days after terrorist attacks and major security operations", *Sky*

Egyptian President issued the presidential decree no.355 for the year 2017 to establish the "National Council for Countering Terrorism and Extremism" (NCCTE)[12]. Until now, the council has remained dormant and ineffective without a clear vision or mandate. In March 2018, the Egyptian cabinet sent a draft law organizing the mandate of the council to the House of Representatives, according to which the council will be renamed to HCCTE[13].

The founding philosophy behind establishing the council, ever since the presidential decree was issued in 2017 was to achieve maximum benefits from coordinating between different efforts of state institutions and expertise. In the draft law that was sent from the cabinet to the House of Representatives there is more than one article that stresses the idea of summarizing the mandate of the council in creating a diverse platform for all state institutions and representatives who are concerned with countering terrorism and extremism. This philosophy is clearly reflected in article three of the draft law, which stipulates the members of the council. The membership includes state representatives, intellectuals, and academics. However, according to the draft law, members of the council are state representatives occupying official positions. The draft law entails that the membership of the council will be composed of the Prime Minister, Head of Parliament, Al-Azhar's Imam, the Coptic Church's Pope, Minister of Defense, Minister of Endowments, Minister of Interior, Minister of Justice, Head of General intelligence, and other official representatives of state institutions.

The new council is supposed to perform specific functions according to its mandate in the draft law. The first of those functions is designing a national strategy for countering terrorism and extremism once every five years. The council is also

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News, July 9, 2017.

[12] "Republican decree for the establishment of a National Council for countering terrorism and extremism", *Akhbarelyom.com*, 26 July 2017 (in Arabic).

[13] E. Aaraqi, "Al-Ahram shares unpublished draft law for the High Council for countering terrorism and extremism", *Ahramonline*, 29 March 2018 (in Arabic).

supposed to design counter-terrorism and extremism policies, plans, programs, initiatives for the various state institutions concerned with the issue. Functions also include designing awareness raising programs for citizens, suggesting plans to create job opportunities in the areas most vulnerable to radical thought, and suggesting legislative amendments that will help with countering terrorism and many other functions. The suggested mandate of the council in the draft law is comprehensive involving all related dimensions of CT and CVE. While this might be seen as a positive move, macro mandates can be misleading due to the vast amount of roles, which can cause confusion in responsibilities and accountability. However, the council could have a positive effect if it manages to decentralize its strategies to make the best use of various institutions available within the state.

The Ministry of Endowments

The Ministry worked on two parallel lines within its counter-radicalization efforts. It established control and supervision over the content of the Friday prayers and exercised direct supervision over mosques and their activities. Those two tasks allowed the Ministry to establish structural control over places of worship, specifically after the Ministry's decision in November 2016 to establish administrative boards to monitor all the activities of each mosque, including the teachings offered, allocating donations collected, and monitoring bank accounts of mosques[14]. At the same time, small mosques, known in Arabic as "Zawya" were closed down or put under the Ministry's direct control when the Ministry issued decisions with certain specifications for a mosque to be licensed[15]. These small mosques,

[14] "The official journal publishes the decision of the Ministry of Endowments to establish a High Committee for the administration of mosques", *Youm7*, 10 November 2016 (in Arabic).

[15] "A court supports the decision to entrust mosques and zawyas to the authority and supervision of the Ministry of Endowments", *Aswat Masriya*, 2 February 2016 (in Arabic).

spread all over Egypt, specifically in rural areas and lower-class neighborhoods have been used in Egypt since the 1980's as breeding ground for radicalization and extremist Islam.

By unifying Friday prayers, the Ministry aimed to monitor radical discourse used by some mosque Imams. While the Ministry used the tool to fight radicalization and revive religious discourse, the decision is both politically motivated and significant[16]. The Egyptian regime started to expand its role within society, and religious spheres were one of them. The government feared a wave of religious radicalization in the aftermath of June 30 and widespread Muslim Brotherhood "Rabaa" sit-ins.

Dar Al-Iftaa (House of Fatwa)

Egypt's house of Fatwa is concerned primarily with issuing Fatwas that make the religious teachings more flexible, up to date, and tolerant. With similar political will as al-Azhar and the Ministry of Endowments for countering extremism, Dar Al-Iftaa has sought to expand its presence within the religious sphere in Egyptian society. Social media was one of the main tools used by the House of Fatwa to spread its moderate religious discourse. Facebook and Twitter accounts were started by the House of Fatwa and received high levels of interactions from society. The house of fatwa also launched a global general secretariat for the house of fatwa attempting to make Egypt the center of Islamic discourse and to trying to expand its regional and international role[17].

However, it is still difficult to find tangible measures to judge the impact of Dar Al-Iftaa's initiatives to counter-radicalization and extremism. For ordinary non-politicized Egyptian Muslims, ones who are not affiliated ideologically, politically or organizationally to Islamic movements or streams, the house

[16] R. Ahmad, "The unification of Friday's prayers in Egypt ignites debates in its first day of application", *Al Hayet*, 16 July 2016 (in Arabic).

[17] "Egypt's Grand Mufti's words at a conference held in Pakistan for the fight against extremism: after 9/11, we have started to suffer from an unusual state of antagonism and distortion against Islam", *Dar al Ifta* (in Arabic).

of fatwa remains the most credible source of religious insight. The impact of the organization's role could be very positive in countering extremism and radicalization, especially if the he interactions with society were made available.

Conclusion

Egypt's CVE approaches primarily center on the state with minor roles played by non-state actors within society. While state institutions possess diverse tools to reach areas of society not available to NGOs, there is a failure of communication at times between state and society. Successful CVE initiatives are ones that include the highest number of concerned actors to reach more sectors of society. The recently established high council uses this philosophy but it applies only to state institutions. In Egypt's case, state-society relations are structurally inefficient due to long years of marginalization and the lack of citizenship policies. Therefore, creating a multi-sectorial platform that includes NGOs, the private sector, academics, and professional unions in addition to state institutions will have a more successful effect in countering terrorism and violent extremism in Egypt. Moreover, experience has shown that decentralization is extremely beneficial in maximizing CVE initiatives in Egypt.

In conclusion, Egypt has suffered over the past few years because it confused CT and CVE approaches and prioritized one over the other, which slowed the potential for positive CVE initiatives. Another flaw within Egypt's CVE approach is its focus on ideological pull factors to radicalization while paying less attention to political and socio-economic push factors. Finally, Egypt's state centered approach is capable of achieving successes in countering terrorism and violent extremism but there are more opportunities for higher rates of success if the approach was centered on state-society cooperation.

