A JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM RESEARCH

EBSCO HOST

Building a Global Network for Security

Editorial Note

The so-called Islamic State (IS) is clearly on the retreat in Iraq and Syria. It has conceded vast swathes of territories including important and strategic towns and cities like Fallujah and Ramadi in Iraq, and Manbij and Dabiq in Syria. The loss of Dabiq in mid-October was particularly significant as the site features prominently in IS propaganda about apocalyptic battles between the 'caliphate' and its enemies. IS has also lost significant number of fighters, top leaders, and revenue-generating areas. It is now a matter of weeks before its last stronghold in Iraq, Mosul, falls to coalition forces. Some IS leaders and their families as well as some of their fighters are already reported to be fleeing Mosul to safer areas in Syria. Infighting among IS fighters and resistance within Mosul are said to be rising.

These adverse developments notwithstanding, IS can be expected to put up a strong resistance as the loss of Mosul, where the declaration of the 'Islamic Caliphate' was made, would be a huge propaganda blow for IS. Following the launch of the offensive to retake Mosul, IS militants set fire to a sulphur plant to release toxic gas to hamper the advance of the Iraqi forces; reports indicated at least 1,000 people were hospitalised due to respiratory problems. IS also mounted diversionary attacks in Kirkuk, Rutba and Sinjar to relieve the military pressure on Mosul. IS may also go beyond Iraq and Syria to mount terrorist attacks in neighbouring countries, Europe and elsewhere to avenge its losses.

Two articles in this issue provide a good mix of IS' current state of play: the first reviews IS' overarching strategy in its online propaganda and recruitment magazine, *Dabiq*, and the second analyses the multi-generational impact of IS' recruitment of children. Beyond the usual focus on IS' modus operandi, we also feature two other articles that specifically narrow in on policy approaches to counter violent extremism.

Nur Aziemah Binte Azman explores how the ongoing war in Iraq and Syria has led to serious setbacks to the Islamic State (IS)'s territories, fighters and revenue, affecting even its media operations. Despite its losses, IS is determined to pursue its goal of establishing a global caliphate and has continued to do so by projecting itself as strong, lethal and determined.

Noting how IS exploits children for armed combat and strategic gains to perpetuate the existence of the caliphate, **Sara Mahmood** argues that the phenomenon of the 'cubs of the caliphate' will present a challenge for years to come, as these children are exposed to deep indoctrination and are likely to be desensitised to violence by the time they reach adulthood.

In light of the recent capture of *Dabiq* by Turkish-backed forces and the ongoing battle of Mosul, **DB Subedi** and **Bert Jenkins** argue for greater interventions by non-state actors in preventing society's relapse into violence. They examine the issues and concerns arising from violence and extremism and outline the ways in which peace and development non-state actors can prevent and counter the threat of violent extremism.

Agus Santoso and *Sylvia Windya Laksmi* outline a risk assessment framework for Southeast Asian countries and countries to tackle the challenge of terrorism financing networks. The authors advocate for continued regional cooperation and collaboration in the overall counter-terrorism effort.

'ISLAMIC STATE' (IS) PROPAGANDA:
DABIQ AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF 'ISLAMIC STATE'

NUR AZIEMAH AZMAN

The ongoing war in Iraq and Syria has not only resulted in the loss of territories, fighters and revenue for the so-called Islamic State (IS), it also appears to have had a negative impact on IS media operations. IS, however, remains defiant. Through its premier digital magazine, Dabiq, IS projects itself as strong, lethal and determined to pursue its goal of establishing a global caliphate.

Introduction

The propaganda operations of the so-called Islamic State (IS) or Daesh appears to have been adversely affected by the sustained anti-IS ground and air attacks over the past 18 months. Many online dissemination platforms such as jihadist online forums and IS content websites have been repeatedly brought down. Pro-IS accounts on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have also been continuously suspended and removed. The quantity of IS propaganda output has also decreased since December 2015 (Zelin 2015). A recent Combating Terrorism Centre study shows that IS visual media releases have declined from 700 products in August 2015 to less than 200 in August 2016 (Milton 2016).

