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# TASK FORCE

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**Preventing ISIL'S Rebirth Through a Greater  
Understanding of Radicalization: A Case Study of ISIL  
Foreign Fighters**

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# Preventing ISIL's Rebirth Through A Greater Understanding of Radicalization: A Case Study of ISIL Foreign Fighters

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

Terrorism kills on average 20,000 people every year. Although this is a small percentage of the world's population, terrorism is a global security issue for every nation. Our report focuses on the rise, recruitment, and fall of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Declaring a Caliphate in 2014, ISIL was responsible for orchestrating attacks across the globe, and influencing hundreds of more lone wolf attacks. While ISIL is responsible for attacking other countries, the majority of deaths have been committed against fellow Muslims in the Levant.

Even though the Islamic State has been defeated in the Levant, 41,490 foreign fighters are waiting to be repatriated to their original home country. Our report seeks to provide possible policy recommendations for dealing with imprisoned ISIL foreign fighters. They present a security threat to the US and the global community since recruits are being held in unsecure prisons in Syria and Iraq. For that reason, our policy recommendations are directed towards the United States government.

To understand the causes of radicalization among international ISIL recruits, we looked at the conditions in the countries from which recruits came in the largest numbers, either in total or per capita of Sunni Muslims of fighting age 15-54 years old.

Our findings demonstrate radicalization is not a monocausal process, but rather a myriad of factors contribute to radicalization. One major contributor to radicalization around the world is Wahhabism. Saudi Arabian funded cultural centers, schools, and mosques distribute radical Wahhabi materials and textbooks that encourage violence against other Islamic sects and non-Muslims.

Working on curbing Saudi influence in other countries is key to stopping radicalization. Prisons contribute to a large percentage of radicalization around the world due to lack of funding, corruption, overcrowding, and arbitrary arrests of petty criminals. Our findings also show that economic factors contribute to terrorism. Lack of economic opportunities within one's native country, high inequality, and high poverty rates increase likelihood of radicalization.

We also found that lack of education factored into radicalization. Countries unable to provide education to high numbers of young people, face greater rates of radicalization as terrorist groups offer social provisions such as education. Socioeconomic factors such as isolation of minority groups plays into radicalization as well as integration of immigrant groups. Additionally, political instability allows for terrorism to thrive. Our policy recommendations aim to combat these contributing aspects in order to assist in preventing terrorism.

# ***THE RISE OF ISIL AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS***

*Orla Casey*

In March 2019, Syrian Democratic Forces in coalition with Iraqi, Syrian, and international forces defeated the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in the Battle of Baghuz.<sup>1</sup> While ISIL has been defeated in the Levant, active affiliate branches in Libya, Yemen, the Philippines, and several other countries still pose security threats. Moreover, large swaths of soldiers are in jails awaiting trial, and thousands of women and children live in displaced person camps waiting to be repatriated. Although the fighting has ended, ISIL still poses a direct security problem for the global community, specifically the United States. Additionally, understanding the rise of ISIL, and radicalization of people around the world can better help prevent re-radicalization and future terrorist attacks. The rise of ISIL is based on three world events: Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, U.S. Invasion of Iraq, and the Syrian Civil War.

On December 24, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan marking the beginning of a nine-year civil war. The Soviets invaded to ensure that the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan stayed in power. However, instead of establishing a stable nation state, the invasion led to a destabilization of Afghanistan as rebel groups began to compete for power. Originally, the Soviet invasion was perceived by some Muslims around the world as a secular foreign power meddling in the politics of an Islamic nation. As a result, thousands of Muslims from around the world traveled to Afghanistan to fight for the Mujahideen. Comprised of primarily Sunni Muslims, the Mujahideen was funded primarily by Saudi Arabia, the United States, Pakistan, and through private donations.<sup>2</sup>

Extensive foreign funding enabled the Mujahideen to train thousands of jihadi fighters. Several of these prominent fighters included Osama bin-Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Mohammed Omar, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Although the Mujahideen eventually defeated the Soviet forces, internal fragmentation among the organization left the country in an unstable position. Later, Osama bin-Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri founded al-Qaeda to continue jihad resistance against foreign influence.<sup>3</sup> Mohammed Omar eventually took control of Afghanistan after founding the Taliban.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi returned to his home country Jordan but would later travel to Iraq to fight U.S. occupation.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan marked the start of a global jihad where fighters from various countries traveled to other countries to resist foreign influence.

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<sup>1</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, "[ISIS Caliphate Crumbles as Last Village in Syria Falls](#)," New York Times, March 23, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> James Phillips, "[The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan](#)," The Heritage Foundation, January 9, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Bergen and Paul Cruickshank, "[Revisiting the Early Al Qaeda: An Updated Account of its Formative Years](#)," Taylor and Francis Online, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, April 1, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Zachary Laub, *The Taliban in Afghanistan*, Council on Foreign Relations, July 04, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> George Michael, "[The Legend and Legacy of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#)," Taylor and Francis Online, Defense Studies Journal, September 12, 2007.

Operation Iraqi Freedom and the subsequent U.S. occupation of Iraq led to the formation of ISIL. In the early 2000s, the Bush Administration claimed Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and posed a direct threat to the United States. The U.S. also attempted to justify the invasion of Iraq by arguing that the U.S. would liberate Iraqi citizens from a cruel dictator and form a stable democracy in Iraq. Not only were weapons of mass destruction never found, but the U.S. failed to form a stable democracy.<sup>6</sup>

From 2003 until 2011, the U.S. occupied Iraq and implemented a policy of de-Baathification. Prior to U.S. interference, Iraq lived in a one-party system in which the Ba'ath Party controlled politics. Under Ba'ath rule, Iraq nationalized major industries including their oil industry. One of the first steps of de-Baathification enabled American companies to privatize Iraqi industries. However, several high-ranking officials in the Bush Administration were connected to powerful companies such as Halliburton, Chevron, Lockheed Martin, and Bechtel which profited heavily off U.S. occupation.<sup>7</sup> This enraged many Iraqis because U.S. crony capitalism allowed select American business to profit off Iraqi industries and resources. During this time, Mujahideen fighter Abu Musab al-Zarqawi traveled to Iraq to fight the U.S. occupation where he founded al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Another component that led to the formation of ISIL were the underlying religious divisions in Iraq. Around 65% of Iraq's population is Shiite Muslim however, the Ba'ath Party and Iraqi Army were primarily comprised of Sunni Muslims<sup>8</sup>. De-Baathification resulted in thousands of former political leaders and soldiers losing their jobs. Sunni military leaders became targets for ISIL recruitment as a Caliphate became a way for Sunnis to regain the power and jobs they once had. Additionally, U.S. forces failed to establish a government in Iraq that understood and was properly equipped to address the Sunni-Shiite divide. As a result, sectarian tensions continued to be a focal point in the rebel insurgency against U.S. occupation.

U.S. occupation in Iraq also resulted in the imprisonment of thousands of Iraqis, some of whom were former Ba'athist politicians, rebel fighters, and civilians. U.S. operated prisons in Iraq became breeding grounds for ISIL. One infamous prison that committed abuse against its prisoners was Abu Ghraib. British contractors originally constructed the prison in the 1950s, and Saddam's government used the prison. Under U.S. forces, Abu Ghraib became infamous because of the torture, harassment, rape, and murder of its inmates.<sup>9</sup> Iraqis became outraged with the lack of accountability of the Bush Administration, and short prison sentences given to U.S. soldiers involved in the Abu Ghraib scandal. Another infamous

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<sup>6</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch, "[The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications](#)," Taylor and Francis Online, Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies, October 1, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Antonia Juhasz, *The Bush Agenda: Invading the World, One Economy at a Time* (New York: Regan Books, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> "[CIA World Factbook](#)," Central Intelligence Agency, February 12, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Seymour Hersh, "[Torture at Abu Ghraib](#)," *The New Yorker*, April 30, 2004.

prison that became a recruiting hotspot was Camp Bucca. Camp Bucca housed some of ISIL's future leaders including Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>10</sup> The lack of oversight at Camp Bucca enabled radicalized inmates to collaborate with other radicals, and to convert non-radicalized and petty criminals. Camp Bucca separated inmates based on religious sect. This made it easier for Sunni Muslims to radicalize other Sunni Muslims. The perceived injustice in the way American forces operated prisons furthered ISIL recruitment.

Other than the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan and the U.S. Invasion of Iraq, the Syrian Civil War heavily impacted the growth of ISIL. In 2011 the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi kickstarted the Arab Springs in Tunisia.<sup>11</sup> By January, protests spread to Syria to demonstrate against Bashar al-Assad. Initially, protests against al-Assad's regime were peaceful, but soon a variety of military groups took up arms against the government. The primary rebel group, the Free Syrian Army, became bogged down by rebel infighting with other groups.

The overall political instability in Syria enabled ISIL to grow into a proto state the size of Britain. Assad exploited these divisions by letting radical Islamic militants go free from jails. Those who wanted to establish an Islamic State in Syria, formed al-Nusra Front. Similar to al-Qaeda in Iraq al-Nusra Front originally pledge allegiance to al-Qaeda. However, in 2013 al-Baghdadi announced the establishment of an Islamic State by merging al-Nusra with al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Unlike other radical Jihadist terrorist groups, ISIL's primary desire was to establish a Caliphate.<sup>12</sup> The Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations seek to end foreign influence in their respective countries and establish their own governments. However, ISIL's goal is to establish an Islamic State on a global level- a Caliphate. The Islamic State sought to unite all Sunni Muslims from around the world in a utopian community devoid of kinds of apostasy, including the Shiite Islam. The call to fight the Islamic State was heard by thousands of foreigners who volunteered to live, work, and fight for the Islamic State. A wholistic examination of why foreigners traveled to live under ISIL's rule is needed to better understand the root causes of radicalization.

In order to better understand where foreign ISIL fighters originate from we had to establish a data set to analyze. Total populations of a country were determined based off of the CIA World Factbook's most recent census records on each country. Additionally, the percentage of Muslims living in a country was drawn from data reported on the CIA World Factbook<sup>13</sup>. From there, we took the percentage of Muslims living in the country and found the raw number of Muslims per country in order to understand

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Chulov, "[ISIS: The Inside Story](#)," The Guardian, December 11, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Erin Blakemore, "[What was the Arab Spring and How Did it Spread](#)," National Geographic, March 29, 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Chulov, "[ISIS: The Inside Story](#)."

<sup>13</sup> "[CIA World Factbook](#)," Central Intelligence Agency, February 12, 2020.

that data in relationship to the total Muslim population in each country. Additionally, the percentage break down between Sunni and Shia Muslims that live in a given country were taken from the CIA World Factbook.

Our primary concern was establishing a set of reliable data points as the gross number of ISIL recruits from each country is not transparent. Some countries publish the number of nationals that have left to fight for ISIL while other countries only provide rough estimates. The total number of ISIL fighters per country was gathered from a 2019 report produced by the International Center for the Study of Radicalization<sup>14</sup>. To better understand these numbers in the context of each country, the raw number of fighters was compared to the overall population of Sunni Muslims in said country. While it is expected that countries with larger Sunni Muslim populations will produce more fighters, we also examined percentages of ISIL recruits to better understand the rate of radicalization within each country. Demographically, ages 15-54 are most likely to fight for ISIL; hence, Sunni Muslims ages 15-54 are the demographic we focused on. Overall, the percentages of Sunni Muslims ages 15-54 project a more detailed rate of radicalization in each country.

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<sup>14</sup> Joana Cook and Gina Vale, "[From Daesh to Diaspora II: The Challenges Posed by Women and Minors After the Fall of the Caliphate](#)," International Center for the Study of Radicalization, July 26, 2019.

# ***THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (MENA)***

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## **SAUDI ARABIA**

*Haley Rogers*

With a staggering contribution of 3,244 people, Saudi Arabia has supplied the fourth largest amount of total foreign fighters to ISIL, even though is not among the top ten countries with the largest total number of Muslims.<sup>15</sup> Mainstream Sunni Muslims are the religious majority in Saudi Arabia, making up 52.3% of the country's religious population, while Wahhabi Muslims make up 22.9% of the population.<sup>16</sup> However, Wahhabi clerics are able to enforce their religious rules on the country, due to the support they get from the Saudi government. Wahhabism is a fundamentalist interpretation of the Qur'an. In July 2013, Wahhabism was identified by the European Parliament in Strasbourg as the main source of global terrorism.<sup>17</sup> Even the U.S. government has held a similar view of Wahhabism's ties to terrorism, as conveyed through a 2003 Senate hearing.<sup>18</sup> The roots of Wahhabism go back to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab, the founder of Wahhabism, arrived in Al-Dir' iyyah, Saudi Arabia and began promoting his ideology.<sup>19</sup> In a political sense, Wahhabism has prevailed as the dominant Islamic sect in Saudi Arabia, and because of this it is taught to school children from a very young age. There is a distinct correlation between Saudi school material and Saudi terrorists, thus indicating that Wahhabism contributes to radicalization in Saudi Arabia.<sup>20</sup> However, the Saudi Arabia's economic conditions also play a role in the radicalization of the country's citizens.

There are 25,000 Saudi public schools, which are responsible for educating around 5 million students. The Saudi government's promotion of Wahhabi religious education materials is not only present in Saudi Arabia itself, but also around the world. In addition, there are academies run by Saudi Arabia in 19 world capitals, which use some of the same religious texts that are advocating for religious intolerance.<sup>21</sup> Saudi Arabia has spent an estimated \$100 billion spreading the Wahhabi ideology around the world.<sup>22</sup> Non-Wahhabi Muslims and non-Muslims are extremely discriminated against in Saudi

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Izady, "[Persian Gulf Religions](#)," Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity (New York, Columbia University, Gulf 2000 Project: 2006-present).

<sup>17</sup> "[Wahhabism: a short guide](#)," Independent.ie, last modified June 11, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Technology and Homeland Security, *Terrorism: Growing Wahhabi Influence in the United States*, 108<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., 2003, S. Doc. 108-267.

<sup>19</sup> "[Wahhābi](#)," Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., last modified December 14, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> "[Arab News: Fewer Textbooks](#)," Security & Terrorism, The Institute for Gulf Affairs, last modified April 13, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> "[Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance](#)," Center for Religious Freedom, last modified 2006.

<sup>22</sup> Farah Pandith, "[Extremism Is Riyadh's Top Export](#)," Foreign Policy, last modified March 24, 2019.

Arabia and are prohibited from publicly practicing their religion.<sup>23</sup> This discrimination against other religions, and even non-Wahhabi sects of Islam, is evident in Saudi Arabia's school textbooks. A 2016 report showed that Saudi textbooks still condemned Sunni Muslims for not following Wahhabi Islam. The texts also instructed Muslims to "hate" people of other religions, even other Muslims who are not Wahhabi, and assert that it is their "religious duty" to spread Islam through jihad. The Saudi government claimed that they had reviewed the country's educational material and removed parts that promoted intolerance towards other religions, though the above report demonstrates otherwise.<sup>24</sup>

Saudi Arabia's total population is 33 million and consists entirely of Muslims. Compared to surrounding countries, Saudi Arabia is not an outlier due to its Sunni majority, as many of its neighbors are majority Sunni as well. The percentage of Sunni Muslims, aged 15-54, from Saudi Arabia joining ISIL is 0.018%, if only mainstream Sunni Muslims are considered. However, this percentage increases to 0.068% if one assumes that the Saudi ISIL fighters come from the Wahhabi-Salafi sect.<sup>25</sup> People ages 15 to 24 constitute 15.38% of the population in Saudi Arabia, whereas those in between the ages of 24 and 54 comprise 50.2% of the population.<sup>26</sup> In 2018, the unemployment rate for people ages 15 to 24 was reported as 25.77%,<sup>27</sup> whereas Saudi Arabia's overall unemployment rate is 5.5%.<sup>28</sup> Unemployed youth have been drawn to Wahhabi groups since the 1980s.<sup>29</sup> Both the education in Saudi Arabia and the employment prospects in the country, namely those for youth, play a large role in whether or not their population is recruited to ISIL.

Saudi Arabia has a GDP of \$687 billion. The country's GDP per capita is \$20,747,<sup>30</sup> which is just over \$3,000 more than the world's average GDP per capita of \$17,500.<sup>31</sup> The country has the fourth highest GDP in the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> Although there are instances in which low socioeconomic status can play a factor in radicalization, there is also research that supports that extreme wealth and resources can result in radicalization as well. Many people who live in poverty simply do not have the access to the resources and education, nor the time, to be politically active, let alone to engage in terrorist activity. Therefore, though common misconceptions of the socioeconomic backgrounds of terrorists may lead people to believe that a large number of total fighters coming from a country as wealthy as Saudi Arabia

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<sup>23</sup> "[Minority Rights](#)," Center for Democracy & Human Rights, last modified June 3, 2009.

<sup>24</sup> "[Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance](#)," Center for Religious Freedom, last modified 2006.

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>26</sup> "[Saudi Arabia](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 5, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> H. Plecher, "[Youth unemployment rate in Saudi Arabia in 2018](#)," Statista, last modified September 20, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> "[Saudi Arabia Unemployment Rate](#)," Trading Economics, last modified February 2020.

<sup>29</sup> "[Wahhabism: a short guide](#)," Independent.ie, last modified June 11, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> "[GDP by Country](#)," WorldOMeter, last modified 2017.

<sup>31</sup> "[World GDP - per capita \(PPP\)](#)," Index Mundi, last modified 2017.

<sup>32</sup> "[The World Factbook](#)," Central Intelligence Agency, last modified 2018.

does not make sense, there is research that supports the idea that wealth and resources can lead to radicalization as well. As some say, “terrorism is a luxury.”<sup>33</sup>

Though Saudi Arabia’s GDP per capita is an indicator of the country’s wealth, it does not provide information about the distribution of that wealth. As previously stated, both wealth and resources as well as a lack thereof can contribute to the radicalization of individuals, especially when a country has a high level of income inequality. A high income leads to more access to resources, which people need to become politically active and involved in politics. However, a high level of income inequality in a country can foster feelings of resentment amongst impoverished people, thus leading them to be drawn to terrorist activity as well.<sup>34</sup> Saudi Arabia’s Gini coefficient of 49.75 indicates that the level of inequality in the country is extremely high.<sup>35</sup> Economic inequality “can lead to discontent, political instability and violence, all of which have the potential to breed radicalism and terrorism.”<sup>36</sup> Therefore, though Saudi Arabia’s GDP and GDP per capita convey the country’s wealth, that wealth is not dispersed equally amongst Saudi citizens, which could be a contributing factor to fostering terrorist ideologies.

While Saudi Arabia’s economic position reveals possible motivations for terrorists from the country, so does its social climate. While the average Human Development Index (HDI) of Arab States is 0.703, Saudi Arabia has a HDI of 0.857, which indicates a very high level human development.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, Saudi Arabia’s World Happiness Index is 6.38, which ranks the country at 28<sup>th</sup> in the entire world with only two other Middle Eastern countries ranking above it.<sup>38</sup> While Saudi Arabia fares well in its World Happiness Index, as of 2019 the country’s Human Freedom Index was 5.42 out of 10, with 10 representing the highest level of freedom. The average rating for 162 countries included in the report was 6.89 and, out of all the countries in the Middle East and Northern Africa, Saudi Arabia ranked in twelfth place in terms of general human freedom. More specifically, the country’s ranking for personal freedom was reported as 4.32, and its economic freedom as 6.52. Overall, its freedom rank in comparison to the rest of the world was 149.<sup>39</sup> While the country has an overall high level of human development, it has a relatively low level of freedom in comparison to other countries not just in the Middle East, but globally.

Saudi Arabia’s political system is a monarchy that uses Islamic law as the prevailing source of legislation. The country is ruled by the Sa‘ūd family, whose political and economic rule was legitimized

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<sup>33</sup> Willem Koomen and Joop Van der Plicht, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 29.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> “[WIID -- World Income Inequality Database](#),” United Nations University, last modified December 2019.

<sup>36</sup> Willem Koomen and Joop Van der Plicht, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 81.

<sup>37</sup> “[Human Development Report 2019](#),” United Nations Development Programme, last modified 2019.

<sup>38</sup> “[World Happiness Index](#),” Country Economy, last modified 2019.

<sup>39</sup> Ian Vasquez and Tanja Porcnik, “[Human Freedom Index](#),” Cato Institute, last modified 2019.

by Wahhabi clerics. The family gives the Wahhabi clerics control over the social spheres including education, courts, and religious matters.<sup>40</sup> In 2015, Salman bin Abdulaziz Saud, known colloquially as Salman of Saudi Arabia, became the king of Saudi Arabia. King Salman is one of the children of the founder of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud. Prior to his appointment as king, King Salman founded the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993. This organization masqueraded as a charity providing relief to Muslim citizens dealing with the aftermath of the civil war. The commission provided \$448 million in aid to Bosnian Muslims in between 1993 and 2000, \$120 million of which came from King Salman personally.<sup>41</sup> The organization's office in Sarajevo was raided by NATO forces and evidence was discovered that incriminated the Saudi government, namely King Salman, in providing funds to terrorist groups.<sup>42</sup> Though parties involved claimed that none of them knew they were providing support for terrorist groups, King Salman had visited the Sarajevo offices, where the incriminating evidence was found, a year before the raid occurred.<sup>43</sup> The King's high involvement with an organization linked to terrorist funding demonstrates how terrorism seems to be inextricably tied to the Saudi government and its support of global Wahhabism.

Following his rise to the throne, King Salman legitimated his authority by increasing the rate of executions to the highest amount in the past two decades. In 2017, King Salman decided to usurp his nephew, Muhammad bin Nayef, from his position as Crown Prince and in his absence, appoint his son, Muhammad, as prince of Saudi Arabia. Following Muhammad bin Salman's appointment as prince, he launched a series of reforms that seemed to be leading the country in a new, more progressive direction. Under Muhammad bin Salman, there was a halt in the crackdowns by religious police, who had previously enforced strict rules that were in line with the state's Wahhabi ideology. For example, these strict rules included banning concerts, movies, and women driving. These progressive changes implemented by Prince Muhammad were a stark contrast to Saudi Arabia's past, which included strict implementation of Wahhabism and did not allow for much social freedom. However, while awarding citizens more social freedom, the Prince has also been less tolerant of criticism and dissent. Under his rule, the Saudi government imprisoned women's rights activists and a prominent columnist, Jamal Khashoggi, who was known for political dissent, was tortured and killed.<sup>44</sup> These heavy restrictions against freedom of speech demonstrate how rigidly the Saudi government enforces Wahhabism on its citizens. The way that the Saudi government and its religious police implement Wahhabism within their

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<sup>40</sup> Joshua Teitelbaum, et al., "[Saudi Arabia](#)," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified February 8, 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Dan Christensen, "[9/11 families: New Saudi king ran terror-funding charity](#)," Miami Herald, last modified February 6, 2015.

<sup>42</sup> David Andrew Weinberg, "[King Salman's Shady History](#)," Foreign Policy, last modified January 27, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> James Jones. *Saudi Arabia Uncovered*. Directed by James Jones (2016; USA; Frontline).

<sup>44</sup> Priyanka Boghani, "[The Paradox of Saudi Arabia's Social Reforms](#)," Frontline, PBS, last modified October 1, 2019.

community demonstrates to Saudi citizens that this religious sect, including the often intolerant, rules and regulations that it promotes, is the only religion that should be adhered to. This rigid enforcement of Wahhabism, coupled with the known link between this sect's ideology and terrorism, demonstrates how the Saudi government is fostering radicalization within its citizens through the beliefs they promote to their people.

Though there is an evident relationship between the Saudi government and the radicalization of Saudi Arabia's citizens, the country has implemented measures to prevent terrorism. Following the 9/11 terrorist attack, the Saudi government conducted widespread arrests, interrogations, and executions of al-Qaeda leaders in the country, hoping that this would prevent and discourage future terrorist attacks. These efforts proved to be ineffective after attacks in Riyadh, the country's capital, which caused the death of 27 people. After the attacks, in 2004, the government concentrated their efforts on implementing a new, "softer" approach to countering terrorism, that focused on counseling extremists.<sup>45</sup> This approach begins in prisons where extremists are counseled by Islamic clerics and receive re-religious education. During this counseling, extremists are asked to explain their ideology and motives behind carrying out the terrorist attacks that they were a part of. Islamic clerics then try to explain to the terrorists how they are interpreting the Qur'an incorrectly and encourage the terrorists to adopt a more moderate version of Islam. In order to foster better feelings amongst the prisoners toward the Saudi government, detainees are compensated over \$250 per day if they have to stay longer than the normal 12-week duration of the program. Additionally, if the detainees would like to challenge the decision of the government to hold them for longer, they have the freedom to do so. In each of the 32 cases where detainees did move forward with challenging the government, the detainees won the cases. It is believed that granting the detainees' requests is done in order to further reduce hostility toward the Saudi government. In order to promote reintegration into Saudi society, the program established halfway-house type institutions in 2007. So far, 220 of 297 participants have been released from the halfway-houses. Early on during the program, Saudi Arabia claimed to have a 100% success rate, though they later confessed that around 10-20% of the program's prisoners reoffended. This confession occurred after 11 of the detainees from Guantanamo, who had been enrolled in Saudi Arabia's rehabilitation program, returned to terrorist activity, which Saudi Arabia revealed in 2009.<sup>46</sup>

Though Saudi Arabia is not one of the most populous Arab countries, 3,244 total fighters have joined ISIL from Saudi Arabia. Therefore, it is important to understand what has motivated such a large

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<sup>45</sup> Marisa L. Porges, "[The Saudi Deradicalization Experiment](#)," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 22, 2010.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

number of Muslims within the country to become recruits.<sup>47</sup> Two of the leading factors of radicalization in Saudi Arabia are the state's Wahhabi ideology and the income inequality within the country. Wahhabism is a strict, fundamentalist Islamic ideology, which promotes intolerance of other religions, and even of followers of Shiite, Sufi, and other traditional forms of Islam.<sup>48</sup> Income inequality is known to have a correlation with radicalization and terrorism.<sup>49</sup> However, the Saudi government has made serious efforts in order to deradicalize terrorists and reintegrate them back into Saudi society. They have done so by creating deradicalization programs that focus on re-religious education, as well as halfway-houses that support returnees in successfully reintegrating back into society.<sup>50</sup> However, Saudi Arabia's current counterterrorism measures primarily address deradicalizing current terrorists and extremists, as opposed to preventing more people from becoming terrorists.

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<sup>47</sup> Richard Florida, "[The Geography of Foreign ISIS Fighters](#)," CityLab, August 10, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> "[Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance](#)," Center for Religious Freedom, last modified 2006.

<sup>49</sup> Willem Koomen and Joop Van der Plicht, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 81.

<sup>50</sup> Marisa L. Porges, "[The Saudi Deradicalization Experiment](#)," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 22, 2010.

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## TUNISIA

### *Olympia Hunt*

Tunisia provides an interesting case study regarding the relationship between democracy and religious extremism. Despite being the birthplace of the Arab Spring, Tunisia has managed to establish a relatively successful democracy.<sup>51</sup> However, despite its political success relative to surrounding regions, Tunisia continues to struggle against unresolved economic disillusionment among its citizens, and as a result, ISIL has found significant success in recruiting Tunisians primarily on financial grounds. Tunisia is the second highest provider of ISIL fighters, with 6,500 recruits.<sup>52</sup> In addition, ISIL has recruited one of the highest numbers of females from Tunisia (700 recruits).<sup>53</sup> The predominant issues leading to this high rate of radicalization are economic disparity, and lack of control over civic and religious institutions.

Despite its democratic, educational, and social advances, the country's economic growth has failed to keep up. This slow economic growth is the result of domestic political corruption and international conflict.<sup>54</sup> Located between Libya and Algeria, the neighboring instability has ripple effects on Tunisia's political and economic frameworks, and resulting stability. This stunted economic growth contributes to unemployment, which then leads to social dissent and unrest.<sup>55</sup> University graduates, as a demographic, are particularly vulnerable to radicalization due higher rates of unemployment, reaching up to 57% in some Tunisian cities.<sup>56</sup> Although educational opportunities have increased, the economy has not been able to provide enough jobs to utilize the upturn in young professionals with higher education. This results in individuals disenchanted with the government due to unmet social and economic expectations.<sup>57</sup> Left unacknowledged, this dissatisfaction can push individuals to turn to other establishments who promote economic and social security that otherwise lacks in mainstream Tunisian civic society.

Similarly, ISIL has found recruitment success through satisfying community voids not being met by the government or religious institutions. Terrorist organizations such as ISIL have found success in

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<sup>51</sup> Valentina Colombo, "[Tunisia a Nascent Democracy Under Siege](#)," European Foundation for Democracy, Counter Extremism Project, September 2015, 10.

<sup>52</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>53</sup> "[Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#)," Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, November 2019, 68.

<sup>54</sup> "[The World Bank in Tunisia](#)," The World Bank, World Bank Group, accessed February 26, 2020.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Oussama Romdhani, "[North Africa: Beyond Jihadist Radicalization](#)," World Affairs 177, no. 5, 2015. 64.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Georges Fahmi and Hamza Meddeb, "[Market for Jihad: Radicalization in Tunisia](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last modified October 15, 2015.

Anne Wolf, "[The Salafist Temptation: The Radicalization of Tunisia's Post-Revolution Youth](#)," CTC Sentinel 6, no. 4, The Combating Terrorism Center, United States Military Academy West Point, April 2013. 15.

seizing control of mosques and utilizing the environment to perpetuate jihadist ideology. Following the 2010-2011 Tunisian revolution, many Imams were ousted for perceived allegiance to the former government, resulting in an increase of up to 400 “uncontrolled” mosques, or mosques operating outside of the Ministry of Religious affairs.<sup>58</sup> While “uncontrolled” does not necessarily mean that they are led by extremists, it does signify a form of religious rebellion, of which a portion align with jihadist ideology.<sup>59</sup> Terrorist organizations in Tunisia have obtained civic support by providing aid and community services to areas that lack a strong state presence.<sup>60</sup> As a result, despite Tunisia’s democratic success and popular rejection of terrorism, due to economic and civic weaknesses, ISIL has still found significant support among poor and disenfranchised Tunisians.

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<sup>58</sup> Anne Wolf, “[The Radicalization of Tunisia’s Mosques](#),” *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 6, (June 2014): 17-18.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>60</sup> Georges Fahmi, “[Why Democracy Couldn’t Prevent Radicalization in Tunisia](#),” Carnegie Europe, October 22, 2019.

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## MOROCCO

### *Olympia Hunt*

The State of Morocco is an interesting ISIL counterterrorism case study. Despite having contributed 1,698 fighters, ISIL has had a relatively small footprint within its borders.<sup>61</sup> Morocco has had previous non-ISIL related terrorist attacks, such as a series of suicide bombings known as the “Casablanca bombings” that killed 43 people in 2003, and the murder of two tourists in 2018, inspired, although not claimed, by ISIL.<sup>62</sup> However, officially there have been no terrorist attacks carried out within Morocco by ISIL.<sup>63</sup> Despite the lack of successful attacks, radicalization is prevalent within the country due to economic depravity, lack of education, ideological indoctrination, lack of democracy and political participation.

In Morocco, economic conditions greatly contribute to the vulnerability of radicalization and successful recruitment of individuals to ISIL. According to analysis of Moroccan ISIL recruits, almost three-quarters come from disadvantaged, poor, economic backgrounds.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, it is noted that religious motivation for joining ISIL is secondary to economic benefit.<sup>65</sup> Additionally, over half of the sample of ISIL terrorists analyzed had not completed education through the elementary level, and they self-identified as having lived lives prior to ISIL recruitment that were isolated and marginalized in society.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, political engagement is blatantly absent from those recruited to ISIL, with 90% of a sample of Moroccan jihadists stating that they had never had any political affiliation or membership.<sup>67</sup>

The Moroccan government has taken an aggressive approach to counterterrorism. Following the 2003 terrorist attacks the government implemented strong anti-terrorism legislation that emboldened its security forces and intensified punishment for terrorist-related criminal offenses.<sup>68</sup> The Moroccan government has also recognized the importance of combatting terrorism via focusing directly on issues of discrimination, poverty, social exclusion, and religious intolerance.<sup>69</sup> The government has used a “soft” counterterrorist approach that encourages tolerant practice of Islam, and draws on a diverse set of partners

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<sup>61</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>62</sup> Greg Miller and Souad Mekhennet, “[Morocco’s forgotten terror attack](#),” Independent, July 2, 2019. Abdeslam Maghraoui, “[Morocco's Reforms after the Casablanca Bombings](#),” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 26, 2008.

<sup>63</sup> “[Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#),” Institute for Economics & Peace, Sydney, November 2019, 39.

<sup>64</sup> Bahija Jamal, “[Moroccan Counter-terrorism Policy: Case of Moroccan Female Migrants to ISIS](#),” International Annals of Criminology 56, 2018, 147.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

across public, private, domestic, and international sectors.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, empowerment and training of female religious leaders has been an approach initiated by the Moroccan government to combat the growth of extremist ideology.<sup>71</sup> The success of these trainings has attracted international attention and resulted in requests to provide trainings for imams in surrounding countries.<sup>72</sup>

Despite the positive results derived from Morocco's counterterrorism efforts, some strong handed approaches have raised human right concerns. Following the 2003 bombings, raids lacking judicial support resulted in the detainment of 2,000 individuals, with a concentration of origin in poorer neighborhoods.<sup>73</sup> Criminal abuse of power by police forces regarding detainment of individuals, torture, coercion to sign statements, and lack of representation in judicial process have all been identified by the Human Rights Watch.<sup>74</sup>

Morocco has had substantial success at curbing ISIL's influence within its borders, despite the neighboring conflict and unrest. However, the success has arguably come at a cost of individual liberties and human rights. Furthermore, the lack of successful attacks could potentially incentivize further application of terrorist efforts, thus raising the stakes and precautions necessary to be taken on behalf of the government and other partners.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>71</sup> Bahija Jamal, "[Moroccan Counter-terrorism Policy: Case of Moroccan Female Migrants to ISIS](#)," *International Annals of Criminology* 56, 2018, 151.

<sup>72</sup> "[Morocco Starts Construction of New Regional Training Center for Religious Leaders](#)," *Professional Services Close-Up*, May 19, 2014.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> "[MOROCCO: Human Rights at a Crossroads](#)," *Human Rights Watch* 16, no. 6, Human Rights Watch, October 2004, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

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## LIBYA

*Hannah Reilly*

Libya is a 96.6% Sunni Muslim country. Out of almost 7 million citizens or 3,779,423 Sunni Muslim citizens of fighting age, about 600 have joined ISIL. While this number represents .02% of the given population, the gross number of Libyan ISIL fighters in Syria and Iraq is relatively high in comparison with Egypt which also contributed 600 fighters and has a Sunni population 14 times larger than that of Libya. However, in comparison with neighboring Tunisia, Libya has sent six times less jihadis to ISIL per capita of the Sunni Muslims of fighting age. The latter does not seem to indicate a lesser level of radicalization in the country but is influenced by the fact that Libya has been involved in a civil war and experienced political instability since the Arab Spring in 2011. The largest number of Libyan radicals likely stayed in the country to fight their jihad in Libya. The presence of extremism in Libya can be attributed to political instability, and socioeconomic injustice on an individual and tribal scale<sup>75</sup>

The greater problem for Libya is not citizens who have become foreign fighters, but the presence of ISIL within the country, which hosts the most powerful ISIL site outside of Iraq and Syria.<sup>76</sup> This has caused speculation about the extent of the threat ISIL poses in Libya, and whether Libya will become a “fallback” option for ISIL.<sup>77</sup> Fears escalated when two ISIL attacks, one in Germany in 2016 and another in the U.K. in 2017, were found to be perpetrated by ISIL in Libya.<sup>78</sup> Since 2011, between 1,350 to 3,400 foreign fighters have travelled to Libya, but figures of how many Libyans joined ISIL in Libya are difficult to obtain.<sup>79</sup> Although Libya hosts more foreign ISIL fighters than it contributed, it was Libyan ISIL fighters returning from Iraq and Syria who established the ISIL enclave in 2014.<sup>80</sup> Many foreign fighters feel an obligation to help their Sunni Muslim counterparts in Syria; ISIL fighters are ideologically motivated, and their ideology is bolstered by the fact that Syria is believed to be the site of the “final battle between Muslims and ‘non-believers’” Other factors are perceptions of social and economic injustice.<sup>81</sup> ISIL is the largest jihadist group in Libya,<sup>82</sup> however, there are many local groups, and some have pledged allegiance to ISIL.