8. Jordan: Emerging Threats to the Kingdom's National Security

Musa Shteiwi, Mohammad Abu Rumman, Jesse Marks

The gruesome murder of Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh by the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS or Da'esh) in early 2015 marked a turning point for Jordan's national security and regional engagement against the rising tide of Jihadists in the Levant. While Jordan has actively engaged with its regional and international allies in fighting terrorism in the region, the death of Kasasbeh produced renewed vigor within Jordan's military to fight in Iraq and Syria against ISIS. A wave of nationalism swept across Jordan producing popular support for Jordan's participation in the war against ISIS. On February 4 and 5, Jordan made a grand entry into the conflict with airstrikes in Raqqa, Syria and Mosul, Iraq killing a number of ISIS fighters, including a senior commander. Kasasbeh has since become a national figure and rallying point for further participation in the war against terrorism. Furthermore, his death prompted Jordan to broaden its military and diplomatic efforts to combat terrorism in Iraq and Syria. However, as a key member of the countering ISIS campaign, Jordan is an increasing target for terrorist activity and security threats both internally and externally.

Ensuring the Kingdom's security is an immediate national and international priority. Jordan has made significant strides toward strengthening its approach to national security, regional security, and radicalization. This paper outlines key national security risks facing the Kingdom, and efforts taken by the government to address these challenges.

Emerging threats

Border security

Jordan is surrounded by conflict, protracted instability, humanitarian crises, and political quandaries on three borders. The country's eastern borders with Syria and Iraq stretch through miles of barren desert often exploited by both smugglers and fighters leaving to fight abroad. Meanwhile, its northern border with Syria is populated by a mix of Iranian-backed militias, moderate factions of the Free Syrian Army, and ISIS. Jordan currently faces both short-term and long-term border threats that stem from three principal areas of concern: the northwestern border (Yarmouk), the center-north, and the east.

The first area of concern is the Israeli, Palestinian, Syrian, and Jordanian tri-border known as Yarmouk. The Khalid ibn al-Walid Army, an ISIS affiliate with an estimated 2,000 fighters[1], controls a pocket of territory bordering Jordan and the Golan Heights. In June 2016, Jordan carried out its first aerial operation against the ISIS affiliate following an ISIS attack on Jordanian security forces at Rukban in Jordan's northeastern border with Syria and Iraq.

The second area of concern stretches from Dara'a eastward to the western edge of the Suwayda governorate. A few kilometers from north of Jordan's Jaber and Ramtha border crossings near Dara'a remains contested with al-Qaeda affiliated groups, Iranian-linked Shi'a militias, the Syrian army, and the Free Syrian Army vying for control of the governorate. While fighting has decreased following the implementation of a Jordan-U.S.-Russia backed ceasefire, the presence of al-Qaeda-linked militias, which enjoy support from more conservative Salafi communities in Jordan, and Shi'a militias, remains a persistent threat to Jordan.

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[1] UN Security Council, "Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) And 2253 (2015) Concerning ISIL (Da'esh) Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals Groups Undertakings and Entities", 20 July 2017.

The third area of concern is Jordan and Syria's shared border in the eastern desert stretching from Suwayda's eastern border to the Jordan-Syria-Iraq tri-border region. In late 2015, a significant wave of internally displaced Syrians fleeing Aleppo, Tadmour (Palmyra), and former ISIS-held areas along the Euphrates valley amassed at two sites on the desert border at Rukban and Hadillat, reaching an estimated 80,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) by mid2016. Jordan fears ISIS-linked persons are attempting to enter Jordan as refugees. Following an ISIS car-bombing at a Jordanian security checkpoint that killed seven Jordanian security personnel, Jordan closed the Rukban crossing and restricted entrance of Syrian IDPs. Within a month of the attack, U.S. and Jordanian-backed Syrian militias recaptured the ISIS-controlled al-Tanf border a few kilometers north. By 2017, the threat of an immediate ISIS attack against Jordanian personnel was lessened by the presence coalition forces stationed in al-Tanf training Syrian opposition forces. The forces there thwarted several attempted attacks on the coalition forces and coalition-backed Syrian opposition. While ISIS is in decline, remnants of the group in the eastern desert remain a threat because the territory is loosely monitored, which allows them to carry out border attacks and coordinate with cells inside refugee populations residing in camps on Jordan's eastern border.

Buildup of Iranian-linked proxies in Syria and Shi'a crescent

In late 2017, ISIS lost significant territory in the Euphrates valley as pro-Assad forces advanced eastward, U.S.-backed Syrian Defense forces advanced south from the northern Euphrates river, and coalition forces cleared ISIS from the eastern desert and lower Euphrates valley. Beginning in Suwayda, Iranian-linked militias supported by pro-Assad forces recaptured Syria's southern border with Jordan, except for a 50 kilometer de-confliction line, agreed-upon by Russia and the United States, that encompassed Jordan's and coalition's military positioning

at Rukban and al-Tanf. The protracted presence these militias near Jordan's northern border creates a two-pronged security threat for Jordan.

First, Iran is utilizing its proxies to create a Tehran to Beirut land route that King Abdullah II calls the "Iranian Crescent" across Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon. The Anti-ISIS coalition military base at al-Tanf, which operates in coordination with Jordanian security forces, is a strategic crossing connecting the M2 highway, which is the most direct route from Baghdad to Damascus. In May 2017, a brief incursion between coalition forces, coalition-backed Maghawir al-Thawra, and Iranian-linked militias occurred after Shi'a fighters aggressively violated the U.S.-Russian de-confliction line, resulting in coalition strikes against Assad's allies. In the months following, reports surfaced that Iranian proxies would attempt to take al-Tanf from coalition forces by force, but no such attack materialized[2]. An "Iranian Crescent" passing along Jordan's northern border could produce worse conditions in Syria if Hezbollah, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and their varying militias gain a regional foothold. The destabilization effect of Iranian policy can be observed in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon. Such a complex political and military quagmire could force Jordan into some form of military involvement in Syria to protect its own borders.

Second, the protracted presence of Iranian-linked militias in southern Syria threatens Jordan's national security by de-stabilizing conditions in southern Syria. Southern Syria is a volatile region given its strategic importance to Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The presence of Iranian-backed militias on Israel and Jordan's border would almost certainly result in Israeli military action to prevent militias from gaining any foothold. Any widespread conflict between Israel and its enemies in Syria and Lebanon could have disastrous consequences for Jordan, and

[2] "Khaz al-Hashid al-Sha'bi in Iraq to liberate al-Tanf in Syria", *Fars News*, 2017 (translated from Farsi).

force the Kingdom deeper into Syria's civil war. In an interview with the *Washington Post*, King Abdullah II noted that Shi'a militias are settling within 70 kilometers of Jordan's border. At the Davos Conference held in January 2018, King Abdullah II expressed that he is "deeply concerned" about the situation in southern Syria, adding that Jordan is "ready and capable of dealing with them [terrorists and foreign militias] in full capacity and with any escalation that might pose a danger to us [Jordan], whether it is ISIS or any foreign groups fighting in Syria or operations that target civilians near our border"[3]. Shi'a militias remain within 70 kilometers of Jordan's border.

