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Peacebuilding Commission

The question of preventing international recruitment by terrorist organisations



MODEL UNITED NATIONS
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Forum	Peacebuilding Commission
Issue:	The question of preventing international recruitment by terrorist organisations
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Introduction

Ankara (Turkey) October 10th, 2015; Paris (France) November 13th, 2015; Kida (Mali) February 12th, 2016; Brussels (Belgium) March 22nd, 2016; Lahore (Pakistan) March 27th, 2016; Orlando (United States) June 12th, 2016; Magnanville (France) June 13th, 2016. In only nine months, more than 70 terrorist attacks have occurred and none of the continents has been spared. Every week, we hear in the media that a suicide bombing killed 30 people, or that 150 innocent people were slaughtered in a shooting, and the murderers are always designed as “terrorists”. Of course they are terrorists, but we barely ever know that they were actually American, French, Turk or Belgian.

The problem of international recruit by terrorist organisations has come to our eyes rather recently: by not taking actions quickly enough, we let it grow and strengthen. With today’s technology, recruiting as never been this easy: the European Union Commission estimates that between 5000 and 6000 European have left for Syria, in order to join some terrorist groups. However, this is only an estimation and the actual number must be far higher, for it is very complicated to keep a trace of them. It is now crucial to prevent this international recruitment by terrorist organisations. This can be done through three steps: prevent the radicalisation of youth, prevent radicalised people to reach the headquarters of terrorist organisations, and finally deradicalise extremists in our countries.

Definition of Key Terms

Terrorism

Terrorism can be defined as a criminal act, against innocent civilians, causing death or injuries, in order to provoke panic and terror in the country or to urge a government to do or refrain from doing an act.

Terrorist Organisation



A terrorist organisation is an organisation that uses terror and violence to achieve their goals. Most of them justify their actions with political or religious motivations. The most internationally known terrorist organisations are Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The United Nations (UN) has created an official list naming all the terrorist organisations that they recognise, because countries' view can differ concerning the recognition of terrorist organisation: for example the Kurdistan Workers Party is recognised by the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) but not by the UN.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is the process of adopting extreme ideologies, radical positions and views. Nowadays, it mostly means to embrace the ideology of terrorist organisations. The youth is the most likely to be radicalised, as young people are the most easily influenced. In the most extreme cases, radicalisation can lead to joining those organisations.

Deradicalisation

Deradicalisation can be defined as the process of moderate or even completely reverse the opinions of radicalised people. This is often used in prison, where radicalised people, after committing more or less important crimes, find themselves together and share their beliefs. However, some countries, such as France, Pakistan and Belgium, have also established deradicalisation programs and centers.

General Overview

Major terrorist organisations

Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda, meaning 'the base' in Arabic, is a terrorist organisation founded approximately in the 1980s by Osama Bin Laden (1957-2011). It was first created to defend the Muslims in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union: thousands of *Mujahideen* – those who are engaged in jihad – were recruited by Al-Qaeda and were crucial in the fights against Soviets. In 1996, the movement declared war to the USA, committing five years later the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack.

Al-Qaeda's aims are to chase Americans and American influence out of the Middle-East, to destroy Israel, to eradicate all pro-Western dictatorship and unite Muslim in



an Islamic State, by force if necessary. Bin Laden has also encouraged every Muslim to fight against and kill US citizens, Jews and other Muslims who are 'unfaithful'. After Osama Bin Laden was killed by the US forces in May 2011, the movement slightly lost its power, being overtaken by other terrorist organisations such as ISIL.

ISIL

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), known as ISIS or Daesh, is a self-proclaimed State and is not recognised by the UN as a State but as a terrorist group. It was founded in 1999 and pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda in 2004, participating in their terrorist attacks. The movement was relatively controlled by the presence of Americans in the Iraqi territory, and after the withdrawal of the USA from Iraq in 2011, ISIL became stronger. When the civil war broke out in Syria, the movement conquered lots of cities in Iraq and Syria such as Mosul and Al-Raqqah. In 2014, it declared itself as a "worldwide caliphate" with Abu Bakr al-Baghdad as leader.

Most of the terrorist attacks nowadays are claimed by ISIL, such as the Orlando shooting, the Brussels bombing, the Paris attacks, the Ankara bombings and the Thalys attacks. It is very important to stop the growth of ISIL as its influence as never been this important, and affects thousands of innocents' lives.