However, the quality of IS media products has not been significantly affected. This is especially true for its premier online magazine *Dabiq* produced by IS's media arm Al-Hayat, which has to date published 15 issues. Since its release two years ago, and in light of the developments on the ground, what does the latest issue of *Dabiq* convey to the Islamic State's enemies, supporters and potential followers? More importantly, what has changed since the first issue of *Dabiq* in June 2014? These are important questions given the military setbacks, loss of territories including the town of Dabiq after which the magazine was named, the deaths of two top IS propagandists -- Abu Muhammad al-Adnani in August (IS spokesperson and top strategist) and Wa'il Hasan Salman al-Fayad (Minister for Information) in September -- and the recent emergence of a new IS publication, *Rumiyah.*

IS Narratives and Directives

IS purveys three broad narratives in its latest – and possibly last -- issue of *Dabiq* (issue 15), namely, that IS remains strong and lethal; Western non-Muslims should convert to Islam; and IS has justifiable reasons for hating its enemies. The magazine's "Foreword" (editorial) underlines these themes, starting with references to attacks in Orlando, Dhaka, Nice, Normandy and Ansbach among others, and gloating over the atrocities committed by IS. It carries articles boasting about the so-called operations of "soldiers of the Caliphate" in IS provinces, Western cities and other parts of the world, and features a spectrum of operations, from guerrilla warfare in the Philippines and West Africa, assassinations in Bangladesh and Sinai, to suicide bombings in Yemen. It lionizes the fighters' battles and demonstrates its global reach outside its home base in Syria and Iraq.

More ominously, IS not only propagates its distorted version of Islam through articles in *Dabiq*, it also uses the magazine to issue several violent directives to its supporters. It calls on IS "soldiers … to attack without delay" and use any means possible. To Muslims residing outside IS-controlled territories, IS calls on them to perform the purportedly obligatory *bai'ah* (pledge of allegiance) to the self-proclaimed caliph

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or die in a state of *jahiliyah* (un-Islamic ignorance). It exhorts them to obey al-Baghdadi's direct command to *hijrah* (migrate) to IS territories, declaring it obligatory and an act of faith. For those who are unable to do *hijrah*, IS orders them to wage jihad "behind enemy lines" against the "Crusader" nations and their citizens.

Several articles are pointedly directed at Christians, calling on them to embrace Islam and warning them of grave consequences if they refused. A lengthy 17-page feature article, "Break the Cross," attempts to discredit Christianity by questioning the authenticity of the Bible, the concept of the Trinity and the crucifixion and divinity of Jesus. *Dabiq* supplements this with stories of conversions and testimonies of converts, including that of two Canadian Christians who converted to Islam, joined IS and were martyred

Another article, "Why We Hate Them and Why We Fight Them", attempts to 'rationalise' IS animosity towards the West. The reasons given in the article include the West's rejection of Islam, the secular and liberal nature of Western societies, transgressions against Islam, crimes against Muslims, and invasion of Muslim lands. It promises that "as long as there is an inch of territory left for us to reclaim, jihad will continue to be a personal obligation on every single Muslim." As in previous issues, *Dabiq* 15 too quotes heavily from Islamic texts, namely the Qur'an and Hadiths, to lend credibility to its arguments in the various articles.

Dabiq 1-15: Shifts in Form and Focus

Dabiq was launched following the inauguration of the caliphate on 29 June 2014. It began as a monthly publication but soon became a bimonthly in 2015 and quarterly in 2016. *Dabiq* 15 was released on 31 July, more than three months after *Dabiq* 14 (released on 14 April). This hiatus reflects to some extent the disruption of IS media apparatus caused by the relentless military assaults on the ground.

While the frequency of *Dabiq* has been affected, its quality has remained fairly intact. The extraction of Quranic verses or texts from the Hadith appears unimpaired, even if they are selectively and improperly cited. *Dabiq* continues to retain a group of writers and researchers who not only have some 'familiarity' with Islamic religious texts and history but also Christian and

> " *Dabiq* continues to retain a group of writers and researchers who not only have some 'familiarity' with Islamic religious texts and history but also Christian and Jewish scriptures and Western history. "

Jewish scriptures and Western history. Graphic design and layout and artistic work for the magazine also seems unaffected. The quality of articles in terms of language, arguments and presentation would also appear persuasive to the less informed and vulnerable members of the community. However, not much is known about the core writers and editors, their nationalities, ethnic group, qualifications and whether they operate in IS-controlled territories or outside as most of the articles carry no by-lines. Given the ease and convenience of online and editing facilities, the possibility for some of the writing and editorial work being done outside IS-controlled territories cannot be ruled out.