Cross-border smuggling (weapons and drugs) and associated criminal activity

The lawlessness in many areas of Syria and the proliferation of criminal activity throughout the country increases the threat of expanding transnational crime networks into Jordan as well as criminal activities, and drug and weapons trafficking along Jordan's north border. Indeed, terrorism and criminal activity are not new threats to Jordan, but increasing interactions between criminal networks and terrorist networks on Jordan's northern border are resulting in new threats to the Kingdom. Criminal and terrorist networks are increasingly collaborating to penetrate Jordan and circumvent the Kingdom's security apparatus. For example, in February 2018, Jordanian security forces discovered that criminal and terrorist networks in southern Syria were utilizing a defunct oil pipeline, part of the historic trans-Arab pipeline stretching from Lebanon to the Arab Gulf, to smuggle weapons, drugs, and terrorist operatives into the country[4]. While reports of the discovery and destruction of the tunnel system do not identify the smugglers, maps of

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[3] "In Unified Stance, King Abdullah Warns of Iran's Influence commends Riyadh's role", *The Baghdad Post*, 26 January 2018.

[4] "Armed Forces dismantle terrorist smuggling network in border zone", *Jordan Times*, 17 February 2018.

the historic oil pipeline used, highlights the underground trafficking routes passing from southern Syria, where IS terrorists control a pocket of the Yarmouk basin, and Golan Heights, to Jordan's Mafraq governorate.

The foiled smuggling route is an example that not only exemplifies the threat of increased collaboration between criminal and terrorist networks, but also the resourcefulness and creativity of smugglers to innovate new ways to enter Jordan. The success of Jordanian security forces in shutting down existing smuggling networks and stricter measures toward smugglers forces smugglers, criminal networks, and terrorists to find new ways for penetrating Jordan's borders. Smugglers are not simply driving across the border as in previous years; these networks are exerting greater effort and innovation into their operations. Combatting and preventing the success of these schemes will present a tactical challenge for Jordanian security forces in the coming year.

Radicalization, homegrown terrorism, and foreign fighters

Jordan is a leading actor in the fight against terrorism, but its participation has made it a target for local terrorist activity. Jordan faces an unprecedented domestic security threat from terrorist cells and lone-wolf actors either linked with terrorist organizations or inspired by extremist ideologies. Attempted terrorist attacks remain a relative constant in Jordan, with the majority thwarted by the Kingdom's security forces. Terrorist organizations, most notably ISIS and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) (formerly Jabhat al Nusra) have actively facilitated and inspired the growth of terrorist cells and actors inside Jordan. Jordan's military operations against these organizations abroad have actively contributed to their defeat in Syria and Iraq. Despite severe losses abroad, terrorists still pose a significant threat to the Kingdom; they are capable of planning and carrying out attacks from their remaining pockets along Jordan's northern border and within Jordan. The Kingdom will continue

to face the overwhelming threat of domestic terrorism, violent extremism, and lone-wolf terrorism.

On November 9, 2015, a Jordanian police officer attacked an international police training facility in Jordan, killing two American servicemen, a South African, and two Jordanians. While the government described the events as a "long wolf" attack carried out by a "disturbed" individual – not a Jihadist, ISIS praised the attackers actions in its December 2016 *Dabiq* publication, calling the Jordanian a "knight of the Caliphate"[5]. At the attacker's funeral, anger and frustration reached its height when thousands of mourners reportedly chanted "Death to American, Death to Israel". *The Washington Post*[6] reported that the tribes of the two slain Jordanian victims were demanding settlement from the attacker's family, calling the event a "premeditated terrorist attack".

In July 2015, Jordanian security forces seized a cache of explosives in Irbid and arrested an Iraqi of Norwegian nationality for plotting attacks against Jordanian and Israeli targets in the Kingdom. Some reports have tied the plot to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)[7].

On March 2, 2016, Jordan Special Forces carried out a raid on a suspected ISIS cell in Irbid foiling plans to carry out attacks on various civilian and military sites across the Kingdom. A firefight ensued leaving a Jordanian security officer and seven terrorists dead. The General Directorate for Intelligence reported that the terrorists were armed with explosive belts and automatic weapons. Authorities also seized weapons and explosives from the cell[8].

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[5] Counter Extremism Project, *Jordan: Extremism and Counter Extremism*, 23 July 2017.

[6] T. Luck, "The questions unanswered in Jordan attack that killed 2 U.S. contractors", *Washington Post*, 21 November 2015.

[7] Al-Quds Al-Arabi, "Jordan: Iraqi affiliated with Quds Force charged with planning terrorist attack", *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 7 July 2015.

[8] "GID says Irbid raid targeted Daesh – affiliated terrorists", *Jordan Times*, 2 March 2016.

On June 6, 2016, gunmen opened fire on security officers and personnel at Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate (GID) office in Baqaa, a Palestinian refugee camp just outside Amman, killing three officers and two personnel.

On June 21, 2016, ISIS fighters in the eastern Syrian desert carried out a suicide attack on Jordanian security forces along Jordan's eastern border with Syria, commonly referred to as Rukban. The attack occurred next to an informal Syrian IDP refugee camp, which killed six Jordanian security officers.

On November 4, 2016, three U.S. military personnel working alongside Jordanian forces to train and equip Syrian opposition fighters to fight ISIS were killed when a Jordanian military guard opened fire on their vehicle as they entered the Prince Faisal airbase in southern Jordan.

On December 18, 2016, Jordanian security forces responded to a call of an ISIS cell in a village outside of Karak where terrorists opened fire injuring two officers. The terrorists then fled to Karak where they attacked a Karak castle, a popular tourist site, holding a number of tourists hostage within the castle walls. After Jordanian forces successfully freed the hostages and killed the terrorists, seven Jordanian police officers, a Canadian tourist, and two Jordanian civilians were killed and an additional 27 wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack a few days later.

In February 2018, the GID announced that it had thwarted a large-scale plot to attack security offices, malls, media outlets, and moderate religious figures in November 2017. Jordan's State Security Court (SSC) charged 17 individuals, in a cell affiliated with ISIS, with plotting and carrying out terrorist attacks and joining a terrorist organization. The cell reportedly planned to manufacture explosive materials from readily-available materials and procured weapons and ammunition for planned attacks[9].

[9] "17 suspected terrorists to face trial for major terror plot", *Jordan Times*, 8 January 2018.

Many of these attacks stem from the Kingdom's radicalization sensation among significant Islamist and Salafist streams in the country who share ties and ideological continuity with foreign jihadist groups. The *Jordan Times* reported that the SSC, responsible for prosecuting terrorism, drug, and national security-related cases, received 320 individuals on charges related to terrorism in 2017 alone. A sociological study of a large sample of SSC terrorism cases by the Center for Strategic Studies revealed that 86 per cent of persons arrested for promoting terrorist groups were affiliated with ISIS. Additionally, 63 per cent of persons arrested for conspiracy to carry out attacks and 66 per cent of cases arrested for illegal possession of weapons or manufacturing of explosives were also affiliated with ISIS. Meanwhile, more than half of all persons accused of attempting to cross Jordan's borders illegally were affiliated with HTS.