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<sup>75</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>76</sup> "[Libya: Extremism and Counter Extremism](#)," *Counter Extremism Project* (January 8, 2020): 1.

<sup>77</sup> Aaron Y Zelin, "[Report: Foreign Fighters in Libya](#)," *Wilson Center* (February 16, 2018).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Lisa Watanabe, "[The Next Steps of North Africa’s Foreign Fighters](#)," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* (March 2018): 2.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> "[Libya: Extremism and Counter Extremism](#)," *Counter Extremism Project* (January 8, 2020): 1.

Libya was attractive to ISIL for geo-strategic reasons. Libyan fighters were some of the first to travel to ISIL, and Libya functioned as a “transit and training hub for jihadis travelling to Iraq and Syria” before becoming a destination for ISIL foreign fighters itself.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, European fighters can travel to Tunisia by sea and cross into Libya, and vice versa. The country has vast deserts and is home to nomadic tribes who ISIL members attempt to disguise themselves as, to avoid detection from an aerial view. ISIL was planning to exploit Libya’s oil resources as it exploited the Iraqi oil fields which helped fund the group.<sup>84</sup> However, in contrast to Iraqi oil, Libya’s oil infrastructure is spread out across vast areas, there are no decent smuggling networks, and no small refineries to process crude oil for the group.<sup>85</sup> This caused ISIL to fall financially short in Libya.

Libya was also appealing location to ISIL due to its weak governance and security. The country was ruled by former dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi, from 1969 to 2011, when he was removed during the Arab Spring. His removal created a power and security vacuum in providing an opportunity for ISIL to take hold. Libya has a young population, with 33.65% of the population between the age of 0 and 14 years old, 15.21% between 15 and 24, and 41.57% between 25 and 54.<sup>86</sup> In 2018, Libya had an unemployment rate of 17.3%.<sup>87</sup> However, in 2007, under Gaddafi’s strong welfare state, Libya had the highest literacy rate in “the Arab world.”<sup>88</sup> Although Gaddafi was a despot, his government provided the population with valuable capital. 12 years later Libya’s HDI was 0.708, ranking 110<sup>th</sup> out of 189 countries.<sup>89</sup>

ISIL intended to exploit the deprivation of Libya’s population, particularly its youth, but there was already significant competition. The contest for control in Libya is between the Government of National Accord (GNA) negotiated by the United Nations in 2015, the Islamist Government of National Salvation (GNS) which attempted a coup against the GNA in 2016, and the Libyan National Army (LNA) enemy of ISIL and militias in western Libya. ISIL and Islamist groups such as the Derna Protection Forces (DPF),<sup>90</sup> contend against each other and the government for control. The DPF is a coalition of Islamist groups fighting against the GNA, but it also intends to banish ISIL from Libya.<sup>91</sup>

Political fractionization created an opportunity for ISIL to exploit, but the presence of tribalism in Libya it inhibited it. Libya’s borders were drawn by European powers without regard to tribal affiliations,

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<sup>83</sup> Watanabe, "The Next Steps," 2.

<sup>84</sup> Geoff D Porter, "[How Realistic Is Libya as an Islamic State “Fallback”?](#)" *Combating Terrorism Center*, 9 no. 3 (March 2016).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> “[Libya](#),” CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 5, 2020.

<sup>87</sup> "[Education Statistics](#),” The World Bank, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>88</sup> Amr Hamdy, "[ICT in Education in Libya](#),” *Survey of ICT and Education in Africa* (June 2007): 1-8.

<sup>89</sup> "[2019 Human Development Index Ranking](#),” United Nations Development Program, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>90</sup> Formerly known as the Shura Council of Mujahedeen in Derna (SCMD).

<sup>91</sup> "Libya: Extremism," 1-2.

so while Libya does not have a sectarian divide, Libyans is a tribal nation. ISIL has been unable to exploit tribal divisions in the way it exploited sectarian divides in Iraq and Syria. Tribal membership is not of utmost importance in urban areas, but with weak governance, tribal identities became essential.<sup>92</sup> Tribalism helps explain the abundance of small jihadi and militia groups in Libya. Gaddafi tried to eradicate tribal affiliations but drew upon them as needed, and exploited them to solidify his power.<sup>93</sup> Tribes loyal to Gaddafi were rewarded, resulting in members of those tribes relying more on their memberships. However, for tribes who opposed him, the Libyan parliament passed a code of honor allowing for collective punishment against them.<sup>94</sup> Tribes of the oil rich east were the most oppressed under Gadhafi, and the first to declare a revolution in 2011, with their main grievance being that Gaddafi favored the tribes around Tripoli.<sup>95</sup>

The overthrow of Gaddafi was more unifying for tribes than divisive.<sup>96</sup> Small militias and jihadi groups inhabited the space ISIL normally would have taken. Their presence could be due to Gaddafi's weakening of the military, to ensure it would not be capable of staging a coup, and his reliance instead on unofficial militias loyal to him.<sup>97</sup> Local groups have effectively countered ISIL in Libya. The DPF began the Derna campaign against ISIL which led to ISIL leaving Derna.<sup>98</sup> While the GNA, in cooperation with the U.S. and allied to Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous (BAM), forced ISIL out of Sirte.<sup>99</sup> The LNA drove ISIL out of Benghazi and ISIL was pushed out of Sabratha by anti-LNA forces including the U.S.<sup>100</sup>

ISIL failed to entice Libyans who did not identify with ISIL's call to the global caliphate, or who had local affiliations.<sup>101</sup> ISIL capitalized on economic lamentations in Derna and Benghazi, but was unable to prey on marginalized young Libyans in the area because the population rejected ISIL, a decision influenced by their more pressing regional goals and localism.<sup>102</sup> ISIL failed to tap into the most important issues to Libyans, and instead relied on foreign ISIL fighters entering Libya. This in turn made ISIL even more unpopular as Libyans viewed it as foreign influence.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Apps, "[Factbox: Libya's tribal, cultural divisions](#)," Reuters (August 25, 2011).

<sup>93</sup> Mansouria Mokhefi, "[Gaddafi's regime in relation to the Libyan tribes](#)," Al Jazeera, (March 20, 2011): 2.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Porter, "How Realistic Is Libya," 1-27.

<sup>99</sup> Matt Nashed, "[In retreat, IS takes advantage of Libya's political divide](#)," *Al-Monitor*, December 21, 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Mattia Toaldo Mary Fitzgerald, "[A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players](#)," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>101</sup> Lachlan Wilson and Jason Pack, "[The Islamic State's Revitalization in Libya and its Post-2016 War of Attrition](#)," *Combating Terrorism Center* 12, no. 3 (March 2019): 28.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Rhiannon Smith and Jason Pack, "[Al-Qaida's Strategy in Libya: Keep it Local, Stupid](#)," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 6 (December 2017).

However, Libya's high number of fighting age individuals will eventually contribute to the number of foreign fighters if better opportunities do not present themselves. Libya's imposing unemployment rate of 17.3% can make joining ISIL more appealing as it would provide young people with employment and resources. A pattern like this has already emerged. In response to ISIL's inability to recruit in the north, it looked to the southern part of the country where there are less economic and political resources.<sup>104</sup>

The presence of ISIL fighters traveling to and from Libya is predominantly due to political instability. The power and a security vacuum allowed non-state actors, including ISIL, to operate within Libya and take advantage of the suffering population. ISIL worked within Libya with a goal of dividing the society in a "war of attrition."<sup>105</sup> However, the same power vacuum allowed other actors in Libya to counter ISIL. Libya's main assets to ISIL were its geo-strategic significance, and its political and economic instability. Yet, these assets acted as restraints on ISIL in Libya. ISIL was unable to penetrate the local institutions provided by tribes, because it offered a global narrative, which Libyans in a war torn country could not identify with.<sup>106</sup> ISIL had a grip on Libya, but Libya's fate would not be like that of Iraq or Syria.<sup>107</sup> ISIL's failure to fully take hold in Libya was ultimately because of the trouble ISIL had enlisting Libyan members.<sup>108</sup> The group was unable to recruit due to local and tribal ties, its out of touch message, and overall unpopularity. ISIL had difficulty exploiting resources, both human and material. Although Libya avoided becoming a "fallback" option for ISIL, the case emphasizes the need for prevention of radicalization.

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<sup>104</sup>Lachlan and Pack, "The Islamic State's Revitalization," 28.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>106</sup> Toaldo and Fitzgerald, "A Quick Guide."

<sup>107</sup> Porter, "How Realistic Is Libya," 1-27.

<sup>108</sup> Watanabe, "The Next Steps," 2.

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## EGYPT

*Haley Rogers*

Egypt's total population is 99.4 million, making it the most populous Arab nation. Out of nearly 100 million people, 90% of this population are Sunni Muslims. Even with a majority Muslim population, the total number of fighters from Egypt that joined ISIL is only 600. The percentage of fighters joining ISIL from Egypt is 0.0012%, which is 166 times less than in Turkey or 15 times less than in Saudi Arabia.<sup>109</sup> Egypt has a high number of total fighters, it does not have many fighters per capita or even fighters per capita of Muslims. European countries, that have much smaller Muslim populations, have higher numbers of fighters per capita of Muslims than Egypt.<sup>110</sup> Due to its disproportionately low number of fighters, it is important to understand what has motivated the fighters from Egypt to join ISIL. Some factors that set Egypt apart from other countries are its socioeconomic and prison conditions, both of which are poor. The high income inequality, along with arbitrary arrests and poor prison conditions, within the country foster resentment against the state amongst Egypt's citizens. This resentment makes Egyptians vulnerable to ISIL recruitment, which frequently takes place in Egypt's prisons, where many ISIL fighters are already imprisoned. In order to combat this recruitment, the Egyptian government has implemented counterterrorism programs that focus on religious reeducation for extremists.<sup>111</sup>

When considering what aspects of a country's environment contribute to the radicalization of its individuals, it is important to look at the country's socioeconomic environment. At \$235 billion, Egypt has an average GDP in comparison to other countries. However, the country's GDP per capita is \$2,441, thus demonstrating a relatively low economic output per number of people.<sup>112</sup> In 2018, 32.5% of Egyptians lived below the poverty line, which is an increase of nearly twice the amount of people that were impoverished in the country in 2000.<sup>113</sup> Additionally, Egypt's Gini coefficient of 31.2 indicates a high level of income inequality within the country, which fosters radicalization.<sup>114</sup> Egypt has an HDI of 0.700, meaning that it has a high level of human development, but it still only places in 116<sup>th</sup> out of all the countries evaluated.<sup>115</sup> Egypt's World Happiness Index is 4.166<sup>116</sup> and its Human Freedom Index is 4.50. Additionally, its personal freedom was 3.95 and its economic freedom 5.05. Due to its rankings and

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<sup>109</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>110</sup> Richard Florida, "[The Geography of Foreign ISIS Fighters](#)," CityLab, last modified August 10, 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Mohamed Bin Ali and Rohan Gunaratna, "[De-Radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight](#)," Taylor & Francis Online, last modified March 28, 2009.

<sup>112</sup> "[GDP by Country](#)," WorldOMeter, last modified 2017.

<sup>113</sup> "[Egypt: A Third of Population Lives in Poverty](#)," Voa, last modified July 30, 2019.

<sup>114</sup> "[WIID -- World Income Inequality Database](#)," United Nations University, December 2019.

<sup>115</sup> "[Human Development Report 2019](#)," United Nations Development Programme, 2019.

<sup>116</sup> "[World Happiness Index](#)," Country Economy, 2019.

indexes, Egypt is considered to be one of the least free countries not just in the Middle East, but in the world.<sup>117</sup> This lack of freedom is especially evident in the restrictions on speaking against the Egyptian government. Though a lot of citizens have been dissatisfied with the country's economic state of affairs, they are not able to freely express this.<sup>118</sup> With Egypt's high income inequality and low level of freedom, the country fosters radicalization, due to the resentment that poor socioeconomic conditions foster amongst citizens. However, the inability of citizens to express their discontent with the government provides an explanation for why there are not as many fighters per capita from Egypt as there are from other countries, where freedom of expression is allowed.

Egypt's lengthy history of civil discontent with the country's political system demonstrates a longstanding tension between the Egyptian government and its citizens. Such discontent can foster resentment towards the state, thus leading individuals to seek out ways to get revenge and bring about the change they wish to see in their government. Egypt is a presidential republican system, meaning that the president is the head of the state.<sup>119</sup> However, the Prime Minister, currently Mostafa Madbouly, is the head of the government.<sup>120</sup> Though the President and the Prime Minister of Egypt are intended to oversee the country together, the President has ended up having almost complete control of the government.<sup>121</sup> Prior to 1953, Egypt was a monarchy, in which political parties and the king and his ministers had a surplus of power and freedom. After the revolution in 1952, the 1923 constitution, which came into force again after temporarily being replaced in 1930, was permanently abolished. What fueled the regime after the revolution was Pan-Arabism, socialism, and non-alignment policy, which called for the creation of a single Arab state. In the following years, Egypt failed multiple times in trying to form transnational unions with other Arab countries. However, in 1958, the United Arab Republic emerged, which was the name of the joint state of Egypt and Syria. The country adopted a new constitution, after which the first presidential election with multiple candidates running took place. Egypt ratified a new constitution in early 2011. The constitution states that Egypt is a democratic state and declares Islam as the state's official religion. The constitution of Egypt also claims that it "guarantees the equality of all Egyptians before the law and their protection against arbitrary intervention by the state in the legal process."<sup>122</sup> In practice, Egyptian citizens have yet to see the constitution fully applied and implemented into their daily lives. Many Egyptians face arbitrary arrests that result from unfair policing practices, which in turn contributes to radicalization.

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<sup>117</sup> Ian Vasquez and Tanja Porcnik, "[Human Freedom Index](#)," Cato Institute, 2019.

<sup>118</sup> "[Egypt: A Third of Population Lives in Poverty](#)," Voa, last modified July 30, 2019.

<sup>119</sup> "[Political System](#)," The Arab Republic of Egypt, last accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>120</sup> "[The World Factbook](#)," The Central Intelligence Agency, last modified February 5, 2020.

<sup>121</sup> Remy Melina, "[How Does Egypt's Government Work?](#)," LiveScience, last modified January 28, 2011.

<sup>122</sup> "[Egypt](#)," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified October 25, 2019.

One of the largest causes of radicalization in Egypt is its failing justice system, coupled with its poor prison conditions. Due to increased arbitrary arrests that land many non-violent offenders in jail, Egypt's prisons are at 160% over capacity. When citizens are arrested for something as simple as a disagreement with the police, or other small, unjustified reasons, new prisoners feel the need to seek revenge. This inclination for vengeance is strengthened when prisoners are arbitrarily detained. The conditions in the prisons are currently the worst that they have been in decades, and they are deemed one of the biggest violations of human rights in the country recently. A wish for retribution, coupled with poor living conditions, makes prisoners especially vulnerable to ISIL recruitment. ISIL fighters inside the prisons will witness the trauma and assault of other prisoners, often as young as 13 to 18 years old, and approach them with the intention of recruiting them. The recruiters appeal to other prisoners by presenting them with a way to get the revenge they desire, along with the promise of protection against future harm and the promise of getting into heaven. Given the constant denial of freedom and the seemingly endless time in jail, ISIL may appear to vengeful, cynical prisoners as their best option.<sup>123</sup> However, the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt may account for the country's comparably small number of fighters per capita, as this organization often competes with ISIL for recruits.<sup>124</sup>

Egypt's efforts to prevent terrorism focus on deradicalization, specifically by attempting to convince Islamic extremists that their interpretation of the Qur'an is incorrect in an effort to persuade them not to use violence. These programs have been active since 1997 and worked alongside Al-Azhar University, one of Islam's most prestigious institutions. Religious clerics host individual counseling with the extremists in the program, during which the extremists are asked to explain their views. The clerics then have a discussion with the returnees, in which they attempt to help them adopt a more moderate interpretation of the Qur'an. The university's contribution to the religious reeducation program, namely through this counseling, has been significant.<sup>125</sup>

Egypt is the most populous Arab state yet does not contribute the largest number of total fighters, therefore, the motivation of the few terrorists that join ISIL from Egypt may seem unclear.<sup>126</sup> However, upon further investigation of the prison conditions within the country, the incentive of Egyptian terrorists becomes significantly clearer. After being arbitrarily arrested, often for non-violent crimes, Egyptian prisoners face conditions that are considered some of Egypt's worst violations of human rights in the past few decades. Prisoners are deprived of their due process rights and kept from their families, as well as

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<sup>123</sup> Amy Woodyatt, "[Egypt's Prisons Are Becoming Recruiting Grounds for the Islamic State](#)," Foreign Policy, last modified April 8, 2019.

<sup>124</sup> "[The Muslim Brotherhood's Influence on Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Iran](#)," Counter Extremism Project, January 2020.

<sup>125</sup> Mohamed Bin Ali and Rohan Gunaratna, "[De-Radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight](#)," Taylor & Francis Online, last modified March 28, 2009.

<sup>126</sup> See Appendix 1.

assaulted within the prisons, therefore making them vulnerable to recruitment within the prisons. ISIL fighters, seeing prisoners become increasingly resentful of the state, approach them with a plan for revenge and protection against further harm. To lonely, abused, traumatized, and now vengeful prisoners, this option has a great appeal.<sup>127</sup> To combat terrorism within the country, deradicalization programs were established in Egypt. These programs have focused on religious reeducation with the support of Al-Azhar University and have enjoyed success in persuading extremists to abandon the use of violence.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Amy Woodyatt, "[Egypt's Prisons Are Becoming Recruiting Grounds for the Islamic State](#)," Foreign Policy, last modified April 8, 2019.

<sup>128</sup> Mohamed Bin Ali and Rohan Gunaratna, "[De-Radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight](#)," Taylor & Francis Online, last modified March 28, 2009.

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## JORDAN

*Audrey Conrad*

Jordan remains an important case for studying radicalization due to the fact that between 3,000 to 3,950 male Jordanians have left the country to take up arms and join ISIL. With these high gross numbers, Jordan falls among the top five contributors to ISIL's fighters. Jordan is a country of 10,458,413 people located in the Middle East.<sup>129</sup> It shares borders with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, the West Bank, and Israel. 97.2% of the country is Sunni Muslim.<sup>130</sup> Between 0.06% and 0.07% of the Sunni Muslim population ages 15 to 54, the age group most likely to be targeted for ISIL recruitment, has gone to fight for ISIL.<sup>131</sup> The main causes that can explain the frequency of ISIL radicalization are the socioeconomic conditions, political disaffection, and radical ideologies in the country. Currently, Jordan's returning ISIL fighters typically end up in jail on terrorism charges. However, since 2015, prisoner deradicalization programs have taken a more rehabilitative stance towards former terrorists, but are usually not effective.

One main cause of radicalization within Jordan is the socioeconomic conditions in the country. Jordan's large youth population is plagued with high levels of unemployment. 52.82% of the population is between the ages of 0 and 24 and the median age in the country is only 23.5 years old.<sup>132</sup> While the role that the Internet plays in radicalizing Jordanian youth is difficult to determine, it is more likely that radicalization occurs due to other factors discussed in this section and exposure to the group through local communities. In many Arab countries, including Jordan, higher levels of education are positively correlated with higher levels of unemployment. Unemployed, educated Arab youth are also more likely to become radicalized.<sup>133</sup> While Jordan's overall unemployment rate of 18.3% is already high, the youth unemployment rate in the country is even higher, at 35.6%.<sup>134</sup> Jordanians with a college level education have found that job prospects are better right out of high school and are electing not to go to college.<sup>135</sup> Those that did go to college and are now facing a higher unemployment rate than high school graduates feel upset at society for being unable to provide them with a college graduate level job after having done extra work and undergone familial financial burden to complete additional schooling.<sup>136</sup> Frustration with

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<sup>129</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>130</sup> "[Jordan](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>131</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>132</sup> "[Jordan](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>133</sup> Kartika Bhatia and Hafez Chanem, "[How do education and unemployment affect support for violent extremism? Evidence from eight Arab countries](#)," Global Economy and Development at Brookings, (March 2017): 9.

<sup>134</sup> "[Jordan](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>135</sup> Sean Yom and Katrina Sammour, "[Counterterrorism and youth radicalization in Jordan: Social and political dimensions](#)," *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 4 (April 2017): 27.

<sup>136</sup> Bhatia and Chanem, "[Education and unemployment](#)," 10.

these economic conditions can result in higher rates of radicalization as the youth in the country feel increasingly powerless to better their lives.

Jordan has few natural resources that it can sell to other countries to bolster its economy. As a result, Jordan has one of the smallest economies in the Middle East.<sup>137</sup> In the past, one of Jordan's main industries was tourism. The tourism industry comprised 13% of Jordan's GDP in 2015, but decreased by 40% following Jordan's campaign against ISIL.<sup>138</sup> In general, domestic employment sectors have taken a downturn in recent years, which only amplifies Jordan's dependence on international aid. In 2019, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) pledged a joint \$2.5 billion aid package to Jordan, to be given over the next five years.<sup>139</sup> Saudi Arabia and Jordan have a friendly relationship, with a public opinion poll indicating over 88% of Jordanians hold favorable views of the country.<sup>140</sup> The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) also pledged \$50 million to assist in Jordanian education services.<sup>141</sup> Beyond monetary aid, Jordan also imported 96.5% of its oil from Saudi Arabia in 2018.<sup>142</sup> The relationship between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, another large ISIL contributor, appears to be partly cultural, but mainly economic. Aspects of Saudi culture may be visible in select parts of Jordanian society, predominantly in the Ma'an governorate. Wahhabi-Salafism is not a large ideological sect in Jordan, but it is found in Ma'an.<sup>143</sup> The extent of Wahhabi-Salafism in Jordan as a whole remains difficult to measure, given that the majority of the sect could be operating underground. However, Saudi Arabia holds an immense amount of power over the economic wellbeing of Jordan, and therefore it would be to Jordan's economic advantage to keep positive relationships with Saudi Arabia. Jordan's small economy due to lack of natural resources as well as its dependence on foreign aid are chronic economic challenges that have no easy solution or end in sight. This helps to foster feelings of economic powerlessness that drive people towards radical ideologies that promise solutions.

The Syrian refugee crisis has also created an immense economic burden on Jordan. While the crisis has not destabilized the country, Jordan is struggling to provide for its own citizens in addition to the 1.2 million Syrian refugees who have entered the country since the start of the Syrian Civil War. Jordan has already accepted an incredibly large amount of refugees and the crisis, which has no end in sight, has strained Jordan's economy, resulting in lacking resources for social infrastructure, housing, and

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<sup>137</sup> "[Jordan](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>138</sup> Areej Abuqudairi, "[Jordan's ISIL campaign scares away tourists](#)," Al Jazeera, last modified June 21, 2015.

<sup>139</sup> Rana Hussein, "[Saudi fund grants Jordan \\$50m loan to build new schools](#)," The Jordan Times, last modified July 5, 2019.

<sup>140</sup> "[Saudi Arabia's Image Falter among Middle East Neighbors](#)," Pew Research Center, last modified October 17, 2013.

<sup>141</sup> "[Saudi fund signs Jordanian schools agreement](#)," Arab News, last modified July 6, 2019.

<sup>142</sup> Harry Stevens et al., "[Who buys Saudi Arabia's oil?](#)" The Washington Post, last modified September 16, 2019.

<sup>143</sup> Amjad Nasser, "[Jordan's Historical Heart Beats the Jihadi War Drum](#)," The New Arab, last modified November 13, 2014.

government services. The refugee crisis also increased Jordan's dependence on foreign aid as the country becomes reliant on humanitarian organizations to help cover the costs associated with housing a large number of displaced persons.<sup>144</sup> In sum, the refugee crisis is another contributing factor to Jordan's ailing economy, which has created a surge in radicalization of individuals that feel that their government and economy cannot provide for them.

Political disaffection with the current government and the monarchy, in particular amongst the large youth population of the country, also plays an important role in driving radicalization. The country is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy and the reigning sovereign is King Abdullah II of the Hashemite dynasty.<sup>145</sup> Aside from issues with the government that surround the dysfunctional economy, one of the largest causes of political disaffection within Jordan is the fact that Jordan recognizes Israel as a country. Following years of armed conflict between the two countries, in 1994 Jordan signed the Israel-Jordan peace treaty that has served as the base for relations between the two countries for the past twenty five years. Jordan remains a part of the treaty to provide an easy way to work with Israel over back-channel border security concerns and enforcement, as well as to secure \$1.5 billion in economic aid from the United States. However, this treaty, and Israel, remain widely unpopular amongst 70% of the Jordanian public. Public dislike of Israel is likely due to the fact that Israel has repeatedly abused the human rights of Palestinians, and 70% of Jordan's population are either Palestinian refugees or of Palestinian descent.<sup>146</sup>

Protests against a new Jordan-Israel gas agreement occurred in Ma'an in January of 2020.<sup>147</sup> The Ma'an governorate in Jordan, located in the southeastern region of the country, has a complicated history with the Jordanian government and has received considerable media attention for containing several vocal ISIL and jihadist sympathizers. In 2014 alone, at least 100 men from Ma'an left to fight for ISIL.<sup>148</sup> The center of tribal leadership within Jordan, Ma'an has historically felt marginalized and ignored by the Jordanian government.<sup>149</sup> The residents of Ma'an are closer, geographically and religiously, to Saudi Arabia and its Wahhabi-Salafism than to Amman and the ruling Hashemite dynasty.<sup>150</sup> Ma'an is also one of the more impoverished areas of Jordan. The region has been the site of several anti-government protests that center around economic dissatisfaction, notably in 1989 when citizens rioted against the

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<sup>144</sup> Michael Jansen, "[Jordan economy groans under the weight of refugee crisis](#)," The Irish Times, last modified October 19, 2018.

<sup>145</sup> "[Jordan](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>146</sup> Michael Safi and Oliver Holmes, "[Jordan and Israel's 25-year peace deal under more strain than ever](#)," The Guardian, last modified November 26, 2019.

<sup>147</sup> "[Dozens protest in Ma'an against Jordan-Israel gas agreement](#)," Roya news, last modified January 17, 2020.

<sup>148</sup> Ben Hubbard, "[Jihadis Tug at Edges of a Staunch American Ally](#)," The New York Times, last modified July 7, 2014.

<sup>149</sup> Samira Said et al., "[Pro-ISIS sympathies simmer in Jordanian city](#)," CNN, last modified September 30, 2014.

<sup>150</sup> Nasser, "[Jordan's Historical Heart Beats](#)."

government's implementation of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that imposed harsh austerity measures and raised food prices.<sup>151</sup> The harsh crackdown that followed the riots by the police has not been forgotten by residents, who have passed down anti-police and anti-government sentiment to their children.<sup>152</sup> Complaints of police brutality are still common in the city today.<sup>153</sup> The trans-generational disdain of the Jordanian government has manifested in citizens in Ma'an being pushed towards extremist ideologies, with older generations preferring al-Qaeda and younger ones preferring ISIL.<sup>154</sup>

Ma'an has also recently been the site of protests over reforms to the Jordanian education system. In 2016, the Jordanian government tried to reduce Islamic references in its textbooks while promoting ideas of shared humanity between Muslims, other Muslims, and non-Muslims. The decision came after a few leading Jordanians hesitated to condemn the killing of First Lieutenant Moaz al-Kasasbeh, a Jordanian pilot who was burned to death in a cage by ISIL, which made the government feel that the education system was in need of reform that called for greater tolerance in order to reduce radicalization.<sup>155</sup> The liberalization of textbooks has upset several persons in the Ma'an governorate, who protested the textbooks and denounced the changes as an attack on Islam. Thus, while the Jordanian government is attempting to quell radicalization through reforming the education system, the reaction to the changes in textbooks demonstrates both political disaffection as well as the strong influence of conservative Islam, including pockets of Wahhabi-Salafism, within the region. Overall, political disenchantment over Jordan's relationship with Israel, poor police relationships with the public, and the emphasis on a mainstream version of Islam in textbooks has provided certain citizens with more reason to dislike the government, radicalize, and find a new source of political authority: ISIL.

In terms of counterterrorism and deradicalization, Jordan is still lacking legal infrastructure. Jordan's anti-terrorism law is broad, defining terrorism as, "any intentional act committed by any means that leads to the death of a person or causes bodily harm or damaging public or private property...with the goal of harming public order and subjecting the peace of society or its security to danger."<sup>156</sup> In 2014, corresponding with the rise of ISIL, Jordan expanded its anti-terror law to give police the power to censor and, "arrest anyone whose spoken or published views were deemed threatening to stability."<sup>157</sup> Due to the

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<sup>151</sup> Alan Cowell, "[5 Are Killed in South Jordan as Rioting Over Food Prices Spreads](#)," The New York Times, last modified April 20, 1989.

<sup>152</sup> Alice Su, "[Fade to black: Jordanian city Ma'an copes with Islamic State threat](#)," Al Jazeera America, last modified September 2, 2014.

<sup>153</sup> Hubbard, "[Jihadis Tug at Edges](#)," The New York Times, last modified July 7, 2014.

<sup>154</sup> Su, "[Fade to black](#)."

<sup>155</sup> Daa Hadid, "[Jordan Tones Down Textbooks' Islamic Content, and Tempers Rise](#)," The New York Times, last modified October 14, 2016.

<sup>156</sup> "[Jordan: Terrorism Amendments Threaten Rights](#)," Human Rights Watch, last modified May 17, 2014.

<sup>157</sup> Yom and Sammour, "[Counterterrorism and youth radicalization](#)," 25.

wide scope of acts and crimes that fall under this definition, it is easy for Jordanians to be convicted of a terrorist offense and gives police a way to justify public repression of thought. The primary way in which Jordan handles persons convicted of terrorist activity is to put them in rehabilitation centers, which have similar conditions to that of prisons. While the number of ISIL fighters who have returned to Jordan remains unsupported by official sources, some unofficial sources say that at least 300 Jordanians have returned to Jordan after fighting for ISIL and are, “now serving prison terms with temporary hard labor in the Al-Muwaqqar Reform and Rehabilitation Center 1 and 2 for prisoners from terrorist groups.”<sup>158</sup> Thus, Jordan often takes a harsh stand against former terrorists and does not support repatriation of ISIL prisoners.<sup>159</sup>

Radicalization in Jordan remains a problem that the country needs to combat. The country remains unable to alleviate socioeconomic issues, curb citizens’ political disaffection, and dispel radical ideologies, such as Wahhabi-Salafism, that has contributed to ISIL radicalization. Jordan also lacks both adequate counterterrorism laws and deradicalization programs to handle the increase of ISIL fighters that want to return to the country. The Jordanian government, known for promoting a mainstream Islam, could be beneficial to creating a deradicalization process and curriculum that centers on promoting mainstream Islam to repatriated prisoners, but due to the socioeconomic predicament the country finds itself in, and Jordan’s lack of support for prisoner repatriation, it is unlikely that Jordan has the capacity on its own to create adequate repatriation and rehabilitation programs. Thus, international assistance from a neutral party could be beneficial in providing the financial means to undertake the creation of an adequate deradicalization program.

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<sup>158</sup> Saud Al-Sharafat, “[How Jordan Can Deal with Jordanian ISIS Fighters Still in Syria](#),” The Washington Institute, last modified August 9, 2019.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

## LEBANON

*Audrey Conrad*

Lebanon is a country located in the Middle East with a population of 6,100,075 people.<sup>160</sup> The country shares borders with Israel and Syria and is a parliamentary republic. The country has a large amount of religious diversity, with the government recognizing 18 different religious sects.<sup>161</sup> Demographically, Lebanon's population is 30.6% Sunni Muslim, 30.5% Shiite Muslim, 33.7% Christian, and 5.2% Druze, with very small numbers of Jews, Baha'is, Buddhists and Hindus residing in the country as well.<sup>162</sup> The sectarian divisions in the country have been amplified by several conflicts over the past 50 years, including the Lebanese Civil War. There are several different extremist groups that operate within the country. In regards to ISIL, 900 fighters have left Lebanon to fight in Syria, which is 0.04% of the Sunni Muslim population in the country between the ages of 15 and 54. This makes Lebanon the 11<sup>th</sup> largest contributor to ISIL.<sup>163</sup> Like Jordan, it is difficult to determine the extent to which the Internet in Lebanon is a contributor to radicalization. Rather, it appears that local factors lead to radicalization. The main causes of ISIL radicalization within Lebanon are sectarian conflicts that have been amplified due to the Syrian Civil War and radicalization occurring within prisons in the country. Lebanon currently does not have a counterterrorism law or effective rehabilitation programs for former terrorists.

Sectarian divisions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in Lebanon have been amplified by the Syrian Civil War and are the main catalyst for ISIL radicalization in the country. The origins of modern day sectarian divisions between Sunnis and Shiites are rooted in the outcomes that emerged after the Lebanese Civil War that lasted from 1975 to 1990. In the years leading up to the war, the Israel-Palestine conflict produced a massive Palestinian refugee crisis in Lebanon. The war originally began with fighting between a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative organization of the Palestinian people, and the Christian Phalange militia. Over the course of the fifteen year long Civil War, several different alliances formed and dissolved, but ultimately Shiite, Sunni, and Christian militias found themselves battling for control of Lebanon. It was during this time that Hezbollah, a Shiite militant organization and later political party, was created. Hezbollah proclaimed its loyalty to Iranian Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a fellow Shiite, and called for the creation of a Islamic state in Lebanon.<sup>164</sup> Sunni Muslims in Lebanon did not agree with Hezbollah, but found themselves politically stuck, given that

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<sup>160</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>161</sup> Gareth Smyth, "[Lebanon awaits winner in regional war: Shias or Sunnis? Iran, Saudi Arabia or Isis?](#)" The Guardian, last modified January 8, 2016.

<sup>162</sup> "[Lebanon](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 5, 2020.

<sup>163</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>164</sup> "[Lebanon: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 10, 2020, 4.

Hezbollah enjoyed strong regional support and defended the Palestinians in the south of Lebanon against Israel.<sup>165</sup> The war ultimately ended with the Taif Agreement in 1989, which reaffirmed the National Pact of 1943, in which the roles of government were divided up based on religious sect.<sup>166</sup>

During the Civil War, both Israel and Syria occupied Lebanon. Even though fighting ended in the early 1990s, Israel remained in Lebanon until May 23, 2000.<sup>167</sup> Following the withdrawal, Hezbollah took control of territory in Southern Lebanon, claiming to be defending the territory from Israeli attacks.<sup>168</sup> Syria also had a delayed withdrawal from Lebanon, and did not fully leave the country until April 26, 2005.<sup>169</sup> Before the end of Syrian occupation, the Sunnis had a political victory with the election of Rafik Hariri, a businessman with close ties to Saudi Arabia. Because of these ties, Hariri played an important role in negotiating the Taif Agreement, which was orchestrated in Saudi Arabia, and subsequently secured himself a position in the reconstruction of Lebanon, from which he would politically and monetarily gain.<sup>170</sup> Hariri became Prime Minister in 1992 and remained in office until 1998. He was elected again in 2000 and remained in office until 2004. One year later, Hariri was assassinated. The 2005 assassination was an enormous blow to the Sunnis, as his assassination, “removed a formidable obstacle to Hezbollah’s preponderance in Lebanon and completed the isolation of the Sunnis.”<sup>171</sup> After Hariri was assassinated in 2005, his son and recently resigned Prime Minister of Lebanon, Saad Hariri, accused Hezbollah and Syria of the murder.<sup>172</sup> The assassination prompted the Cedar Revolution, which led to the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country.

Following the occupation, Lebanon remained split between pro-Syria forces, including Hezbollah, and anti-Syria forces, which garnered mainly Sunni support. Due to the prominence of Hezbollah, Lebanon has also become a location where rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia compete for influence, which has only exacerbated sectarian divides within the country further. Former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who has been under several investigations for corruption, went to Saudi Arabia in 2017 where he was interrogated, threatened, tortured, and gave a, likely coerced, resignation speech on Saudi television. In his speech, he claimed to be stepping down to protest the influence of Hezbollah and Iran in Lebanon. Many in Lebanon did not accept his resignation, which he later rescinded upon return to

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<sup>165</sup> Zoe Hu, “[The History of Hezbollah, from Israel to Syria](#),” Al Jazeera, last modified December 19, 2016.