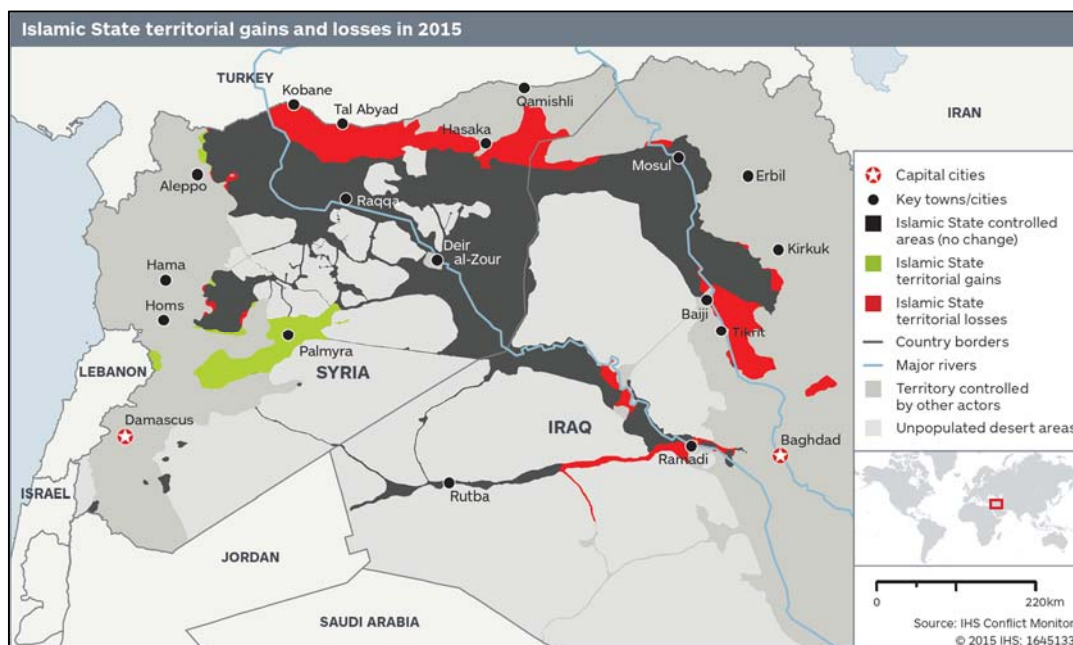


Figure 1. ISIL territorial gains (green) and losses (red) in May 2015 in the Middle-East

Burke, Liz. "Have We Sent IS Running Scared?" *NewsComAu*. N.p., 27 Dec. 2015. Web. 03 July 2016. <<http://www.news.com.au/world/middle-east/ihs-maps-islamic-states-territorial-losses-over-2015/news-story/94a659d0b38a54857d8b11dc3922ac1e>>.



Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a terrorist group founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf based in Nigeria. Boko Haram is one of the most murderous terrorist organisations, for around 6 600 people were executed by the movement in 2014. Boko Haram did stay more or less quiet for eight or nine years, the bombing of the UN headquarters in Abuja in August 2011 was the first of many deadly attacks committed by the movement. In the year 2013, Boko Haram kidnapped dozens of young women and girls in order to rape them and to make them bride, but the organisation stayed out of the Western media. They made their appearance in the media when they kidnapped 276 girls between 16 and 18 in Chibok in April 2014. Sadly, 218 girls are still missing. Most of them were Christians and have been forced to convert to Islam, they have been married to older men and raped.

Boko Haram's intention are more or less the same as Al-Qaeda's: free the region of American influence, release all Boko Haram prisoners and create an Islamic State in the region.

Radicalisation

Causes and motivations

Radicalisation can be caused due to a difference in beliefs and personal situation, but they often need to be combined. According to a study made by Mathew Francis, the causes can be separated in four categories: situational, strategic, ideological and individual.

In the category situational will be placed the pre-conditions and the precipitant causes. The pre-conditions can be racial discrimination, poverty, the feeling to be misunderstood by politics, but also all the things that enable people to receive hate messages such as Internet and urbanisation. The precipitants causes will be the 'flash points' which will push people to join such terrorist organisation: it could be for example wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Strategic causes can be long-term or short-term motivations. Long-term can be to combat western influence in the Middle East, and short-term will be to instore fear and to force governments to react. Under ideological causes will be placed the non-negotiable beliefs about what's good for today's society, for example the belief that young girl aged nine or ten must be married. Finally, individual causes are personal choice, the person's background, psychological problems or just serendipity.