Jordan has a radicalization problem. In the last few years, a significant number of Jordanian youth have followed pathways toward radicalization paved by senior leaders in global jihad, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (the al-Qaeda in Iraq leader which), Abu Mohammad al-Maqdisi, Abu Qatada, and Abu Sayyaf. There are three prominent pathways: adopting radical ideologies, supporting or joining foreign and local extremist groups, and plotting to commit acts of terrorism.

In 2017, SSC issued charges for 320 individuals on charges related to terrorism[10]. A sociological study of a large sample of SSC terrorism cases by the Center for Strategic Studies revealed that 86 per cent of SSC cases of promoting terrorist groups were affiliated with ISIS. Additionally, 63 per cent of persons arrested for conspiracy to carry out attacks were affiliated with ISIS and 66 per cent of cases arrested for illegal possession of weapons or manufacturing of explosives were also affiliated with ISIS. Meanwhile, more than half of all persons accused of attempting to cross Jordan's borders illegally were affiliated with HTS.

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[10] "SSC issued rulings in 14,100 terror, drug cases in 2017", *Jordan Times*, 8 January 2018.

Jordan's Salafist stream, whose ideologies reflect that of ISIS and HTS, has attracted 7,000 Jordanian hardliners, many of whom espouse radical ideologies and express sympathies with prominent Jihadi groups. An estimated 7 per cent of Jordanians (290,000 Jordanians) express support for extremist groups, but this number dropped to 3 per cent after ISIS released footage of Muath al-Kasasbeh's death[11]. A significant contributing factor to the proliferation of radical ideology originated from the Muslim Brotherhood's training and ideologies. More specifically, the Brotherhood's teachings on jihad and the establishment of an Islamic state played a critical role in attracting Jordanian youth to jihadi groups who offered youth an outlet to tangibly contribute to the establishment of a physical Islamic state built on Salafist ideas and traditions[12]. Experts estimate that as many as 2,500[13] Jordanians are fighting abroad with foreign jihadist groups, while 250 to 1500 have been killed abroad in Syria and Iraq[14]. The majority of Jordanians fighting in Syria are in the ranks of HTS. This phenomenon occurred because HTS was successful in veiling its affiliation with al-Qaeda early in the war and attracted large numbers of fighters from around the world under the pretext of defending Syria from a dictatorial power[15]. But, now as Jordanian fighters begin to return, Jordan faces an unprecedented challenge in identifying, arresting, charging, rehabilitating, and eventually integrating them back into society.

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[11] A. Speckhard, *The Jihad in Jordan: Drivers of Radicalization into Violent Extremism in Jordan*, Washington, D.C., International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism, 2017.

[12] M. Shteiwi and M. Abu Rumman, *The Sociology of Extremism and Terrorism in Jordan: An Empirical and Analytical Study*, Amman, University of Jordan and Center for Strategic Studies, 2018.

[13] H. al-Rawashdeh, "Jordan's Approach to Counter-Extremism", in *Methods of Preventing and Combatting Terrorism in the MENA Region and in the West*, Amman, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Jordan and Iraq, 2016, pp. 93-102.

[14] A. Speckhard (2017).

[15] M. Shteiwi and M. Abu Rumman (2018).

Turning the tide

At the United Nations Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism, King Abdullah II outlined Jordan's strategy for countering terrorism and preventing the spread of violent extremism. In his speech, he drew the international community's attention to critical military, ideological, and domestic priorities for fighting ISIS in effort to create a holistic, multitier approach for defeating the threat of terrorism and arrive at inclusive political solutions to the conflicts from which the terrorism threat emerged. First, the international community should stem the flow of foreign fighters to conflict areas and cut off radical groups' transnational supply chains. Second, efforts should be expanded to combat the proliferation radical ideologies and recruit via the internet. Lastly, He emphasizes that domestic strategies should focus on dealing with social, economic, education, and political dynamics that might contribute as push and pull factors of radicalization[16]. To this end, Jordan adopted a multipronged strategy that addresses these three components.

Securing borders

Jordan has taken practical steps to sure up its borders by instituting new technology and mechanisms for monitoring many of the porous regions of its border, preventing infiltration by ISIS and other radical groups, and rapidly responding to border intrusions when they occur. In 2016, U.S. contractor *Raytheon* entered into its final phase in the development of a US$100 million U.S.-funded Jordan Border Security Project (JBSP) in partnership with the Jordanian government. This new border security system, funded by the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, is integrated with day and night cameras, ground radars, rapid-response vehicles, and a full command,

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[16] King Abdullah II (Jordan), "Speech at UN Leaders' Summit on Countering ISIL and Violent Extremism in New York", 29 September 2015.

control, and communications suite that will be operated by Jordanian security forces[17]. Similar to border security systems employed by Israel on its northern border with Lebanon, Jordan's system already covers 160 miles of Jordan's northern and eastern border with Syria and another 115 miles of the Iraqi border. Upon its completion, the system with cover the three aforementioned areas of concern, securing the borders from infiltration attempts. In 2017, Jordan launched a collaborative border management project funded by the European Union and the International Organization for Migration aiming to harmonize Jordan's border security capacity and international humanitarian priorities for providing for vulnerable Syrians in the border regions. The project provides technical support for the Jordanian Armed Forces, including observation and border posts, increasing the capacity of security forces to respond to humanitarian and security threats on the northeastern border and provide humanitarian assistance to areas of concern[18].

To ensure the continuity of Jordanian security, the U.S. Congress approved a US$1.3 trillion spending package on March 21, 2018, which allocated nearly US$500 million to support the Jordanian armed forces and enhance the Kingdom's border security. It also approves a total of US$1.8 billion to the "Counter-Islamic State of Iraq and Syria Train and Equip Fund" which provides a financial assistance (including but not limited to logistics, training, supplies, and equipment) to regional allies participating in the war against ISIS[19]. Furthermore, Jordan stands to gain from an extended presence and buildup of U.S. military forces on the Iraq-Syria border. With U.S. President Donald Trump's regional priorities shifting toward containing Iranian expansion and preventing a resurgence of ISIS in the

[17] B. Opall-Rome, "Raytheon-Jordan Border Defense Against ISIS Enters Final Phase", *Defense News*, 26 May 2016.

[18] International Organization for Migration (IOM), "IOM, EU, Jordan Launch EUR 5,280,000 Border Management Project", IOM, 22 September 2017.

[19] U.S. Congress, House, "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018", 115th Cong., 23 March 2018, pp. 1370-1395.

lower Euphrates valley, Jordan wins conveniently as U.S. foreign policy priorities are increasingly analogous with Jordan's own.

Regional security through military and diplomacy

Jordan's national security challenges evolve with regional conflicts in Syria and Iraq. The rise of the ISIS in the region in 2014 was a key turning point for Jordan, whose participation in the Syrian conflict until that time remained minimal. By the end of 2014, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and ISIS controlled large swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq, which provided the groups with a safe haven from which to plan and carry out attacks regionally and abroad with relative impunity. Jordan expanded its regional efforts beyond its own borders through regional military operations in Iraq and Syria, opposition fighter training programs in Syria, and regional diplomacy with Russia, the United States, Iraq, and Israel.