While the *Dabiq* magazines illustrate how IS consolidates its power, justifies its actions and authority, organises its military strategy and argues against its enemies (Gambhir 2014), the themes and focus of the publication have shifted over the years, in response to the context of the times and events on the ground. In the first five issues, *Dabiq* focused mostly on IS and the consolidation of its power, emphasising on *hijrah* (migration) to Syria and Iraq, jihad against the West and its allies, the importance of the *ummah* or the Muslim community, and the expansion of the caliphate within the Levant and outside. These themes are reflected in the titles of these issues, such as "The Return of the Khilafah", "The Flood", "A Call to Hijrah"and "Remaining and Expanding" (issues 1, 2, 3, and 5). However, the subsequent issues did not put as much

emphasis on *hijrah* and jihad in Syria and Iraq. Instead, they highlighted and encouraged jihad in the home countries of IS supporters. Colas (2016, 12) noted that this has perhaps become more important to the cohesion and survival of the group as their territorial expansion has slowed and even shrank

In fact, *Dabiq* has shown an increasing emphasis on the expansion of the caliphate beyond Syria and Iraq to reaffirm IS image as a global caliphate. *Dabiq* began to publish "A Selection of Military Operations" from issues 11 (August/ September 2015) to 15 (July 2016) to reflect the operations and attacks conducted "by the mujahidin of the Islamic State that have succeeded in expanding the territory of the Khilafah" in IS provinces and elsewhere, such as in Somalia, Bangladesh and the Philippines.

In projecting IS' continued strength and lethality, *Dabiq* 15 deliberately avoids publishing a host of problems confronting IS. *Dabiq* 15 does not mention IS' military reverses and loss of over 40 percent of its territories, including border areas with Turkey, which is a major blow to the group's ability to receive foreign fighters from the rest of the world (Withnall 2016). *Dabiq* fails to report that in Sirte (Libya), which was considered to be IS possible fall-back option, IS is losing control to pro-government forces backed by US air strikes (Reuters 2016). IS is also losing fighters (from a peak of 33,000 to about 18,000-22,000), and it is plagued by the loss of revenue, financial misappropriations, internal resistance, infiltration by spies, and infighting between recruits of different nationalities (Weiss 2016; Hudson 2016). The omission of these adverse developments is part of IS efforts, through *Dabiq*, to continue to project IS as a strong and viable political entity and fighting force.

While many of the articles in *Dabiq* are directed against the Christians, Jews and other "disbelievers", it is equally virulent in its attacks against anti-IS Muslims (whom they regard as apostates) and rival jihadist groups. While *Dabiq* still includes attacks on the West, such as executions of foreign captives and attacks on Western countries, issues 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12 shifted their focus to internal jihadi disputes by criticising Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Al-Nusrah Front, and other rebel groups in Syria as well as their Arab nation allies. It specifically addressed the Al Salul, the derogatory name used for the Saud monarch of Saudi Arabia, in an effort to mock and delegitimise the regime. Meanwhile,

" Dabiq has shown an increasing emphasis on the expansion of the caliphate beyond Syria and Iraq to reaffirm IS image as a global caliphate. "

issues 7 and 14 denounce alternative Islamic perspectives of the Muslim Brotherhood, and prominent imams and scholars such as the Grand Sheikh of Al Azhar, Ahmed Al Tayeb, and American Muslim scholars Hamza Yusuf and Suhaib Webb. Issue 13 went to great lengths in debunking Shi'ism with allegations of Shiite religious transgressions and conspiracies.

Rumiyah

Perhaps the more intriguing shift in IS's media strategy is the surprising publication of another English online magazine called *Rumiyah*. Like *Dabiq*, this too is published by Al-Hayat. The first issue was released on 5 September, a week after IS's spokesperson and key propagandist Abu Muhammad Al-Adnani was killed; a second issue came out in early October, which is fast by IS standards. The name *Rumiyah* or Rome in Arabic is taken from a quote by Abu Hamza Al-Muhajir, a leader of the then Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), "…we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah (Rome)". 'Rumiyah' is also mentioned in a Hadith which is reproduced in the last page of both issues, where the Prophet was asked, which of the two cities, Constantinople or Rumiyah, would be conquered first, and his reply was Constantinople (now Istanbul). The change of name hints at IS's new directions, from Dabiq -- a northern Syrian town where jihadists believe the 'crusader armies' would be defeated in an apocalyptic final battle -- to Rome or more broadly the West. The anticipated loss of Dabiq in the near future – it finally fell to Turkish-backed rebels on 16 October -- probably necessitates the shift towards Rome, creating an alternative battle space outside Syria and Iraq. Interestingly, the penultimate paragraph of *Dabiq* 15 editorial (Foreword) assures its readers: "And have no

doubt that the war will only end with the black flag of Tawhid (Islamic monotheism) fluttering over Constantinople and Rome…"