<sup>166</sup> Joseph Bahout, “[The Unraveling of Lebanon’s Taif Agreement: Limits of Sect-Based Power Sharing](#),” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, last modified May 16, 2016.

<sup>167</sup> “[Lebanon: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 10, 2020, 5.

<sup>168</sup> “[Hezbollah and Israel: A timeline of cross-border attacks](#),” Al Jazeera, last modified September 9, 2019.

<sup>169</sup> “[Syrian Troops Leave Lebanon After 29-Year Occupation](#),” The New York Times, last modified April 26, 2005.

<sup>170</sup> Bahout, “[The Unraveling of Lebanon’s Taif Agreement](#).”

<sup>171</sup> Hilal Khashan, “[The Rise and Growth of Hezbollah and the Militarization of the Sunni-Shiite Divide in Lebanon](#),” The Middle East Institute, last modified January 26, 2016.

<sup>172</sup> “[Lebanon’s Saad Hariri demands ‘justice’ for slain father at trial](#),” Al Jazeera, last modified September 12, 2016.

Lebanon, as credible.<sup>173</sup> This is one example, out of many, that illustrates the extent to which the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran is fought using Lebanon as a proxy. Ultimately, Lebanon's government remains in discord and the society remains deeply divided on sectarian lines due to years of foreign occupation, political and civil unrest, regional conflicts between Iran and Saudi Arabia, and a long recent history of violent conflict.

Due to residual Sunni and Shiite tensions and mixed feelings about Syria that are left over from the Lebanese Civil War, the current Civil War in Syria is stirring up sectarian rivalries and sparking ISIL radicalization within Lebanon. On May 25, 2013, Hezbollah, who had already sent militants into Syria, officially sided with the al-Assad regime and has been providing military support to the Syrian government.<sup>174</sup> When ISIL officially began to fight against the al-Assad regime, and by extension Hezbollah, it was not a surprise that some Sunnis in Lebanon supported ISIL, given that the group was fighting against their longtime rival Hezbollah. Additionally, the Lebanese army has been accused of working with Hezbollah to defeat ISIL in the Bekaa Valley within Lebanon. This has only added to Sunni—Shiite tensions in the country, as the Sunnis feel that they can no longer trust the Lebanese military.<sup>175</sup> In 2014, ISIL was also better funded than other Sunni groups, such as Jabhat al-Nusra, which attracted young recruits. In Tripoli, a city in Northern Lebanon with a large Sunni Muslim population, a rise in ISIL sympathy has been widely observed.<sup>176</sup> In sum, historical sectarian divisions in Lebanon are being reignited through the context of the Syrian Civil War, which is driving higher rates of ISIL radicalization.

The prison system in Lebanon also fosters radicalization. In particular, Roumieh Prison, the largest prison in the country, has been identified as a center for radicalization. Within Roumieh, prisoners are separated into various blocks, depending on their offense and the religious sect to which they belong. Block B in Roumieh holds only Sunni individuals who have been detained or convicted of terrorist activity. Separating out prisoners by religious affiliation has reduced sectarian conflict within the prison, but it has also made it easier for radical Sunni Muslims, with terrorist charges, to communicate and collaborate with one another. Roumieh is also wildly overcrowded. The recommended guard to prisoner ratio in Roumieh is one guard for every 36 inmates, however, the current ratio is one guard for every 125 inmates.<sup>177</sup> The inability of guards to enforce order in the prison has resulted in prisoner-led governance.

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<sup>173</sup> [“UN: Lebanon’s Hariri was tortured in Saudi Arabia,”](#) Middle East Monitor, last modified June 21, 2019.

<sup>174</sup> Anne Barnard, [“Hezbollah Commits to an All-Out Fight to Save Assad,”](#) The New York Times, last modified May 25, 2013.

<sup>175</sup> Zeina Karam, [“Lebanon Pulled Into ISIS Fight,”](#) Business Insider, last modified October 18, 2014.

<sup>176</sup> Sulome Anderson, [“In Northern Lebanon, Life Under ISIS’s Shadow,”](#) New York Magazine, last modified September 14, 2014.

<sup>177</sup> Indi Phillips, [“Prison Radicalization: Indirect Processes of Radicalization at Lebanon’s Roumieh,”](#) European Eye on Radicalization, last modified December 16, 2019.

This system of governance is highly developed; Block B has its own elections, court system, and committees that all enforce compliance with behavioral norms.<sup>178</sup> In January 2015, Block B was evacuated in order to conduct a police operation within the prison. The operation was shown on television, where it was revealed that Block B prisoners had no cell doors, a barber shop, a coffee shop, electronic equipment, TV sets, and mobile phones.<sup>179</sup> These conditions made it easy for prisoners to interact and communicate with one another and with the outside world. Security forces discovered during this raid that Block B had been used as, “an operations room for several terrorist attacks between 2013 and 2015.” Thus, the combination of separating prisoners by religious sect, overcrowding, and prisoner governance creates an environment that is ideal for the transfer of radical ideology and terrorist skills. Roumieh Prison has also previously attracted the attention of ISIL, who featured Block B in their propaganda videos and celebrated its prisoners.<sup>180</sup> In sum, the conditions inside Roumieh prison have created an environment where ISIL radicalization not only occurs but, thrives.

Currently, 14 former ISIL fighters have returned to Lebanon.<sup>181</sup> Counterterrorism programs in Lebanon are lacking or nonexistent. There is currently no counterterrorism law in Lebanon. The country is reliant on its criminal code to prosecute terrorists, who typically end up in prisons like Roumieh where radicalization and terrorist coordination, rather than deradicalization, is far more likely to take place.<sup>182</sup> Lebanon has focused on using its criminal code to prosecute persons who engage in terrorist financing as well. A terrorist financing conviction is typically punished with fines or hard labor.<sup>183</sup>

Radicalization in Lebanon is mainly driven by deep sectarian divides in the country that have been amplified by the Syrian Civil War. These sectarian divides left over from the Lebanese Civil War have only been amplified by political unrest and foreign interference from Iran and Saudi Arabia. Pro-ISIL sympathizers are predominantly found in Northern Lebanon, in particular the city of Tripoli, where the majority of the Sunni Muslim population is concentrated. The Lebanese prison system, which is weakened by overcrowding, low staffing, and prisoner governance, also contributes to radicalization. The repatriation of ISIL prisoners, if it were to occur, would be difficult to implement due to Lebanon’s lack of infrastructure, both legal and physical, for prosecuting and deradicalizing returning prisoners. Due to the level of political and economic unrest in Lebanon, support for the creation of new infrastructure to deal with repatriated prisoners would have to come from outside the country.

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<sup>178</sup> Indi Phillips, “[Deradicalization Programs Inside Prisons in Lebanon](#),” European Eye on Radicalization, last modified December 18, 2019.

<sup>179</sup> “[Roumieh inmates riot to demand WiFi, cell phones](#),” The Daily Star, last modified June 23, 2015.

<sup>180</sup> Phillips, “[Deradicalization Programs Inside Prisons in Lebanon](#).”

<sup>181</sup> Joana Cook and Gina Vale, “[From Daesh to ‘Diaspora’ II: The Challenges Posed by Women and Minors After the Fall of the Caliphate](#),” *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 6 (July 2019): 19.

<sup>182</sup> Phillips, “[Deradicalization Programs Inside Prisons in Lebanon](#).”

<sup>183</sup> “[Lebanon: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 10, 2020, 15.

## TURKEY

*Aliye Volkan*

Turkey plays a crucial role in combat against terrorism and prevention of foreign fighters due to its geostrategic location. ISIL cells in Turkey assist foreign fighters in their journey to Syria and have been extremely successful in recruiting between 7,476 and 9,476 Turkish citizens.<sup>184</sup> Turkish politicians alleged political and economic interests in the region, high number of Turkish recruits and existing Turkish-Kurdish conflict complicates Turkey's role in the region as well as its relations to ISIL. At the same time Turkey is one of the most affected states by the war in Syria and ISIL's presence in the region. Today, Turkey is hosting more than 3,5 million Syrian refugees,<sup>185</sup> which also added to the instability of the state. Over the last 20 years Turkey has gone through some transformations within its democratic and social structure which resulted in instability and reduced trust for the government. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, the rate of unemployment raised to 13.3%, as of November 2019,<sup>186</sup> and ISIL cells within the country filled this gap with new economic opportunities for young Turks. Some Turks became "part-time" jihadists, going into Syria for few months and returning with "war spoils" to have a luxurious life in Turkey, while some decided to live under the Islamic State for its promises of an opportunity start a new life and redemption after living as infidels for years due to drug abuse and even interest in music and science.

After the fall of Ottoman Empire, Turkey was established as a secular state, but today the secular quality of the state is questionable. The view of Islam has been shaped by Justice and Development Party (AKP) leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan during his Prime Ministry and current Presidency. When Erdogan came to power, he implemented policies to satisfy European Union (EU) requirements for membership while passing legislature for more religious freedom, such as lifting the prohibition of wearing headscarves in public offices and universities.<sup>187</sup> But the constant rejection from the EU led him to abandon his democratic policies and focus on the 're-Islamization' of Turkey. Erdogan believed in the Muslim Brotherhood's cause and showed his support publicly by condemning Bashar al-Assad.<sup>188</sup> At the beginning of the Syrian Civil War, he showed support for the rebellious groups and, some claim, ISIL as well. Various resources claim that Erdogan's support for ISIL was mainly because of their fight against

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<sup>184</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>185</sup> Ahmet Selman Özdemir, "[Türkiye'deki Suriyeli Sayısı Şubat 2020](#)," Mülteciler Derneği, last modified February 20, 2020.

<sup>186</sup> "[Nüfusun İşgücü Durumu](#)," Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, last modified November 2019.

<sup>187</sup> Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larabee, "The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey," Santa Monica, RAND, 2008, ix.

<sup>188</sup> Ahmet Yayla, "[The So-Called Islamic State and the \(Slow but Steady\) Radicalisation of Turkey](#)," *Orient - Deutsche Zeitschrift Fur Politik Und Wirtschaft Des Orients*, no 3, July 1, 2017, 40.

Kurdish group Peshmerga, which is a threat to Turkey.<sup>189</sup> The Turkish government is accused of allowing thousands of foreign fighters including more than 25,000 ISIL members to cross the border to Syria without problems.<sup>190</sup> Some journalists exposed possible Salafi-Jihadist ties within the government. The journalists discovered that the Ministry of Culture and Tourism distributed books with written by Wahhabi-Salafists, were published by Guraba publishing house which is owned by renowned al-Qaeda supporter Abdullah Yolcu.<sup>191</sup> Yolcu allegedly preached to his followers to vote for Erdogan's party for implementation of Sharia law.<sup>192</sup> Many analysts agree that even though Erdogan did not believe in the Wahhabi-Salafist ideology he had economic relations with these groups which is also why they helped by supplying arms and logistics as well as financing the group through purchase of ISIL's oil.<sup>193</sup>

The Wahhabi-Salafist communities in Turkey, instead of attending mosques where Hanafi Muslim imams preach, they have their own private places for prayer, often in isolated communities. They do not vote in elections and many refuse to send their children to school. The Wahhabi-Salafists are hostile towards the Turkish government for teaching Hanafi Sunni ideology at the mosques and religion classes. Most of the members of these communities refuse to send their kids to schools and vote in elections. In their Turkish magazine, 'Kostantiniyye,' ISIL criticizes the Turkish government for being "infidel" for its close relations with capitalist and therefore "evil" Western powers. The inequality within Turkey is a part of ISIL's propaganda when recruiting disadvantaged and unemployed citizens. Even though ISIL's propaganda is the same throughout the country the narratives that they push or the people that they target change from city to city.

Some of the ISIL communities were already established due to previous al-Qaeda networks. Ilyas Aydin, who fought with al-Qaeda and later returned to Turkey to recruit for ISIL, controlled the largest ISIL cell in Istanbul<sup>194</sup> His cell was responsible for managing ISIL's social media profiles that were incredibly successful in spreading the Wahhabi-Salafist ideology. The cell also played a crucial role in welcoming foreign fighters coming to Turkey on their journey to the Islamic State. Istanbul is home to more than a million students which provides ISIL a large pool of possible recruits.<sup>195</sup> Most of these students come from different parts of Turkey and not all have the financial resources to have a sustainable

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>191</sup> "[Kültür Bakanlığı IŞİD destekçisi yayınevının kitaplarını kütüphanelere dağıttı!](#)," soL Haber Portalı, last modified May 4, 2016.

<sup>192</sup> "[IŞİD'in Kitapçısı Şeriat İçin AK Parti'ye Oy Toplamış](#)," SputnikNews, last modified May 11 2016.

<sup>193</sup> "[Remarks of Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen at The Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 'Attacking ISIL's Financial Foundation](#)," U.S. Department of the Treasury, October 23, 2014.

<sup>194</sup> Doğu Eroğlu, "*Türkiye'de Radikalleşme, Örgütlenme, Lojistik IŞİD Ağları*," 1. Baskı, Bugünün Kitapları, 233 İstanbul: İletişim, 2018, 69.

<sup>195</sup> "[Üniversite Şehri İstanbul](#)," İstanbul.gov.tr accessed February 23, 2020.

life in Istanbul, therefore ISIL members approach these newcomers with opportunities of low-cost or even free housing.<sup>196</sup> The recruitment process starts with simple acquaintances that slowly evolve to a friendship. Many others were recruited through their friends or relatives within the Wahhabi-Salafist community. Targeted people would be invited to ISIL gatherings, which is where the community isolation process would begin. Potential recruits begin to distance themselves from their ‘secular’ social lives, and in some cases even stop playing musical instruments and participating in sports. Students are not the only source for the Istanbul cell. The recruits also target Turkish nationalists through their antagonism towards Kurdish people and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that receives support by Peshmerga forces in Iraq.<sup>197</sup>

Kurds are the largest minority group, they comprise up to 19% of the Turkish population, but still struggle for representation. The leader of the Kurdish party, People’s Democratic Party, is imprisoned for alleged connections to the Kurdistan Workers Party, backed by Peshmerga forces in Iraq, that engages in guerrilla warfare with the Turkish army. Interestingly, in Konya’s Saracoglu neighborhood, ISIL target the Kurdish population living in poverty. Many of Kurdish people from this, conservative, and undereducated neighborhood, were not content with the Kurdish People’s Democratic Party’s (HDP) representation of Kurdish women, felt misrepresented in the Turkish majority community where they are already discriminated against. In order to recruit Kurds living in the Saracoglu neighborhood, ISIL uses a narrative against Kurdish parties and promises a life in the Islamic State where ethnicity does not matter and they have, a community can feel belong to.<sup>198</sup> While some conservatives Kurds joined through accepting Wahhabi-Salafist ideas, others mainly joined for the financial opportunities ISIL offered to them. As a result, almost 500 young Kurdish men crossed the border to fight in Syria.<sup>199</sup>

The Ankara cell was the first discovered Wahhabi-Salafist community in Turkey. The cell was located in a small neighborhood called Hacibayram during a raid in 2004, which was conducted due to suspicions of the existence of an al-Qaeda group.<sup>200</sup> The neighborhood is known for its Salafist community and its support, previously, for al-Qaeda, and now ISIL. Youth in the neighborhood suffer from unemployment and low education, which led many to start using drugs. Under the Urban Transformation project, as buildings and the only school in the neighborhood were demolished with the promise of being renewed, many of its residents became displaced. This led residents to feel left out and mistreated by the government. The Wahhabi-Salafist community used the sense of guilt some people had

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<sup>196</sup> Elif Ergin, “[Yurtlardan IŞİD Yandaşlığına](#),” Evrensel.net, last modified October 5 2014.

<sup>197</sup> Doğu Eroğlu, “*Türkiye’de Radikalleşme, Örgütlenme, Lojistik IŞİD Ağları*,” 1. Baskı, Bugünün Kitapları, 233 İstanbul: İletişim, 2018, 79.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 22.

for using drugs and the reduced trust in the government when recruiting. During the recruitment process, the Wahhabi-Salafist community members who had traveled to Caliphate showed pictures of the Caliphate, demonstrated their war spoils, talked about the financial benefits of joining ISIL and enticed opportunity to start a new life in the ‘just’ Islamic State. Members with strong connections in ISIL would even take possible recruits to Syria for a brief tour of the state. The promise of a new life attracts especially drug addicts who are seeking redemption. The structure within ISIL allows drug addicts to overcome their addictions and prevents them from using drugs again, which, for some people works better than the Turkish government’s rehabilitation programs. Like other cells, ISIL’s Ankara cell also has strong connections at the border that makes it easy for them to travel, which allowed many to become “part-time” jihadists, who fight for several months and come back to live a luxurious life in Ankara with the money and goods captured from raided places.

The largest ISIL cell that is famous for carrying out eight bomb attacks within the country, was in Adiyaman. The leaders were focused on recruiting young schoolboys between the age of 16 and 25, who live with their parents. Many of these young men came from non-religious families. Thus, because the young men lacked knowledge about Islam, the recruits were able to scare them into joining ISIL by telling them about hell and suffering that they would encounter if they continued to fail fulfilling their religious responsibilities, such as jihad. Slowly, regardless of their families being non-religious, Hanafi Sunni, or Shiite, these men stopped going to the mosque or cemevi, dropped out of school, started growing beards, and pressured women in their families to wear hijab.<sup>201</sup>

Most of Turkey’s counterterrorism policies are targeted against left-wing radicalism and PKK. But in 2013, by recognizing ISIL as a terrorist organization, Turkey started taking measures against Islamist terrorism. In 2015, 12 establishments linked to ISIL were closed and leading ISIL websites and media accounts were banned.<sup>202</sup> In 2017, there were still 2,564 social accounts under investigation.<sup>203</sup> In 2014, Turkish National Police (TNP) launched an outreach program to prevent radicalization within “at-risk” communities, where the population is vulnerable to extremism. TNP’s program focuses on raising awareness of radicalization among the youth and families. Their program includes training officers working in counter radicalization. The Turkish Government’s Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) joined TNP’s counterterrorism efforts by promoting a more moderate version of Islam through reinterpreted religious texts and providing religious education using a more moderate framework.<sup>204</sup> In

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>202</sup> Ebru Ece Özbey, “[Turkey’s Fight Against Youth Radicalisation: Small Steps on a Long Path](#),” Euromesco Policy Brief, no.78, January 18, 2018.

<sup>203</sup> “[Turkey’s Fight Against DEASH](#),” Ministry of the Interior of Turkey, July 2017, 53.

<sup>204</sup> “[Turkey: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, last modified January 26, 2016.

2016, the program also published a report on how ISIL is exploiting Islam.<sup>205</sup> As one of the founding members of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Turkey is working on prosecuting terrorist acts, preventing recruitment and combating terrorism. Additionally, through the Hedayah initiative established in 2012, there are training, dialogues, and research being conducted on counterterrorism.<sup>206</sup> According to the Ministry of Interior Affairs' report, Turkey is also active in preventing foreign fighters from joining ISIL. The report states that between 2011 and 2017, 1,337 foreign fighters were arrested, while 3,840 were taken to custody and 4,957 people were deported from the country for trying to cross the border.<sup>207</sup>

As a major source of recruits and a transit hub for foreign recruits, Turkey does not have substantial policies to deradicalize Islamic terrorists and prevent terrorism. Lack of strict border patrol and anti-corruption measures at the border are still allowing illegal border crossings. Any strict measures Turkey takes can weaken ISIL. From the already implemented programs and policy, it is clear that Turkey is more focused on discovering links and preventing radicalization through outreach programs and religious teachings, but these policies seem to miss a major reason why many Turkish people join ISIL, which is poverty and unemployment. If Turkey adopts policies towards fixing its economy and enlarges its labor market this can diminish the numbers being radicalized. In order to prevent spreading of Islamist terrorism, Turkey needs to secure its borders, have better records of the refugees coming in from Syria and revisit its policies in Idlib.

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<sup>205</sup> [“Dini İstismar ve Tedhis Hareketi DEAŞ,”](#) Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency of Religious Affairs, October 2016.

<sup>206</sup> [Turkey: Extremism & Counter-Extremism,](#)” Counter Extremism Project, last modified January 26, 2016.

<sup>207</sup> [Turkey’s Fight Against DEASH,](#)” Ministry of the Interior of Turkey, July 2017, 54.

# ***SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA***

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## **AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN**

*Manisha Jha*

Studying Pakistan and Afghanistan is essential to understanding how ISIL fits into a larger history and context of jihadi extremism in the MENA region. While they share common roots, al-Qaeda, ISIL, and the Taliban differ in their views on Islamic Law.<sup>208</sup> Due in part to conflict between the three predominant jihadist groups in the region, Afghanistan and Pakistan contributed relatively low numbers of ISIL foreign fighters. There have been between 50 and 120 ISIL recruits from Afghanistan and an estimated 100 ISIL recruits from Pakistan.<sup>209</sup> Additionally, estimates range from several hundred to up to 10,000 ISIL fighters in the Khorasan region itself, which includes northern Afghanistan, Iran, and much of Central Asia. ISIL “is also focusing on northern Afghanistan, where its fighters aim to establish small pockets and to link up with Uzbek, Tajik, Chechen and Chinese Uighur militants.”<sup>210</sup> The reasons for recruitment include long-term political instability, the high prevalence of jihadi groups, Osama Bin Laden’s assassination and the related lack of trust of the West, poor prospects for education and work, the proliferation of technology, and detention in prison camps. Pakistan and Afghanistan are demographically similar in many ways. The two countries are almost entirely Muslim, Sunni Muslims comprise about 90% of the Muslim population,<sup>211</sup> and about 60% of the population is under the age of 24.<sup>212</sup> There are 37 million people in Afghanistan and 237 million in Pakistan. 42% of young Afghans (age 15 to 24) are neither employed, in school, or in training. 35% of children in Afghanistan receive secondary education.<sup>213</sup> Pakistan has a much lower unemployment rate at 5.78%.<sup>214</sup> Though the recruitment numbers of Afghans and Pakistanis who defected to join ISIL are low, Afghanistan is the country most impacted by terrorism in the world, experiencing a 59% increase in terrorism deaths in 2018. Pakistan is ranked fifth out of 138 countries impacted by terrorism.<sup>215</sup> Low recruitment numbers in Afghanistan and Pakistan may be the result of warring factions of jihadist extremism or simply fatigue from a long history of violent conflict.

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<sup>208</sup> Akhilesh Pillalamarri, “[Revealed: Why ISIS Hates the Taliban](#),” *The Diplomat*, January 30, 2016.

<sup>209</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>210</sup> Dawood Azami, “[The Islamic State in South and Central Asia](#),” *Survival* 58, no. 4 (2016): 131-158.

<sup>211</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>212</sup> “[Pakistan](#),” CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

“[Afghanistan](#),” CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

<sup>213</sup> “[Afghanistan Overview](#),” World Bank, last modified October 13, 2019.

<sup>214</sup> “[Pakistan Unemployment Rate \[1980 - 2020\]](#),” CEIC Data, last modified March 29, 2019.

<sup>215</sup> “[Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#),” Institute for Economics & Peace, November 2019.

One reason for terrorist recruitment in Afghanistan and Pakistan is the prevalence of jihadist groups and decades-long conflict. Since 1979, Afghanistan has been home to a weak state structure, long-lasting political and economic instability, and a civilian population exhausted by famine, war, poverty, and drought. Its porous border with Pakistan led to further instability in South Asia. Jihadists have used this to their advantage by setting up training camps and hideouts across the region: Indian intelligence officials identified over 120 such camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan at the time of the September 11 terrorist attacks,<sup>216</sup> and al-Qaeda hid Bin Laden in Pakistan until his death.<sup>217</sup> For decades, fighting between al-Qaeda, the mujahideen and later the Taliban, Afghan government forces, and Western military forces kept the region engulfed with violence long before ISIL gained influence.<sup>218</sup> This violence has come at a high cost: 157,000 people have been killed in the war in Afghanistan since 2001, of whom 43,000 were civilians.<sup>219</sup> Another 65,000 Pakistanis have been killed in this time, of whom about 23,300 were civilians. Many of these deaths were the result of American drone strikes.<sup>220</sup> These deaths, combined with a stagnation in development, have held Pakistan and Afghanistan back in many ways, too: In 2018, the world's average GDP per capita was about \$11,300. In Pakistan, it was roughly \$1,500; in Afghanistan, \$520.<sup>221</sup> Pakistan is ranked 152 and Afghanistan is ranked 170 out of 185 countries ranked in the Human Development Index in 2018.<sup>222</sup>

This history and context made recruitment a straightforward process for militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan who wanted to join one of several jihadist groups in the area, including ISIL: Other prospects were hard to come by and there was little traveling involved. Particularly with ISIL - Khorasan (IS-K), the IS-affiliate in the Khorasan region of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, militants could find purpose, train, fight, and hide within the relative familiarity of their home country. The group's growth was facilitated by disillusioned former Taliban leaders and is now responsible for over 100 attacks against civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>223</sup> Many IS-K fighters were "ex-Taliban combatants who had grown displeased with Taliban understanding of Islamic teachings."<sup>224</sup> Pakistan is home to at least 48

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<sup>216</sup> Satinder Bindra, "[India Identifies Terrorist Training Camps](#)," CNN, September 19, 2001.

<sup>217</sup> Jonathan Mahler, "[What Do We Really Know About Osama bin Laden's Death?](#)" The New York Times, October 15, 2015.

<sup>218</sup> "[A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan](#)," PBS News Desk, May 4, 2011.

<sup>219</sup> "[Costs of War Study: Afghan Civilians](#)," Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University, last modified January 2020.

<sup>220</sup> "[Costs of War Study: Pakistani Civilians](#)," Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs at Brown University, last modified January 2020.

<sup>221</sup> "[GDP per Capita](#)," The World Bank, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>222</sup> "[Human Development Report 2019](#)," United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>223</sup> "[Islamic State Khorasan \(IS-K\)](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, accessed February 25, 2020.

<sup>224</sup> Ghulam M. Qane and Mohammad Naqib Ishan Jan, "[Madrasas and Recruitment of Child Soldiers: The Scenario in Afghanistan](#)," *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* 12, no. 8 (2019), accessed February 10, 2020.

jihadi groups, many of which are secretly sponsored by the military as proxies. In Balochistan, which borders Afghanistan, “locals have found walls chalked with messages that glorify the Islamic State and calling for fighters to join.”<sup>225</sup> Many of these jihadist groups are factions of ISIL, the Taliban, or al-Qaeda. Taliban ideology can be traced back to the Wahhabi indoctrination found in Afghan refugee camps and Saudi-funded madrassas in Pakistan. Saudi Arabia has been the Taliban’s principal source of financial and ideological support.<sup>226</sup> The Taliban, whose original fighters were the mujahideen, concentrates its power in the hands of mullahs from Kandahari Pashtun tribes.<sup>227</sup> The Taliban observes Wahhabism, nationalism, and Pashtun cultural ideals, and these differences form a point of contention with ISIL. Similarly, Bin Laden wanted al-Qaeda to focus on American targets while ISIL emphasized sectarian war and attacks on Shiite Muslims, whom they considered apostates. In recent years, this ideological difference has persisted: ISIL instead focused on constructing its caliphate. These ideological differences have largely prevented the three groups from coordinating efforts and have likely curbed the success of ISIL recruitment in the region.

Another major reason for ISIL recruitment in Afghanistan and Pakistan was the assassination of bin Laden and the resultant resurgence of polio. The amount of polio cases in Pakistan mirrored the amount of drone strikes between 2004 and 2012, but after 2013, polio cases increased and drone strikes decreased. This may have been because the CIA used a fake immunization program to obtain the DNA of Bin Laden’s children in trying to confirm his residence at the compound in Abbottabad prior to his assassination in 2011.<sup>228</sup> Militants decided this meant all vaccination programs were covers for espionage and should be targeted. Soon after, polio cases increased in Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>229</sup> Though drone strikes are justified by the U.S. government as necessary to fighting the Taliban and the fake immunization program was deemed necessary to killing Bin Laden, they’ve undercut public health efforts in the region (largely led by the West) and resulted in stronger anti-West sentiments than ever seen before. ISIL has leveraged its unique brand of extreme brutality into global popularity: It published countless videos showing the brutal beheadings of Western aid workers that are now synonymous with the group itself.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Kiran Nazish, “[The Islamic State Is Spreading Into Pakistan](#),” The New Republic, September 23, 2014.

<sup>226</sup> Helena Finn, “[Cultural Terrorism and Wahhabi Islam](#),” Council on Foreign Relations, October 8, 2002.

<sup>227</sup> “[Afghan Taliban](#),” Stanford University, last modified June 2018.

<sup>228</sup> Laurie Garrett, and Maxine Builder, “[The Taliban Are Winning the War on Polio](#),” Foreign Policy, February 12, 2014.

<sup>229</sup> Jonathan Kennedy, “[How drone strikes and a fake vaccination program have inhibited polio eradication in Pakistan: an analysis of national level data](#),” *International Journal of Health Services* 47, no. 4 (2017): 807-825.

<sup>230</sup> Rukmini Callimachi, “[The Horror Before the Beheadings: ISIS Hostages Endured Torture and Dashed Hopes, Freed Cellmates Say](#),” The New York Times, October 25, 2014.

Furthermore, schools administered by ISIL not only disseminated these videos of beheadings to children but also indoctrinated them with the group's extremist ideologies in order to train them as the next generation of ISIL recruits. This is not a new strategy: During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Afghan refugees who fled to Pakistan were often cared for and educated by charities financed by wealthy Saudis.<sup>231</sup> Children from improvised Afghan and Pakistani madrassas have been funneled into terrorist organizations for decades. At these madrassas, "future Taliban members developed a belief in Sharia law, motivated by the suffering among the Afghan people."<sup>232</sup> The group's capacity to use its brutal nature to its advantage in schools across the region was made possible only through the proliferation of technology. 3G services were available in Afghanistan starting in 2012, two years before ISIL's earliest high-profile beheadings of aid workers were recorded and spread online. Today, the country's optical fiber network connects the country to Pakistan and much of Central Asia.<sup>233</sup> In 2015, fighters in Afghanistan would receive videos directly from ISIL commanders in Syria and Iraq and show them to children in the villages and schools administered by ISIL "every day."<sup>234</sup> ISIL invoked this longstanding tradition of co-opting the role of educators in the region. Because roughly 60% of the population of Afghanistan and Pakistan is under 25, the role of education in the region cannot be understated. With low literacy and school-attendance rates, the two countries have shown a significant demand for education in the last decade. Most ISIL - Khorasan combatants were local youth with no foreign combat experience.<sup>235</sup> Some unemployed youth in Afghanistan were drawn to ISIL by reports that their fighters "are paid hundreds of dollars a month."<sup>236</sup> ISIL offered schools, training, and relatively high-paying jobs to those who needed it. It was meeting the basic needs of Afghans and Pakistanis who were not being assisted by the government. The group first released its own textbooks containing fundamentalist Wahhabist ideology in October 2015.<sup>237</sup> In Nangarhar, ISIL took over a majority of madrassas and would recruit young children through a mixture of deception, threats, and payment to families suffering from poverty.<sup>238</sup>

The last principal cause of ISIL recruitment in Pakistan and Afghanistan is the presence of foreign detention centers because they facilitate radicalization for some detainees. While extreme Islamist beliefs are seldom solely the result of these individuals' time in prison, when combined with a context of

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<sup>231</sup> Carol Choksy, and Jamsheed Choksy, "[THE SAUDI CONNECTION: Wahhabism and Global Jihad](#)," *World Affairs* 178, no. 1 (2015): 23-34.

<sup>232</sup> "[Afghan Taliban](#)," Stanford. Accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>233</sup> "[Connecting Afghanistan: The rise of technology in governance and society](#)," The Embassy of Afghanistan in London, September 22, 2016.

<sup>234</sup> "[ISIS in Afghanistan](#)," PBS, 2015.

<sup>235</sup> Qane, "[Madrassas and Recruitment](#)."

<sup>236</sup> Azami, "[The Islamic State](#)."

<sup>237</sup> Jacob, Olidort, "[INSIDE THE CALIPHATE'S CLASSROOM: Textbooks, Guidance Literature, and Indoctrination Methods of the Islamic State](#)," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 2016.

<sup>238</sup> Qane, "[Madrassas and Recruitment](#)."

other factors and vulnerabilities, “their prison experiences significantly accelerated their radicalization through isolating them from mainstream society while also exposing them to ideologies to which they ultimately proved highly vulnerable.”<sup>239</sup> Some of these ideologies may have developed into ISIL’s central beliefs. In 2002, two men were beaten to death by guards at a U.S. military detention center in Bagram, Afghanistan. While it took three years for the New York Times to publish an investigation and the American public to learn about the deaths, it’s likely that knowledge of general abuse and mistreatment by American guards was widespread among those detained in Bagram. When senior military intelligence officials at Bagram were made aware of abuse by “several interrogators,” they did not follow mandated reporting practices. Staff from the Bagram facility, including those interrogators accused of abuse, were later assigned to Abu Ghraib. In 2004, a high-level military inquiry found that “the captain who led interrogation operations at Bagram, Capt. Carolyn A. Wood, applied many of the same harsh methods in Iraq that she had overseen in Afghanistan.”<sup>240</sup> In 2010, the Red Cross confirmed the existence of a secret second prison in Bagram when nine former prisoners came forward and alleged torture.<sup>241</sup> The pervasive nature of abuse in these prisons indicate they are harmful to detainees and oftentimes a place that encourages radicalization and resentment toward the United States.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have lived through decades of violent conflict and occupation. This, paired with ongoing wars in the region, have created a context of poor socioeconomic conditions and political instability in which ISIL could easily indoctrinate children with extremist Wahhabi ideology and radicalize people in American detention centers. Some of these countries have taken measures to deradicalize their returning ISIL fighters, including different combinations of education, vocational training, post-release programs, and religious discourse.

In Pakistan, psychologists have helped to construct reintegration programs for boys and young men that have so far deradicalized 192 former Taliban fighters and reintegrated them into the communities they left. Many of these fighters were kidnapped as boys from families who could not afford to pay off Taliban recruiters canvassing the countryside for money or child recruits, so psychologists place an emphasis on trauma-informed care.<sup>242</sup> The Punjab police in Pakistan run a similar program that provides young men schooling to learn a trade like plumbing, carpentry, or electronics as well as an interest-free loan to set up a small business.<sup>243</sup> Evidence from Afghanistan suggests that fostering healthy, mentorship-like

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<sup>239</sup> James Brandon, "[The Danger of Prison Radicalization in the West](#)," *CTC Sentinel* 2, no. 12 (2009): 1-4.

<sup>240</sup> Tim Golden, "[Army Faltered in Investigating Detainee Abuse](#)," *The New York Times*, May 25, 2005.

<sup>241</sup> Hillary Anderson, "[Red Cross confirms 'second jail' at Bagram, Afghanistan](#)," *BBC News*, May 11, 2010.

<sup>242</sup> Jeremy Moore, "[How Pakistan Deradicalizes Taliban Fighters](#)," *United States Institute of Peace*, October 11, 2017.

<sup>243</sup> Jason Burke, "[Fighting terrorism: Do 'deradicalisation' camps really work?](#)" *The Guardian*, June 9, 2013.

relationships between detainees and guards, psychologists, and teachers can boost the likelihood of success in reintegration.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Jessica Stern and Marisa L. Porges, “[Getting Deradicalization Right](#),” *Foreign Affairs*, April 20, 2010.

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## THE MALDIVES

*Orla Casey*

Located in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives are comprised of a small collection of islands. Officially, Sunni Islam is the state religion with citizens being required to adhere to Sunni Islam in order to obtain citizenship.<sup>245</sup> Of the 391,000 Maldivian Sunni adherents, around 200 people have been recruited by ISIL and travelled to the Levant. Of the Sunni Muslims ages 15-54 approximately 0.02% to 0.08% of the population left to fight for ISIL.<sup>246</sup> A seemingly tropical paradise has one of the highest recruitment percentages in the world. ISIL success in recruiting Maldivians is primarily due to a poor economy, political instability, rising gang violence, and Saudi influence.