Jordan's participation in the US-led countering ISIS campaign has played a critical role in coordinating and launching operations to defeat the terrorist group since as early as 2013[20]. From its Amman-based Military Operations Center (MOC), the United States, Jordan, and other coalition countries have coordinated military efforts to fight ISIS, secure Jordan's border, and arm the Southern Front, a moderate opposition affiliated with the Free Syrian Army. MOC operations served as a buffer for Jordan's northern border, and offered an avenue to carry out operations against competing jihadist groups and Iranian-linked militias active in southern Syria. In Jordan's eastern desert, the Kingdom has also deployed forces to monitor and protect the border following a string of deadly attacks against Jordanian security forces and displaced Syrians at the informal Rukban camp. Following the recapture of al-Tanf from ISIS in 2016, the border-crossing became a strategic coalition base of

[20] P. Sands and S. Maayeh, "Syrian rebels get arms and advice through secret command centre in Amman", *The National*, 28 December 2013.

operations for logistics, coordination, and training for Syrian opposition forces in the war against ISIS in Deir-ez-zor.

In May 2017, Russia introduced a national ceasefire plan to de-escalate the conflict between the Syrian government and the opposition, guaranteed by Iran, Russia, and Turkey. The plan envisioned a specific ceasefire in southwestern Syria, which borders Jordan and the Golan Heights, and the deployment of military observers. Initially, the agreement presented a threat to Jordan and Israel who feared the buildup of Shi'a militia groups if Iran deployed observers. King Abdullah II's diplomacy with Russia and the United States produced a trilateral agreement which aimed to address Israel and Jordan's concerns over Iranian-linked militias. Jordan established a logistics center in Amman to coordinate and implement the ceasefire in southern Syria with Russia and the United States as part of Russia's national de-escalation plan. The success of the agreement in preventing foreign militias from rooting themselves on Jordan's border has yet to be seen, but the agreement has produced relative calm in the south. In an interview with the *Jordan Times* two months after the ceasefire's implementation, King Abdullah II expressed ongoing concern with developments in southern Syria. Given the erratic nature of the conflict in the south, the threat of resurgence in violent conflict on Jordan's northern border is imminent.

Building a national strategy

In a 2014 speech in Astana, Kazakhstan, King Abdullah II verbally attacked ISIS stating "We Muslims are facing a brutal attack by outlaws, or Khawarij, who distort our faith to try to justify monstrous crimes. Nothing treats our religion with more contempt and nothing hurts the Muslim people more than the actions of these elements. They agitate sectarianism and sedition. They mislead young people into abandoning their futures"[21]. The King's use of the term "Khawarij" or "outlaws

[21] "Nothing treats Islam with more contempt than Khawarij actions - King",

of Islam" plays an important role in drawing a distinction between the acts of ISIS, a distortion of Islamic ways, and what he defines as the "Islamic way" which highlights Islam's call to respect, peace, tolerance, and coexistence. Hussain al-Rawashdeh, a Jordanian author and commentator, defines this approach as *internal containment*: "targeting the idea and thought of the organization, which has become an attractive one, and targeting sympathizers using both security and intellectual means". He adds that "this tactic… exploits and utilizes the differences and disagreements within the Jihadi-Salafist current in the country in order to counter the organization"[22].

In 2014, Jordan created a *National Counter-Extremism Strategy* that falls in line with Hussain al-Rawashdeh's aforementioned notion of internal containment. The strategy details responsibilities of all public institutions and ministries to address the manifestations of extremism across their respective activities and duties. More specifically, it highlights that efforts to confront extremism require cross-collaboration to address the phenomenon as it relates to security, education, religion, culture, society, politics, and economy on three tiers: domestic, regional, and international[23]. The strategy outlines sector-specific preventative measures for security, intellectual, academic, and public bodies and institutions to prevent the proliferation of extremism, promote moderate ideals domestically, and provide avenues for rehabilitation and reintegration for those who radicalized. At the regional and international levels, the strategy outlines the Kingdom's efforts to prevent border infiltration and cross-border smuggling, and engage in regional initiatives to fight terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria across the border[24].

Jordan Times, 11 June 2015.

[22] H.al-Rawashdeh (2016), p. 96.

[23] "Al-Ghad publishes the national plan to confront extremism", *Al-Ghad*, 16 June 2016.

[24] Ibid.

In 2016, the Kingdom took further steps toward this end and partnered with the United Nations Development Programme to launch the *National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Jordan* with the objective of "strengthening national efforts in reducing the threat of terrorism and radicalization, especially among youth and vulnerable marginalized societal groups, to ensure the continued stabilization of Jordan"[25].

A key component of Jordan's counter-terrorism strategy that persists across the listed body-specific duties is the emphasis on rule of law and justice mechanisms to effectively prosecute terrorism. In 2014, Jordan amended its Anti-Terrorism Law, which expanded the definition of terrorism to include any act meant to create sedition, harm property or jeopardize international relations, or to use the Internet or media outlets to promote extremist thinking[26]. Persons found guilty by the SSC under the amended-law now face penalties ranging from 10 years in prison to the death penalty[27]. The changes enable Jordan's security apparatus to crack down on the use of the internet for spreading extremism and recruiting Jordanian youth to join terrorist groups. But, the expansion of the law has caused speculation that the ambiguous nature of amended articles could be employed to prosecute public criticism of foreign political leaders as terrorism and threaten rights of speech, according to Human Right Watch[28]. Balancing rights and security in an increasingly hostile environment remains a challenge to be addressed.

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[25] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "National Strategy on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Jordan", UNDP, 17 May 2016.

[26] A. Abuqudairi, "Jordan Anti-terror law sparks concern", *al Jazeera*, 25 April 2014.

[27] Ibid.

[28] "Jordan: Terrorism Amendments Threaten Rights", *Human Rights Watch*, 17 May 2004.

Conclusion

While Jordan and its partners in the war on terror uproot remnants of ISIS from their territorial strongholds in Iraq and Syria, the group is far from defeated. The ideologies and factors that aided the group's rise and expansion are still widely present as are several of its lesser affiliates. More broadly, the presence of jihadi groups in Syria and Iraq, both Salafi and Shi'a, present a continuous threat to the Kingdom. Presently, Hay'at Tahiri al-Sham, with whom many Jordanians are still fighting, still exerts sovereignty over large swaths of territory in Syria's north where it is able to operate relatively freely. The Kingdom's multifarious national security strategy has largely bulwarked Jordanian youth from the reach of terrorist groups, but the radical ideologies they espouse remain rooted among Jordan's hardline Salafist movement and Jordanian fighters returning home. King Abdullah II's call for a holistic approach to fighting terrorism and extremism is orienting Jordan in the right direction. However, certain socioeconomic and political conditions in that push youth toward radicalization continue and must be addressed if Jordan wants to secure its physical and intellectual security.