As Turkish and Syrian rebel forces moved closer to *Dabiq* since August this year, there has been speculation that *Rumiyah* would replace *Dabiq* (McKernan 2016). While this remains to be seen, it will not be a surprising development should this come to pass. Prior to the inauguration of the self-proclaimed 'caliphate' in late June 2014, the *Islamic State Report* was IS's first English-language magazine that focused on brief descriptions of IS's major battles and advances, with heavily-used visual illustrations depicting battles, executions of prisoners and IS's governance-related matters and activities. *Dabiq* succeeded the *Islamic State Report* following the announcement of the caliphate, retaining its original content but with more topics added to it. *Rumiyah* may take *Dabiq's* place but analysts have noted its inferior quality -- *Rumiyah* lacks the apocalyptic narrative of *Dabiq*, relies on recycled articles and is significantly shorter than *Dabiq* (McKernan 2016).

Even so, the impact of *Rumiyah* is not to be underestimated. Like *Dabiq*, its arguments are purportedly 'supported' by Quranic verses and sayings from the Hadith, as well as historical precedents which would appeal to IS loyalists, reaffirm their beliefs, and strengthen their commitment to IS and its global jihadi struggle. For example, *Rumiyah's* editorial argues that the death of Al-Adnani and other top ranking leaders would not undermine IS for Al-Adnani will be replaced by another "who will inflict them [IS enemies] with a far worse torment"; it cites Al-Adnani as an example of a fighter who carried on the struggle of IS founder Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi after his death. *Rumiyah's* articles pray for the conquest of Constantinople and Rome, seek to fortify the faith of IS followers, promote IS' global caliphate and call for 'lone wolf' attacks. It reminds Muslims residing outside IS territories "that the blood of the disbelievers is halal, and killing them is a form of worship" (*Rumiyah*, 1). *Rumiyah* 2 echoes the same line, declaring that "Muslims residing in the West, in particular, have an opportunity to terrorise the Crusaders themselves as well as the imams of kufr allied to the Crusaders." It also celebrates the sacrifices of the Bangladeshis who attacked the Gulshan (in Dhaka) restaurant and justifies IS brutality and savagery.

> " *Rumiyah's* articles pray for the conquest of Constantinople and Rome, seek to fortify the faith of IS followers, promote IS' global caliphate and call for 'lone wolf' attacks. "

Conclusion

It is moot whether *Rumiyah* replaces *Dabiq* as they and other IS publications spread a virulent religio-political ideology that promote extremism, vilify its enemies and glorify hate, violence and terror. IS digital publications incite supporters to mount terror attacks against everyone who does not embrace IS jihadi beliefs, and pledge allegiance to al-Baghdadi. These online publications are responsible for the radicalisation and recruitment of thousands of IS supporters and its affiliates all over the world. IS makes effective use of information and communications technology (ICT) to disseminate knowledge on bomb-making techniques to extremists and facilitate vital communications between jihadists. Much has been done in the last one year to bring down jihadist online forums and IS content websites. IS will, however, continue to find ways of circumventing such counter-measures to publicise its violent propaganda and provoke atrocities. In this respect, exposing IS exploitation of religious texts online is crucial in neutralising its negative impact on vulnerable constituencies. It is also imperative that governments and ICT companies collaborate further to neutralise IS's entire propaganda apparatus and infrastructure. IS should be put on the defensive and forced to retreat not only on the military front as is the case now but also in the unregulated cyber world.