Recruitment in prison

Prison is the easiest place where radicalised terrorists can recruit other people. Indeed, people in prison are often consumed with hatred and surrounded by other people who execrate western morality and who have extreme views. Therefore, they find in terrorism a good solution to get revenge from western society. Some countries decided to group all extremists together, in order to limit the radicalisation in prison. However, they can then strengthen their position together, and when they come out of prison, be even surer of their beliefs.

Recruitment online

One of the most used means to radicalise and recruit people is Internet. It has never been this easy to post videos and propaganda texts on the Internet: freedom of speech has clearly been overtaken by messages of hate and encouragement to violence. For example, ISIL post regularly videos through the Media Al Hayat. Some of them western friendly, showing fighters posing with American or European products, but most of them incite to violence and death, showing beheading and murders. Indeed, ISIL shows honestly the beheading of the people who are considered traitors or collaborators, thus claiming that the organisation embodies justice and governance. In every video, music is used and there is very little text, in order to captivate the viewer and make him willing to watch it until the end and most of the videos are translated in Western languages. Through those propaganda videos, terrorist groups encourage people to take actions, to fight for their beliefs, showing the sins of those who do not.

Some countries have strict regulations online, but others are more permissive, which permit to terrorist organisations to target where to post their message and thus to contact youth and recruit.

Deradicalisation

Some countries choose a more military deradicalisation systems, however others, such as in Europe, choose other options. In Europe, deradicalisation is mostly done by teams of psychologists and psychiatrists who will try to understand the mental state of the patient and help them recover from their traumatic past. However, this can take months or even years, and is very difficult because the patient is still in contact with propaganda videos or other radicalised people.



Major Parties Involved and Their Views

What it is important to understand is that there are no ‘major parties’ but only countries that are more affected by radicalisation than others. No country is protected from terrorism and radicalisation and everyone is victim of both. Every delegate should really research what the situation is in their own country, for it is the only way to have fruitful debates.

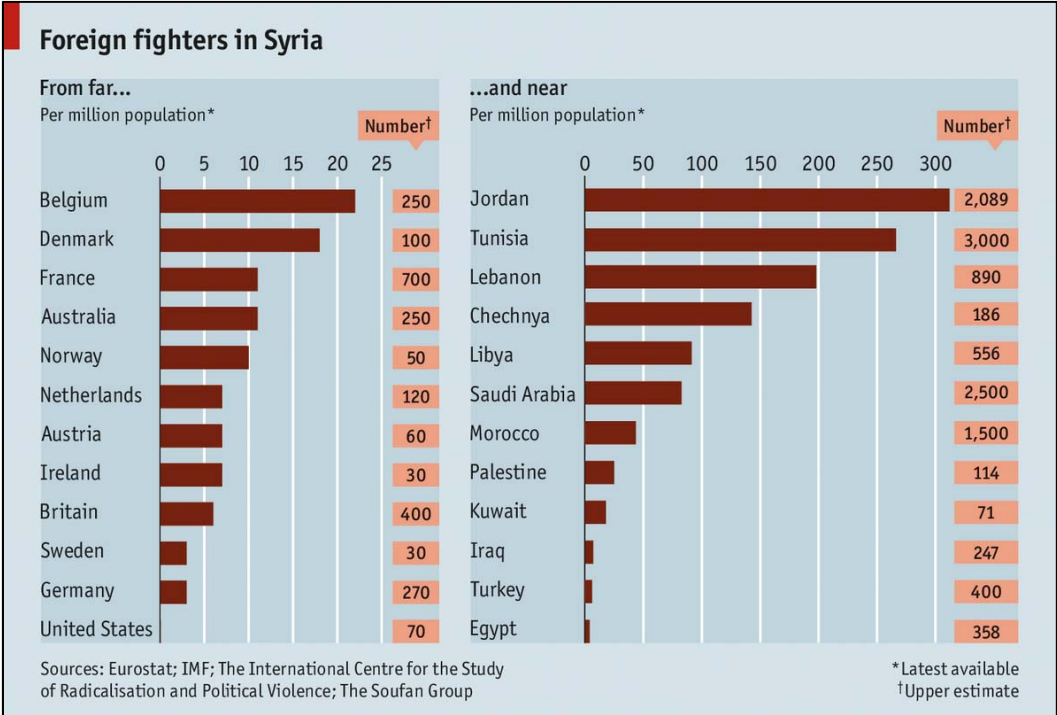


Figure 2. Origin of foreign fighters in Syria (in number and per million population)