9. Saudi Efforts in Countering Violent Extremism

Abdullah Khaled Al-Saud, Yousuf Zarea

Historically, *Jihadist* terrorist organizations, from al-Qaeda to the so-called Islamic State (IS), targeted Saudi Arabia. Over the past decades, these groups directed relentless verbal and physical attacks against the Kingdom[1]. Several reasons explain the attacks including Saudi Arabia's important position in the Muslim world as the heartland of Islam and custodian of the two Holy Mosques. Saudi Arabia's abundance of wealth also makes it a target for terrorist fundraising. However, most importantly, Saudi Arabia bases its legitimacy on upholding Islam and Islamic law, which makes it the archenemy of all radical and terrorist groups claiming to hold a monopoly over the understanding and application of Islamic law and faith[2].

As a result of a long history of animosity and confrontation with terrorist groups, Saudi Arabia has become very experienced in dealing with the threat of terrorism. And with both the political will and funds, it has become a leading innovator in devising new methods and techniques to counter radical ideologies and the threat of violent extremism. The Kingdom began efforts in this field almost a decade earlier than other nations.

[1] According to official estimates, more than 840 terrorists attacks targeted Saudi Arabia between 1979 and 2017. See Center for International Communication, "More Than 840 terrorist Attacks Targeted Saudi Arabia between 1979 and 2017", 13 February 2018; N. Obaid, "The Myth of Saudi Support for Terrorism", Cambridge, MA, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 21 July 2016.

[2] A. bin Khaled Al-Saud, "Deciphering IS's Narrative and Activities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 27 October 2017.

Among the many initiatives started by the country are programs aimed at providing rehabilitation to extremists already in detention, and other programs aimed at countering the spread of extremist propaganda online. These initiatives include the *Sakinah* (tranquility) Campaign, the Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Center (MNCC), and more recently, the Etidal (moderation) center. Based on the authors' research, interviews, and access to the centers discussed, this paper will describe and analyze important initiatives taken by Saudi Arabia.

The *Sakinah* (Tranquility) Campaign

2003 marked the onset of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)'s terror campaign against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During this critical juncture in the history of Saudi Arabia, the online counter-radicalization campaign, *Sakinah*, was launched under the supervision of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs[3]. In its early days, campaign staffers entered into dialogue and candid discussions with radicals through online forums and chatrooms. However, as the nature of both social media and terrorist propaganda transformed over the past decade, so did the techniques and methods used by the campaign's staffers.

Instead of assuming a defensive posture engaging in debates of intricate theological doctrines, *Sakinah* staffers now go on the offensive. They challenge conventional wisdom of radicals and ingrained beliefs through social media by disseminating infographics, caricatures, and challenging hashtags. According to the leader of the campaign, Abdul Muni'm al-Mushawwah, radicals and extremists "respond more to such hard-hitting provocative doses of reality about the barbaric, un-Islamic, and unrestrained nature of their organizations than to long and deep religious fatwas"[4].

[3] A. bin Khaled Al-Saud, "The Tranquillity Campaign: A Beacon of Light in the Dark World Wide Web", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 58-64.
[4] Ibid.

It is difficult, however, to measure the success of virtual interactions. While they are certainly useful, as they target radicals and supporters, they are no substitute for more important and measurable initiatives dealing with radicals in detention. Saudi efforts in this regard received worldwide recognition and acclaim through the pioneering rehabilitation program of the MNCC[5].

Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Center

In March 2016, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) urged:

> States to adopt rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returning foreign terrorist fighters [. . .] and to adopt a comprehensive approach that includes the development of national centers for counsel and deradicalization [. . .] and in this regard welcomes the role of the Mohammed bin Naif Counseling and Care Centre in countering terrorist ideologies and activities[6].

Stemming from the need to deal with the many individuals detained following AQAP's terror campaign from 2003-2005, Saudi Arabia established a rehabilitation program. In 2004, the government set up a *Munasahah* (counseling) program in its prison's programs. The program aimed to confront violent extremist ideologies and correct misconceptions of Islam embraced by radicals. Under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior, the *Munasahah* program developed research studies analyzing the ministry's experience in dealing with detainees. These studies laid the foundation of what later became the MNCC center in 2007. The center now operates its own facilities. Today, the center attempts to counter extremist ideologies

[5] United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Effects of Terrorism on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights", United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/HRC/31/L.13/Rev.1, 23 March 2016.
[6] Ibid.

and rehabilitate radicals through a process it calls "intellectual treatment".

After completing their sentence in prison, qualified inmates are sent to the MNCC center for a minimum of three months[7], where they live in a friendly environment away from prison. The goal is to gradually reintegrate them back into society to become contributing and productive members of the community. MNCC refers to inmates as beneficiaries, and beneficiaries who pass the center's programs and receive authorization to be released are referred to as graduates. This is part of the mental preparation process to reintegrate inmates back into society. The time spent at the center is considered a life transition period. It is a small retreat with a nice garden, where beneficiaries play games and socialize. It also has a fully equipped gym, swimming pool, and art studio, along with a number of classrooms where sessions are held. It is "like an American summer camp, but with a higher purpose", aimed at fostering positivity and integration[8]. The MNCC operates its program in three integral, consecutive stages: counseling, rehabilitation, and aftercare, each of which includes a variety of programs.

The Counseling stage

The backbone of treatment is the counseling stage, which begins as soon as prisoners are detained and continues when they become beneficiaries at the MNCC. Advice committees preform the counseling, which consists of a collection of therapeutic programs based on scientific learning and Islamic teachings. Committees include religious scholars, psychologists, social specialists, and experts who engage with inmates at an individual and one-on-one level as well as through group discussions inside prison. To maximize the benefits, individual sessions are

[7] This is extendable for another three months if the supervising committee sees the status of the beneficiary as not fit to graduate and be released or not ready to integrate with society.

[8] BBC World Service, "What's Happening to IS Fighters Now?" *The Inquiry*, 18 March 2018.

designed based on each individual's psychological and social state as well as religious thoughts and level of extreme doctrine.

The Rehabilitation stage

Once prisoners serve their full sentences, they move to the center to begin the next stage of the treatment: rehabilitation. The rehabilitation stage consists of five major components. The first is an educational program, which covers six main areas: religion, psychology, art therapy, history, economy, and politics. The religious activities are a continuation of counseling sessions started during a beneficiary's time in prison and aim to correct ideological misconceptions. Subjects covered in counseling sessions include: *takfir* and its regulations, *jihad* and its regulations, issues of *al-wala' wa al-bara'* (loyalty and disavowal), and the ideal of Islamic *Caliphate*. Research and publications by the MNCC play a major role in treatment. A landmark work completed by the center is a book in which religious scholars and experts identify and refute the most dangerous religious misconceptions on which terrorist groups rely. This book is an integral part of the center's program.