Economically, the Maldives is heavily dependent on tourism. While countries that are dependent on tourism tend to stray away from terrorism, that may not be the case in the Maldives. When tourists visit the Maldives, the majority of people travel to island resorts. These resorts are located on private islands.<sup>247</sup> The profits of tourism primarily go to a select few. People who live in major cities do not directly benefit from tourism. Around 23% of the population lives on three dollars a day.<sup>248</sup> Moreover, people who become radicalized see tourists as destroying and exploiting their land. Outside of tourism, the Maldives is heavily dependent on fishing. Recently, climate change has dramatically impacted the Maldives. Not only does global warming affect fishing, but by 2050 the majority of the Maldives will be uninhabitable.<sup>249</sup> The Maldivian government continues to pressure other governments to reduce their carbon emissions, but few countries are listening to the Maldives. Seeing tourists come to pollute the islands without advocating for climate change causes outrage amongst the radicalized population. Since climate change is a global phenomenon, the Maldivians have little to no agency over their own destiny. ISIL promised recruits a new home that they would have control over. When looking at future cases of radicalization, it is pertinent to factor in people's economic opportunities, the agency they have, and their economic rights.

Politically, the Maldives have experienced turmoil for the last two decades, which created a power vacuum that lets radicalization thrive. The Maldives gained independence in 1968 from British colonial rule, but it took until 1976 for British troops to leave the Maldives.<sup>250</sup> From 1978 until 2008, the

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<sup>245</sup> "[Maldives](#)," CIA World Factbook, February 5, 2020.

<sup>246</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>247</sup> Hassan Moosa and Geeta Anand, "[Inhabitants of Maldives Atoll Fear a Flood of Saudi Money](#)," The New York Times, March 26, 2017.

<sup>248</sup> "[Causes of Poverty in the Maldives](#)," The Borgen Magazine, The Borgen Project, February 6, 2017.

<sup>249</sup> Morgan McFall-Johnsen, "[The Climate Crisis is Inherently Unfair. These 9 Countries Will Get Hit Especially Hard as the Globe Heats Up](#)," Business Insider, July 11 2019.

<sup>250</sup> "[Maldives](#)," CIA World Factbook, February 5, 2020.

Maldives was ruled by Maumoon Abdul Gayoom without free and fair elections. During Gayoom's thirty-year rule, political power was concentrated in the presidency which ensured no radical groups to come to power.<sup>251</sup> However, towards the end of his rule, Gayoom attempted to adopt radical rhetoric in order to widen his support base, thus, enabling radical groups to come to power. In 2008 the Maldives held their first free elections, and elected Mohamed Nasheed.<sup>252</sup> The transition to democracy enabled gangs and radical groups to come to power. Since 2008, the Maldives have experienced extreme political instability. In 2013 Nasheed was ousted and Abdulla Yameen took over as President. Not only did Yameen arrest Nasheed for faulty terrorism charges, but Yameen allowed radical Wahhabi groups and gangs to murder journalists and critics with no punishments.<sup>253</sup> Radical Islam began to flourish in the political power vacuum and continued to grow under President Yameen. In 2018, the Maldives pushed back against sectarian politics by electing Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.<sup>254</sup> Although the Maldives political situation appears to be improving, the damage caused by a politically unstable climate has empowered radical groups and gangs.

Another factor in the high levels of radicalization of Maldivian Muslims, is the large presence of gangs and criminal syndicates. As previously discussed, political instability enabled gang violence to thrive. Gang violence is primarily concentrated around the capital Malé and the neighboring island of Hulhumalé.<sup>255</sup> In general, gangs are comprised of young men aiming to control the drug trade throughout the Maldives. However, there is evidence that some gangs are vigilantes primarily motivated by radical Islam and are attempting to enforce Sharia. These gangs have been responsible for the abduction and murder of several high profile journalists who were critical of Islamic militants. Additionally, the current government of Solih is investigating ties between gangs and former President Yameen. During his time as president, Yameen did not investigate several high-profile killings of journalists.<sup>256</sup> Whether these gangs are young males attempting to control narcotics trade, or radical Islamists, they become perfect targets for ISIL recruiters. In fact, several Maldivians who went to fight for ISIL stated that young Maldivian men were targets for ISIL as they had experience in gangs and were exposed to violence.<sup>257</sup> They also stated that Maldivian men were strong soldiers as a lot of them were laborers.

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<sup>251</sup> [“Maumoon Abdul Gayoom: Former Maldives President Released on Bail,”](#) BBC, September 30, 2018.

<sup>252</sup> Michael Safi, [“Former Maldives President Who Sought Asylum in UK Returns Home,”](#) The Guardian, November 1 2018.

<sup>253</sup> PA Media, [“Maldives Rejoins Commonwealth After Evidence of Reforms,”](#) The Guardian, February 1, 2020.

<sup>254</sup> Andreas Johansson, [“Maldives: New President Must Ward Off Threats from Islamic Extremism, Foreign Powers and Autocratic Rivals,”](#) The Conversation, January 15, 2019.

<sup>255</sup> [“Maldives President Lied About Crime Rates,”](#) Maldives Independent, September 16, 2018.

<sup>256</sup> Mohamed Junayd, [“Commission Says Maldives Journalist Was Murdered By Islamist Militants,”](#) Reuters, September 1, 2019.

<sup>257</sup> [“Maldives: Trouble in Paradise,”](#) Al Jazeera, October 31, 2019.

Alongside political instability and gang violence, Saudi foreign influence in the Maldives has resulted in the increase in radical Wahhabi adherents. From the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Saudi government began to offer scholarships for Maldivians to come study at Wahhabi religious schools.<sup>258</sup> These students returned to the Maldives to spread Wahhabi ideology. In order to preach in mosques and public places, the Maldivian government doles out permits. Wahhabi imams who preach intolerance are granted permits to proselytize in mosques and public places. In an unstable country, radical preachers who promise stability in an Islamic controlled state become ever more enticing. Moreover, after the 2004 Sumatra-Andaman Tsunami devastated the Maldivian islands, Saudi Arabia began to increase economic investments in the Maldives.<sup>259</sup> These investments include but are not limited to building mosques, funding schools, and sending over Wahhabi imams. Under President Yameen, the Maldivian government accepted loans from the Saudi government. These loans were used to pay off foreign debt to other countries but, their foreign debt was transferred to the Saudi government. There is a direct correlation between the rise in radicalism and Saudi influence in the Maldives. As the Saudi government has become more involved in Maldivian politics, intolerant Wahhabi ideology has begun to fester. Since Wahhabis are granted permits by the Maldivian government to preach about killing infidels, it does not come as a surprise that some members of the public begin to carry out those orders.

So far, the Maldives have done little to prevent radicalization. As ISIL fighters are repatriated to the Maldives, the government needs to establish a deradicalization plan that examines and incorporates solutions for the main causes of radicalization to further prevent radicalization of the population. Although President Ibrahim Solih is attempting to stamp out gangs, more needs to be done in order to stabilize political power within the government, ensure economic diversity, and work with Saudi Arabia to stop large swaths of Wahhabi radicals from spreading Wahhabism.

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<sup>258</sup> Henry Storey, "[Violent Extremism in the Maldives: The Saudi Factor](#)," The Diplomat, December 24, 2019.

<sup>259</sup> Hassan Moosa and Geeta Anand, "[Inhabitants of Maldives Atoll Fear a Flood of Saudi Money](#)," The New York Times, March 26, 2017.

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## INDONESIA

*Orla Casey*

Located in Southeast Asia, Indonesia is home to the world's largest population of Muslims. Of the 228 million people inhabiting the island nation, around 262 million identify as Muslim with the majority of people being Sunni Muslim.<sup>260</sup> Approximately 800 Indonesians travelled to the Levant to fight for the Islamic State. That means 0.00059% of Sunni Muslims ages 15-54 became radicalized by ISIL.<sup>261</sup> Although the gross number of ISIL recruits is relatively large when compared to other countries, the percentage shows that Indonesia has sent a relatively small number of its Muslim population to fight for ISIL. As the country with the largest population of Muslims, Indonesia provides an interesting case study in understanding radicalization in Southeast Asia. Low ISIL recruitment rates are because of the history of Islam in Indonesia, the history and recruitment processes of Jemaah Islamiyah, and a prosperous economy.

The history of Muslim community in Trinidad and Tobago uncovers the origins of current tensions within the community itself, as well as with the non-Muslim majority. In order to understand how radical Islam has spread throughout Indonesia, the history of Islam in Indonesia needs to be examined. Around the 11th century, Islam came to Indonesia through traders and merchants from India, Persia, Egypt, and China.<sup>262</sup> However, it wasn't until the 16<sup>th</sup> century that Islam became the dominant religion over Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Although colonizers such as the Portuguese, the British, and the Dutch attempted to convert locals, Indonesians continued to practice Islam. A notable development in Islam in Indonesia was the founding of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926. Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Muslim group with 90 million adherents, follows the Shafi'i Sunni school of Islam, and preaches tolerance among various sects of Islam and other religions.<sup>263</sup> However, during the fight for independence a split in the group occurred. Founded in 1942, Darul Islam wanted to implement Sharia law after the country gained independence.<sup>264</sup> The formation of Darul Islam is influential in modern day Islamic political thought in Indonesia as the radical group's message continues to resonate with Indonesians. Jemaah Islamiyah was founded in 1993 as a splinter group of Darul Islam. After independence, Indonesia established a pluralist state with religious freedom; however, during his rule

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<sup>260</sup>“[Indonesia](#),” CIA World Factbook, February 5, 2020.

<sup>261</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>262</sup> Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010).

<sup>263</sup> Patrick Winn, “[The World's Largest Islamic Group Wants Muslims to Stop Saying 'Infidel'](#),” Public Radio International, March 8, 2019.

<sup>264</sup> Marika Vicziany and David Wright-Neville, *Terrorism and Islam in Indonesia: Myths and Realities* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2005).

from 1965-1998, General Suharto suppressed pro-Sharia parties. It was not until the end of Suharto's reign that Suharto began to adopt Islamic politics in order to attempt to sustain public support.<sup>265</sup> Resentment of the government amongst Sharia law advocates continued to fester.

Motivated by repression and the ideas of Darul Islam, a new radical Islamic group, Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is still active today. With known ties to al-Qaeda and ISIL, Jemaah Islamiyah wants to create an Islamic state in Southeast Asia. ISIL recruitment in Indonesia is so low due to the fact that those who might sympathize with ISIL ideology do not have to travel to the Levant. Instead, Indonesians who have become radicalized can join Jemaah Islamiyah, or a variety of other jihadi splinter groups. Currently, it is estimated that Jemaah Islamiyah's membership is around 5,000 fighters.<sup>266</sup> This number gives a better sense of how many people in Indonesian are radicalized Muslims. However, in order to better understand causes of ISIL radicalization, an in-depth analysis on JI recruitment techniques is required because ISIL recruitment in Indonesia is similar to Jemaah Islamiyah recruitment. Jemaah Islamiyah recruits' people from schools and prisons. One way in which JI recruits members is by targeting those who have been educated in Islamic boarding schools, specifically the schools that teach children radical versions of Islam. For the majority of Islamic boarding schools, traditional Islam ideology is taught to children. However, a large number of recruits come from the few schools and universities that teach materials sympathetic to JI and ISIL. Some of these schools are funded by the Saudi government. In the 1980s, the Saudi government founded the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic (LIPIA). LIPIA has expanded to several schools, and offer scholarships for students to study. Overall, the Saudi government's proselytizing of Wahhabi ideology leads to an increase in intolerance for other Islamic sects and religious groups.

Another recruiting hotspot for JI and ISIL is prisons. Out of the 464 prisons in Indonesia, the infrastructure is designed to hold around 124,000 people. However, there are currently 240,000 people in Indonesian prisons, and that number is rising. Although the crime rate in Indonesia continues to decrease, harsh drug laws account for the growing prison population.<sup>267</sup> Although 70% of inmates are incarcerated for narcotic offenses, drug offenders are not segregated from suspected terrorists. This enables low level criminals to be radicalized when in prison. Additionally, Indonesia's criminal justice system does not fully finance prisoners. Instead, prisoners are primarily dependent on their families to provide them with food, clothes, and money.<sup>268</sup> By allowing outside actors to support prisoners, the Indonesian government

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<sup>265</sup> Robert Pringle, *Understanding Islam in Indonesia: Politics and Diversity* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010).

<sup>266</sup> Colin Freeman, "[Al-Qaeda Map: ISIS, Boko Haram and Other Affiliate Strongholds Across African and Asia](#)," The Telegraph, Jun 12, 2014.

<sup>267</sup> Niniek Karmini, "[Study: Extremists Still Flourishing in Indonesia's Prisons](#)," Associated Press, February 9, 2018.

<sup>268</sup> Aisyah Llewellyn, "[Indonesia's Prison System is Broken](#)," The Diplomat, May 23, 2018.

is encouraging the spread of radical Islam in jails. Terrorist cells can offer to pay for, feed, and cloth those who join their ranks; thus, there is a monetary incentive for low level drug criminals to become radicalized. Moreover, wealthy inmates are able to buy luxurious cells with some people even being able to remodel their cells.<sup>269</sup> The inequality of wealth and resources amongst prisoners causes radicalization when lower level criminals become upset at how they are being treated compared to those who are wealthy. In turn, this marginalizes those who are not as wealthy as high-class criminals meaning that they are more likely to turn to radical recruiters who promise to change inequality. Only recently did the Indonesian government start to separate leaders of terrorist cells from the general prison population, but this is not enough as it still allows for other radical Islamists to convert other prisoners. Overall, as Indonesia ISIL fighters return from the Levant, it is important to understand JI in order to ensure that ISIL fighters do not continue to terrorize Indonesians.

The percentage of radical Muslims in Indonesia is considerably low due to the economy and the effective deradicalization programs the country runs. Economically, Indonesia's GDP of 1 trillion dollars is because of its highly diverse economy.<sup>270</sup> Not only do they export a large amount of petroleum, but Indonesia also has a sizable manufacturing and textile industry. Indonesia's strong economic wellbeing is represented by the fact that less than 10% of the population lives below the poverty line, and that the GINI index is around 38.<sup>271</sup>

Since the 2002 Bali bombing, the Indonesian government has taken concrete steps in curbing radicalization. In regards to tactical prevention, the government established an elite anti-terrorism unit called Detachment 88.<sup>272</sup> With help from the Australian and US governments, Detachment 88 is an intelligence and military unit that solely focuses on stopping terrorist attacks. While Detachment 88 is able to physically stop attacks, they are not successful in curbing radicalization. In order to curb radicalization, the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs has begun to fund deradicalization madrasas (schools).<sup>273</sup> These madrasas are for children whose parents were suicide bombers or attempted to take them to the Levant. Interestingly, the madrasas are taught by former radical terrorists who understand the radicalization process and can aid the children. Instead of stripping away Islam from these children, the school promotes learning the Qur'an. Overall, the schools are successful in curbing radical sentiments

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<sup>269</sup> Yvette Tanamal, "[In Indonesia, Prison is a Life of Luxury, as Long as You Can Afford It](#)," VICE, July 27, 2018.

<sup>270</sup> Robert Wardi and Lona Olavia, "[Indonesian Economy Resilient and Strong: Chief Economy Minister](#)," Jakarta Globe, February 3, 2020.

<sup>271</sup> "[Indonesia](#)," CIA World Factbook, February 5, 2020

<sup>272</sup> Tom Allard and Kanupriya Kapoor, "[Fighting Back: How Indonesia's Elite Police Turned the Tide of Militants](#)," Reuters, December 23, 2016.

<sup>273</sup> Hannah Beech and Mukitita Suhartono, "[At A School for Suicide Bomber's Children Dancing, Drawing, and Deradicalization](#)," The New York Times, October 18, 2019.

among children. As more ISIL fighters return with their children, deradicalization madrasas provide a model for how to reintegrate children into the community.

As the country with the largest population of Muslims, Indonesia is a model for curbing radical Islamic terrorists. Naturally, when there is a large population diversity of thought will occur. While extremist sects of Islam do exist in Indonesia, the government works to ensure those who are radicalized do not turn into terrorist. However, as more ISIL fighters are repatriated the government needs to examine how radical groups recruit members in order to stop the cycle of terrorism. Specifically, the Indonesian government needs to work with Wahhabi schools in order to stop indoctrinating students with ideas on intolerance and violence. Moreover, more needs to be done in regard to inequality and overcrowding in jails.

# ***THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE BALKANS, AND CENTRAL ASIA REPUBLICS***

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## **THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

*Fenyun Li*

In 2019, the Russian Federation, alongside Tunisia, had the total number of 4,000 to 5,000 ISIL affiliates, ranking the third among the top countries from which ISIL receives its recruits. The percentage of Sunni Muslims between the ages of 15 and 54 joining ISIL is estimated at about 0.06%. It shows that the majority of Muslim population does not seem to be radicalized. The ISIL fighters mainly come from the restless North Caucasus of Russia, like Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia, within which the number of female and minor ISIL affiliates was remarkably reported at about 2,600 in total, making up more than half of the total ISIL affiliates from Russia.<sup>274</sup> Growing out of a schism in the Chechen separatist movement, the Islamist groups in the North Caucasus, including the notable Caucasus Emirate (CE), was responsible for at least 42 attacks and 227 fatalities in Russia between 2008 and 2016. Since 2014, many of the CE members had defected to ISIL, founded with the goal of creating the Caucasus Province of the Islamic State. These ISIL fighters have committed at least 30 attacks and 90 fatalities in the region from 2015 to 2018 within the country.<sup>275</sup> Although the ISIL fighters have not initiated large-scale terrorist incidents domestically in the recent decade, their violent activities abroad greatly intensified the political instability in countries where the Islamic State established its regime. Thus, examining the causes of radicalization for Russian ISIL affiliates is important in order to further tackle down the transnational Islamic terrorism. In this report, I will first explain how Wahhabism provides the ideological support for Russian ISIL fighters to voluntarily travel to the Middle East and fight for an Islamic “utopia” they originally expected. Then, I will examine that the political instability, existing in the whole Russian--Chechen conflict lasting three decades, exposes the moderate Muslim minority to radical ideologies, which inspires them to seek revenge against those who seized their resources and survival space. I will finally give accounts for how the miserable socioeconomic conditions in Chechnya drive those unemployed young Sunni Muslims to proselytize Wahhabism as ISIL financially supported them to fight for their religious belief.

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<sup>274</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>275</sup> “[Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#),” Institute for Economics & Peace, last modified November 2019.

The ISIL fighters from Russia were mainly former members of the Caucasus Emirate (CE) linked with al-Qaeda, Russia's main Jihadist group. On 23 June 2015, official ISIL spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani declared the formation of a new governorate in Russia's North Caucasus.<sup>276</sup> This was the first time ISIL made a territorial claim inside Russia. Meanwhile, thousands of Islamic extremists in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia, and Kabardino-Balkaria--four declared provinces of the CE, formally pledged allegiance to ISIL.<sup>277</sup> Before the ISIL penetrated Russia, the Islamic resistance in Chechnya was dominantly led by the CE which also practiced Islamic Wahhabism. The ideology of Wahhabi Islam grew out of the Chechen sectarian conflict for about two decades since the Chechen civil war in 1994. Following the Russian military repression and Kremlin's power centralization over Chechnya in the 2000s, the CE finally pledged an oath to global jihad led by al-Qaeda.<sup>278</sup> The founder Doku Umarov declared his intent to turn the North Caucasus into an Islamic region under Sharia by expelling the "infidels" that controlled the region. In line with the goals of al-Qaeda, CE is allegedly committed to the global jihadi movement and seeks to take back lands beyond the Caucasus that were historically Muslim.<sup>279</sup> By early 2012, hundreds of foreigners from Russian Chechnya were reported to migrate to the Syrian battlefield, joining this transnational Islamic terrorism. The Chechens had the reputation as fierce fighters and quickly rose through the ranks.<sup>280</sup> Many of the CE former senior leadership began defecting to ISIL since late 2014. The death of its last top emir Suleymanov without new leadership appointment in 2015 suggested the organization was finally defunct. The disintegration of the CE was followed immediately by the replacement of ISIL that fully integrated the Islamic global aspirations with its regional operations.

The ideology of ISIL's Wahhabism funded with the goal of fighting for Islamic "utopia" appeals not only to young men from Chechnya but also recruits an important number of women and children that cannot be overlooked. Women and young kids were reportedly made up of 2,600 out of 5,000 ISIL affiliates from Russia, each accounted for 1,000 and 1,600 separately.<sup>281</sup> Different from the male ISIL fighters who either serve in ISIL high ranks or directly fight in the terrorist combats, many (though not all) female and minor ISIL affiliates are victims of Wahhabi ideologies. Some of the female ISIL

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<sup>276</sup> Harleen Gambhir, "[ISIS Declares Governorate in Russia's North Caucasus](#)," Institute for the Study of War, last modified June 23, 2015.

<sup>277</sup> Meredith Hoffman, "[Caucasus Emirate Militants Pledge Allegiance to the Islamic State in a Video](#)," *VICE*, last modified December 20, 2014.

<sup>278</sup> "[Caucasus Emirate](#)," Mapping Militant Organizations, Stanford University, last modified 11 April 2014.

<sup>279</sup> "[Emarat Kavkaz | Narrative Summaries of Reasons for Listing](#)," UN Security Council, last modified July 29, 2011.

<sup>280</sup> Subcommittee Hearing: "[Assessing Terrorism in the Caucasus and the Threat to the Homeland Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee](#)," 311 Cannon House Office Building, last modified April 13, 2014.

<sup>281</sup> See Appendix 1.

affiliates were taken to Syria by force, by their trusted families like husbands.<sup>282</sup> Sometimes they brought their kids with them but, in many cases, the children were born in Syria. Others who wanted Sharia voluntarily went to Syria but soon got disappointed by the strict rules, random use of violence, and executions for legal violations there. However, not all women in the North Caucasus are victims of local violence, sometimes they are perpetrators of terrorism and could be as radical and dangerous as male terrorists. Since 2000, Russian-Chechen conflict recorded high level of female suicide attacks with more than 30% out of total 83 suicide attacks involving at least one woman.<sup>283</sup> Chechen women and girls are particularly vulnerable to honor killing, abductions for marriages and domestic violence.<sup>284</sup> Many of those women whose husbands were abducted or killed in terrorism transformed to conduct terrorism in the form of suicide attacks. They were coined by the Russian government as “Black Widow”. Most of them carried out the extreme terrorism for revenge of their family losses. These were also the women easily to be found and recruited by ISIL since the organization had documented their husbands or children who joined ISIL. They were persuaded to join ISIL to avenge a personal loss and to redeem the family name.<sup>285</sup> Another group of female ISIL affiliates are those young girls from Wahhabi families, and when their families were killed, they are systematically forced to sacrifice themselves as Allah’s Brides.<sup>286</sup> The legal systems in Chechnya lack specific programs dedicated to helping women and children whose families are ISIL affiliates, thus they are particularly vulnerable to ISIL recruits.

The Wahhabi ideology could not easily take roots in the North Caucasus without a politically unstable environment in which a crushed social order and illegitimate regime greatly helped breed Islamic extremism. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 followed by the two Russian-Chechen wars was where the Islamic radicalization in North Caucasus started. Due to its large oil reserves and geopolitical importance in preserving the integrity of the fledgling Russian state, the Yeltsin government rejected Chechnya's attempt to claim independence. This led to the outbreak of the first Chechen war in 1994. The Kremlin’s indiscriminate attacks on Chechen residents contributed to massive civilian deaths and crackdown of the social order. During the interwar periods from 1996 to 1999, increasing numbers of young Chechens participated in the local armed forces, using the combat as a way to gain rewards and achieve upward mobility. Chechnya was fractured by intense competition between warlords and Islamists culminating in conditions of social fragmentation. Meanwhile, the federal forces disclosed evidence of

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<sup>282</sup> “[ISIS Returnees Bring Both Hope and Fear to Chechnya](#),” Crisis Group, last modified April 29, 2019.

<sup>283</sup> “[GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#),” Institute for Economics & Peace, last modified November, 2019.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Jusik, Y. *Die Bräute Allahs*. St. Pölten: Residenz Verlag, 2004.

robbery and exploitation of civilians' property.<sup>287</sup> By holding hostages for ransom, many Chechens turned this lucrative business into a branch of Chechnya's economy, which created an industry turnover that ran into tens of millions of dollars. This economic activity was aided by drug trafficking, illegal oil trade, and other criminal behavior that permitted the Chechen rebels to obtain modern arms for continuing the war and access a large flow of money to purchase the means for abductions, robberies, murders, and war.<sup>288</sup> During the era of instability, Wahhabism became prominent in Chechnya when Omar ibn al Khattab came with a group of trained Arab guerillas in 1995, financially backed by Osama bin Laden. This Islamic extremism gained popularity when more powerful means of mobilization were required in order to fight against the strong Russian forces. The Chechens were financially rewarded for their conversion to and proselytizing the Wahhabi Islam in the amounts as high as \$1,000 per person.<sup>289</sup> The Russian-Chechen conflict was transformed to an escalating crisis after Putin came to power in 1999 and adopted a political strategy based on coercion and force until 2004. The uncompromising Chechens responded by conducting violent attacks in other Russian cities involving more innocent civilians. Islamic terrorism in Russia rose to its peak with 607 deaths from terrorist attacks in 2004.<sup>290</sup>

Then, Putin abolished local elections for republican leaders and reimpose with presidential appointments. He arbitrarily appointed a pro-Russian Chechen president, Akhmed Kadyrov, to head the new loyalist Chechen administration in 2000.<sup>291</sup> However, the local armed groups loyal to the Kadyrov administration were given increasing power and took control of the informal but lucrative economic resources. His assassination in 2004 was followed by his son, Ramzan Kadyrov, who sustained a close connection with the Kremlin and acceded to the presidency in 2007. By undermining local political access and accountability, the North Caucasus was penetrated by increasingly hierarchical and bureaucratic federal system that is unlikely to produce the regional political stability. Moreover, the widespread elite corruption resulted from this self-serving bureaucracy aggravated the Chechen people's anti-Russian sentiment. Between 2007 and 2010, Moscow sent subsidies totaling R168.8 billion (\$6.6 billion); however, these vast sums of money were not materialized to make reformed changes of the local residents' lives.<sup>292</sup> The Islamist extremism is unlikely to be eradicated as long as the political corruption of local elites and extrajudicial treatment towards Muslim population in Chechnya were still pervasive. Moreover, the radical Islam spread in Chechnya gradually transformed to be integrated in an Islamic

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<sup>287</sup> Julia Jusik, *Die Bräute Allahs: Selbstmord-Attentäterinnen Aus Tschetschenien* (St. Pölten: NP, Niederösterreichisches Pressehaus, 2005).

<sup>288</sup> Tishkov, *the Sons of War*, 103.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 174.

<sup>290</sup> Hannah Ritchie, et al., "[Terrorism](#)," Our World in Data, last modified November 2019.

<sup>291</sup> Ross Cameron, *Russian Regional Politics under Putin and Medvedev*. London: Routledge, 2012.

<sup>292</sup> Paul Goble, "[Window on Eurasia: Kremlin Sending Ever More Money to North Caucasus as Ethnic Russians Flee, Moscow Writer Complains](#)," Moscow Writer Complains, last modified January 1, 1970.

transnational network closely linked with al-Qaeda. In order to distance itself from the local pro-Russian political structure and moderate Islamic groups, the Islamic radical formations like the CE applied Islamic Wahhabism whose ideology lies in its purity and austerity, its rejection of secularism and any popular, ethnic or national accretions.<sup>293</sup> The moderate Islamic organizations, acknowledged by the central Russian government were accused by Islamic radicals that they were bribed and corrupted by the secular state. Following the decline in the ideological attraction of modernist interpretations of Islam, young Chechen Muslims were increasingly drawn to Wahhabi ideology. Apart from the oppressive and corrupted bureaucracy affiliated with United Russian party, the only viable political formations to the radical Muslims in the North Caucasus are those of Salafi Islam.

Along with the everlasting political instability, the miserable socioeconomic conditions suffered by certain Muslim population in the North Caucasus also led them to proselytize to Islamic Wahhabism and then voluntarily join ISIL. In the post-Soviet context of a rapidly deteriorating economic situation, those who offered access to state resources and substantial financial support could stipulate how that money was to be used and what form of Islam was to be promoted. During the civil war era, it is estimated that the labor surplus reached perhaps 100,000 to 200,000, or 20-30% of the able-bodied population.<sup>294</sup> These people came to be the main reserve of the armed forces in the Chechen wars. The highly unemployment situation was not even alleviated after the civil wars in the 1990s. In 2004, an estimated 75% of the able-bodied population were officially unemployed, marking Chechnya to be the top region of poverty within the Russian Federation.<sup>295</sup> Although the number fell to 21.5% in 2014, it was still notably high in a region with a high fertility rate where mainly young people lived.<sup>296</sup> Therefore, those Islamic radicals who did not have a formal job were easily targeted and recruited by ISIL as long as the group guaranteed them with stable financial payment that covers their basic needs and provides them with a “heaven land” to practice their Wahhabi Islam. Foreign fighters tended to be the highest paid of the ISIL recruits, earning as much as \$1,000 per month.<sup>297</sup> Unlike al-Qaeda, ISIL regards itself as a state, offering its “citizens” education and welfare system that have highly running costs. This also partly explains why many young men would bring their wives and children to migrate to Syria to fight as they were promised that their families would receive pension and good care after they died.

In conclusion, Wahhabism took the power vacuum during an era of instability by attracting Islamic radicals who had accumulated anti-Russian sentiment over the three decades of Russian-Chechen

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<sup>293</sup> Miriam Cooke and Bruce B. Lawrence, *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>294</sup> Tishkov, *Contradictory Modernization*, 41.

<sup>295</sup> “[12 Years of Humanitarian Aid for Chechnya](#),” European Commission, accessed February 18, 2020.

<sup>296</sup> “[Chechnya, Republic of Unemployment Rate, 1990-2014](#),” Knoema, accessed February 23, 2020.

<sup>297</sup> Richard Engel and Robert Windrem, “[ISIS Makes Three Times as Much from Oil Smuggling as Previously Thought: Officials](#),” NBCNews.com. NBCUniversal News Group, last modified August 25, 2015.

conflict. The crashed civil order and fragmented social frameworks had provided ample opportunities for different armed forces to grow and gain power during the restless periods. Along with the political instability resulting from civil wars in the 1990s, the Russian government has committed indiscriminate attacks and surveillance over the North Caucasian population during the early 2000s, particularly the Muslim minority, which pushed the Islamic radicals to expand the violence throughout the country. The main Islamic terrorist groups like the Caucasus Emirate and ISIL had substantial financial power to mobilize and recruit these Islamic radicals to commit extreme violence and even migrate to Syria to fight for an Islamic Caliphate. Those female ISIL affiliates are particularly vulnerable to this extreme Islamic ideology that they are often brought by their trusted families to move to Syria and could barely secure themselves while living in the Islamic State, let alone safely getting back to Russia. Although the Russian government had prevented the large-scale terrorist incidents committed by ISIL affiliates domestically. They have not been able to eradicate the intention of ISIL recruits to export to the Middle East who greatly intensify the transnational Islamic terrorism. Without an in-depth counterterrorism system to investigate the individual causes of Islamic radicalization in Chechnya, the internal reasons for people to be radicalized have not been honestly addressed and successfully resolved. Therefore, the Russian government should actively take more comprehensive strategies, including the gender-based investigations, to further prevent the radicalization of Islamic radicals domestically.

## THE BALKANS

*Fenyun Li*

Balkan countries are among Eastern Europe's top exporters of ISIL fighting for radical Islam. The top three contributors from the Balkans, that will be discussed in this section, are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Albania. Bosnia, Kosovo, and Albania have respectively contributed 500, 446, and 163 ISIL recruits. The percentage of Sunni Muslims between the ages of 15 and 54 joining ISIL is 0.047% in Bosnia, 0.04% in Kosovo, and 0.016% in Albania. Sunni Muslims comprise the majority within these countries. 50.7% of Bosnia's population is Sunni Muslim, 56.7% of Albania's is also Sunni, and Kosovo has a population of 95.6% of Sunni Muslims.<sup>298</sup> Although ISIL recruits are not as pervasive in the Balkans as in other regions with large Muslim populations, ISIL returnees and radicalized Muslims may nonetheless pose terrorist threats despite their small numbers. Due to almost five decades of communist rule, the Muslim communities in the Balkans have been secularized. The Islamic interpretation is oriented towards the generally moderate and secular Hanafi school of thought of Sunni Islam. The more conservative and radical thought of Islam, such as the Hanbali school and the Salafist movement, came to the Balkans in the early 1990s when around 800 Arab mujahedeen combatants came to defend their Muslim coreligionists for the sake of serving God and even hoping to fall in the battles and achieving Paradise during the Yugoslavia Wars.<sup>299</sup> In 1993, the Saudi Aid Initiative to Bosnia was established; after the war ended in 1995, it delivered an estimated \$600 million to Bosnia in aid to build hundreds of mosques, schools, and cultural centers that promote socially conservative Sunni ideologies.<sup>300</sup> The Saudi's generous aid has imported the extreme form of Saudi Islam--Wahhabism that attracts radicalized Muslims from the Balkans to join ISIL. The Wahhabi ideology provides radicalized Balkan Muslims a sense of unity and anti-Shiite sentiment, encouraging them to go to Syria and fight the "evil Syrian government" in an attempt to help their oppressed Sunni brothers. Due to the post-war local instability, the political fragmentation has undermined the state governments' capability of preventing the Islamist radicalization of certain Muslims and establishment of al-Qaeda sleeper cells. Furthermore, the ISIL and Nusra Front's gains in Syria and Iraq in the 2010s altered the dynamics of the terrorism threat in the Balkans and broadened the use of social media in its recruitment.

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<sup>298</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>299</sup> Andrea Oskari Rossini, "[Bosnia Herzegovina: the Rebellious Muslims](#)," Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso, last modified February 28, 2020.

<sup>300</sup> David Pallister, "[Terrorist Material Found in Sarajevo Charity Raid](#)," The Guardian, last modified February 23, 2002.

Adoption of Wahhabism provides the ISIL fighters from the Balkan countries a fulfilling and cohesive identity and a sense of belongingness to a broader religious community that they do not obtain in their domestic society. They regarded their violent attacks in Syria as a justified method of defense by arguing that they were loyal soldiers of Allah and it was their responsibility to protect their “Muslim brothers and sisters” who suffered from violence and inequality. In 2016, some foreign fighters returning from Syria to Kosovo were asked about their motivations to participate in ISIL; a common denominator that drove them to the Middle East was the ideological and political reasons. They claimed that their motivations were shaped by the urge to defend the civilians and fulfill a religious duty.<sup>301</sup> Beyond that, the patriarchal mindset rooted in Muslim-majority countries that promotes male masculinity and honor places harsh expectations on young men. Physical toughness, bravery, and eagerness to fight are often regarded as traditional traits of successful and honorable men.<sup>302</sup> This reinforced their belief that every male Muslim was obliged to wage wars against those who provoked violence against Sunni Muslims. Some ISIL returnees additionally justified that the Qur’an stipulated that a day spent waging jihad is equal to sixty years of piety and devotion.<sup>303</sup> The ISIL fighters from Bosnia and Albania shared similar motivations for joining ISIL. It is reported that young Bosnian ISIL fighters were “driven mostly by adrenaline and a quest for self-validation, self-respect, group belonging, and purpose.”<sup>304</sup> Also, the crimes committed by the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad have angered Balkan Muslims, which has in turn motivated some to travel to Syria to join ISIL.<sup>305</sup> In addition, elevating the word of Allah and making Sharia the only law in the universe sufficiently illustrates why young men make the commitment to the Islamic State.<sup>306</sup> Thus, group belongingness and male masculinity are the two important ideological causes of Islamist radicalization in a minority of Muslims from the Balkans.