An ominous message coming out from the latest issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is the new direction of the crumbling 'caliphate'. Following a string of military losses in Iraq and Syria – and more to come starting with Mosul -- IS has

changed strategy and is now creating an alternative battle ground outside the Levant, reaffirming itself as the global caliphate with its present wilayahs (provinces) as IS enclaves. It has set its sights on Rumiyah (Rome), meaning the West, and deemed all Christians, 'apostate' Muslims and non-believers everywhere as legitimate targets for attacks. From a state-building entity in Iraq and Syria, IS has now focussed more on terrorist operations over the last one year, embarking on terrorist attacks and inspiring 'lone wolf' attacks through its violent propaganda. It will strive to direct or inspire more terror attacks, escalate propaganda work, and build up its underground networks. IS can also be expected to work towards the consolidation of its existing wilayahs and territories from West Africa to Bangladesh and the Philippines with returning IS fighters, and creation of new enclaves in vulnerable areas and conflict zones. The global battle against IS will be a long one unless its leaders in the Levant and the wilayahs are neutralised and its ideology of hate and savagery discredited.

Nur Aziemah Binte Azman is an Associate Research Fellow with the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

References:

Colas, Brandon. "What Does Dabiq Do? ISIS Hermeneutics and Organizational Fractures within Dabiq Magazine." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* Accessed September 15, 2016. DOI:10.1080/1057610X.2016.1184062

Gambhir, Harleen K. 2014. Dabiq: The Strategic Messaging of the Islamic State. *The Institute for the Study of War.* Accessed September 15, 2016.

Hudson, John. "Top US Official: Islamic State Has Lost 47 Percent of its Territory in Iraq." *Foreign Policy*, June 28, 2016.

Ingram, Haroro J. 2016. *Dabiq, Issue 15: A Call to Islamic State's Enemies as the Caliphate Crumbles.* Accessed September 15, 2016

Ingram, Haroro J. 2015 What Analysis of the Islamic State's Messaging Keeps Missing. *The Washington Post.* Accessed September 16, 2016

Islamic State. 2016. "Break the Cross". Dabiq. *Issue 15.*

Islamic State. 2016. "The Murtadd Brotherhood". Dabiq. *Issue 14.*

Islamic State. 2016. "The Rafidah: From Ibn Saba' to the Dajjal". Dabiq. *Issue 13.*

Islamic State. 2015. "Just Terror". Dabiq. *Issue 12.*

Islamic State. 2015. "From the Battle of Al-Ahzab to the War of Coalitions". Dabiq. *Issue 11.*

Islamic State. 2015. "They Plot and Allah Plots". Dabiq. *Issue 9.*

Islamic State. 2015. "Shari'ah Alone will Rule Africa". Dabiq. *Issue 8.*

Islamic State. 2015. "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy". Dabiq. *Issue 7.*

Islamic State. 2014. "Al-Qaidah of Waziristan: A Testimony from Within". Dabiq. *Issue 6.*

Islamic State. 2014. "Remaining and Expanding". Dabiq. *Issue 5.*

Islamic State. 2014. "The Failed Crusade". Dabiq. *Issue 4.*

Islamic State. 2014. "A Call to Hijrah". Dabiq. *Issue 3.*

Islamic State. 2014. "The Flood". Dabiq. *Issue 2.*

Islamic State. 2014. "The Return of the Isis' new magazine Rumiyah shows the terror group is 'struggling to adjust to losses". Dabiq. *Issue 1.*

McKernan, Bethan. Isis' new magazine Rumiyah shows the terror group is 'struggling to adjust to losses'. *Independent,* September 6, 2016. Accessed October 7, 2016.

Milton, Daniel. Communication Breakdown: Unraveling the Islamic State's Media Efforts. *Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point*, October 10, 2016.

Moore, Jack. Does the Death of Abu Mohammad Al-Adnani Spell the End for ISIS? *Newsweek*, August 31, 2016. Accessed October 7, 2016.

Reuters. Heavy toll weighs on Misrata after battle for Libya's Sirte. *Al-Arabiya English*. Accessed October 8, 2016.

Robins-Early, Nick. 4 Things To Know About Dabiq, ISIS' Slick Propaganda Magazine. *The Huffington Post,* February 10, 2016. Accessed September 16, 2016.

The Clarion Project. The Islamic State's (ISIS, ISIL) Magazine. Accessed September 19, 2016

The Carter Center. Overview of Daesh's Online Recruitment Propaganda Magazine. Accessed September 19, 2016.

The Soufan Group IntelBrief. The Insecurity of the Islamic State. Accessed September 19, 2016.

Weiss, Michael. Leaked ISIS Documents Show Internal Chaos. *The Daily Beast*, August 30, 2016. Accessed October 8, 2016.

Winter, Charlie. The Virtual 'Caliphate': Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy. *Quilliam Foundation*.