Furthermore, the psychological component of the program aims to help beneficiaries better understand themselves and equips them with skills to be more accepting of others and to communicate positively with members of the community. Topics covered by the program include concepts of self-improvement, positive thinking, stress and mental health as well as principles of success such as setting and achieving goals.

Art is also utilized by MNCC as a therapeutic technique for beneficiaries to express feelings and repressed emotions such as anger, fear, and depression. The program allows beneficiaries to create freely and engage with specialists in conversations to discuss their motives, personal needs, and justifications for their behavior. According to the center's staff, in their early days of the program, some beneficiaries drew violent and cruel paintings. Yet, over time, a fascinating shift happened. After spending a couple of months at the center the overall themes of

the paintings turn more bright and colorful. Through creative methods of expression, art therapy sessions help beneficiaries shift their views of the world into ones that are more positive and radiant.

Finally, since it has been found that many young terrorists and radicals are driven by emotions and lack political awareness, the political component aims to introduce beneficiaries to basic political concepts. It covers an introduction to international relations, mechanisms of joining international organizations and treaties, and the importance of which from a political and religious perspective, as well as an overview of historical and current national, regional, and international political events. The educational section also includes other sessions in history and economics introducing beneficiaries to the basics.

The second major program of the rehabilitation stage is the training program, which is designed to equip beneficiaries with the educational and professional skills necessary to find and maintain a job after graduation from the center. Beneficiaries learn computer, information technology (IT), business management and the English language skills as well as vocational skills such as plumbing, carpentry, and electrical work. Courses are organized with the help from private and public training institutions, including the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, and Riyadah[9].

The third program is the sports and entertainment program, which aims to foster a positive attitude and mental well being through extracurricular activities. The fourth program is the cultural program. Its goal is to improve beneficiaries' ability to engage positively with others and reconnect with the world beyond prison walls. An important day at the center is the "My Experience Day," where previous graduates give lectures about their stories and experiences before, during, and after the MNCC treatment. On another day, MNCC hosts an Open House, where distinguished personalities, such as religious scholars,

[9] A nonprofit organization for entrepreneurship; see www.riyadah.com.sa.

businessmen, or community leaders, visit the center and engage in open conversations and discussions with beneficiaries.

The fifth and last program, the services program, includes a wide range of social, logistical, and financial services offered for beneficiaries. The services assist in the center's attempt to help beneficiaries transition life, they include internal services (reception, subsistence, laundry, hygiene, maintenance, cell phone, and internal medical care services), external services (issuing legal documents, opening bank accounts, court documents, university admissions, and external medical care services), and visits and vacations services (family communication and visits, sick visits, events and holidays, and emergency visits in case of death, illness, or marriage). Visitors accessing the program through all its gateways are encouraged to talk to beneficiaries about life beyond the center's walls.

The Aftercare stage

Toward the end of the three-month period, the center's experts evaluate each individual case and provide a recommendation for a beneficiary to either stay another three months, if a beneficiary is deemed unfit to graduate, or graduate and be released. Specialists evaluate beneficiaries based on four categories: religious, psychological, social, and behavioral. The aftercare stage, is the third stage of the treatment and begins once the beneficiary graduates. In this stage, the center continues efforts to support beneficiaries in achieving personal and social integration into civil society.

In order to enhance the family's role in the intellectual treatment, the center follows up after the graduation via programs that target both the graduates and their families. These programs include social support (such as family and/or marriage counseling), logistical support (such as help with university admissions, job applications, traveling, etc.), and in some cases, financial support. The objective of this support and aftercare is to ensure that graduates do not feel lost once outside of prison, which in turn minimizes the risk they become vulnerable to the influence of radical views again.

The process of radicalization is a complex one, and de-radicalization is equally so[10]. However, the MNCC center has been a pioneer in the field with high success rates. According to its own estimates, by the end of 2016, more than 3,300 individuals have benefited from the center's programs, and around 130 detainees were transferred from Guantanamo Bay prison. Around 80 per cent of graduates from MNCC have successfully reintegrated into society and are currently leading normal lives, while the rate of recidivism was 20 per cent.

Despite promising results, rehabilitation centers like MNCC are not equipped to deal with the ever-evolving world of technology. The spread of extremist and radical propaganda is rampant through social media outlets, which are built with algorithms intended to bring the most engaging posts to the surface[11]. Accordingly, international interest to digitally counter violent extremism is gaining momentum, with significant and demonstrable results[12]. The Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology, also known as Etidal, which was established in Riyadh in May 2017, promises to be a major player in the field of countering extremist ideologies via state-of-the-art software, tools, and technologies.

The Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal)

Terrorist organizations rely heavily on the internet and social media to communicate with potential recruits and spread violent extremist messages. Social media has enabled violent extremists and terrorists to expand and operate globally by

[10] S. Leistedt, "On the Radicalization Process", *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, vol. 61, no. 6, 2016, pp. 1588-1591.

[11] J. Daniels, "The Algorithmic Rise of the "Alt-Right"", *Contexts*, 28 March 2018; A. Taub and M. Fisher, "Where Countries Are Tinderboxes and Facebook Is a Match", *New York Times*, 21 April 2018.

[12] Europol, Press Release, "Islamic State Propaganda Machine Hit by Law Enforcement in Coordinated Takedown Action", 27 April 2018.

gaining followers from a wide range of countries, which increases the threat and complicates the fight[13]. Since declaring the so-called *Caliphate*, in June 2014, over 140 terrorist attacks occurred around the world carried out either by IS members or by radicals influenced by the group's propaganda[14].

Efforts aimed at countering violent extremism, thus, include not only military, ideological, and intellectual approaches, but have focus on the virtual world. Etidal's approach to countering violent extremism is based on the idea that terrorism is only a symptom of the problem, whereas someone's extreme views is the problem itself, and fighting a symptom (terrorism) will not eliminate the problem (extremism). The solution lies in targeting the systematic ways extremists think and challenging their religious understanding and worldviews. Etidal aims to do this in the virtual world.

The center conducts research, devises analytical methods, technology, and digital tools, and utilizes media outlets to fight against terrorism. It currently works on three main projects: the Etidal Innovation Lab, the Global Extremism Index, and the Media Affairs Department.

Etidal Innovation Lab (EIL)

The EIL team, in collaboration with leading tech companies, such as Google's Jigsaw, and renowned experts, adapts novel and innovative technologies to counter violent extremism. According to the center, it developed software and predictive models capable of monitoring and recognizing extremist content uploaded to the Internet within seconds after it is posted

[13] D. Patrikarakos, "Social Media Networks are the Handmaiden to Dangerous Propaganda", *Time*, 2 November 2017; J.M. Berger and B. Strathearn, "Who Matters Online: Measuring Influence, Evaluating Content and Countering Violent Extremism in Online Social Networks", *Developments in Radicalisation and Political Violence*, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, March 2013.

[14] T. Lister et al., "Isis Goes Global: 143 Attacks in 29 Countries Have Killed 2,042", *CNN*, 12 February 2018.

and with an 80% accuracy rate.