The Balkans is a stronghold of transnational Islamic extremism. During the outbreak of the Yugoslav Wars since the early 1990s, large-scale trafficking of drugs, human beings, cigarettes, alcohol, and weapons was widespread in Southeast Europe. Due to its geopolitical importance, the Balkans was an important transit corridor for illegal trading to Western Europe and the Middle East. Along with the political instability that lasted for decades, the economic crime and state corruption like tax evasion,

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<sup>301</sup> Marc Sageman, “Understanding Terror Networks: The Turn to Political Violence,” (London: The Henry Jackson Society, July 13, 2010).

<sup>302</sup> Sophie Namy et al., “Be a Man, Change the Rules: Findings and Lessons from Seven Years of CARE International Balkans’ Young Men Initiative” (Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women, 2014).

<sup>303</sup> “[Dynamics of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Kosovo](#),” United States Institute of Peace, last modified January 23, 2017.

<sup>304</sup> Julian Borger, “[Isis Targets Vulnerable Bosnia for Recruitment and Attack](#),” The Guardian, last modified June 25, 2015.

<sup>305</sup> Jonathan Brown, “[ISIL Recruits in the Balkans](#),” Al Jazeera, last modified January 13, 2016.

<sup>306</sup> Cole Bunzel, “[From Paper State to Caliphate: The Ideology of the Islamic State](#),” Brookings, last modified July 28, 2016.

smuggling of legal goods, and misappropriation of public funds greatly hindered the Balkan states' political and economic stabilization. In Bosnia, with the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement that marked the end of the Bosnian war, the international community assumed the task of leading the peace process. International agencies promoted neoliberal agenda that encouraged the application of privatization and democracy in Bosnia. With the democratization processes, the presence of foreign relief agencies, and marriages between foreign fighters and local women, it was difficult for the local governments to deny stay permits even citizenships to many suspicious individuals. Moreover, the aid money pouring into Bosnia for building infrastructure, democratizing the political structures, and liberalizing the socialist economy did not achieve what the neoliberal agenda intended.<sup>307</sup> Instead, most of the money evaded the lacking central state structures through its distribution in decentralized ways.<sup>308</sup> Local political and economic elites and organizations illegally siphoned off these large amounts of public funds.<sup>309</sup> Therefore, the illegal exploitation of public resources resulting from the economic strategy of liberalization not only empowered the local elites but at the same time weakened the central state institutions of Bosnia. As corruption surveys show, low-intensity state corruption is widespread in Bosnia and is most pervasive at the local level.<sup>310</sup>

The weak government was not competent to make reformed changes to combat the high levels of unemployment and poverty that plagued the Balkans and exposed conservative Muslims vulnerable to extreme ideologies. In 2008, nearly two-thirds of young people between 18 and 35 years of age said they would emigrate if they could due to the lack of socioeconomic prospects.<sup>311</sup> The unemployment rate of Bosnia was 44% in 2012, the year when ISIL fighters from Bosnia migrated to Syria to fight. The high percentage of unemployment and precarious employment combined with a troubled economy has created a group of young Bosnians without job prospects who seek alternative measures to provide for themselves, including joining ISIL. In Kosovo, the political corruption has overturned the citizens' perception of the government credibility. In 2015, Kosovo's corruption rate is much higher than others in the Western Balkans.<sup>312</sup> Many citizens expressed their disappointment towards government institutions

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<sup>307</sup> [“Elections and Political Change in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina,”](#) Taylor & Francis, accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>308</sup> Shepard Forma et al., “Good Intentions: Pledges of Aid for Post-conflict Recovery,” Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, (2000): 315-366.

<sup>309</sup> De Guevara et al., “[The Balkans](#),” In *Transnational Organized Crime: Analyses of a Global Challenge to Democracy*, edited by Schönberg Regine and Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 211-38. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2013. accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>310</sup> [“The Political Economy of Corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina,”](#) Taylor & Francis, accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>311</sup> [“Early warning system report 2008,”](#) Early Warning System. Sarajevo: UNDP Bosnia, accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>312</sup> [“Corruption Perceptions Index 2015,”](#) Transparency International - The Global Anti-Corruption Coalition, accessed February 28, 2020.

and perceive them as largely corrupt, self-interested, and incapable of addressing important issues for ordinary citizens.<sup>313</sup> In the absence of a competent government, religious institutions were gaining popularity.<sup>314</sup> Although the political dynamics are not the single cause of Islamist radicalization in the Balkans, the political conditions can help explain the rise in popularity of Wahhabism in the region. This conservative Islamic way of life that promotes the primacy of religious identity helps frustrated people distance themselves from the secular and “apostate” state led by political elites who practiced the traditionally moderate Islam. Along with the systemic corruption within the weak governments, a small fraction of youth in the Balkans were plagued by a dire economic and political environment that inspired some to join ISIL.

Besides the political instability and miserable socioeconomic situation in the post-Balkan conflict environment, jihadi ideologies spread through social media have effectively exposed mainstream Sunni Muslims to the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam. They provide easy, and most of the time free, access to the extreme Islamic ideology that attracts already radicalized Muslims. ISIL developed tailored products for niche audiences and produced a large body of recruitment videos targeting specific populations in the Balkans.<sup>315</sup> In June 2015, ISIL released a 20-minute video, “Honor is in Jihad,” aimed at mobilizing potential Balkan Muslims to come to Iraq and Syria. A fighter identified as Abu Jihad al Bosni vows to, “bring our people out from the darkness and into the light.”<sup>316</sup> Fighters from Bosnia, Albania, and Kosovo also feature in the footage. Unlike other global jihadi groups, ISIL did not maintain an official website or singular social media account in order to reduce the possibilities of being attacked online by local governments.<sup>317</sup> Instead, ISIL’s Base Foundation posted visualized materials and audio broadcasts on jihadi forums and file sharing website, allowing anyone online to download and repost the content.<sup>318</sup> ISIL’s supporters on Twitter alone posted more than 90,000 messages on behalf of the group each day by February 2015.<sup>319</sup> In Albania, there are 27 active Telegram channels in the Albanian language supported by ISIL. In addition, there are 6,352 subscribers or accounts on pages operated by ISIL fighters, HTS, or

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<sup>313</sup> [“Dynamics of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Kosovo,”](#) United States Institute of Peace, last modified January 23, 2017.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> [“IS Fighters from Trinidad Call for Immigration to ‘Caliphate’ in Video: Multimedia: Articles,”](#) SITE Enterprise accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>316</sup> Jonathan Brown, [“ISIL Recruits in the Balkans,”](#) Al Jazeera, last modified January 13, 2016.

<sup>317</sup> Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, [“Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations,”](#) Contemporary Voices: St Andrews Journal of International Relations. School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, last modified February 5, 2016.

<sup>318</sup> Harleen Gamhir, [“The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS's Information Warfare,”](#) Institute for the Study of War, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>319</sup> Jon Greenberg, [“Does the Islamic State post 90,000 social media messages each day?”](#) PunditFact, last modified February 19, 2015.

generic jihadi supporters.<sup>320</sup> The content circulated through these channels plays a crucial role in exposing the ideology of jihad, Salafi literature, propaganda videos, and daily information of official jihadi organizations prevalent in Syria. Some ISIL members operating in the West Balkans also establish Facebook accounts to spread their influence around the world. For example, 77 Albanian Facebook accounts that endorsed ISIL propaganda were identified. Based on their profiles, their ages ranged from 13 to 51 years old.<sup>321</sup> ISIL has strategically evaded the government's detection and succeeded in Internet radicalization by adopting various approaches within social media.

In the recent decade, the Balkans countries have made generous efforts at bringing back ISIL affiliates to home. Kosovo and Bosnia have the highest number of ISIL returnees in the Balkans that they have respectively taken back 243 and 56 ISIL affiliates in 2019.<sup>322</sup> However, the weak state institutions and poor assistance programs in these poor Balkan countries face serious challenges in preventing terrorism and prohibiting the re-radicalization of those former ISIL affiliates. ISIL returnees still burden the country with treating them in the right manner, such as dealing with women and children who had been mentally traumatized in the war zones, and ensure the kids can be raised and grow up just as other kids in the Balkans.<sup>323</sup> In such highly secular states like Bosnia and Kosovo, ISIL returnees usually face the problems of reintegration in the society and have little access to social benefits.

In conclusion, ISIL radicalization in the Balkans is mainly the result of Wahhabi ideology that strengthens ISIL fighters' emotional connection and group belongingness with their counterparts in Syria and Iraq. They are motivated to physically fight for an Islamic Caliphate governed only by Sharia law where they believe every Muslims could harmoniously live and thrive together. Amplified by the elite corruption and weak state institutions resulting from the local instability after the civil wars, the vulnerable and radicalized Muslims are easily targeted by militant groups like al-Qaeda and ISIL when the government is incapable of imposing active reforms to eliminate the influence of foreign Wahhabi organizations. ISIL also deliberately targets citizens of the Balkans through their social media campaigns.

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<sup>320</sup> Adrian Shtuni, "[Western Balkans Foreign Fighters and Homegrown Jihadis: Trends and Implications](#)," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, last modified August 13, 2019.

<sup>321</sup> Anne Speckhard, "[Bringing Down the Digital Caliphate: A Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter-Narratives Intervention with Albanian Speaking Facebook Accounts](#)," ICSVE Research Reports, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>322</sup> Joana Cook, "[From Daesh to 'Diaspora' II: The Challenges Posed by Women and Minors After the Fall of the Caliphate](#)," Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, last modified October 15, 2019.

<sup>323</sup> Valerie Hopkins, "[Isis Fighters Struggle on Return to Balkan States](#)," Financial Times, last modified May 20, 2019.

## CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

*Manisha Jha and Devon Fleming*

The former Soviet states that now constitute the Central Asian Republics — Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan — served as opportune recruiting grounds for ISIL. Large-scale, preexisting jihadist entities in Central Asia have shifted their support from the Taliban to ISIL, extending its recruitment networks in the region and bolstering its potential for a stronger Caliphate.<sup>324</sup> Tactically, ISIL has collaborated with these groups to adapt its propaganda to the Central Asian context and propagate it accordingly. While ISIL uses Central Asian recruits to broaden its network, foreign fighters from the region are also migrating to the Islamic State's current territory.<sup>325</sup> Recruits from Central Asia have been routinely used by ISIL to commit suicide bombings globally.<sup>326</sup> All countries in this region have majority-Sunni Muslim populations. Up to 500 people from Turkmenistan left to join ISIL, 863 from Kyrgyzstan, more than 1,100 from Kazakhstan, almost 2,000 from Tajikistan, and somewhere between 1,500 and 2,500 recruits joined from Uzbekistan.<sup>327</sup> Additionally, estimates range from several hundred to up to 10,000 ISIL fighters in the Khorasan region itself, which includes northern Afghanistan, Iran, and much of Central Asia. ISIL "is also focusing on northern Afghanistan, where its fighters aim to establish small pockets and to link up with Uzbek, Tajik, Chechen and Chinese Uighur militants."<sup>328</sup> The countries in this region are intricately connected with one another through shared languages, cultures, and histories, presenting ISIL an easily accessible network to disseminate its extremist ideology. A combination of several factors account for the large numbers of Central Asians radicalized by ISIL, including broken education systems, insufficient economic opportunities, political instability, active jihadist groups in the region, authoritarian governmental responses to these issues, and the widespread reach of ISIL propaganda in the region.

Central Asian education systems have not recovered from the USSR's fall in 1991. Characterized by deep corruption, underpaid teachers, inadequate infrastructure, and antiquated curricula, the average Central Asian school does not equip its students with sufficient knowledge of Wahhabism, the tools to recognize jihadist propaganda, or substantial avenues to achieve higher socioeconomic status.<sup>329</sup> Because

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<sup>324</sup> Damon Mehl, "[The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Opens a Door to the Islamic State](#)," *CTC Sentinel* 8, no. 6 (2015): 1-24.

<sup>325</sup> Dana Abizaid, "[Why ISIS Recruits from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan](#)," *The National Interest*, January 17, 2017.

<sup>326</sup> Uran Botobekov, "[ISIS Uses Central Asians for Suicide Missions](#)," *The Diplomat*, December 1, 2016.

<sup>327</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>328</sup> Dawood Azami, "[The Islamic State in South and Central Asia](#)," *Survival* 58, no. 4 (2016): 131-158.

<sup>329</sup> Abizaid, "[Why ISIS Recruits](#),"

Umarov, Akram. "[How Serious is Religious Radicalization in Turkmenistan?](#)" *European Eye on Radicalization*. June 18, 2019.

much of the Central Asian population is so young, the importance of education cannot be understated. 49.56% of Tajiks,<sup>330</sup> 39.1% of Kazakhs,<sup>331</sup> 46.09% of Kyrgyz,<sup>332</sup> and 39.82% of Uzbeks<sup>333</sup> are 24 years of age or younger. This vastly mal-educated generation is susceptible to indoctrination by jihadist groups whose ideology not only provides young people an opportunity to participate in the actualization of “real Islam,” but also a reality seemingly hopeful in comparison to their own.<sup>334</sup>

Scarce job opportunity also contributes to the radicalization of Central Asian populations.<sup>335</sup> Though overall GDP levels are growing, government attention to human capital remains lacking.<sup>336</sup> In 2018, the world’s average GDP per capita was about \$11,300. In Kazakhstan, it was about \$9,800 dollars; in Turkmenistan, it was \$7,000; in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, it was roughly \$1,500; in Tajikistan, \$826.<sup>337</sup> While the other four are ranked relatively low on the list, Tajikistan is ranked 50 out of 138 countries in impact of terrorism.<sup>338</sup> And while Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are considered to have high human development, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan follow with medium human development scores.<sup>339</sup> Poor education and job prospects leave young people unfulfilled, disengaged and looking for opportunities; ISIL targets Central Asians, especially migrants, for recruitment with this in mind.

Especially with regard to wages, strife amongst labor workers lays further foundation for extremist ideologies. Many Central Asians leave their home countries to look for work. Significant structural challenges prevent many Central Asian migrant workers from obtaining legal worker status in Russia, where wages are higher and more jobs are available. Intent on earning sufficient wages, the reality of labor in Russia causes worker vulnerability to mistreatment and marginalization.<sup>340</sup> In Tajikistan especially, the lack of job and education prospects drives young people and their families to neighboring Russia for work. Journalists have uncovered claims that most Tajik ISIL fighters were targeted by Chechen gangs while working as migrant construction laborers in Moscow. As a result, “up to 4,000 central Asian migrants are said to be in Syria” fighting for ISIL.<sup>341</sup> Some of these migrants are drawn by the small payments of money ISIL pays in benefits per child, increasing the appeal of leaving a decrepit

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<sup>330</sup> [“Tajikistan,”](#) CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

<sup>331</sup> [“Kazakhstan,”](#) CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

<sup>332</sup> [“Kyrgyzstan,”](#) CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

<sup>333</sup> [“Uzbekistan,”](#) CIA: The World Factbook, last modified February 1, 2018.

<sup>334</sup> Dina Lisnyanski, [“Jihad Strategies in Central Asia,”](#) The Hudson Institute, May 1, 2007.

<sup>335</sup> [“How does Central Asia contribute to ISIS recruitment?”](#) The Henry Jackson Society. Accessed February 20, 2020.

<sup>336</sup> Akram, [“How Serious is Religious.”](#)

<sup>337</sup> [“GDP per Capita \(Current US\\$\),”](#) The World Bank, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>338</sup> [“Global Terrorism Index 2019: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism,”](#) Institute for Economics & Peace, November 2019.

<sup>339</sup> [“Human Development Report 2019,”](#) United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>340</sup> Marta Ter, and Ryskelki Satke, [“Conditions for Central Asians in Russia boost radicalism,”](#) European Council on Foreign Relations: Wider Europe Forum, March 17, 2016.

<sup>341</sup> Daniil Turovsky, [“How Moscow’s migrant workers are being recruited to Isis,”](#) The Guardian, May 5, 2015.

situation for the poor in their home country. Central Asia is home to some of the highest rates of human trafficking and slavery in the world; this is why others were convinced when recruiters said they, “wouldn’t be treated like slaves.”<sup>342</sup> Recruiters told laborers in Moscow that they didn’t have to fight if they joined ISIL, but that the group was also looking for nurses, teachers, and engineers.<sup>343</sup>

Political instability has also contributed to the lack of economic opportunity and the number of ISIL fighters from the region, particularly in Tajikistan. The Tajikistani Civil War was fought between the Moscow-backed government and the Islamic-led United Tajik Opposition. It created a refugee crisis that pushed tens of thousands of Tajiks into Afghanistan, which was facing its own civil conflicts with the Soviet invasion, the mujahideen, and the Taliban.<sup>344</sup> The president of Tajikistan has ruled since 1992 and banned opposition parties, making it one of the least free countries in the world.<sup>345</sup> And though it has seen relatively less violent conflict since it became an independent nation, Uzbekistan has become one of the worst countries in the world for political rights and civil liberties.<sup>346</sup> While the country has banned and criminalized any “religious extremism,” “separatism,” and “fundamentalism,”<sup>347</sup> political corruption prevents the country from maintaining a strong rule of law. Corruption and oppression in these two countries may have contributed to the context in which thousands of citizens felt the need to flee and look for other prospects. Governments’ weak control across Central Asia gave ISIL “the opportunity to establish safe havens in the footsteps of al-Qaeda.”<sup>348</sup>

This environment which lacks adequate structures to foster positive growth in the quality of life for large citizen populations provides fertile ground for radical extremist groups. Strengthened by U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, jihadist entities in the region capitalize on citizen discontentment to exacerbate national security concerns and instrumentally draft Central Asians to join the fight in Syria and Iraq. Uzbekistan, the most populated and authoritarian Central Asian State, contributes the highest gross number of foreign fighters to ISIL.<sup>349</sup> When ISIL - Khorasan (IS-K), the IS-affiliate in the Khorasan region of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, was established in January 2015, it marked ISIL’s first official expansion outside of the Arab world.<sup>350</sup> The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which

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<sup>342</sup> Ibid.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Bruce Pannier, “[Tajikistan's Civil War: A Nightmare The Government Won't Let Its People Forget](#),” Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, June 23, 2017.

<sup>345</sup> “[Tajikistan Country Report](#),” Freedom in the World 2019, Freedom House, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>346</sup> “[Uzbekistan Country Report](#),” Freedom in the World 2019, Freedom House, accessed February 10, 2020.

<sup>347</sup> “[Creating Enemies of the State: Religious Persecution in Uzbekistan: Notes on Wahhabism, “Wahhabis,” and Hizb ut-Tahrir](#),” Human Rights Watch, accessed February 26, 2020.

<sup>348</sup> Azami, “[The Islamic State](#).”

<sup>349</sup> See Appendix 1.

“[Uzbekistan: Reform or Repeat?](#)” International Crisis Group, Sept 29, 2016.

<sup>350</sup> Azami, “[The Islamic State](#).”

operates on Tajikistan's southern border, was integrated into IS-K in 2014.<sup>351</sup> Despite subsequent splintering in its leadership, the IMU continues to threaten Tajikistan with its Tajik branch, Jamaat Ansarullah (JA) seeking to implement Islamic rule in the country. Tajik jihadis in the region "could either continue to fight with groups there, chose to return to Tajikistan, or opt to travel to other conflict zones like Afghanistan where one Tajik and several other Central Asian terror groups are established."<sup>352</sup> This network not only practically supports the Caliphate's territory under siege, but also provides security to Tajiks fleeing the collapse of caliphate.<sup>353</sup> In Kazakhstan, the reach of the Islamic Liberation Party (HTI) grows as Wahhabi ideologies spread to neighboring Russian republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan. HTI, with even more extensive networks in Kyrgyzstan, has implemented online indoctrination campaigns in Uzbek, Russian, and Kyrgyz languages and particularly focused on the recruitment of Central Asian youth. HTI has 10,000 members across Kyrgyzstan, a country also seriously threatened by IMU and Jaish al-Makhdi (JM). Leading Central Asia in ISIL recruits, ethnic Uzbeks have organized three substantial jamaats in Syria that have fought with ISIL and other jihadist groups.<sup>354</sup>

The ineffective governmental attempts to combat the operations of these organizations and silence advocacy for improved economic conditions likely increases the number of individuals radicalized by the jihadist narrative.<sup>355</sup> In Uzbekistan, the government's strict agendas to combat jihadist organizations restrict Muslim religious freedoms, pushing their structure abroad and further inspiring radicalization.<sup>356</sup> By routinely violating the rights of ordinary Muslims and violently suppressing protests against economic conditions, the Uzbek government provides an opportunity for ISIL propaganda and IMU to capitalize on injustice. Similarly, citizen opposition to Tajik government repression of political rivals and the likelihood of military operations in the Gorno-Badakhshan region is exploited by jihadists to inspire support for ISIL.<sup>357</sup> Furthering the divide, groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), which had stated its goal as the peaceful construction of a Muslim caliphate in Central Asia, were banned across the region. HT had gained popularity across Central Asian republics, boasting up to 10,000 members in Kyrgyzstan. Blanket bans on Islamic political parties drove those organizations and their ideologies underground and

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<sup>351</sup> Sajjan Gohel, "[How Uzbekistan became ripe recruiting territory for ISIS](#)," CNN, Nov 1, 2017.

<sup>352</sup> Damon Mehl, "[Converging Factors Signal Increasing Terror Threat to Tajikistan](#)," *CTC Sentinel* 11, no. 10 (2018): 1-38.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Nodirbek Soliev, "[Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan](#)," *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 7, no. 1 (January/February 2015): 50-57.

<sup>355</sup> Abizaid, "[Why ISIS Recruits](#)."

Akram, "[How Serious is Religious](#)."

Uran Botobekov, "[ISIS and Central Asia: A Shifting Recruiting Strategy](#)," *The Diplomat*, May 17, 2016.

<sup>356</sup> "[How does Central Asia ...](#)" The Henry Jackson Society.

Farangis Najibullah, "[Reforming' Uzbekistan Makes Big Additions To List Of Banned Material, Websites](#)," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, Jan 26, 2020.

<sup>357</sup> Mehl, "[Converging Factors Signal Increasing](#)."

made it difficult for their members to exist in the open. These members may have been more likely, then, to leave Central Asia altogether and join jihadist groups like ISIL.<sup>358</sup>

ISIL and more localized jihadist organizations tailor propaganda to resonate with the hardships of Central Asian citizens.<sup>359</sup> To reach these populations, in recent years ISIL has disseminated materials in Russian such as the magazine “Istok” and social media campaign “Furat Media” to target populations of low socioeconomic status. In recent years, the ISIL online propaganda campaign specifically targeted at these Central Asian countries, some of which asks individuals to stay home and continue jihad against “kafirs” at home, providing the Islamic State with reach outside of its shrinking territory.<sup>360</sup> Specifically, the narrative of worker exploitation by Russian corporations and lacking economic opportunity in Tajikistan is particularly relevant.<sup>361</sup> Low paying jobs in Russia comprise 40% of the Tajik GDP.<sup>362</sup> Overall, these online campaigns emphasize social justice in the Caliphate that was not reflected by reality. However, the strategic relevance of ISIL propaganda extends beyond worker strife. Because the family unit is paramount to Central Asian culture, ISIL has falsely advertised itself as the ideal environment to raise a family.<sup>363</sup>

Thousands of Central Asians traveled to Iraq and Syria to join ISIL looking for a better life for their families. This was an underlying theme for several of the reasons for ISIL recruitment in Central Asia: including broken education systems, insufficient economic opportunities, political instability, a vast network of active jihadist groups, governmental oppression, and the proliferation of propaganda. Governmental responses to ISIL recruits have yet to successfully combat the issue, but their principle policies to reintegrate ISIL returnees require examination.<sup>364</sup> The Tajik government established a program through which ISIS fighters can return home if they show remorse and concede to not participating in violence. Islamic State recruits have gone through this program and successfully reintegrated into society.<sup>365</sup> However, if citizens are convicted of terrorism, their citizenship may be revoked.<sup>366</sup> Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also implemented this policy since 2015.<sup>367</sup> Authorities in Kazakhstan have so far arrested all men who returned from the Islamic State and threatened them with 10-year jail

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<sup>358</sup> Abizaid, “[Why ISIS Recruits.](#)”

<sup>359</sup> Botobekov, “[ISIS and Central Asia.](#)”

<sup>360</sup> Uran Botobekov, “[Is Central Asia Ready to Face ISIS?](#)” The Diplomat, July 20, 2016.

<sup>361</sup> “[How does Central Asia.](#)” The Henry Jackson Society.

<sup>362</sup> Deirdre Tynan, “[Islamic State Threatens Central Asia.](#)” International Crisis Group, June 8, 2015.

<sup>363</sup> Botobekov, “[ISIS and Central Asia.](#)”

<sup>364</sup> Gohel, “[How Uzbekistan.](#)”

Gavin Helf, “[Central Asia Leads the Way on Islamic State Returnees.](#)” United States Institute of Peace, Sept 13, 2019.

<sup>365</sup> Mehl, “[Converging Factors Signal Increasing.](#)”

<sup>366</sup> Catherine Putz, “[Kazakhstan Considers Revoking Terrorists’ Citizenship.](#)” The Diplomat, May 24, 2017.

<sup>367</sup> Aydar Ashimov, “[Kazakhstan begins revoking citizenship of convicted terrorists and militants.](#)” Caravanserai, March 22, 2018.

sentences.<sup>368</sup> Some women were also arrested, but the vast majority are put into a treatment and reintegration site, called the Rehabilitation Center of Good Intentions, where “the women are provided nannies to look after their children, fed hot meals and treated by doctors and psychologists, testing the soft-touch approach to people affiliated with a terrorist group.”<sup>369</sup> The center was built because Kazakhstan is the only country with a number of citizens in prison camps in Syria that has so far agreed to repatriate all of them. So far, this number is at 516.<sup>370</sup> Uzbekistan repatriated 148 women and children from prison camps in Syria in May,<sup>371</sup> and another 64 in October.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Almaz Kumenov, “[Kazakhstan evacuates citizens from Syria, arrests some](#),” Eurasianet, accessed February 26, 2020.

<sup>369</sup> Andrew Kramer, “[Kazakhstan Welcomes Women Back From the Islamic State, Warily](#),” The New York Times, August 10, 2019.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> “[Uzbekistan repatriates 148 women and children linked to ISIS from Syria](#),” The Defense Post, May 30, 2019.

<sup>372</sup> “[Uzbekistan repatriates 64 children of 'terrorists' from Iraq](#),” The Defense Post, October 11, 2019.

# *EUROPE*

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## **SCANDANVIA AND THE NETHERLANDS**

*Jaya Wegner*

The Scandinavian countries all rank among the top nations on the happiness index. Finland occupies the number one spot as the happiest nation in the world followed by Denmark and then Norway, taking the second and third place rankings respectively. Sweden still remains in the top ten, coming in seventh place.<sup>373</sup> Although not nominally a part of Scandinavia, the Netherlands is geographically close to these nations and ranks as number five on the happiness index. Generally, these nations are not immediately associated with terrorism because they are primarily regarded as ‘happy’ and ‘safe’ nations. Regardless of the reputations of these nations, there are major concerns regarding their citizen’s links to terrorist organizations.

Finland has 0.087% of their Muslim population that joins ISIL, Norway has 0.087-0.93%, the Netherlands has 0.05%, and Denmark has 0.047% Sweden follows with 0.042-0.043%. Despite being ranked as some of the world’s happiest nations, they also provide some of the highest percentages of foreign fighters for their Muslim populations. To help put these percentages in perspective, Turkey provides the most foreign fighters that travel to join ISIL. Turkey has somewhere between 0.0093-0.011% of their Muslim population joining ISIL. The nation that provides the most foreign fighters has a significantly smaller portion of their Muslim population joining ISIL than Scandinavia and the Netherlands. Scandinavia and the Netherlands are all within the top ten nations for the highest percentage of Muslims in their country joining ISIL.<sup>374</sup> The threat of terrorism has become an increasing issue within Scandinavia and the Netherlands. In 2017, Finland was forced to raise its threat level from low to elevated due to rising numbers of people becoming inspired from groups like ISIS. This was after being classified as one the safest countries in the world.<sup>375</sup>

The number of Muslims in Scandinavia began to grow more rapidly in the 1950s. During this time, Sweden received Ahmadiyya missionaries who also created settlements in Denmark and Norway. When the Scandinavian countries began to experience economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s, they needed to bring in people from outside the country for their work force. This resulted in the immigration

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<sup>373</sup> [“Political Stability – Country Rankings”](#) The Global Economy, 2018.

<sup>374</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>375</sup> [“ISIS Fears Mean Finland, the World’s Safest Country, Is Raising Its Threat Level.”](#) Newsweek, last modified June 14, 2017.

of Muslims of Turkish and Yugoslav origins<sup>376</sup>. This is similar to the Netherlands, where the country received much of their Muslim population in the 1960s and 1970s when they too experienced a need for a larger labor work force.<sup>377</sup> Norway, however, put a ban on labor migration in 1975. Norway's added Muslim population after this was primarily from family reunification and refugees. In the 1980s, these countries began taking in a lot of refugees, many of which were Muslim. Sweden, with its liberal immigration policies, is thought to have historically undergone a greater transformation due to immigration than any other European country since WWII. This greatly affected their demographics and integration politics. Sweden also has one of the most heterogeneous Muslim populations in Western Europe as there are Muslims from over 40 different countries.<sup>378</sup>

These nations are all members of the European Union, therefore, immigration between member nations is more lenient. People who come from outside if the E.U. needs to obtain permission to enter by having a work permit that meets the requirement for the minimum salary, seeking family reunification, or through seeking asylum.<sup>379</sup> In 2018, Norway received 4.8 asylum-seekers per 10,000 inhabitants, Finland received 5.3, Denmark received 5.4, Netherlands received 5.9, and Sweden received the highest value, at 17.8 asylum-seekers per 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>380</sup>

It is a commonly accepted assumption that radicalization is correlated with economic inequality among the population, the instability of the government, or on infringement on freedoms, however, in these nations, none of these factors seem to be a major threat. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands are all parliamentary constitutional monarchies and Finland has a parliamentary republic.<sup>381</sup> As of 2018, Norway had a political stability index of 1.15, Denmark has 0.96, Finland has 0.92, Sweden has 0.91, and the Netherlands have 0.87. To contextualize further, Monaco has the highest score with a 1.61 and Yemen has the lowest with -3.<sup>382</sup> The 2018 average was a -.05, therefore, these nations are all ranked relatively high. These nations have fairly high Gini index ratings. As of 2015, Norway has a 27.5 rating, Finland has a 27.1, Netherlands has a 28.2, Denmark also has a 28.2 and Sweden has a 29.2<sup>383</sup>. These nations are all on the lower end of the scale, indicating a high amount of equality in the society. These countries also have high levels of human freedom. Denmark ranks 8.56 for human freedom,

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<sup>376</sup> Susanne Olsson and Simon Sorgenfrei, "[Islam and Islamic Studies in Scandinavia](#)," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, last modified 2019.

<sup>377</sup> Wahideh Achbari, "[Institutionalizing Islam in the Netherlands](#)," *Groniek Historisch Tijdschrift* (October 2017): 239.

<sup>378</sup> Susanne Olsson and Simon Sorgenfrei, "[Islam and Islamic Studies in Scandinavia](#)," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*, last modified 2019.

<sup>379</sup> Marion Schmid-Drüner, "[Immigration Policy](#)," European Parliament, last modified December, 2019.

<sup>380</sup> "[Refugee population by country or territory of asylum](#)," World Bank, last modified 2018.

Marion Schmid-Drüner, "[Immigration Policy](#)," European Parliament, last modified December, 2019.

<sup>381</sup> "[Government Type](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>382</sup> "[Political Stability – Country Rankings](#)," The Global Economy, last accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>383</sup> "[GINI index \(World Bank estimate\) - Country Ranking](#)," index mundi, last modified 2018.

Finland 8.53, Sweden 8.50, Netherlands 8.50, and Norway 8.44. Among all the other nations in the world, Denmark ranks in at number 6, Finland at 8, Sweden and Netherlands are both ranked 11, and Norway is 17.<sup>384</sup> Despite these encouraging statistics, these nations still produce radicalized foreign fighters.

Because the economic and political factors do not account for the high level of foreign fighters, other elements need to be considered such as the marginalization of the Muslim communities. Marginalization is often identified as having a central role in driving violent extremism and promoting violent ideologies.<sup>385</sup> People who identify as Muslim are a small minority of a larger population that is fairly homogenous. In Sweden, 80.9% of the population is Swedish, with 8.1% being Muslim. The Netherlands' population is 76.9% Dutch with 5.1% being Muslim. In Denmark, the population is 86.3% Danish, with 5.5% being Muslim. Norway's population is 83.2% Norwegian with Muslim being 3.2%. Finally, Finland's population consists of mainly Finn, Swede, Russian, Estonian, Romani, Sami with Muslims consisting of 2.7% of the population.<sup>386</sup> The demographics show that Muslim people need to integrate into nations that consist mainly of white people. The United States also primarily consists of white people, however, they produce less foreign fighters for their Muslim populations. This could potentially be due to geography, as people would have a less difficult time traveling from Scandinavia or the Netherlands to Iraq and Syria than people from the U.S. Another common explanation for the radicalization in these nations is due to discrimination. Since the late 1980s, Muslim people have been increasingly becoming the "other" in this Scandinavian area.<sup>387</sup> This is thought to be due to a more ethnic discrimination, rather than one based on appearance and skin color.<sup>388</sup> Another theory is that discrimination is not based on race, religion, or even ethnicity, but due to difference in educational structures. Bosnian refugees (who made up the bulk of the refugees from the Yugoslav wars and who practiced Islam) were able to successfully integrate themselves due to a similar "education level and the possibility of recognizing the system of the country as being similar to your country of origin."<sup>389</sup> Some point out that regardless of appearance, Muslims, Bosnian or Somalian, are both greatly discriminated against, therefore appearance is not to blame. With the blatant discrimination on groups of people from African descent, who are denied access from clubs and bars, or receive racist behavior from the police such as being forced to explain themselves for just walking down the street,<sup>390</sup> it is difficult to rule

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<sup>384</sup> "[World Happiness Index](#)," [countryeconomics.com](#), last modified 2019.

<sup>385</sup> Linus Gustafsson and Magnus Ranstorp, "[Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#)," *Swedish Defense University* (2017): 69.

<sup>386</sup> "[Ethnic Groups](#)," CIA: The World Factbook, last accessed February 28, 2020.

See Appendix 1.

<sup>387</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "[Racism in the Nordic Countries](#)," Nordics Info, last modified February 2019.

<sup>388</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "[Racism in the Nordic Countries](#)," Nordics Info, last modified February 2019.

<sup>389</sup> Lee Roden, "[What lessons can Sweden learn from its Yugoslavian refugees?](#)" The Local SE, last modified September 2017.

<sup>390</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "[Racism in the Nordic Countries](#)," Nordics Info, last modified February 2019.

appearance as a discriminatory factor against Muslims. Regardless of how much of a role race, ethnicity, and education, play, it is hard to contest that many Muslims are discriminated against in these nations.

Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands all accept refugees, a lot of whom come from Iraq and Syria. Scandinavia is notorious for their welfare programs and although not in Scandinavia, the Netherlands welfare system has significant similarities to the Nordic welfare system.<sup>391</sup> The welfare benefits are extremely generous and are also extended to refugees. The government promises everyone access to fundamental needs, such as housing and health care. People between jobs also receive unemployment benefits and are offered job training programs. The idea behind the model is that job training and state support will create easy transitions for people between jobs. These economies are centered around higher skilled, highly paid professions. For early waves of immigrants from Iraq and Syria, which included, doctors, accountants, and other professionals, they would receive language training and then were able to continue their professions. For more recent refugees, they often have very little education and have suffered great trauma, making it difficult for them to obtain the skills for these jobs.<sup>392</sup> In the Netherlands, their foreign-born unemployment rate is 2.7% higher than native-born unemployment rate, Norway's foreign-born unemployment rate is 4.2% higher, Finland's foreign-born unemployment rate is 4.6% higher, Denmark's foreign-born unemployment rate is 4.7% higher, and Sweden's foreign-born unemployment rate is 11.4% higher.<sup>393</sup> This means many refugees are supported solely by the state, which makes the welfare model unsustainable. Since people have to pay very high in taxes to support the welfare system, many have become upset by having to support refugees, and this can lead towards discrimination against these immigrants, and in turn, Muslims.