Joshi, Shashank. "The Economist on Foreign Fighters in Syria, per Million Population." *Twitter*. The Economist, 28 Aug. 2014. Web. 3 July 2016. <<https://twitter.com/gawhary/status/505246518191095808>>.

Middle-East countries

Whether it is Saudi Arabia, Jordan or Tunisia, the situation is catastrophic. The number of foreign ISIL fighters from those countries rises up to 3 000 fighters, as we can see in Figure 2. But the political instability of the region prevents the governments of finding a lasting solution to stop the recruitment by terrorist organisations. In Syria, the civil war is one of the causes of ISIL presence on its territory: the country being weakened by the rebellions and combats, it was very easy for the movement to intrude the State, and even more for the western countries were too occupied dealing with Bashar Al-Assad.

It is in the Middle East that the question of preventing recruitment by terrorist organisations will be the most laborious to solve. Indeed, as it is where those organisations are based, it is very difficult to prevent radicalised people to join them. Moreover, the propaganda is extremely present in the region, which gives countering radicalisation and deradicalisation programs very little impacts.

European countries

Europe has suffered a great deal because of terrorist attacks in the previous year. Of course, other countries outside Europe were also victim of terrorist attacks, but the fact that Western countries were the target shocked the international community more, as it showed that terrorists were attacking principles such as freedom of speech, freedom of media or freedom of sexuality. The European Union (EU) has quickly understood the importance to act against this radicalisation, as around 6 000 European Citizens have left the European soil to fight alongside ISIL. In order to fight against this enormous wave of radicalisation, the European Commission created the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), which aims to bring together experts on radicalisation such as police officers, prison authorities but also teachers, psychologists and civil society representatives in order to share knowledge and experiences on the issue. The EU has also established in 2005 a strategy to stop terrorist radicalisation and recruitment with three main actions: disorganise the networks and actions that lead to radicalisation (propaganda through Internet, videos, texts), promote justice, security and democracy, and finally ensure that the radicalised opinions do not dominate the general views.

United States of America (USA)

The USA have been concerned with terrorism since September 11th, 2001: the attacks have completely changed the opinion of Americans towards terrorists. In 2003, the government created the National Counterterrorism Center, also known as NCTC, which aim to track terrorists in the USA, to list them in the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment, which help to trace and supervise the actions and moves of terrorists, and to support the authorities after a terrorist attack. According to the FBI, around a thousand US citizens or permanent residents support ISIL. This number has invited the government to take action, such as programs to fight against this radicalisation, because it recognises its accountability on the matter. Indeed, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) wrote in 2010 a report about countering radicalisation and which strategy to take – for example fighting only violence radicalisation or also cognitive radicalisation –, a report who gives to the Muslim community an important role in those programs.



Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1988	Creation of Al-Qaeda.
February 26 th , 1993	Bombing in the World Trade center: 6 people killed and more than a thousand of injured. The murderer will be sentenced to life imprisonment plus 240 years.
July 25 th , 1995	Bombing in the Parisian metro: 8 people killed and 157 injured. In the four next months, another 11 attacks will occur in the country.
August 23 rd , 1996	Osama Bin Laden declares war to the USA, calling for for the death of all American citizens.
1999	Creation of ISIL.
September 4 th , 1999	Bombing of a residential building in Russia: 64 killed.
February 29 th , 2001	In the United Kingdom, the Terrorist Act is enacted, giving police officer the right to arrest without a warrant if the person is suspected of terrorism.
September 11 th , 2001	Twin Towers bombing in New-York: 3000 killed.
2002	Creation of Boko Haram.
March 2003	Invasion of Iraq by the coalition led by the USA.
March 11 th , 2004	Bombing in Madrid: 192 killed and 1 800 wounded.
July 4 th , 2005	Four suicide bombing in the London tube kill 52 people and injure hundreds.
August 26 th , 2011	Vehicle bombing in Nigeria at the UN headquarters: 23 killed and 80 injured, claimed by Boko Haram.
April 14 th , 2014	Boko Haram kidnap 257 schoolgirls.
May, 24 th , 2014	A French ISIL supporter kills four people in front of the jewish museum in Brussels.
October 22 nd , 2014	A soldier is murdered at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Canada. The murderer was willing to join a terrorist group in Libya.
January 7 th , 2015	<i>Charlie Hebdo</i> attacks in Paris claimed by Al-Qaeda.
February 14 th , 2015	Two attacks in a cultural center and a synagogue in Denmark: 2 killed and 5 wounded. The murderers were affiliated with ISIL.
March 20 th , 2015	In Yemen, a mosque is victim of four suicide bombing: 142 killed and 351 injured, an attack claimed by ISIL.
July 10 th , 2015	A bombing is claimed by Boko Haram in Chad, being the first sign of the terrorist group in the country.



October 10 th , 2015	A peaceful protest is bombed by ISIL members: 102 killed and more than 400 wounded.
November 13 th , 2015	Paris attacks claimed by ISIL: 130 killed and 368 injured.
March 22 nd , 2016	Brussels: suicide bombings in the metro and the airport by ISIL supporters. 32 people are killed and more than 300 are wounded.
March 27 th , 2016	On Eastern Sunday, a suicide-bombing hit a park in Lahore, Pakistan, claimed once again by ISIL. Hundreds of people are killed or wounded.
June 12 th , 2016	In Orlando, USA, a gay nightclub is victim of an ISIL member. It is the deadliest shooting for the LGBT community in the USA: 50 killed and 53 injured.

UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

The UN understood quite quickly the importance of stopping the terrorist organisations and their recruitment, and therefore passed a few resolutions on the matter and created a strategy to counter terrorism.

- The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS), 8 September 2006.

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/un-global-counter-terrorism-strategy>

The UNGCTS is based on four pillars: combatting and preventing terrorism, ensuring Human rights, finding and fighting against the conditions favourable to the spread of terrorism and finally strengthening the UN role on the question and the States' capacity to prevent terrorism.

- Measures to eliminate international terrorism, 14 December 2015 (**A/RES/70/120**)

http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/120

This resolution adopted by the General Assembly is aiming to tackle the issue of terrorism by condemning it, implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, calling nations to stop funding terrorist groups and emphasizing the need of international cooperation in order to solve the issue.

- Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, 21 December 2015 (**S/RES/2255**)

[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2255\(2015\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2255(2015))



This resolution was actually first presented in 2001 (resolution 1377) but has been amended dozens of times since then. The principal measures are stopping the funding of such terrorist organisations, the establishment of list of the different terrorist organisations and of individuals who are suspected of terrorism.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

All the previous attempts to resolve the issue have clearly failed, or at least were not sufficient enough, for terrorism has never been so present. The solutions that the UN calls for in its resolutions and strategy are well thought and can help to solve the issue, but they will have to be strengthened and used by all Member States, and completed with other solutions.

Possible Solutions

The first solution, which is absolutely primordial, is education. Schools have a big role in preventing international recruitment of youth by terrorist organisations, as they are the one who teach children how to build their own opinions and how to not be influenced by propaganda. Of course, they are not the only factors of this learning: parents also have a very important role as well as religious leaders, if the child is a believer, who have to be able to make them understand that no religion calls for violence. All those adults must be trained in order to be able to teach pedagogically the children about it.

The media also has an important role. Stricter regulations should be put in place worldwide in order to prevent terrorist organisations to post videos and texts on the Internet that children and easily influenced person could find, for freedom of speech stops where the duty of respect of all begins.

Another solution, which has already been proposed by the UN, is to created list of all individuals who seems to sympathise with Islamic views. This solution can be completed by a prohibition of travelling to the Middle East for those persons. This way, radicalised people won't be able to join terrorist groups. Once they are listed, they could be hosted in a deradicalisation center, where, with time, they would understand why violence is unnecessary.



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Appendices

- I. The CIA's World Factbook, a very useful website to know a bit more about your country:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

- II. ISIL rise explained in a video (by Vox):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzmO6RWy1v8>