There are three components of EIL's work. First, it monitors and collects data of extremist organizations and their supporters on social media. It then analyzes collected data to better understand which extremist organizations pose the greatest threat to public safety. It also analyzes the strength of their supporters and influence on social media. Finally, the center attempts to weaken extremist groups' ability to spread their messages through social media by removing extreme comments and producing media materials aimed at exposing the hypocrisies of terrorism.

Monitoring and data collection. The process starts by collecting data from social media sites with content related to terrorist organizations and extremist ideologies. The EIL team also collects data from accounts of friends and followers of these terrorist organizations. This process allows for a categorization and differentiation between supporters and non-supporters.

The team categorizes the data they collect according to the themes of its content (military engagements, news, politics, and religion) and demographics (gender and whether the account is that of an individual supporter or controlled by a terrorist organization). Needless to say, some demographic information, like age, may not always be available from a social media account.

Data analysis. The analysis is designed to show which extremist organization has the highest reach, poses the greatest threat to public safety, and has the most influential social media campaigns and supporters. For instance, an analysis conducted by the center on data collected from Twitter between January-August 2017 showed that tweets with content related to IS appeared more than other extremist groups like al-Qaeda or Hezbollah. Moreover, the data revealed IS supporters discussed a diverse range of topics over social media while accounts linked to Hezbollah supporters focused mainly on politics and al-Qaeda supporters on both politics, 75 per cent of the time, and location, 25 per cent of the time. In addition, the center found

that around 40% of the accounts with extremist content were controlled by terrorist organizations.

This information allows for the center to categorize posts using negative versus positive references to terrorist groups. The software developed by EIL identifies accounts as supporters, non-supporters, or potential supporters based on a mathematical equation by dividing the number of posts using one or more positive references to a certain terrorist group by the number of posts using one or more negative references to it, in which higher numbers indicate greater support. This analysis allows the center to more appropriately target accounts in the engagement process.

Engagement. The engagement process aims at isolating terrorist groups' activity on social media through a combination of statistically rigorous filtering, conducting network analysis, and targeting specific users. The center uses two approaches of engagement: (1) closing accounts and/or deleting posts, and (2) media campaigns[15].

In order to isolate IS supporters, the EIL team targets accounts and posts that are most successful in reaching new audiences. These accounts pose the greatest risk to public safety, as they have a wide reach and the best ability to reach potential supporters. This targeting technique also enhances the flow of positive constructive debates and discussions on social media.

Another technique utilized by the EIL team is the Arabic version of Jigsaw's Redirect Method, which is used to redirect potential supporters to educational counterradical content whenever they click on radical or extremist content such as on YouTube. Such content is not necessarily produced by the center, but the center does produce its own content through its Media Affairs Department.

[15] See the section on the Media Affairs Department, which follows.

Global Extremism Index (GEI)

The most strategic and long-term project for Etidal is the GEI, which is aimed to reflect the center's scientific and methodological approach. The aim of the GEI endeavor is the creation of a predictive index to monitor the increase or decrease in extremist mindsets based on levels of extremist ideologies (concealed, propagated, and/or violent)[16] and demographics (social background, age distribution, geographic distribution, and educational level).

As a continuation of the important work done by previous international projects, such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), GEI targets violent extremist ideologies, rather than terrorist incidents. The project commences with a local focus, but it will aim to build a valid index that is measureable and adaptable to extremist ideologies in the wider global context. The basic parameters (levels of extremism and demographics) will be used in a local context to determine societal levels of extremism. The given parameters will identify the risk of extremism in certain locales, using a range of labels from "optimal" and "acceptable" to "warning" and "intervention." Establishing the GEI will provide a metric to assess the extent or threat of extremist ideology in any region of interest. This is certainly an ambitious project and a work in progress, but one well worth engaging.

Media Affairs Department

Since terrorist groups heavily use media, Etidal established the Media Affairs Department as part of the engagement process to challenge extremist ideologies, reveal false propaganda, and provide a counter narrative on social media outlets.

Media material is produced according to research and analysis by Etidal's experts as well as by other sources of expertise.

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[16] Concealed: having an extremist lifestyle but not promoting it to others; propagated: having an extremist lifestyle and promoting it to others while rejecting other points of view; violent: using violence to promote extremism.

Products include videos (documentaries or educational motion graphics), pictures (infographics), and brief articles focused on raising public awareness of political trends and extremist discussions on social media. The articles are designed to raise critical thinking about extremism and moderation. These media products are posted on Etidal's official accounts on three major social media outlets: Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook. Some content is posted as a series. For example, a series of posts on Etidal's Twitter feed (the Arabic version), titled "Extremism on Social Media," included valuable information, from presenting main factors that have allowed extremist content to spread to explaining how terrorist groups have shifted communications from one domain to another in order to employ additional layers of encryption[17].

Conclusion

Great efforts are being taken to combat violent extremism, both online and offline. However, under pressure, terrorist organizations will certainly try to innovate and adapt, and in most cases already have. IS has certainly evolved its warfare tactics and strategies as it established and defended the territories of its so-called *Caliphate*. The terrorist group has also been innovative and adaptable in its use of digital venues. After major social media outlets, such as Twitter, removed violent extremist content, IS shifted to Telegram for its communications and dissemination of propaganda campaigns[18].

Although innovations can be technical, tactical, operational, or strategic, they also can be ideological. IS's narrative of

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[17] Etidal, "Extremism on Social Media", https://twitter.com/i/moments/986988978913075200.

[18] J.M. Berger and H. Perez, *The Islamic State's Diminishing Returns on Twitter: How Suspensions Are Limiting the Social Networks of English-Speaking ISIS Supporters*, Occasional Paper, Program on Extremism, George Washington University, February 2016.

momentum and success has suffered a serious blow, and the appeal of its slogan, "remaining and expanding", has diminished. However, the radical ideas and ideologies that IS and other terrorist groups propagate do not need territorial control in order to survive and flourish, but rather specific conducive contexts and environments in which they can feed and thrive. In fact, each new generational wave of terrorist groups has proved to be more extreme than the predecessor[19]. It is imperative international forces working to counter violent extremism are superior to terrorist organizations in their ability to innovate and adapt to changing contexts and environments.

The three main initiatives explored in this paper; Sakinah, MNCC, and Etidal, reflect Saudi Arabia's efforts in keeping up with the rapidly changing field of countering violent extremism. Work done by the two programs *Sakinah* and Etidal is mainly digital, that is, via blocking the spread of radical messages on the internet and challenging their worldview, whereas that of MNCC is mainly curative and therapeutic. These programs, as well as others not mentioned, place the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the forefront of the fight against violent extremism. In the years ahead, cooperation between countries to fight terrorism will be a key to its success. Saudi Arabia has much to offer in terms of intelligence sharing and the transfer of knowledge in this regard.

[19] R. Wright et al., *The Jihadi Threat: ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Beyond*, Wilson Center, United States Institute of Peace, Dec. 2016-Jan. 2017.

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