Another issue regarding these refugees is that they are often concentrated in certain neighborhoods. Due to rent control, Sweden struggles with providing enough housing for its citizens, and therefore, what was first supposed to be temporary housing, often becomes permanent.<sup>394</sup> It is also possible that Muslims choose to reside in these areas for the sense of community but regardless, lots of these neighborhoods are considered "exposed areas". Exposed areas can be defined as "socially deprived areas hit by high criminality and low socioeconomic status."<sup>395</sup> Areas like these create conditions where it is easier for people to become radicalized. In these neighborhoods, unemployment rates are much higher,

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<sup>391</sup> Nima Sanandaji, "[DUTCH RETHINK THE WELFARE STATE](#)," newgeography, last modified November 2, 2013.

<sup>392</sup> Peter S. Goodman, "[The Nordic Model May Be the Best Cushion Against Capitalism. Can It Survive Immigration?](#)" New York Times, July 11, 2019.

<sup>393</sup> "[Foreign-Born Unemployment](#)," OECD, last accessed February 28, 2020.

"[Native-Born Unemployment](#)," OECD, last accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>394</sup> Yalda Hakim, "[How Sweden became an exporter of jihad](#)," BBC, last modified October 2016.

<sup>395</sup> Linus Gustafsson and Magnus Ranstorp, "[Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#)," *Swedish Defense University* (2017): 5.

and two-thirds of children have dropped out of school by the time they are 15, when in the rest of Sweden, the high school dropout rate is 30%. It should be noted that 90% of these people eventually finish their high school degrees through adult education programs, but regardless, the dropout rate still remains a concern<sup>396</sup>. Although it is difficult to get completely accurate information of where people reside, due to the fact that people may be registered in one area and not live there, research has shown that over 70% of people from Sweden who become foreign fighters have at one time resided in these areas.<sup>397</sup> Gothenburg is one of the most diverse cities in Sweden, yet this is where much of the ISIL recruitment takes place.<sup>398</sup> This goes against the notion that minority groups in more homogeneous societies have a higher likelihood to be radicalized. However, in Gothenburg, the Muslim population seems to be segregated in these ‘exposed’ areas in the city, where their population rises to more than 70%. Likely due to the highly condensed Muslim population, it has also been indicated that these specific areas are targeted by recruiters giving people more opportunities to join ISIL.<sup>399</sup> Despite these nations having low economic inequality, high political stability, and ranking high on the Human Freedom index, these areas are marginalized from the rest of society, making them more susceptible to radicalization.

These ‘exposed’ areas are portrayed negatively. These neighborhoods are even referred as ‘no-go zones’ through the media,<sup>400</sup> which is another way of marginalizing the people of these communities. Negative depictions of Islam in the media creates more segregation issues in the country, especially since Islam usually does not receive positive attention. Muslims are often associated with words such as “fundamentalism” or “terrorism,” when being described in the media, while this is not the case for other religions.<sup>401</sup> These terms may be applicable for Wahhabi Islam but are not for the majority of Muslims.

Denmark has implemented a “ghetto plan” to try and rid the nation of these exposed areas. These ghettos are identified by the government through residents’ income, employment status, education levels, number of criminal convictions, and “non-Western background.” This plan includes people being labeled “ghetto parents” and “ghetto children” if they reside in certain neighborhoods. “Ghetto children” are required to spend at least 25 hours a week away from their families, which does not include naps, where they receive mandatory teachings about “Danish values” including holidays like Christmas and Easter, and the Danish language. If parents do not comply with this, they risk losing their welfare payments.

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<sup>396</sup> Yalda Hakim, “[How Sweden became an exporter of jihad](#),” BBC, last modified October 2016.

<sup>397</sup> “[Thirty percent of Swedes drop out of high school](#),” The Local SE, last modified June 12, 2012.

<sup>398</sup> Linus Gustafsson and Magnus Ranstorp, “[Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#),” *Swedish Defense University* (2017): 5.

<sup>399</sup> Yalda Hakim, “[How Sweden became an exporter of jihad](#),” BBC, last modified October 2016.

<sup>400</sup> Linus Gustafsson and Magnus Ranstorp, “[Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#),” *Swedish Defense University* (2017): 84.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>402</sup> “[Muslim Immigrants in Finland](#),” FIIA, last modified 2008

Other parts of this plan include allowing courts to give double the punishments for certain crimes committed in these areas and potential prisons sentences for parents who have their kids make extended visits to their country of origin as it may disrupt their “schooling, language and well-being.” These measures further marginalize people and threaten the Muslim populations in these areas.<sup>402</sup>

Prisons are commonly known as being a place for people to radicalize. The Nordic model for prisons has been effective in that they have a relatively low rate of people who return.<sup>403</sup> These prisons aim to treat their prisoners as people and are careful to avoid tactics that dehumanize them. They are heavily focused rehabilitation. Even the workers in the prisons serve a dual role as enforcers and social workers, balancing regulating the prisoner’s behaviors with preparation for re-entry into society. The Netherlands also has extremely low incarceration rates, where they have actually been closing prisons because they have remained so empty.<sup>404</sup> However, the demographics within these prisons are unknown. One explanation is that they may not be keeping the demographic information is that these nations are much newer to mass immigration than nations like the United States and the United Kingdom, therefore there are not as many discussions surrounding race and racism.<sup>405</sup> However, foreign prisoners make up 17.1% of Finland’s prison population 19.1% of the Netherlands’, 22.1% of Sweden’s, 28.6% of Denmark’s, and 30.9% of Norway’s.<sup>406</sup> Because of its unique prison systems, lack of demographics, and substantial amount of foreigners in their prison system, it is unclear the extent of radicalization that happens within these prisons.

A major psychological factor of why people join ISIL is a person’s quest for significance. ISIL promises glory and significance when fighting for their cause. People who feel rejected, victimized, or disrespected are often motivated to restore their sense of self-worth and meaning. ISIL’s ideological message of the glory and importance of the caliphate may then be enticing to people seeking self-worth and acceptance.<sup>407</sup> Muslims who are marginalized in Scandinavian societies and the Netherlands likely have feelings of rejection and this could motivate them to seek significance and self-worth. When targeted by recruiters, these people may be more likely to join ISIL. Experiencing marginalization within society also causes many people to resent the country they reside in. Data shows that 75% of the foreign fighters are Swedish citizens, and 34% are born in Sweden. A lot of these foreign fighters are not ethnically

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<sup>402</sup> Ellen Barry and Martin Selsoe Sorensen, “[In Denmark, Harsh New Laws for Immigrant ‘Ghettos.’](#)” New York Times, last modified July 1, 2018

<sup>403</sup> Zeeshan Aleem, “[Sweden’s Remarkable Prison System Has Done What the U.S. Won’t Even Consider.](#)” Mic, last modified January 27, 2015.

<sup>404</sup> Danielle Batist, “[How the Dutch Are Closing Their Prisons.](#)” U.S. News, last modified May 13, 2019

<sup>405</sup> Lee Roden, “[Why Sweden doesn’t keep stats on ethnicity and crime.](#)” The Local SE, last modified May 8, 2018.

<sup>406</sup> “[World Prison Brief Data.](#)” World Prison Brief, last accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>407</sup> Katarzyna Jasko et al., “[ISIS: Its History Ideology, and Psychology.](#)” *Cham Springer* (April 2018): 24-26.

Swedish and are often multi-ethnic, with at least one parent originating from outside of Sweden.<sup>408</sup> These people are marginalized in a country where they are from, which leads them to seek acceptance and significance elsewhere. There are people who are born in these nations, being the child of immigrants, and end up joining ISIL saying they feel no allegiance to their countries.<sup>409</sup>

Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway take approaches to prevent radicalization by implementing ways for different sectors to communicate with each other in order to catch the signs of early radicalization. They use both local and regional actors to help detect signs of radicalization, such as police, municipalities, and psychiatry. These countries have recognized that Islamic extremism and propaganda have become an increasing issue in their nations, especially with the accessibility to propaganda from Islamic extremist groups, like ISIL. These nations are also recognizing they have a problem regarding what to do with ISIL returnees who had traveled to combat zones in Iraq and Syria.<sup>410</sup> Recently in Norway, there have been public controversies regarding what to do with returnees.<sup>411</sup>

These Scandinavian countries believe that all forms of extremism (left, right, and Islamic) can be prevented using the same measures and methods. Denmark and Norway use primarily civil society organizations to promote inclusion and resilience while Finland and Sweden use civil society organizations more actively to directly target those at risk in extremist environments. All these nations put an emphasis on early prevention by putting an emphasis on democracy and education.<sup>412</sup> They also take measures to prevent extremist propaganda and hate speech through promoting democratic ideals, in hopes of making youth critical of ideas and resilient to propaganda. Denmark has a special unit that identifies extremism material online and maps extremist activities.<sup>413</sup> Similarly, the Swedish Defense Research Agency also tracks and analyzes propaganda.<sup>414</sup> All of these nations also aim to make the prevention hate crimes a top priority. In addition, all these nations promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences through central international networks.<sup>415</sup>

The Netherlands policy focuses on fostering the integration of Muslim populations by introducing anti-discrimination measures for combatting Islamophobia and encouraging social and political

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<sup>408</sup> Linus Gustafsson and Magnus Ranstorp, "[Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq](#)," *Swedish Defense University* (2017): 6.

<sup>409</sup> "[Denmark 'high on ISIS's list': Danish Jihadist](#)," *The Local DK*, August 2014.

<sup>410</sup> "[EFFORTS TO PREVENT EXTREMISM IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES MAPPING](#)," *Ramboll* (December 2017): 5-6.

<sup>411</sup> Henrik Pryser Libell, "[ISIS Wife's Return to Norway Divides Government](#)," *New York Times*, last modified January 24, 2020

<sup>412</sup> "[EFFORTS TO PREVENT EXTREMISM IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES MAPPING](#)," *Ramboll* (December 2017): 10.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-35.

<sup>414</sup> "[EFFORTS TO PREVENT EXTREMISM IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES MAPPING](#)," *Ramboll* (December 2017): 48.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

participation, increasing the Muslim populations resilience to radicalization by supporting Muslim associations with a moderate message, and isolating and combating radicalization by setting up support systems by supporting ‘at risk’ individuals.<sup>416</sup> In this sense, the Netherlands has similar approaches to the Scandinavian countries. The Netherlands, however, in other ways seems stricter and less tolerant. In October of 2013, the Netherlands actually became the first European country to sentence two people on the verge of joining the war effort in Syria.<sup>417</sup> Netherlands had previously made it illegal to go abroad in training camps, something that was not made illegal in Sweden until 2016.<sup>418</sup> The judge decided that they were guilty of more than just training and found them guilty of “preparing to commit murder, planning arson or explosions and adhering to jihadist ideas.”<sup>419</sup>

Various human rights organizations have criticized the Netherlands on these policies due to its length of pre-charge or pre-trial detention, severity of sentences, and infringements on freedom of speech. The Netherlands approaches preventing radicalization through their administrative measures. Instead of focusing on early prevention, they conduct frequent identity checks, focus efforts on border control especially around “high risk areas”, freezing assets and dissolving organizations, and deportations.<sup>420</sup> Although their administrative approaches are tougher than the Scandinavian’s, the Netherlands does have early detection and prevention measures in place as well. They were the first nation in Europe to contemplate a more comprehensive approach to address radicalization which is nearly identical to preventative approaches in the Nordic countries.<sup>421</sup>

When observing all of the statistics, these nations are rated among the happiest, safest, most equal, and most economically and politically stable in the world. For these reasons, it seems extremely uncharacteristic for these countries to provide high number of ISIL fighters in proportion to the size of their Muslim populations. Statistics reveal that the radicalization of Muslims in Scandinavia and the Netherlands is not due to lack of democracy or economic instability in the region. The cause of radicalization seems to be multi causal; a combination of the segregation of the Muslim community, recruitment targeting, psychological reasons, ISIL ideology and the negative perception of Islam, especially in the media and education. All of these factors make Muslims in these nations particularly susceptible to radicalization. Regardless of efforts to prevent radicalization, these nations are still experiencing increasing threats of terrorism, therefore, it is clear their policies should be revisited.

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<sup>416</sup> Francesco Ragazzi, “[Towards ‘Policed Multiculturalism’? Counter-radicalization in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.](#)” *Les Etudes du CERI* (2014): 7.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

<sup>418</sup> Yalda Hakim, “[How Sweden became an exporter of jihad.](#)” BBC, last modified October 2016.

<sup>419</sup> Francesco Ragazzi, “[Towards ‘Policed Multiculturalism’? Counter-radicalization in France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.](#)” *Les Etudes du CERI* (2014): 20.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-27.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Finland's Ministry of the Interior provided an assessment of their action plan saying there needs to be more focus on distribution of information and better communication between actors.<sup>422</sup> Along with the criticisms of the human rights aspects of Netherlands policies and the continued segregation, lack of knowledge, and general "othering" of the Muslim population, it is clear these policies need to be revisited.

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<sup>422</sup> [“Assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention of Violent Radicalisation and Extremism by the Ministry of the Interior,”](#) *Ministry of the Interior-Finland* (2019):15.

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## UNITED KINGDOM

*Hannah Reilly*

4.4% of the U.K.'s population is Sunni Muslim, large for Europe. 900 Sunni Muslims of fighting age from the U.K. have joined ISIL, 0.06% of the population.<sup>423</sup> Large cities like London and Birmingham are diverse, but have neighborhoods that are almost completely Muslim, places termed "Muslim ghettos" because some these residences are subsidized by the state. 28% of British Muslims live in subsidized housing. Divided societies with large Muslim minorities are believed to be centers for radicalization. Stigmatization of the large minority Muslim population creates a higher likelihood of radicalization among Muslims.<sup>424</sup> Most British ISIL recruits are second or third generation immigrants, uniquely aware of the alienation and inequality they face.<sup>425</sup> Radicalization in the U.K. is caused by the susceptibility of Muslim prisoners to radicalization, segregation, fueled by misinformative media and institutionalized discrimination, and ISIL's targeted social media campaign to recruit members

There are an estimated 30 British ISIL fighters detained in camps in Iraq and Syria, a confounding number as 900 foreign fighters haled from the country.<sup>426</sup> The U.K. has yet to address them and is not inclined to repatriate them. Britain does not have legislation under which these foreign fighters could be prosecuted and fears a public backlash. If U.K. authorities do not address the issue and begin to repatriate their citizens, the former ISIL fighters and their children could become more radicalized as they are detained with people of varying degrees of radicalization. In Camp Bucca, a similar situation spread radical ideology allowing ISIL to become a powerful force.<sup>427</sup> Without action from the U.K., Britons will be executed under Iraq and Syrian laws.<sup>428</sup> Executions abroad due to the U.K.'s lack of policy, would lead to a sense of injustice amongst Muslims and could fuel radicalization.

In 2019, 16% of the British prison population was Muslim, while 4.4% of the general population identified as such. 84% of the prison population is under the age 50, meaning that Muslims detained are the age demographic most commonly joining ISIL. Adding to the issue, 64% of U.K. prisons are

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<sup>423</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>424</sup> Efraim Benmelech and Esteban F. Klor, "[What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?](#)," *NBER Working Paper Series* (April 2016): 11.

<sup>425</sup> Gulfer Ulas, "[Female Radicalisation: Why do women join ISIS?](#)," *LSE Middle East Center Blog* August 15, 2019.

<sup>426</sup> Dan Sabbagh, "[Thirty Britons believed to be among Isis fighters held in Syria.](#)," *The Guardian*, Dec. 6, 2019.

<sup>427</sup> Julia Rushchenko, "Terrorist recruitment and prison radicalization: Assessing the UK experiment of 'separation centres,'" *European Journal of Criminology* 16 (February 22, 2019).

<sup>428</sup> Joana Cook and Gina Vale, "[From Daesh to 'Diaspora' II: The Challenges Posed by Women and Minors After the Fall of the Caliphate.](#)," *CTC Sentinel* 12, no. 6 (July 2019).

overcrowded, creating a greater chance of radicalization.<sup>429</sup> Prisons are known to be centers for radicalization, and the disproportionate number of Muslims detained can feed feelings of discrimination.

British Muslims already experience discrimination, and negative stereotypes are held against them.<sup>430</sup> Muslims are accused of taking advantage of the U.K.'s social welfare system and of refusing to integrate.<sup>431</sup> As Muslims pick up on the stereotypes, they become metastereotypes. This causes mutual distrust between Muslims and non-Muslims, and makes integration of Muslims into society even more difficult. This creates a cycle in which Muslims have trouble being accepted into society and potentially become radicalized. The impediment to Muslim integration is fueled in part by Islamophobia perpetuated by the media.<sup>432</sup>

Housing is a large barrier to integration; Muslims are more likely to experience poor housing conditions than non-Muslims; 46% of English Muslims live in 10% of the most disadvantaged areas in the country.<sup>433</sup> This is due to poverty, but also redlining. Asylum seekers have not had normal access to state benefits, including housing, since the 1990s. Since 2000, asylum seekers have been moved to less desirable areas, leading to poorer economic opportunities and reduced social interaction.<sup>434</sup> Stereotypes of Muslims taking advantage of social housing are rampant, but between 2007 and 2015, 93% of all new leases for subsidized housing in England and Wales went to British subjects. Of the remaining 7%, only 3% of leases went to people from countries outside of the European Economic Area.<sup>435</sup> While Muslims are accused of refusing to integrate and of taking advantage of social welfare, they are systematically barred from integrating and do not use social welfare resources as much as other groups.

The U.K. has a large economy with only 3.8% unemployment in 2019.<sup>436</sup> but there are significant wage gaps along ethnic lines.<sup>437</sup> In 2018, ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshis (who are majority Sunni Muslim) had the lowest median hourly pay.<sup>438</sup> Economic inequality is a driver of radicalization. In Europe, the wealth and political freedom of a country positively influences the relative number of foreign

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<sup>429</sup>Georgina Sturge, "[UK Prison Population Statistics](#)" (2019), 9-12.

<sup>430</sup> Willem Koomen, and Joop van der Pligt, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>431</sup> "[Our Shared British Future: Muslims and Integration in the UK](#)," The Muslim Council of Britain (2018), 30-31

<sup>432</sup>*Ibid.*, 68-69.

<sup>433</sup> "[British Muslims in Numbers](#)," Muslim Council of Britain, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>434</sup> "Our Shared British Future" 65-66.

<sup>435</sup> Dawn Foster, "[Who lives in the 4.1m social homes in England and Wales?](#)" *The Guardian*, November 18, (2015).

<sup>436</sup> "[Unemployment](#)," Office for National Statistics, January 21, 2020.

<sup>437</sup> "[Young Muslims in the UK face enormous social mobility barriers](#)," *Social Mobility Commission*, September 7, 2017.

<sup>438</sup>Tom Evans, "[Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018](#)," *Office for National Statistics*. Last modified July 9, 2019.

fighters.<sup>439</sup> Strong social welfare is not conducive to preventing radicalization if the Muslim minority does not enjoy those privileges, as is the case in the U.K.

High GDP and HDI are correlate to the number foreign fighters because education and political freedom allow people to become more politically aware and active.<sup>440</sup> Some may adopt radical positions with this access. In contrast, impoverished people do not have the resources to become involved in radical ideology. Minorities operating within the middle class are able to compare themselves to non-Muslims in similar socioeconomic positions and identify their mistreatment in comparison to their counter parts. Most foreign fighters from Western countries have been middle class.<sup>441</sup> However, most Muslims in the U.K. are not middleclass, so although the U.K. is a relatively economically and politically stable country, it is more likely that radical Muslims in the are responding to inequality and discrimination.

Muslims in the U.K. experience lower wages, a higher poverty rate, and are more likely to experience poor housing. Young Muslims face employment discrimination although young ethnic Pakistani and Bangladeshis are more likely to receive a university education than other groups. Despite this, only 19.8% of the Muslim population between age 16 and 74 have full time employment.<sup>442</sup> The age discriminated against overlaps with those of fighting age. Muslims report stereotyping and a lack of Muslim role models at school. They also report feeling discriminated against in the labor market and those in the workforce report a lack of cultural understanding.<sup>443</sup> These factors isolate Muslim communities and stop them from advancing socially, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and stereotyping.

The media perpetuates negative stereotypes about Islam which has a major influence as 64% of the British public receive their information about Islam through the media. The majority of Brits view Islam as a threat, with 37% reporting they would support a political party which would reduce the Muslim population. Furthermore, 31% of children agree that Muslims are “taking over” England.<sup>444</sup>

ISIL targets European countries to recruit foreign fighters, exploiting the isolation, discrimination, and lack integration felt by Muslims.<sup>445</sup> ISIL is particularly hostile towards the U.K. because as part of the coalition forces, it entered the Middle East in 2003, a decision regarded by ISIL as Western imperialism. A perpetrator of the 2005 London bombings stated that British civilians were targets of attacks due to the actions of their government.<sup>446</sup> Muslims who feel unaccepted can be at risk of

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<sup>439</sup> Benmelech and Klor, "What Explains the Flow."

<sup>440</sup> Koomen and van der Pligt, *The Psychology of Radicalization*.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>442</sup> "Young Muslims in the UK."

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>444</sup> "Our Shared British Future," 73.

<sup>445</sup> Benmelech, and Klor, "What Explains the Flow."

<sup>446</sup> Koomen and van der Pligt, *The Psychology of Radicalization*, 199.

radicalization via ISIL online targeting particularly through propaganda appealing to injustice and social media.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>447</sup>["Countering Daesh's Propaganda,"](#) The Global Coalition Against Daesh, accessed February 29, 2020.

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## IRELAND

*Hannah Reilly*

While just 1.3% of Ireland is Muslim, 0.083% of Ireland's Sunni Muslims between the ages of 15 and 54 have joined ISIL. Although this only amounts to between 30 and 50 foreign fighters, given that Ireland has a relatively small Muslim minority population, the number is significant.<sup>448</sup> Most of its Ireland's citizens share a common ethnic identity, with Catholicism contributing to the identity of 84% of the Irish born population. As a deeply Christian nation, Ireland's laws have loose separations between church and state, which has had a mixed influence on Islam in Ireland. Irish society has a history of treating ethnic minorities unjustly. For example, protesting the construction of mosques.<sup>449</sup> While islamophobia and discrimination play a role in the radicalization of some Irish Muslims, the community's relationship with Saudi Arabia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has been most influential in radicalization.

The Irish public holds reservations about minorities, nearly half of the Irish-born adult population report that some cultures are superior than others, and 17% report that some races are less intelligent.<sup>450</sup> Attitudes of citizens of host countries affect integration; while isolation and hostility trigger radicalization, integration can mitigate these effects. This is particularly relevant to Muslims in Europe as there has been discussion of the alleged difficulty of integrating Muslims.<sup>451</sup>

Irish Muslims enjoys a different status than Muslims in other European countries; they are relatively privileged socioeconomically, and Ireland hosts no effective far-right political party with anti-immigration views.<sup>452</sup> About two thirds of Ireland's Muslims are immigrants.<sup>453</sup> However, those born in Ireland do not receive birthright citizenship.<sup>454</sup> Additionally, Muslims face negative attitudes from the Irish population; Muslims ranked 50th out of 51 groups on a social distance scale; the second least preferred group before drug addicts.<sup>455</sup> Although a general belief in a higher power correlates to more positive attitudes towards Muslims and immigrants, fundamental religious beliefs correlate to negative attitudes towards the aforementioned groups.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>449</sup> "[This is Kilkenny, not Mecca': angry opposition to mosque plan](#)," *The Irish Times*, April 13, 2018.

<sup>450</sup> Frances McGinnity et al., "[Attitudes to Diversity in Ireland](#)," Irish Human Rights Equality Commission (March 2018): 50.

<sup>451</sup> Eamonn Fahey et. al., "[Irish Attitudes to Muslim Immigrants](#)," *The Economic and Social Review* 50, no. 3 (September 30, 2019): 492.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*, 492-3.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 493.

<sup>454</sup> "[Irish Citizenship](#)," Citizens Information, accessed February 29, 2020.

<sup>455</sup> Fahey et al., "Irish Attitudes to Muslim," 495.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 497-8.

As emphasized, the Irish Muslim population is small, and ethnic Irish do not have much interaction with Muslims. Irish get most of their information about Muslims from international news and social media coverage, which is frequently negative. This means that international terrorist attacks affect attitudes toward Muslims in Ireland, though there has been no Islamist terror attack in the country.<sup>457</sup> For example, an Irish news agency published an article titled: “Many Muslims are failing to integrate into Irish society despite efforts” which warned of the dangers of ISIL, and criticized the government’s “liberal” policies regarding Islam, including allowing girls to go to school wearing a hijab or niqab. The media propagates alarmist and Islamophobic content, even though there has been no terrorist attack in Ireland since the Troubles.<sup>458</sup> Social interactions with minorities improve attitudes towards those groups and alleviate the effects of negative media. However, most Irish citizens do not interact with Muslims.<sup>459</sup> Conversely, factors such as a university education contribute to more positive views of Islam.<sup>460</sup> Additionally, during times when the Irish economy was strong, views towards immigration were more positive.<sup>461</sup>

Islam was introduced to Ireland due to the immigration of middle-class Muslims from Islamic nations, who came to Ireland for educational opportunities in the medical field in the 1950s. The most common profession for Irish Muslims in 2016 was that of medical practitioner.<sup>462</sup> During the same period, Egypt imprisoned members of the Muslim Brotherhood, a movement with the goal of unifying Islam, because an assassination attempt on Egyptian leader was believed to have been planned by Brotherhood leaders.<sup>463</sup> The Egyptian government’s persecution of the Brotherhood ignited immigration to Europe. These immigrants studied in Europe and established themselves there. Throughout the 1960s, members of the Brotherhood created Muslim communities in Ireland.<sup>464</sup> As they looked to create community structures, the Dublin Islamic Society prioritized the construction of mosques. Construction needed funding so members of the society concentrated on foreign embassies in London in 1972. The Saudi Arabian Embassy and its diplomat, Salem Azzam, contributed most to the project. This began the relationship between Irish Muslims in Ireland and Saudi Arabia.<sup>465</sup> A Wahabi nation Saudi Arabia, financed the first mosque in Ireland in order to expand their influence in Europe. Saudi Arabia not only

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<sup>457</sup> Ibid., 498.

<sup>458</sup> John Spain, "[Many Muslims are failing to integrate into Irish society despite efforts](#)," *Irish Central*, January 15, 2015.

<sup>459</sup> Fahey et al., "Irish Attitudes to Muslim," 498.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 508.

<sup>461</sup> McGinnity et al., "Attitudes to Diversity," 49.

<sup>462</sup> "[Census of Population 2016 – Profile 8 Irish Travellers, Ethnicity and Religion](#)," Central Statistics Office, last modified, 2019.

<sup>463</sup> Bryony Jones and Susannah Cullinane, "[What is the Muslim Brotherhood?](#)" *CNN*, July 3, 2013.

<sup>464</sup> Adil Hussain Khan, "[Political Islam in Ireland and the Role of Muslim Brotherhood Networks](#)," In *Muslims in Ireland: Past and Present*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 91-93.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid., 94.

financed the mosque but the Islamic Council of Europe established by Azzam, provided the mosque with a monthly religious speaker.<sup>466</sup> The Irish government's support of religious education aided the spread of the Wahhabism which was accepted by Irish Muslims at the time due to the lack of formal religious outlets.

Concerns still exist about Islamist groups inciting radicalization still exist within Ireland. There have been reports of radical guest speakers at Irish mosques as late as 2018.<sup>467</sup> Irish imams have warned about radical teachings in mosques, and an Irish Islamic cleric called for Islamic leadership to condemn "hate narratives" and to provide alternatives.<sup>468</sup> In addition to the presence of Wahabism in Ireland, discrimination and prejudice against Muslims are factors in the radicalization of Ireland's Muslim minority population.

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<sup>466</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>467</sup> Orla Ryan, "[I want to join ISIS': How big a problem is radicalisation in Ireland?](#)" *The Journal.ie*, Mar. 15, 2018.

<sup>468</sup> "[Ireland: Extremism and Counter Extremism.](#)" Counter Extremism Project, October 17, 2019.

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## FRANCE

### *Olympia Hunt*

France has a significant role in the history and ongoing struggle against terrorism. Terrorism was originally coined in reference to the 1793-94 French ‘Reign of Terror’, however, France has sufficient modern examples of terrorist activity within its borders.<sup>469</sup> France is the largest exporter of ISIL fighters in Europe, and the country has the highest population percentage of Sunni Muslims in Europe (9%).<sup>470</sup> The French government has applied strong security and legislative force to combat terrorist activity, however, these efforts have been criticized by domestic and international human rights experts. Complex socioeconomic factors and severe marginalization of minority groups within the French population has led to disproportionate incarceration, police brutality, political discrimination, and stigmatization - all of which are contributing factors to the vulnerability of minority individuals to ISIL recruitment.

ISIL’s recruitment of fighters from France has exploited marginalization and lack of integration into the greater society. In December 2004, a 1,600-page manifesto was published online entitled, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*.<sup>471</sup> This work, authored by Abu Masab, identified Europe as the focus target for battle with the West and further identified the “poorly integrated” younger generation of Muslims as the vehicle of violence against Europe.<sup>472</sup> While other terrorist leaders and organizations, such as Osama Bin Laden of al-Qaeda, have had top-down chain of command approaches built on centralized leadership, groups such as ISIL have taken advantage of social media as a communication platform, while exploiting ethnic isolation, discrimination, incarceration, and socioeconomic disparity to support their recruitment.<sup>473</sup> ISIL has specifically identified France as a “main enemy” when calling for retaliation against Western countries fighting ISIL.<sup>474</sup> It is this European focus paired with the network-based organization of ISIL, using vehicles of social media, economic disparity, and prison-systems, that makes Europe, namely France, a case study of increased significance.

Many Muslims fled to France as a result of the 1954-1962 Algerian War, and settled in suburbs on the outskirts of the city called “banlieues.” The tangible separation and containment of Muslim immigrants in these banlieues perpetuated limited opportunities and discrimination within the broader cultural French landscape. Capitalizing on this “poorly integrated” second generation of Muslim

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<sup>469</sup> "[The History of the Word 'Terrorism'](#)," Merriam-Webster, 2020.

<sup>470</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>471</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, 10.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., XI, XII, 33, 137.

<sup>474</sup> Alissa J. Rubin and Aurelien Breeden, "[ISIS Claims Truck Attacker in France was its 'Soldier'](#)," The New York Times, July 16, 2016.

immigrants in Europe, ISIL recruiters purposefully sought out these vulnerable individuals that felt victimized and discriminated against. It is this foundation of victimhood that has proved to be more successful in ISIL recruitment than prior knowledge of Islam.<sup>475</sup>

The 2015 Paris Attacks had significant, and extended, effects on government and public perception. The series of terrorist incidents conducted in November 2015 targeted a football match at the Stade de France, an Eagles of Death Metal concert at the Bataclan theatre, and multiple eateries. ISIL claimed responsibility for The Paris Attacks that killed 131 victims.<sup>476</sup> The 131<sup>st</sup> victim of the attacks was officially recognized as a victim of the attacks despite his passing two years after the attack due to suicide, a representation of the enduring trauma sustained in public memory.<sup>477</sup>

In the wake of the 2015 terrorist attacks, the French government adopted a state of emergency.<sup>478</sup> The state of emergency was extended six times, operating for over two years.<sup>479</sup> The length of extension was considered by many to be an encroachment on human rights.<sup>480</sup> The extended state of emergency resulted in accounts of unlawful profiling and unannounced search and seizure, based solely on potential “threat.”<sup>481</sup> Under the provisions of a state of emergency, authorities are able to conduct ‘administrative searches’ that do not require judicial approval or support.<sup>482</sup> Within ten days of the November 14, 2015 attacks, over 1,200 searches and 260 house arrests were conducted.<sup>483</sup> Within a year, over 4,000 administrative searches were conducted.<sup>484</sup> However, from these extensive and sweeping investigations, only 7% of the administrative searches resulted in judicial proceedings.<sup>485</sup> Nevertheless, in the months after the attacks, 79% of French people still supported the state of emergency and its extension.<sup>486</sup> In the wake of the attacks, some politicians even called for the creation of “anti-terrorist internment centers.”<sup>487</sup> In a French survey, 74% of respondents supported imprisonment of individuals on the grounds of

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<sup>475</sup> Andrew W. Terrill, "[Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West](#)," *Parameters* 48, no. 2, (Summer 2018).

<sup>476</sup> CNN Editorial Research, "[2015 Paris Terror Attacks Fast Facts](#)," Cable News Network, last modified November 13, 2019.

<sup>477</sup> "[Bataclan Survivor Commits Suicide Two Years After Terror Attack](#)," The Local Fr, last modified November 27, 2017.

<sup>478</sup> "[Le Parlement Vote La Prolongation De L'État D'Urgence En France](#)," France 24, last modified July 6, 2017.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Marco Perolini, "[France's permanent state of emergency](#)," Amnesty International, September 26, 2017.

<sup>482</sup> Robert Zaretsky, "[France's Perpetual State of Emergency](#)," Foreign Policy, The Slate Group, July 16, 2016.

<sup>483</sup> Emmanuel Blanchard, "[État d'urgence et spectres de la guerre d'Algérie](#)," La Vie des idées, February 16, 2016.

<sup>484</sup> Robert Zaretsky, "[France's Perpetual State of Emergency](#)," Foreign Policy, The Slate Group, July 16, 2016.

<sup>484</sup> "[UN rights experts urge France to protect fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism](#)," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, OHCHR, January 19, 2016.

<sup>485</sup> Timothée Vilars, "[Etat d'urgence prolongé pour la 3e fois : contre le terrorisme ou pour l'ordre public ?](#)," L'obs, May 18, 2016.

<sup>486</sup> Jérôme Fourquet, "[79% des Français favorables à une prolongation de l'état d'urgence](#)," Atlantico.Fr., January 30, 2016.

<sup>487</sup> Emmanuel Blanchard, "[État d'urgence et spectres de la guerre d'Algérie](#)," La Vie des idées, February 16, 2016.

suspected terrorism.<sup>488</sup> While these ‘administrative searches’ were arguably the most utilized power under the state of emergency, additional powers available under this umbrella included implementation of curfews, house arrests, and suppression of public expression.<sup>489</sup>

A new counterterrorism law came into force on November 1, 2017, ending the state of emergency.<sup>490</sup> However, a United Nations Special Rapporteur expressed concern regarding the law’s encroachment on religious liberty, given the power to control mosque operations and the perceived institutional stigmatization of the Muslim community as a “suspect community.”<sup>491</sup> The power exercised by the French government under the umbrella of the state of emergency, and the resulting counterterrorism law, have attracted examination and raised voices citing discrimination against the Muslim community in France, stigmatizing and further marginalizing an already ostracized community.<sup>492</sup> It is the *normalization* of these emergency powers that is particularly concerning to the Human Rights Community.<sup>493</sup> In 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, raised concern regarding France’s approach to counterterrorism regarding human rights.<sup>494</sup>

Despite the concern raised by international human rights experts, in a survey of French individuals, 84% were willing to accept greater limitations and controls of their freedom in the name of security.<sup>495</sup> Additionally, the majority of respondents had confidence in French intelligence and law enforcement to combat terrorism, with 87% stating trust in French security forces.<sup>496</sup> These statistics indicate division within civic society regarding the debate between counterterrorism security efforts and protection of individual liberties and human rights.

It is widely agreed upon that unemployment provides vulnerability to radicalization, and Muslims in France are more likely to be denied job opportunities. When applying to job opportunities Muslims

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<sup>488</sup> Albert Zennou, “[Les Français prêts à restreindre leurs libertés pour plus de sécurité](#),” Le Figaro.Fr., November 17, 2015.

<sup>489</sup> Robert Zaretsky, “[France’s Perpetual State of Emergency](#),” Foreign Policy, The Slate Group, July 16, 2016.

<sup>490</sup> “[France: UN expert says new terrorism laws may undermine fundamental rights and freedoms](#),” United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, OHCHR, May 23, 2018.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Marco Perolini, “[France’s permanent state of emergency](#),” Amnesty International, September 26, 2017.

“[France: New terrorism laws may undercut human rights and freedoms, says UN expert](#),” UN News, United Nations, May 25, 2018.

<sup>493</sup> “[France must bring counter-terrorism law in line with international rights obligations – UN experts](#),” UN News, United Nations, September 27, 2017.

<sup>494</sup> Jean-Yves Le Drian, “[Letter by the High Commissioner to the Foreign Minister](#),” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Human Rights Council, August 7, 2018.

<sup>495</sup> Albert Zennou, “[Les Français prêts à restreindre leurs libertés pour plus de sécurité](#),” Le Figaro.Fr., November 17, 2015.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

must apply to twice as many job openings as Christian applicants.<sup>497</sup> Additionally, the rate at which Muslim applicants are called back following application is 6.7% lower than Christian applicants.<sup>498</sup> This systematic racial profiling reinforces and perpetuates stigmatization and discrimination, thus leading to increased radicalization.

There is also a large disparity between religious distribution of incarceration in France. Sunni Muslims make up to 9% of the general French population, however, some estimate that Muslims make up 50-60% of inmates in the French prison system.<sup>499</sup> This unequal distribution raises concern regarding institutional and state endorsed profiling. There are fears, and examples, of terrorists radicalizing other non-radicalized prisoners.<sup>500</sup> A leading French and Tunisian ISIL and former al Qaeda jihadist, spoke out about the role of French prisons in the Jihadist terrorist network, citing that it was a “marvelous gateway” for recruiting young fighters.<sup>501</sup>

France has experimented and invested in deradicalization programs within its prison systems. In an attempt to reduce additional radicalization in prisons, France tested an approach of isolating radicalized prisoners from the general incarcerated population.<sup>502</sup> However, the approach was abandoned following concerns that it was having its opposite intended effect by actually introducing and connecting radicalized individuals, thus strengthening terrorist networks and communications.<sup>503</sup>

Additionally, the French government sought to institute preventative measures through the creation of a deradicalization center for at-risk individuals. The center was in rural, central France and the programming took a strong stance to impose traditional French culture and replace all religious ideology with secularism.<sup>504</sup> All participation was voluntary, rendering the approach of total ideology replacement uninviting and unsuccessful. The program lasted only 5 months, cost 2.5 million euros, and failed to deradicalize a single ‘at-risk’ participant.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Marie-Anne Valfort, “[Has France a Problem with Muslims? Evidence from a Field Experiment in the Labour Market](#),” IZA/CREST/OECD Workshop, Paris School of Economics - Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne University, July 2, 2017, 3.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>499</sup> “[Europe’s Growing Muslim Population](#),” Pew Research Center, November 29, 2017.

Molly Moore, “[In France, Prisons Filled with Muslims](#),” The Washington Post, April 29, 2008.

<sup>500</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, 32. Adam Plowright, “[Wanted Dead, Not Alive: France's Approach to French Jihadists](#),” The Local Fr., October 18, 2017.

<sup>501</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Terror in France: The Rise of Jihad in the West*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017, 31.

<sup>502</sup> Noemie Bisserbe, “[French Prisons to Stop Segregating Islamist Inmates](#),” The Wall Street Journal, October 25, 2016.

<sup>503</sup> Noemie Bisserbe, “[French Prisons to Stop Segregating Islamist Inmates](#),” The Wall Street Journal, October 25, 2016.

<sup>504</sup> Elena Souris and Spandana Singh, “[Want to Deradicalize Terrorists? Treat Them Like Everyone Else.](#),” Foreign Policy, November 23, 2018.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

France is a particularly high-stake situation regarding ISIL's presence in Europe due to its influential position and traumatized population, both religious and secular, from the significant attacks that have occurred in recent years. Despite government efforts and investment in counterterrorism and deradicalization solutions, the outcomes have either been ultimately unsuccessful or posed severe encroachment on personal liberty and religious freedoms in the name of security. To find a sustainable solution to this struggle, France will have to strike a balance between implementing sufficient security measures, while not further ostracizing and stigmatizing its minority communities.

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Stéphanie Fillion, "[What we can learn from France's failed deradicalization center](#)," La Stampa, last modified June 19, 2019.

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## BELGIUM

*Olympia Hunt*

Belgium confronts similar realities to France regarding terrorist radicalization. In 2016, a series of suicide bombings targeted the Brussels Airport and a metro station in central Brussels.<sup>506</sup> In Belgium, Muslims make up 5% of the general population, and of that percentage, 0.2% have joined ISIL - a much higher percentage than France (0.06%), although still a fraction of the greater community.<sup>507</sup> In fact, with 0.2% of the country's Sunni Muslim population joining ISIL, Belgium has the highest rate of ISIL recruitment in Europe. This vulnerability to radicalization in Belgium's Muslims communities is evident through the separation of its suburbs, vulnerabilities within its prison systems, and influences in religious institutions.

Belgium has visible religious segregation, and the Brussels suburb of Molenbeek highlights this separation. Charles Michel, Former Prime Minister of Belgium, commented regarding terrorism in Belgium that, "Almost every time, there is a link to Molenbeek".<sup>508</sup> This suburb has been likened to an incubator for radicalization, and there are region-specific statistics that suggest support for that argument.<sup>509</sup> While the average population density in Belgium is 363 people per square kilometer, in Molenbeek the population density is 16,401 people per square kilometer.<sup>510</sup> Furthermore, the average unemployment rate in Belgium is 7.9%, whereas the unemployment in Molenbeek is 27.2%, highlighting a common pairing of regional economic disparity with vulnerability to radicalization.<sup>511</sup>

Prison systems provide an additional avenue of radicalization in Belgium. According to French State Security, almost 5% of prisoners in Belgium contribute in some way to the threat of radicalization.<sup>512</sup> A 2015 United Nations report identified that terrorist recruitment in Belgium is predominantly relationship-based – conducted chiefly through a combination of social media and community networks of friends and family.<sup>513</sup> The network of religious institutions fits within this community framework, and has been a subject of attention to Belgium authorities. In a counterterrorism

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<sup>506</sup> ["Brussels explosions: What we know about airport and metro attacks,"](#) BBC News, last modified April 9, 2016.

<sup>507</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>508</sup> ["Paris Attack Probe Turns to Belgium's 'Islamist Pit Stop' of Molenbeek,"](#) France 24, last modified November 16, 2015.

<sup>509</sup> Valentina Pop, ["Brussels Neighborhood Struggles to Break Ties to Terrorism,"](#) The Wall Street Journal, last modified February 8, 2018.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> J. La, ["Il y a 450 Radicalisés En Prison: Le Problème Se Pose Surtout Du Côté Francophone,"](#) La Libre.be, January 26, 2017.

<sup>513</sup> Jean-Marc Ferré, ["With High Number of Foreign Fighters in Belgium, UN Experts Call for Robust Action to Address Risks,"](#) UN News, United Nations, October 16, 2015.

effort to limit foreign influence via religious institutions, Belgium terminated Saudi Arabia's lease of the Grand Mosque of Brussels in 2018.<sup>514</sup> Saudi Arabia had been managing and controlling Brussels' largest Mosque rent-free for nearly a century, but in an effort to reduce "foreign interference" regarding Islamic teachings in Belgium, officials sought to end the agreement.<sup>515</sup>

Belgian Muslims are tangibly separated from the rest of society and are, as a result, subject to higher rates of unemployment and risk of radicalization. As a country that has experienced ISIL terrorist attacks, it is of primary concern to contain the perpetuation and introduction of extremist ideologies within its Muslim communities, while also grappling with the significant religious segregation within its borders.

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<sup>514</sup> Alissa de Carbonnel, "[Belgium Takes Back Brussels' Grand Mosque from Saudi Government](#)," Reuters, March 16, 2018.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

## GERMANY

*Aliye Volkan*

Germany has the largest economy in Europe and is home to more than 4 million<sup>516</sup> Muslims from Turkey, the Balkans and many other places. Germany has been known for its “*Multikulti*” nature for hosting migrants from different regions and religions, as well as for accepting over 1,45million refugees mainly from Syria and Afghanistan.<sup>517</sup> There are 1,268 Germans or Islamists from Germany that travelled to join the Islamic State,<sup>518</sup> 60% of whom were either only German citizens (40%) or had dual-citizenship (20%) and the remaining 40% were not German citizens.<sup>519</sup> While the German government admits not all Salafist Muslims are inclined to violence they also have claimed that all recruits, including converts, were associated with Wahhabi-Salafist groups and by 2018 there are estimated to be 25,810 followers of Islamism or Islamist Terrorism.<sup>520</sup> These estimated high numbers show that there is a large community vulnerable to radicalization. Germany has one of the lowest unemployment rates at 3.1%.<sup>521</sup> And rights of immigrants and refugees are protected under the 2006 the General Act on Equal Treatment. Yet immigrants and refugees still face discrimination in their daily lives, at job hunt and finding a house. The reports on 20% of Germany’s prison population being foreigners is alarming as well.<sup>522</sup>

After the Second World War, Germany needed to rebuild, therefore in the early 1960s Germany invited workers from Turkey, the Balkans, North Africa, and several European countries which resulted in an increase of the Muslim population in Germany. Many of these foreign workers were viewed as ‘temporary,’ thus German Government did not make a large effort to integrate them which resulted in the social isolation of the workers’ into their own ethnic and religious communities. Next generation immigrants are still struggling to have a sense of belonging in the state due to the discrimination they face in their daily lives and even in job hunting. When applying for a job, people with ‘foreign-sounding names’ are 24% less likely to be called in for an interview and almost 46% of the unemployed population are made of non-ethnic Germans.<sup>523</sup> In the 2010s, the number of Muslim refugees increased and regardless of the German government’s efforts to promote the image of refugees as victims of war and

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<sup>516</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>517</sup> “[UNHCR Statistics - The World in Numbers](#),” UNHCR popstats.unhcr.org, last modified 2018

<sup>518</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>519</sup> Bérénice Boutin et al., “[The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies](#),” ed. Bibi van Ginkel and Eva Entenmann, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, last modified April 1, 2016, 33.

<sup>520</sup> “[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 5, 2020,

<sup>521</sup> “[Unemployment Rate \(indicator\)](#),” OECD, accessed February 28, 2020,

<sup>522</sup> Soeren Kern, “[Germany: Number of Foreign-Born Prison Inmates at Record High](#),” Gatestone Institute, February 13, 2019.

<sup>523</sup> Elizabeth Schumacher, “[Germany: ‘No Arabs Please’ Job Rejection Controversy](#),” Deutsche Welle, last modified January 16, 2020.

terror, 61% of German adults think that refugees increase the likelihood of terrorism.<sup>524</sup> In 2014 and 2015 new anti-immigrant and anti-Islam groups like The Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, and The Freital Group, emerged and started carrying out attacks on refugee shelters.<sup>525</sup> Since 2015 the number of reported hate crimes have increased to 8,113 from 3,046 by 2018 and while 1,033 of these are racist and xenophobic crimes, 148 were anti-Muslim.<sup>526</sup> Discrimination the migrants and incoming refugees face made many vulnerable to ISIL's promise of belonging.

Before the implementation of the "Mosque Tax," Muslims in Germany would have to attend to mosques funded by foreign states or privately. The Turkish Presidency for Religious Affairs has funded and staffed 900 of 3,000 German mosques while some of the rest were funded by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.<sup>527</sup> With the refugees coming from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq the demand for Arabic-speaking mosques increased and in 2015, to fill the demand for Arab mosques Saudi Arabia offered to build 200 more mosques,<sup>528</sup> but Germany declined this offer to prevent the spread of Wahhabi-Salafist ideology which all recruits were associated with. Many refugees started attending, already existing, Arabic-speaking 'mosques, and many became uncomfortable due to the excessively conservative nature of the mosques and feared being viewed as 'radicals.'<sup>529</sup> With the "Mosque Tax" in 2019, the German government put an end to the foreign funding and started the process of 'Germanizing' Islam through training imams in Germany and ensuring that they preach in German; it is also hoped to help with the integration process.<sup>530</sup>

The majority of recruits were introduced to Wahhabi-Salafism and ISIL through their friends (37%), in mosques (33%), and through propaganda messages on the internet (30%).<sup>531</sup> ISIL recruiters effectively used German-language propaganda via social media and the jihadist magazine 'Kyberbetiq' when spreading their ideology.<sup>532</sup> As a result of the propaganda, many recruits believe the idea that the Islamic State is the center of the fight for justice and jihad is a way of moral purification.<sup>533</sup> Another thing that attracted marginalized people was the idea of being assessed not for their skin color or ethnicity but

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<sup>524</sup> "[The Growth of Germany's Muslim Population](#)," Pew Research Center, last modified November 29, 2017.

<sup>525</sup> "[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 8, 2020.

<sup>526</sup> "[Hate Crime Reporting- Germany](#)," OSCE - ODIHR, accessed February 28, 2020.

<sup>527</sup> "[Muslims in Germany: Facts & Figures](#)," About Islam, last modified September 23, 2019.

<sup>528</sup> Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, "Refugee Crisis: Saudi Arabia's Offer to Build 200 Mosques in Germany for Syrian Refugees Branded 'cynical'" The Independent, last modified September 21, 2015.

<sup>529</sup> Joseph Nasr, "[Allah Is Listening](#)" - Qantara.De, Reuters, last accessed February 22, 2020

<sup>530</sup> Tobias Buck "[Berlin Moves to Cut Ties between German Muslims and Turkey](#)," Financial Times, last modified March 23, 2019.

<sup>531</sup> Arthur Ciechanowicz, "[Islamic State in Germany, Germans in Islamic State](#)," Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, April 2017, accessed February 8 2020, 11.

<sup>532</sup> "[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 8, 2020

<sup>533</sup> Arthur Ciechanowicz, "[Islamic State in Germany, Germans in Islamic State](#)," Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, April 2017, accessed February 8 2020, 9.

whether they were good Muslims or not, which provided them with a sense of belonging and acceptance.<sup>534</sup> Another way ISIL spread its ideology was through the True Religion (*Die Wahre Religion*, DWR), a Wahhabi-Salafist organization's "Lies! Read!" campaign. Through the campaign the organization handed out Qur'ans at booths set up in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. After the government found out that 140 of DWR's supporters had travelled to Syria,<sup>535</sup> the group got banned in 2016. ISIL was not only operating in the social sphere but also existed within Germany's armed forces. The Military Counterintelligence Service (*Militarischer Abschirmdienst*) investigated 300 suspected cases of Islamism and identified 24 Islamist and according to their 2016 report approximately 29 soldiers joined ISIL in Syria.<sup>536</sup>

German government's counterterrorism efforts initiated after the 9/11 attacks, with the establishment of the Joint Counter-Terrorism Center in 2004, which cooperates with 40 other internal security agencies. Later, the government introduced the Joint Internet Center in 2007 following the increase in cyber threats and an increased need to monitor Islamist terrorist networks. In 2017, the government founded the Center of Information Technology of Security Authorities to combat crime and terrorism online.<sup>537</sup> Following the Charlie Hebdo attack, Germany adopted new legislative measures such as prohibiting Islamist extremists from travelling outside Germany, expanding existing laws against terrorist financing, and creating the Network Enforcement Law to detect and censor hate speech, terrorist propaganda, and misinformation online.<sup>538</sup> In April 2019, in an attempt to deter dual citizens from joining ISIL, Germany passed a law that would strip of their German citizenship if they join foreign terrorist groups.<sup>539</sup>

Germany's efforts of Islamist deradicalization and prevention of radicalization began in 2012 with the Hayat program, a counseling hotline for people or their families involved in radical Wahhabi-Salafist groups or who were otherwise vulnerable to becoming radicalized.<sup>540</sup> With the 2014 Framework on Prevention Regarding (Wahhabi-)Salafism, the government created rehabilitation programs for returnees and deradicalization programs in prisons. The framework also provides support and advice to relatives or friends of the radicalized people.<sup>541</sup> Similarly, in 2019 the Turkish Community in Germany,

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<sup>534</sup> "[Salafist Efforts](#)," Bundesamt Für Verfassungsschutz, last accessed February 9, 2020,

<sup>535</sup> "[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed November 3, 2015.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

<sup>539</sup> Chase Winter "[Germany Approves Stripping Dual National Terrorist Fighters of Citizenship](#)," Deutsche Welle, last modified April 3, 2019.

<sup>540</sup> "[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#)," Counter Extremism Project, accessed November 3, 2015.

<sup>541</sup> B erence Boutin et al., "[The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies](#)," ed. Bibi van Ginkel and Eva Entenmann, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies*, last modified April 1, 2016, 35.

equipped with EU funding launched an online counseling service for Turkish and Arabic speakers, who are concerned about loved ones who are inclined to religious extremism.<sup>542</sup>

Germany's welfare systems in signifies the economic gains that ISIL have been promising to its recruits. However, the discrimination migrants and refugees face in their everyday lives and the feeling of alienation make some vulnerable to ISIL's propaganda of promises to have a community to belong and an opportunity start new life. Germany seems to focus on preventing the spread of ISIL ideology and de-radicalizing rather than tackling the push factors of radicalization. There are still people applying for asylum, and others trying to migrate to Germany for a better life, which puts Germany in a place where it needs to consider its citizens safety and well-being while allowing new people in the country and assisting them with their integration process.

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<sup>542</sup>[Germany: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed November 3, 2015.

## AUSTRIA

*Aliye Volkan*

Austria has one of the highest per capita rates in the European Union of foreign fighters joining ISIL, with a total of 256 of its people.<sup>543</sup> The majority of the radicalized people come from migrant or disadvantaged communities and have previously experienced racism, religious discrimination, and unemployment, while others have experienced mental health issues.<sup>544</sup> As a result of incoming ‘guest workers’ in 1964, the Bosnian War,<sup>545</sup> and the Syrian Civil War, the Muslim population today make up to 7.9% of the Austrian population,<sup>546</sup> and their religious rights are protected under the 1912 Austrian Constitution.<sup>547</sup> Even though their religious freedom is protected, Muslims still face discrimination due to their religious belief and sometimes for being migrants. Refugee groups also have concerns about finding jobs, for example, in 2015 around 75% of Syrians and 46% of Afghan refugees were unemployed.<sup>548</sup> Finding a job is not the only concern of refugees, once asylum seekers are granted asylum they have to leave the federal housing and this puts 80% of the refugees at the risk of becoming homeless.<sup>549</sup> These factors lead young refugees to feel alienated and many ISIL recruiters took advantage of their search for a community to belong and opportunities to start a new life.

With the Charlie Hebdo attack the fear from Islamist terrorism grew and led to an increase in racism towards Muslims, in 2015 there were 156 assaults recorded against Muslims, 95% of which were aimed at women for their traditional Islamic clothing.<sup>550</sup> The increase might be explained by the two right parties, the Freedom Party (FPÖ) and some members of the Austrian People Party’s (ÖVP) depiction of Islamic community as a “hotbed of fundamentalism and meeting place for peddlers of extremism.”<sup>551</sup> Another study shows that while in 2015, 43% of interviewed Austrians defined migrants as “bad” this percentage rose by 10% in 2017.<sup>552</sup> Austrians were also at the top of the list of Europeans who

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<sup>543</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>544</sup> “[Austria: Efforts to Tackle Extremism Must Balance Root Causes and Security Measures](#),” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations, last modified July 6, 2018.

<sup>545</sup> “[Islam in Austria: News and Analysis on Islam in Europe and North America](#),” Euro-Islam, accessed February 8, 2020.

<sup>546</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>547</sup> Zeynep Sezgin, “Islam and Muslim Minorities in Austria: Historical Context and Current Challenges of Integration,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20, no. 3, August 1, 2019, 873.

<sup>548</sup> “[Austria: Migrants and the Labour Market](#),” Cedefop, last modified January 23, 2018.

<sup>549</sup> “[Country Fiche – Austria](#)” FEANTSA, last modified December 2018.

<sup>550</sup> Zeynep Sezgin, “Islam and Muslim Minorities in Austria: Historical Context and Current Challenges of Integration,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20, no. 3, August 1, 2019, 800.

<sup>551</sup> Farid Hafez Miklin Reinhard Heinisch, and Eric, “[The New Right: Austria’s Freedom Party and Changing Perceptions of Islam](#),” Brookings, July 24, 2019.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

felt uncomfortable working with Muslims.<sup>553</sup> These concerns of citizens were reflected on the Austrian government, with a new policy the government decided to restrict the number of asylum applicants to “annual cap of 35,000” by 2017,<sup>554</sup> and implement new security measures that allows the government to declare a state of emergency if the inflow of asylum seekers threatens national security.<sup>555</sup>

The Wahhabi-Salafist ideology was spread into Austria through several actors. Ebu Tejma (aka Mirsad Omerovic), a Bosnian-Austrian preacher, has managed to recruit young Europeans and successfully raise funds for the terrorist group. Ebu Tejma, originally from Serbia, encountered Wahhabism for the first time through the al-Qaeda cell in a small Bosnian village, Gornja Maniaca. He later moved to Vienna and started preaching in Austria and Southern Germany.<sup>556</sup> In 2016, he received a sentence of 20 years in prison for recruiting, at least, 166 young European to ISIL. Austrian youth and Muslims were also targeted by a Germany based Wahhabi-Salafist organization, the True Religion through their “Lies! Read!” campaign, under which the organization distributed Qur’ans interpreted by Wahhabi-Salafist preachers. In order to limit further spreading of Wahhabism, in 2017, Austria adopted a ban to prohibit distribution of the Qur’an in public spaces. In 2017, two new Wahhabi organizations called “Imam” in Vienna and “Fitrah” in Graz were established. Even though both organizations denounce violence, the Austrian government is still concerned with these organizations because they potentially, “provide a breeding ground for radicalization and recruitment.”<sup>557</sup>

Austria initiated its efforts to counter radicalization and extremism in 2014 by banning ISIL and al-Qaeda symbols and detaining 28 people for membership of a terrorist organization. By 2017, this number increased to 68 people.<sup>558</sup> In the same year, the government passed the National Act which allowed Austrian government to strip dual nationals of their Austrian citizenship if they voluntarily join an armed group and engage in hostilities abroad. Following the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris, the government allocated \$335 million to fight terrorism.<sup>559</sup> The Ministry of Justice established a task force to design deradicalization programs for prisoners and train them for resocialization when they are released.<sup>560</sup> There were special training sessions implemented for prison guards and deradicalization counsels with the assistance of the non-governmental organization Initiative for Societal Cohesion and

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<sup>553</sup> Zeynep Sezgin, “Islam and Muslim Minorities in Austria: Historical Context and Current Challenges of Integration,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20, no. 3, August 1, 2019, 800.

<sup>554</sup> “[Freedom in the World 2017 - Austria](#)” Freedom House, last modified September 1, 2017.

<sup>555</sup> Zeynep Sezgin, “Islam and Muslim Minorities in Austria: Historical Context and Current Challenges of Integration,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 20, no. 3, August 1, 2019, 883.

<sup>556</sup> “[Austria Jails Balkan-Born Jihadi Recruiter](#),” *Balkan Insight*, last modified July 14, 2016.

<sup>557</sup> “[Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 8, 2020.

<sup>558</sup> Katharina Götsch, “Austria and the Threats from Islamist Radicalisation and Terrorist Involvement,” *Journal of Radicalization*, no.12, September 4, 2017, 173.

<sup>559</sup> “[Austria: Extremism & Counter-Extremism](#),” Counter Extremism Project, accessed February 8, 2020.

<sup>560</sup> Katharina Götsch, “Austria and the Threats from Islamist Radicalisation and Terrorist Involvement,” *Journal of Radicalization*, no.12, September 4, 2017, 175.

Dialogue (DERAD).<sup>561</sup> With the Islam Law of 2015, the Austrian government banned Islamic religious societies from receiving funds from abroad, this led to cutting ties with Turkish and Saudi Arabian financing. Islam Law also required Austrian Muslims to use a standardized Qur'an that is translated in German as a part of combatting the spreading of Wahhabi ideology through Qur'an.<sup>562</sup> While the Austrian Muslim Youth (*Muslimische Jugend Österreich*, MJO) and the Muslim Civil Society Network (*Netzwerk Muslimische Zivilgesellschaft*, NMZ) protested this law for discriminating against Islam, the law was supported by the Islamic Religious Community.<sup>563</sup>

There were many projects aiming to deradicalize and prevent radicalization launched by NGOs that were supported by the government. In 2014, a counseling service, Extremism Information Center (*Beratungsstelle Extremismus*), launched with the goal of providing help to family members, friends or teachers who are confronted with extremism. Counselors were concerned with building trust and mutual respect with the people inclined to radicalization across the country.<sup>564</sup> The Viennese Network for Deradicalization and Prevention trains youth workers and teachers to detect radicalization. The NGO *Not in God's Name*, established in 2015, uses martial arts and other sports to help youth sympathizing with radical ideas. Through examples of successful role models from sports and workshops they work to guide these young people.<sup>565</sup> In addition to DERAD, there is another organization that provides assistance to imprisoned terrorist offenders under the age of 21 called NEUSTART. This organization aims to disengage and deradicalize young people in prison and help them develop a plan for their future after their release.<sup>566</sup>

Austria is working on deradicalization and how to detect radicalization before it is too late. Yet, Austria is lacking policies to tackle the root causes of radicalization. Many recruits were disillusioned with the idea of living in this 'utopic' Islamic State where everyone was welcomed. Of course, once they arrived in Syria they realized nothing was as they expected. Some were intrigued by the idea of fighting for the Caliphate, which gave some people a purpose in life and a chance to be respected in the Islamic State for their decision to join the jihad. In order to prevent future radicalization the Austrian government

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<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>562</sup> Shadia Nasralla, "[Austria Passes 'Law on Islam' Banning Foreign Money for Muslim Groups.](#)" Reuters, last modified February 25, 2015.

<sup>563</sup> Farid Hafez Miklin Reinhard Heinisch and Eric, "[The New Right: Austria's Freedom Party and Changing Perceptions of Islam.](#)" Brookings, July 24, 2019.

<sup>564</sup> Katharina Götsch, "Austria and the Threats from Islamist Radicalisation and Terrorist Involvement," *Journal of Radicalization*, no.12, September 4, 2017, 176.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>566</sup> "[Non-Custodial Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism: A Guidebook for Policymakers and Practitioners in South-Eastern Europe.](#)" OSCE, last modified January 28, 2020, 81.

should work to prevent the discrimination migrants and refugees face and build a bridge between ethnic Austrians and non-Austrians to overcome prejudice and fear.

# ***THE AMERICAS AND OCEANIA***

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## **UNITED STATES, CANADA, NEW ZEALAND, AND AUSTRALIA**

*Devon Fleming*

272 recorded citizens from the United States have joined ISIL's fight, a number slimly leading other Five Eye countries Australia with 232, Canada with 115, and New Zealand with 12.<sup>567</sup> Although these numbers are not relatively significant in size when placed in comparison with other nations, they have an upward trend and collectively comprise 36% of recorded IS-affiliated women and minors.<sup>568</sup> Those recruited to the Islamic State from these countries defy reasonable assumptions about terrorist demographics. For instance, the group of recruits from the United States has included "a substitute teacher from Texas, a Baptist mother of four from Indiana, a former student from Columbia University, and an F.B.I translator who married the terrorist she was spying on," none of which were previously affiliated with the Muslim religion.<sup>569</sup> Further, the factors which produce these radicalized citizens highlight an increasingly significant and dangerous phenomenon: the role of social media in ideological radicalization.<sup>570</sup> While Jihadism is only one of the radical worldviews further catalyzed by the 21st century technological context, analyzing its ability to advance ISIL's terrorist objectives will also be relevant to the study of preventing other violent ideologies such as that of white supremacy. ISIL propaganda tactics online have successfully recruited Americans, Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders both with and without previous ties to Islam. In this historical moment, individuals do not have to actually meet radical circles, but instead encounter this ideology from the comfort of their home. When analyzing the factors which contributed to the radicalization of these recruits, it is necessary to understand how the historical, geopolitical and religious contexts of these nations differ not only from nations which contribute the largest gross numbers of ISIL recruits per capita of Sunni Muslims, namely those in the MENA region, but also from those of seemingly similar Western countries like Sweden, Norway, or Ireland.

Antithetical to mainstream, Western terrorism-prevention thought employed by United States foreign policy,<sup>571</sup> imminent desperation proliferated by political or economic forces does not explain the

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<sup>567</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>568</sup> Cook, "From Daesh to Diaspora," (2018): 18.

<sup>569</sup> Robin Wright. "[Despite Trump's Guantánamo Threats, Americans Who Joined Isis are Quietly Returning Home.](#)" The New Yorker, Jun 11, 2019.

<sup>570</sup> Jytte Klausen. "[Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq.](#)" *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 1 (2015): 20.

<sup>571</sup> United States Institute of Peace. [The Global Fragility Act: A New U.S. Approach.](#) January 15, 2020.

motivations of all individuals recruited as terrorist combatants. This hypothesis certainly does not explain the flow of foreign fighters from the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, all of which rank highly on the scales for GDP and HDI. Rather, the factors which create ISIL recruits from these countries need to be understood through a lens which recognizes geopolitical and psychological factors in the formation of one's identity.

The assertions of this report rest on an analysis which understands the radicalization of individuals with existing ties to Islam and those without such ties to be explained through different factors. The number of Muslims from, or living in, the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand becoming radicalized is smaller per capita than those countries with the largest numbers of ISIL recruits,<sup>572</sup> thereby requiring an analysis of their lower likelihood for radicalization. The relatively diverse demographics of these countries begin to explain this phenomenon, a concept which includes their high levels of religious fractionalization. This framework calculates "the probability that two randomly selected individuals from a given country will not share the same ethnicity, language, and religion."<sup>573</sup> A country's level of religious fractionalization does not solely explain its radicalized population, however this framework acts as a foundation to understand racial, ideological, and cultural tensions between minority and majority groups which contribute to radicalized populations. In Western Anglo countries with low fractionalization levels, such as Norway and Finland, the higher numbers of ISIL recruits are partly explained by the difficulty minority Muslim populations experience integrating into such homogenous societies. In turn, according to this logic, countries with highly diverse demographics, such as those in New Zealand, the U.S., Australia, and Canada, have a larger capacity to accommodate a diverse population of religions and ethnic groups, thereby decreasing the chances of minority Muslim populations to be isolated in society and more susceptible to radicalization.<sup>574</sup> This notion does not overlook the discrimination against minority groups in these countries, despite their relative diversity, but rather explains the lower rates of extremist ideologies in minority populations. However, though the United States and Australia are the two nations with the highest levels of religious fractionalization, their Muslim populations with regards to radicalization by ISIL propaganda are in vastly different circumstances. While the narrative of Islamic State jihadism radicalizes a relatively significant percentage of Australian Muslims, it seldom appeals to American Muslims.

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<sup>572</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>573</sup> Efraim Benmelech and Esteban Klor, "[What explains the flow of foreign fighters to ISIS?](#)" *National Bureau of Economic Research*, (2016): 6.

<sup>574</sup> See Appendix 1.

[Preventing Violent Extremism Through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance, and Respect for Diversity.](#) *United Nations Development Programme*, (2016).

William Koomen and Van Der Pligt Joop, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism* (New York: Routledge, 2020): 12-31, 117-138.

The explanation for a flow of ISIL fighters from the United States remains a counterintuitive phenomenon, a compilation of isolated events rather than an easily classified pattern.<sup>575</sup> This notion which assigns importance to a country's religious fractionalization begins to explain why, contrary to popular belief, the majority of ISIL recruits from the United States are citizens with no previous ancestral ties with Islam. In fact, in contrast to Al Qaeda's American recruits, more Caucasian/white and African American/black U.S. citizens have joined ISIL since 2013 than those of Middle Eastern, North African, or South-Central Asian descent.<sup>576</sup> Of the 272 Americans who have joined ISIL, 38 have been female, but the overwhelming majority are American males without a bachelor's degree. Further, these recruits are more likely to be new converts to Islam than their predecessors affiliated with Al Qaeda.<sup>577</sup> These trends demonstrate a larger terrorist threat from lone operators born in the U.S. than preexisting Muslim communities. This post 9/11 shift not only reveals the resilience of U.S. intelligence and security since the attack, but the ways in which ISIL has reactively adjusted its propaganda to target a different vulnerable population: lone operators.<sup>578</sup>

ISIL affiliates from the U.S. recorded since 9/11 are not direct terrorist operatives.<sup>579</sup> They do not participate in jihadist terrorist activity through structures physically established in the U.S., but rather are in contact with jihadists online. This thoroughly established counterculture prevails on the internet despite a limited ability for jihadist communities to organize and mobilize on U.S. territory. This online system requires an analysis of ISIL's complex propaganda structure and the Americans it mobilizes. These recruits do represent a pattern, albeit vague. First, they have an individual, psychologically explained motivation, such as to belong in an established group, solve their identity crisis, resolve their isolation, or, routinely, "express their commitment to a cause."<sup>580</sup> These individuals encounter jihadist propaganda counterculture on the internet that was created with the rise of the Islamic State and adopt the ideology as their own. Eventually, those radicalized to the point of traveling to the IS do so without a realistic understanding of the environment receiving them.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> "[Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#)," (The White House, Washington DC, 2011): 3.

<sup>576</sup> Nathan Chandler and Heather Williams, "[Trends in the Draw of Americans to Foreign Terrorist Organizations from 9/11 to Today](#)," *RAND Corporation*, (2018): 32.

<sup>577</sup> Chandler, "[Trends in the Draw of Americans](#)" *RAND Corporation*, (2018): 29.

<sup>578</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized*, (2013): 143.

<sup>579</sup> Chandler, "[Trends in the Draw of Americans](#)" *RAND Corporation*, (2018): 21.

<sup>580</sup> Charlie Winter, "[The Virtual 'Caliphate': Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy](#)," *Quilliam*, (July 2015): 39.

Paige Pascarelli, "[Ideology à la Carte: Why Lone Actor Terrorists Choose and Fuse Ideologies](#)," *Lawfare*, Oct 2, 2016.

<sup>581</sup> "The White Papers - Understanding Jihadists in their Own Words," *Quantum Communications*, (March 2015).

Although psychological factors explain the majority of ISIL recruits from the United States, each recruit may contain certain external factors which contribute to jihadist radicalization.<sup>582</sup> A majority of recent U.S. recruits fit this description and are Caucasian or African American males without a degree of higher education, but this narrative cannot account for all radicalized Jihadists in the U.S. An anomaly of the nearly 40 citizens or residents charged with supporting the jihadist group al-Shabaab between 2007 and 2014, 75% had been recruited from a predominantly Somali community in Minneapolis. “With high unemployment, low paying jobs, and few changes to move up or out,” this example is an anomaly to the standard American ISIL recruit. This Somali community in Minneapolis was “the one exception to the pattern of comparatively isolated and externally inspired attacks. Of the nearly 40 citizens or residents who have been charged with supporting the jihadist group al-Shabaab between 2007 and 2014, three quarters were ethnic Somalis who had been recruited in Little Mogadishu.”<sup>583</sup> This community resembled the European, mono-cultural Muslim ghettos which experience economic hardship and present a “breeding ground” to jihadist recruiters. This community also became further radicalized by online jihadist propaganda. From the Somali community in Minneapolis came the sole grassroots movement in the U.S. They “grew up in the same community, attended the same schools, and worshiped at the same mosque.”<sup>584</sup>

While the tools which ISIL employs to radicalize these American individuals mainly succeeds online, a significant number of mosques in the U.S. have taught Wahhabi ideology with textbooks published by Saudi Arabia.<sup>585</sup> This curriculum “encourages violence towards others, and misguides the pupils into believing that in order to safeguard their own religion, they must violently repress and even physically eliminate the ‘other.’”<sup>586</sup> Saudi Arabian officials repeatedly promise the U.S. government reform initiatives to revisit the contents of these textbooks which indoctrinate violence. However, their 2020 educational improvement program does not commit to reform in the area of religious textbooks.<sup>587</sup>

With regard to the American Muslim population, though aspects of radical jihadist ideology view American hegemony as the principal cause of Muslim suffering, American Muslims are less susceptible to Jihadist ideology than European Muslims. Highly fractionalized in religious, ethnic, and racial variables, the diverse U.S. society and national immigrant narratives build an environment which,

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<sup>582</sup> Emily Corner and Paul Gill, “[Is There a Nexus Between Terrorist Involvement and Mental Health in the Age of the Islamic State?](#)” *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 1. (Jan 2017).

<sup>583</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists*, (2013): 142.

<sup>584</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized*, (2013): 143.

<sup>585</sup> Freedom House, “[Saudi Publications on Hate Ideology Invade American Mosques.](#)” *Center for Religious Freedom*, (2005).

<sup>586</sup> Nina Shea, “[Teaching Hate, Inspiring Terrorism: Saudi Arabia’s Educational Curriculum.](#)” *Hudson Institute*, (July 19, 2017).

<sup>587</sup> “[National Transformation Program.](#)” (Saudi Vision 2030, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2018).

according to scholars, makes the anti-American aspect of jihadism resonate less with American Muslims. Further, American Muslims' exposure to the United States uncovers the flaws of the jihadist portrayal of their country. With a few exceptions, the prevalent European Muslim "ghettos" do not exist in the U.S. Due to an inconsistent history and geography of immigrant settlement, American jihadists have created fewer organized structures than their European counterparts.<sup>588</sup> They also have more difficulty traveling to the Islamic state due to the long geographic distance separating them and the U.S. legal system's tools highly capable of detecting and intercepting their journey.<sup>589</sup>

Characteristics of foreign fighters from Canada largely parallel those of American recruits. Approximately 120-130 Canadians have joined ISIL, 15-18 of which have been female. All of these recruits are Canadian citizens or have been living in the country for many years. They are diverse in ethnicity, but have Somalia and Pakistan are notably recorded for country of origin. These foreign fighters were radicalized through a combination of online propaganda and isolated personal attributes, but were more educated on average than their U.S. and European counterparts.<sup>590</sup> Canada has been criticized as doing very little to bring its radicalized citizens home. While the U.S. is repatriating citizens, albeit directly to jail, Canada has left many ISIL members who want to return home in a state of legal limbo.<sup>591</sup>

In the case of New Zealand, a country with a much smaller population, 12 fighters have fled to join ISIL, comprising 0.038% of its Sunni Muslim population ages 15-54.<sup>592</sup> Uniquely, 11 of these ISIL recruits have been women.<sup>593</sup> These women differ in terms of socioeconomic background, ethnicity, and are often more educated than their male counterparts. Radicalized by online propaganda, these girls are targeted by ISIL members who intend to build romantic relationships with them until eventually convincing them to move to the Islamic State. Again, the research into the perspectives of these women reveal a desire for love, identity, recognition, or other psychological motivations coupled with unrealistic expectations of the environment awaiting them on the other side.<sup>594</sup> The government urges global participation in countering the success of this online ISIL propaganda.<sup>595</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> Paul Neumann, *Radicalized: New Jihadists and the Threat to the West*. (I.B. Tauris & Company, 2013): 140.

<sup>589</sup> Bennett Clifford and Seamus Hughes et al., "[The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq](#)," *Program on Extremism, The George Washington University*, (2018): 8.

<sup>590</sup> "[2016 Public Report on the Terrorist Threat to Canada](#)," (Public Safety Canada, Canada, 2016).

<sup>591</sup> Ian Austen, "[They Left Canada for ISIS. Should They Be Allowed Home?](#)" *The New York Times*, last modified Feb 22, 2019.

Alex Wilner and Irfan Yar, "[Canadian Terrorists by the Numbers: An assessment of Canadians joining and Supporting Terrorist Groups](#)," *Macdonald-Laurier Institute*, (2019): 19-25.

<sup>592</sup> See Appendix I.

<sup>593</sup> Cook, "[From Daesh to Diaspora](#)," (2018): 18.

<sup>594</sup> "[Q&A: Why do young, educated women want to be jihadi brides?](#)" *NZ Herald*, last modified Dec 9, 2015.

<sup>595</sup> Charlotte Graham-McLay and Adam Satariano, "[New Zealand Seeks Global Support for Tougher Measures on Online Violence](#)," *The New York Times*, last modified May 12, 2019.

Trends across ISIL recruits from the United States, Canada, and New Zealand point to analysis of personal and psychological factors to predominantly explain their vulnerability to radicalization.<sup>596</sup> These individuals consistently possess qualities of isolation, thereby possessing a greater probability of being radicalized.<sup>597</sup> The jihadist counterculture they encounter online meets their need for self-assurance in the forms of identity, community, power, or in some cases, masculinity.<sup>598</sup> Other motivations may include a search for thrill, recognition, discomfort with Western values, or an identification with victims in conflict areas. However, at large, these recruits “are bound together by a need to express their commitment to a cause.”<sup>599</sup> In addition, these recruits are ignorant to the conditions of their receiving environment.<sup>600</sup>

Despite the similar ranks of Australia and the U.S. on scales for GDP, HDI, and religious fractionalization, the geopolitical contexts which contribute to the radicalization of citizens are rather different. Unlike the case of American Muslims, Australian Muslims, who make 2.6% of the total population are more likely to identify with the broad jihadist narrative and become radicalized explicable through factors other than purely identity-seeking and advanced social media propaganda.<sup>601</sup> While 0.017% of Sunni Muslims in the U.S. between the ages of 15 and 44 have joined ISIL, 0.07% of this population in Australia have joined.<sup>602</sup> 42.59% of Australian foreign fighters are born in Australia, however research shows a spike in the number of recruits in second generation Australians, further emphasizing problematic social integration in the country. Recruits have ancestry from Afghanistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Lebanon.<sup>603</sup> For a total of 232, 30-40 of which are female, Australians recruit fighters at home, hold leadership positions in the Islamic State, and contribute a significant number of foreign fighters to ISIL for the size of its Muslim population. The primary explanation for this phenomenon, in contrast to U.S. case, is the Australian Muslim minority’s difficulty integrating to the Australian society at large; an anomaly to the religious fractionalization logic. This situation highlights an especially nonintegrated Muslim community in Australia in comparison to countries with similar levels of ethno-religious diversity. The three principle dynamics responsible for the radicalization of Australians with Middle Eastern descent are: “limited career opportunities for Australian Muslims; on-going foreign conflicts to which they can relate their predicament; and the existence and availability of the kind of

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<sup>596</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized*, (2013): 144.

<sup>597</sup> Winter, “[The Virtual ‘Caliphate’](#),” (2015): 39.

<sup>598</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized*, (2013): 101.

<sup>599</sup> Neumann, *Radicalized*, (2013): 105.

<sup>600</sup> Butime, “[Spotlight on Australian Jihadists](#),” (2014).

<sup>601</sup> “[Australia](#),” CIA: The World Factbook, last modified January 30, 2020.

<sup>602</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>603</sup> Mark Rix, “[Australian Jihadists in Syria: Actual, Virtual and Financial Dimensions of Australians’ Involvement in the Wars in Syria](#),” *Al Mesbar*, (Apr 26, 2018).

technology that allows for the internalization of the perceived predicaments of the Muslims in Australia and abroad.”<sup>604</sup>

Muslims living in Australia experience limited economic opportunity due to discrimination on the basis of their religious and ethnic identities.<sup>605</sup> 51.3% of Muslims ages 15-64 are unemployed in Australia.<sup>606</sup> For jihadis specifically, the proportion in blue collar jobs is more than twice the national rate. The Australian jihadi unemployment rate also exceeds the national average.<sup>607</sup> With respect to the prison population, not only are Australian Muslims overrepresented for their overall population, but speculation begins to notice an upward trend in prisoner converts to Islam.<sup>608</sup> 40% of Australian Jihadists are children of refugees who fled the Lebanese Civil War from 1975-1990, under the Australian Government’s Special Humanitarian Program. By comparison, 15-20% of Australian Muslims are Lebanese, perhaps partly accounting for the large number of Australian ISIL recruits per capita of Sunnis.<sup>609</sup> Despite its elimination of the “White Australia” policy in 1973 which allowed for the admission of non-White immigrants, Australia has a specifically Islamophobic climate which does not differentiate between Muslim people of Middle Eastern descent and non-Muslim people of Middle Eastern descent. The low social position of Australian Muslims and, by extension, Australians of Middle Eastern descent, has caused and reinforced the concentration of minorities in specific neighborhoods. This segregation, with Muslims generally occupying a lower social status, results in a low level of interaction between ethnic groups. In fact, Australian Jihadists mainly originate from Victoria, Queensland, and New South Wales, the states with the most concentrated settlements of Australian Muslims. This breakdown in communal relations reinforces stereotypes, prejudices, and the ostracization of an ethnic group. All of these circumstances stemming from ethnic segregation not only contribute to the difficulty Australian Muslims experience in finding economic opportunity, but also to a broader context of isolation, making them more vulnerable to radicalization.<sup>610</sup> In response to this tension, “in 2004, the Australian Press

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<sup>604</sup> Herman Butime, “[Spotlight on Australian Jihadists in the Middle East](#),” *Small Wars Journal*, (Dec 2014).  
Rodger Shanahan, “[Typology of Terror – The Backgrounds of Australian Jihadis](#),” *Lowy Institute*, (November 21, 2019).

<sup>605</sup> Beth Cook, “[Labour Force Outcomes for Australian Muslims](#).” *University of Newcastle Center of Full Employment and Equity*, (2011).

<sup>606</sup> “[Are a majority of working-age Muslims not working and living on welfare?](#)” *ABC: Fact Check*, Sept 5, 2018.

<sup>607</sup> Shanahan, “[Typology of Terror](#),” (2019).

<sup>608</sup> Christopher Knauss and Noor Gillani, “[‘There’s a lot of repenting’: Why Australian prisoners are converting to Islam](#),” *The Australian*, last modified Jan 5, 2018.

Chip Le Grand and Dan Box, “[What lies behind jihadist convictions](#).” *The Australian*, June 20, 2015.

Hossein Adibi, “[An Investigation of the Employment Status of Muslims in Queensland](#),” (The Challenges and Opportunities of Islam in the West: The Case of Australia, Brisbane, QUT, 2008,)

<sup>609</sup> “[Ancestry – Lebanese](#),” NSW Government, accessed Feb 26, 2020.

Butime, “[Spotlight on Australian Jihadists](#),” (2014).

Shanahan, “[Typology of Terror](#),” (2019).

<sup>610</sup> Koomen, *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism*, (2020): 12-31.

Council developed advisory guidelines for the use of religious terms in headlines. The Council advised against the constant linking of Islam to terrorist groups, which can contribute to the lack of trust that exists between the media and the Muslim community in Australia”<sup>611</sup>

The resonance between such predicaments experienced by Australian Muslims and the grievance narrative expressed by jihadism abroad explains the consistent flow of foreign fighters from Australia to ISIL in Syria since 2012. The eruption of the war in Syria in 2011 inspired many Lebanese Muslims in Australia to join the fight, comprising 18.52% of ISIL recruits from Australia.<sup>612</sup> The relatability of these emerging conflicts to Australians of Middle Eastern descent has not only attracted their allegiance, but brought ISIL’s organizational tactics to Australia, giving Australian recruits a specifically operational role in propaganda campaigns. Further, the history of Australia in the MENA region has also laid a foundation for the radicalization of Australian Muslims and nationals alike. The Australian jihadis contribution to wars in Syria, namely by transferring and raising funds to support the Islamic State, have inspired some Australian nationals to pursue jihadist careers and significantly strengthened its operative reach. This crowdfunding phenomenon is particularly relevant to Australia jihadist support. However, globally, for many jihadists who do not perceive their duty to include traveling to join the Islamic State, they will finance ISIL online. “Fundraising appeals can be disseminated through, for example, social networks, closed online forums or placed on ‘thematic websites’ but avoid detection and blocking by using ambiguous, cryptic or ‘coded’ language, making no direct reference to their actual terrorist purposes, invoking charitable, community development and humanitarian causes,” or any combination of these covers as a way to finance their operation.<sup>613</sup>

The existence and availability of technology that allows for internalization of the perceived predicament of the Muslim narrative at home and abroad employs a carefully created propaganda structure, and ISIL has created one to specifically target Australians. In this propaganda structure ISIL demonstrates its capability of spreading fear, masks the risks inherent in joining ISIL, and positions itself as the leading Islamist militant group by distinguishing its operatives from that of Al Qaeda. 76.9% of Australian foreign fighters have had direct contact with this ISIL propaganda strategy online, but their ideology is also taught in Wahhabi-Salafist “cultural centers,” namely Al-Risalah in Sydney, Al-Furqan in Melbourne, and Iqraa in Brisbane.<sup>614</sup> In conclusion, ISIL’s propaganda campaign directed at Australians is not only geared towards exploiting contradictions in Australia’s social integration, but also easing the

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<sup>611</sup> Lauren Williams, “[Islamic State Propaganda and the Mainstream Media](#),” *Lowy Institute*, (February 29, 2016).

<sup>612</sup> Andrew Zammit, “[Australian foreign fighters: Risks and responses](#),” *Lowy Institute*, (April 2015): 8.

<sup>613</sup> Susan McDonald, “[Islamic State using social media as crowdfunding platform for terrorist activities, expert warns](#),” ABC News, Nov 16, 2015.

<sup>614</sup> Rix, “[Australian Jihadists in Syria](#),” (2018).

Williams, “[Islamic State Propaganda and the Mainstream Media](#),” (2016).

trans-nationalization of the group's activities by distinguishing it from Al Qaeda and positioning it as the leading Islamist militant group in the world.

Because ISIL's main tactics to attract foreign fighters from the U.S., Australia, Canada, and New Zealand exist online, a specific analysis of their social media propaganda campaign is useful to consider combating radicalization. ISIL online outreach strategy recognizes consistent qualities in potential recruits and makes a sophisticated structure of propaganda ready to catalyze and facilitate the radicalization process. As previously mentioned, these qualities center around a general isolation, or discontentment with the current identifying factors in one's livelihood. Most of these individuals browsing social media, or perhaps specifically targeted by ISIL members, "simply pass through, but a minority get caught."<sup>615</sup> This propaganda system channels a variety of narratives, from theological to political, to attract a broad spectrum of demographics. Estimates show that ISIL and its supporters tweet upwards of ten thousand times per day, using the platform as a form of psychological warfare.<sup>616</sup> Disseminators of this propaganda include both bots and self-appointed fans or volunteers of the organization called Islamic State "diplomatic corps."<sup>617</sup> Through circulating propaganda material and targeting potential recruits, this social media strategy accounts for a majority of ISIL foreign fighters from the United States, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

These countries have all employed various community-based approaches aimed at deradicalizing aforementioned potential ISIL recruits. The Canada Center was launched in 2017 to counter radicalization and violence through policy guidance, promoting vertical coordination and collaboration between government, communities, practitioners, academics, and police, funding planning and coordinating research, and implement targeted programming through a fund which provides financially supports radicalization prevention initiatives. This organization works with Five Eyes, but predicates its research and initiatives on the assumption that "radicalization to violence is not a phenomenon that uniquely affects individuals of any particular background, culture, or religion."<sup>618</sup> However, the government also passed legislation to revoke citizenship of those found guilty of joining a terrorist organization abroad.<sup>619</sup> In terms of governmental counterterrorism responses to the Australians joining ISIL, the government has focused on increased funding resources and powers for police and intelligence agencies and also began implementing a program termed Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Punitive responses include disciplining recruiting networks with Preventative Detention Orders and Control orders, as well as

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<sup>615</sup> Winter, "[The Virtual 'Caliphate'](#)," (2015): 39.

<sup>616</sup> Rix, "[Australian Jihadists in Syria](#)," (2018).

<sup>617</sup> Winter, "[The Virtual 'Caliphate'](#)," (2015): 37.

<sup>618</sup> "[National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence](#)," Government of Canada, Dec 22, 2018.

<sup>619</sup> Meghan Benton and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, "[Foreign Fighters: Will Revoking Citizenship Mitigate the Threat?](#)" *Migration Policy Institute*, April 3, 2019.

cancelling passports of suspected radicalized jihadists. On the other hand, CVE attempts to “dissuade people from becoming involved in terrorist activity” by assessing at-risk individuals and refer them to support services that can help them reject violent extremism, promoting counter-narratives and removing online extremist material, and tailoring the Department of Social Services social cohesion programs to support CVE objectives.<sup>620</sup> Australia has passed legislation to revoke citizenships from people who hold dual nationality, and has extended this policy to minors as young as 14 years old.<sup>621</sup> New Zealand has similarly passed legislation which grants the government more power in investigating extremism and enforces stricter regulation on immigration processes.<sup>622</sup>

In the United States, a country relatively less interested in CVE approaches, strict surveillance and oversight policies are partly responsible for a relatively low number of Americans reaching the Islamic State. However, some past initiatives to counter radicalization of its own citizens attempt to approach the social-domain of communities holistically.<sup>623</sup> Leading academic institutions in counter-radicalization recognize social integration theory as the foundational lens to understand radicalized Americans.<sup>624</sup> However, more recent actions from the current administration suggest an approach intent on terrorist detainment and passport revocation.<sup>625</sup> Further, the government has employed digital strategies to counter online radicalization, focusing more on attacking ISIL’s platforms than introducing a counternarrative.<sup>626</sup>

The pattern catalysts for the radicalization of individuals the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, are an insufficient integration the Muslim population, manifesting in discrimination in economic opportunity and social segregation, the psychological effects of social isolation, or a combination of these factors. Coupled with the widespread and advanced ISIL propaganda structure online and, in some cases, Wahhabi mosques, new jihadists are traveling to join the Islamic State. Perspectives disagree on the method to most effectively deradicalize these individuals, however research shows that solely imprisoning these individuals not only deepens radicalization, but also risks the

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<sup>620</sup> Williams, “[Islamic State Propaganda and the Mainstream Media](#),” (2016).

<sup>621</sup> Michael Safi, “[Isis Members can now be Stripped of Australian Citizenship](#),” The Guardian, May 5, 2016.

<sup>622</sup> “[Intelligence and Security in a Free Society: Report of the first Independent Review of Intelligence and Security in New Zealand](#),” Office of the Minister for National Security and Intelligence, 2014.

“[Counter Terrorism](#),” New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, accessed Feb 29, 2019.

<sup>623</sup> “[Empowering Local Partners](#),” (2011).

<sup>624</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Health Sciences Policy; Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies. “[Countering Violent Extremism Through Public Health Practice: Proceedings of a Workshop](#).” Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); Feb 17, 2017.

<sup>625</sup> Julian Borger, “[Donald Trump signs executive order to keep Guantánamo Bay open](#),” The Guardian, Jan 30, 2018.

<sup>626</sup> “[Digital Strategies and Communications](#),” Countering Violent Extremism Taskforce, Department of Homeland Security, accessed Feb 29, 2019.

Harleen Gambhir, “[The Virtual Caliphate: ISIS’s Information Warfare](#),” *Institute for the Study of War*, (2016): 33.

dissemination of violent ideology.<sup>627</sup> Returnees need to also undergo programs which deradicalize their ideology.

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<sup>627</sup> Daniel Koehler, [\*Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism\*](#), (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Alexander Meleagrow-Hitchens, Seamus Hughes, et al. "[The Travelers: American Jihadists in Syria and Iraq.](#)" *Program on Extremism at The George Washington University*, (Feb 2018): 81.

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## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

*Orla Casey*

With a population of over 1,200,000 people, Trinidad and Tobago is the fifth most populous country in the Caribbean.<sup>628</sup> Although a minority, the Muslim population is comprised of around 5% of the population, or 60,776 citizens. However, anywhere from 130 to 250 ISIL recruits originated from Trinidad and Tobago. Out of the Sunni Trinidadian Muslims ages 15-54, around 0.39% to 0.75% of them have been recruited by ISIL.<sup>629</sup> Overall, out of all the countries of the Western Hemisphere, Trinidad and Tobago is sending the highest rates of their Muslim population to fight for ISIL. Economic conditions, the political climate, history, and ethnic divisions of Trinidad's Muslim population influenced the number of ISIL recruits from Trinidad.

Economically, Trinidad and Tobago is recovering from several years of negative growth, but the profits of the newly blooming economy are not equally distributed. The primary exports of Trinidad and Tobago are oil-related products such as petroleum, natural gas, methanol, and ammonia. In total, the gross domestic product equates to a moderate 42.85 billion dollars. Although the unemployment rate is only around 4.9%, an estimated 20% of the population lives below the poverty line.<sup>630</sup> Moreover, the GINI index for the country is around 49.<sup>631</sup> Both the high levels of poverty and high GINI index indicate that wealth from oil is not being equally distributed. This wealth gap can motivate prospective ISIL recruits. However, a recent study showed that of the ISIL recruits who were originally from Trinidad and Tobago, around 90% of them were middle class.<sup>632</sup> This study does not disprove the influence the Trinidadian economy had on recruiting ISIL fighters, rather it demonstrates that there is a complexity of factors influencing Trinidadian citizens. Lower class Muslims may not have the time, money, and resources to think about economic injustices. Instead, middle class Muslims who recognize the economic hurdles that other Muslims are facing will enlist in solidarity.<sup>633</sup>

Another factor that explains the high rates of ISIL recruits, is the geostrategic importance of the country. Located in the Caribbean Sea, the islands of Trinidad and Tobago are less than 7 miles away from Venezuela. The close proximity to North and South America as well as its union with other Caribbean nations makes the island of importance for both drug cartels and ISIL recruiters. For drug

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<sup>628</sup> "[Trinidad and Tobago](#)," CIA World Factbook, February 6, 2020.

<sup>629</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>630</sup> "[Trinidad and Tobago](#)," CIA World Factbook, February 6, 2020.

<sup>631</sup> "[WIID- The World Income Inequality Database](#)," United Nations University, 1992.

<sup>632</sup> Dan Worth, "[How Trinidad and Tobago Became an ISIS Recruiting Hotspot](#)," University of Kent, March 7, 2019.

<sup>633</sup> Koomen, Willem, and Joop van der Pligt. *The Psychology of Radicalization and Terrorism*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

cartels that are attempting to smuggle drugs out of Colombia and Venezuela, Trinidad becomes a haven for drug transportation.<sup>634</sup> The high rate of drugs that are smuggled into the country has resulted in a formation of a number of gangs. Gang feuds have resulted in high crime rates which continue to grow. In January 2020, 45 people were murdered.<sup>635</sup> High murder rates result in community frustration with lack of government accountability. For ISIL recruiters, Trinidadians are targets as citizens are able to freely travel to other Caribbean countries without visas.<sup>636</sup> For the US government, ISIL fighters returning to Trinidad and Tobago pose a security threat as they can easily target countries in the Western Hemisphere.

Frustration over political gridlock and lack of accountability is another factor in radicalization. Politics in Trinidad are dominated by two parties: United National Congress (UNC) and the People's National Movement (PNM). Founded in 1989 as a coalition of liberal parties, the United National Congress is led by Kamla Persad-Bissessar. Currently, the UNC is the opposition party against the PNM. On the other hand, the People's National Movement was founded in 1955 by Black activist Eric Williams. Holding the majority of seats in Congress, the party is currently led by Prime Minister Keith Rowley.<sup>637</sup> Colloquially the UNC is known as "the Indian party" and the PNM is known as "the Black party" due to the fact that ethnic and racial divisions play a large role in politics.<sup>638</sup> For the past couple of decades, the PNM and UNC have dominated politics with little room for any other parties. The political gridlock has become a source of contention for citizens who are upset about the extreme murder rates and the lack of government accountability. For Trinidadian Black Muslims who feel unrepresented, the political gridlock further frustrates those who feel isolated.

The history of the Muslim community in Trinidad and Tobago uncovers the origins of ethnic tensions within the country. During the early 1830s, the British began a colonial program in which Indians came to Trinidad to work for ten years as indentured servants.<sup>639</sup> While the majority of Indians were Hindu, a large minority of Indians were Muslims. Today, Indians comprise 95% of the Muslim population in Trinidad, while 5% of Muslims are Black. In the 1980s, Yasin Abu Bakr founded the Jamaat al Muslimeen for Afro-Trinidadians who were converting to Islam. Within the Muslim community, Afro-Trinidadians are a minority that is marginalized. For Afro-Trinidadians, the Caliphate could be viewed as a racial utopia where those who were marginalized in Trinidad can thrive in the

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<sup>634</sup> Juliana Ruhfus, "[ISIL in the Caribbean: Why Trinidadians Fight in Syria and Iraq](#)," Al Jazeera, May 19, 2017.

<sup>635</sup> "[Trinidad Top Cop Chides Justice System, Politicians Over Crime Fight](#)," Stabroek News, February 2, 2020.

<sup>636</sup> Emma Graham-Harrison and Joshua Surtees, "[Trinidad's Jihadis: How Tiny Nation Became ISIS Recruiting Ground](#)," The Guardian, February 2, 2018.

<sup>637</sup> Scott MacDonald, "[A Busy Year In the Caribbean: Elections](#)," Global Americans, January 16, 2020.

<sup>638</sup> "[The Legacy of Indian Migration to European Colonies](#)," The Economist, January 21, 2020.

<sup>639</sup> Nasser Mustapha, "[The Influence of Indian Islam on Fundamentalist Trends in Trinidad and Tobago](#)," Sociological Bulletin, 1997.

Levant. The racial divide among Muslims is one contributing factor to the high percentage of ISIL recruits.

The marginalization of Black Muslims in Trinidad is primarily because of the history of Jamaat al Muslimeen. Yasin Abu Bakr believed that the corrupt Trinidad government was to blame for crime and a failing economy. Moreover, the government had attempted to seize a plot of land in which Abu Bakr had established a Mosque.<sup>640</sup> In 1990, Abu Bakr led a group of men in a coup-d'état against the Trinidad government. Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister were held hostage for six days. In the end, the Jamaat al Muslimeen surrendered in return for receiving amnesty. Even though the Jamaat al Muslimeen were given amnesty, this has not stopped the Trinidadian government and the international community from harassing the group. In fact, the Jamaat al Muslimeen are constantly under surveillance by intelligence agencies, mosques are frequently raided, and members are stopped during international travel. Although the majority of ISIL recruits are Afro-Trinidadians, this does not mean that the group fosters radicalization. Rather the constant discrimination against Black Muslims is a factor in their radicalization. ISIL recruits from Trinidad are leaving with their children as they believe life in the Caliphate will be better than in Trinidad.<sup>641</sup> Together in combination with high crime rates, high inequality, poor politics processes, ethnic and religious divisions some Trinidadian citizens are leaving for the Levant.

As ISIL fighters await to be repatriated to the islands, the Trinidadian government has been focusing on repatriating the children taken by their parents. Not only should the government work to ensure that children are deradicalized, but they need to also work to ensure that the recruits becomes deradicalized. Although ISIL's magazine Dabiq produced a segment targeting Trinidadians specifically, the majority of recruitment was done in person. In this sense, the Trinidad government needs to work on stopping their own citizens from becoming radicalized by fellow citizens. In the future, the government needs to work on curbing income inequality, lowering murder rates, working on political grid lock, and fostering ethnic collaboration.

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<sup>640</sup> Walter C. Soderlund, *Mass Media and Foreign Policy: Post-Cold-War Crises in the Caribbean* (Westport, Praeger, 2003).

<sup>641</sup> Juliana Ruhfus, "[ISIL in the Caribbean: Why Trinidadians Fight in Syria and Iraq](#)," Al Jazeera, May 19, 2017.

## ***CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS***

Although ISIL has been militarily defeated in Iraq and Syria, over 40,000 ISIL fighters are awaiting trial in Iraq and Syria. Additionally, ISIL is operating in several other countries. As a terrorist threat to the global community, ISIL has not been defeated. By examining several countries to understand radicalization, we found that multiple factors play into radicalization.

One of the primary causes for radicalization is the spread of Wahhabi-Salafist literature. Wahhabi Salafist materials condone violence against members of other Muslim sects and people from other religions. The Saudi government continues to spread Wahhabi-Salafism throughout the world by opening cultural centers, funding schools, and expanding their foreign influence. To curb radicalization, it is important to stop violent literature from being spread.

Although studies have shown that terrorism is a rich man's endeavor, our case study points to economic inequality and instability being a factor in radicalization. Lack of economic opportunities within one's native country can lead to increased likelihood for radicalization, specifically within countries with high rates of youth unemployment.

Countries whose populations are largely composed of youth are prone to radicalization as governments are not meeting educational demands. Terrorist groups operate as a proto state that provide social provisions such as education. Those who receive education by terrorist groups undergo radicalization. In order to bridge the gap, educational funding needs to be increased as well as access to education across gender, religious, and ethnic lines.

Prisons are highly prone to radicalization due to large swaths of people living in close quarters. Overcrowding, underfunding, and human rights abuses all result in radicalization of prisoners. In countries that segregate prisoners bases off of Islamic sect, Shiite-Sunni divides become more prominent. By allowing petty criminals to live with terrorists, radicalization spreads.

Social media is also a tool in which ISIL utilized to radicalize thousands of people around the world. By publishing the magazine Dabiq in multiple languages, ISIL was successful in reaching a broad audience. Although bots and governmental agencies work on targeting online recruitment, continued monitoring of online recruitment is needed.

Political instability and lack of representation in political processes fosters radicalization. We found that politically unstable countries without proper governmental infrastructure enables radicalization to spread. Additionally, those who are politically suppressed are more prone to rebelling against the government.

Lack of integration among refugees and minority groups can lead to isolation. Communities that face increased social obstacles such as housing discrimination, increased unemployment, high dropout rates, and over representation in the criminal justice system are more prone to radicalization.

Our review of countries that contribute to ISIL's foreign fighters' details how radicalization is multicausal. The writing of this report is designed to help prevent terrorism. For this reason, we are writing to the government of the United States to implement short term policy recommendations on how to handle ISIL fighters, and long-term policy recommendations to stop the spread of radicalization.

The U.S. government ought to implement the following policies and encourage other nations to follow suit.

### **Short Term Policy Recommendations**

1. Repatriate ISIL Foreign Fighters
2. Legally Process ISIL fighters and affiliates
  - a. Work on legally processing and trying adults on terrorism charges
  - b. Encourage the justice system to not legally prosecute minors
  - c. Place minors into a long-term deradicalization educational program

### **Long Term Policy Recommendations**

1. Curb Wahhabi Influence
  - a. Use economic and political influence to enter into discussions with the Saudi government to stop disseminating radical Wahhabi-Salafi ideology in the country and abroad
  - b. Encourage the U.S. to continue to expand foreign investment
2. Reform Prison Conditions
  - a. Increase funding to meet U.N. standards for prison conditions
  - b. Implement capacity building programs for prison guards regarding deradicalization
  - c. Employ mainstream Sunni imams to support deradicalization programs
  - d. Isolate ISIL fighters from other prisoner populations to avoid radicalization
3. Promote Economic Stability
  - a. Work with other countries on expanding and diversifying their economies
  - b. Encourage international financial organization to support economic development in developing countries with high levels of radicalization
  - c. Make sure that loans can be paid off within the allotted time frame
4. Increase Global Funding on Education
  - a. Form an international coalition to promote greater funding on education
  - b. Advocate for greater equality in access to education
5. Foster Inter and Intra Community Dialogue
  - a. Integrate refugee and minority communities
  - b. Increase funding for existing programs that promote cross-cultural dialogues
  - c. Fund mainstream imams and former radicals to create dialogues about Islam
  - d. Eliminate institutionalized discrimination in housing and employment
  - e. Make mental health services available to all residents
  - f. Increase dialogues to promote trust between law enforcement and minority communities
6. Combat Social Media Recruitment
  - a. Continue to monitor the internet usage of suspected terrorists' engagement with ISIL propaganda
  - b. Generate ISIL counternarratives on social media platforms
7. Foster Political Stability in the Middle East
  - a. Promote political representation and human rights for all, particularly of vulnerable social strata- children, women, and minorities

- b. Engage the UN Security Council and Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to form a Committee for Political Stabilization of the Middle East (CPSME) with Oman as its president
- c. Start a dialogue with Iran through the CPSME and join forces to fight against terrorism
- d. Encourage rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran to prevent proxy wars in the region to minimize the possibility of ISIL's rebirth

## Appendix 1

Country Names	Total Population	Percentage of Sunni Muslims	Gross Number of ISIL recruits (Low Estimation)	Gross Number of ISIL recruits (High Estimation)
Turkey	81,257,239	99	7476	9476
Tunisia	11,516,189	99.1	4000	6500
Russian Federation	142,122,776	12.5	4000	5000
Jordan	10,458,413	97.2	3000	3950
Saudi Arabia (Wahhabi)	33,091,113	87.5	3244	3244
Saudi Arabia	33,091,113	87.5	3244	3244
Uzbekistan	30,023,709	88	1500	2500
Tajikistan	8,604,882	95	1899	2000
France	67,364,357	9	1910	1910
Morocco	34,314,130	99	1698	1698
Germany	80,457,737	5.1	1268	1268
Kazakhstan	18,744,548	70.2	1136	1236
United Kingdom	65,105,246	4.4	900	900
Lebanon	6,100,075	30.6	900	900
Kyrgyzstan	5,849,296	90	863	863
Indonesia	262,787,403	87.2	800	800
Belgium	11,570,762	5	602	602
Libya	6,754,507	96.6	600	600
Egypt	99,413,317	90	600	600
Bosnia	3,849,891	50.7	500	500
Turkmenistan	5,411,012	89	360	500
Kosovo	1,907,592	95.6	446	446
Netherlands	17,151,228	5.1	432	432
Sweden	10,040,995	8.1	341	351
United States of America	329,256,465	0.9	272	272
Austria	8,793,370	7.9	256	256
Trinidad and Tobago	1,215,527	5	130	250
Australia	23,470,145	2.6	232	232
Maldives	392,473	100	61	200
Albania	3,057,220	56	157	163
Norway	5,372,191	3.2	140	150
Denmark	5,809,502	5.5	150	150
Finland	5,537,364	2.7	122	122
Canada	35,881,659	3.2	110	120
Afghanistan	34,940,837	87.2	50	120
Pakistan	207,862,518	87.5	100	100
India	1,296,834,042	14.2	67	75
Ireland	5,068,050	1.3	30	30
Montenegro	614,249	19.1	27	27
New Zealand	4,545,627	1.3	12	12

Country Names	Gross Number of ISIL recruits (Low Estimation)	Gross Number of ISIL recruits (High Estimation)	Percentage of Sunni Muslims 15-54 Joining ISIL (Low Estimate)	Percentage of Sunni Muslims 15-54 Joining ISIL (High Estimate)
Trinidad and Tobago	130	250	0.39	0.75
Belgium	602	602	0.2	0.2
Norway	140	150	0.165	0.176
Finland	122	122	0.17	0.17
Ireland	30	30	0.11	0.11
Tunisia	4000	6500	0.063	0.10
Netherlands	432	432	0.1000	0.1000
Denmark	150	150	0.09	0.09
Sweden	341	351	0.084	0.087
Maldives	61	200	0.02	0.08
Austria	256	256	0.07	0.07
Australia	232	232	0.07	0.07
Saudi Arabia (Wahhabi)	3244	3244	0.018	0.068
Jordan	3000	3950	0.06	0.07
United Kingdom	900	900	0.06	0.06
Germany	1268	1268	0.06	0.06
Russian Federation	4000	5000	0.04	0.06
Bosnia	500	500	0.047	0.047
Montenegro	27	27	0.04	0.04
Kosovo	446	446	0.04	0.04
France	1910	1910	0.04	0.04
Lebanon	900	900	0.04	0.04
New Zealand	12	12	0.038	0.038
Tajikistan	1899	2000	0.034	0.036
Kyrgyzstan	863	863	0.029	0.03
Canada	110	120	0.019	0.02
Turkey	7476	9476	0.016	0.02
United States of America	272	272	0.02	0.02
Saudi Arabia	3244	3244	0.018	0.018
Turkmenistan	360	500	0.012	0.02
Kazakhstan	1136	1236	0.016	0.017
Libya	600	600	0.02	0.02
Albania	157	163	0.0158	0.016
Uzbekistan	1500	2500	0.01	0.02
Morocco	1698	1698	0.009	0.009
Egypt	600	600	0.001	0.001
Afghanistan	50	120	0.0003	0.0007
Indonesia	800	800	0.00059	0.00059
Pakistan	100	100	0.0001	0.0001
India	67	75	0.00006	0.000069

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