Withnall, Adam. Isis 'cut off from rest of world' as rebels expel Islamists from Turkish border. *The Independent*, September 4, 2016. Accessed October 7, 2016.

Zelin, Aaron Y. ICSR Insight – The Decline in Islamic State Media Output. Accessed September 16, 2016.

_____

'CUBS OF THE CALIPHATE': THE ISLAMIC STATE'S FOCUS ON CHILDREN

SARA MAHMOOD

The so-called Islamic State (IS) enlists children, lauded as the 'cubs of the caliphate', for short-term tactical gains in armed combat and long-term strategic gains to ensure the longevity of the 'caliphate'. Even if IS is defeated militarily, the large pool of children indoctrinated in IS ideology and desensitised to violence will pose a challenge to peace and stability.

Introduction

It has been estimated that children between the ages of 8 to 15 have been recruited to join the ranks of multiple armed groups within the Syrian conflict (Berti & Osete 2015). In this case, one of the predominant recruiters of children is the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) that continues to enlist children for armed combat, suicide and intelligence operations and other logistical tasks. It has been estimated that at least 1,100 children joined IS in 2015, whereas close to 900 children between the ages of 9 and 15 years were abducted by the group (Anderson 2016; Gorka, Gorka & Herzog 2016). However, these estimates remain dubious due to the lack of consolidated official numbers on IS membership.

Yet IS propaganda in the cyber domain is testimony to the imperative role of children within the so-called 'Islamic State'. Since the declaration of the caliphate in 2014, IS has released multiple videos and articles depicting children receiving training in combat, partaking in armed combat and executing dissidents and prisoners in IS-held territories (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies 2016). In *Dabiq*, the IS official magazine, IS children are referred to as the 'Cubs of the Caliphate' who will become the 'Lions of Tomorrow' (Dabiq 2015). This signifies the importance IS attaches to children within its ranks, beyond tactical benefits that they may provide. This article will discuss the phenomenon of children in the 'Islamic State', focusing on their recruitment, the short-term and long-terms goals of their inclusion along with the consequences of their participation.

Background: Children in Armed Conflict

It is pertinent to note that the title accorded to the IS children depicts stark resemblance to Saddam's Lions Cubs, which was a child soldier unit controlled by former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (Singer 2003). The unit was formed after Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War in 1991, and comprised boys between the ages of 10 to 15. This unit not only focused on providing military training to young children, but also concentrated on systematic desensitisation and indoctrination centred on Ba'athist ideology.

Overall, the use of children in armed conflict or terrorism is not unique to the Islamist, Iraqi or Syrian case. During the Nazi regime in Germany, Adolf Hitler created the Hitler Youth organisation extolling it as the future of Germany. Members of the Hitler Youth were as young as 14 and indoctrinated with Nazi ideology and trained in armed combat. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) also recruited child soldiers extensively since the outbreak of the civil war in Sri Lanka. LTTE children were actively involved in suicide missions and armed combat and also acted as bodyguards for the group leaders. IS is also not the only entity employing children in Iraq and Syria, as various other state and non-state armed groups engage in the same. Most Iraqi Shia militias aligned with the government recruit children, while in Syria the Free

Syrian Army (FSA), Islamic Front, Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) and Ahrar al-Sham conscript children in their ranks. Despite provisions in international law against the recruitment of children under 18 for participation in any capacity within armed groups, children are recruited avidly.

The Methods of Recruitment

IS relies on voluntary and forced recruitment to fill its ranks with children for a wide range of operational and logistical roles. First, IS tends to recruit children through various public events and rallies within its territories in Iraq and Syria. During these rallies that are more often referred to as *Dawah* (the call to Islam or proselytising), IS members distribute food and drinks to the public and screen their propaganda for attracting the youth (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies 2016). In addition, while a significant number of children join IS voluntarily, there are cases of forced membership in the ethnic minorities. There have been reports of Kurdish children being abducted and coerced into becoming a part of IS. Specifically, in May 2014, 600 Kurdish children in Aleppo were kidnapped by IS members and 186 of them were sent to IS training camps and schools for indoctrination (Anderson 2016).

According to UNICEF, more than two million children between the ages of 5 to 17 were out of school in Syria in 2015, and the number is growing with the progression of the conflict. In this scenario, more than 670,000 children out of school in IS-held territories have been easy targets for education-based recruitment campaigns (UNICEF 2015). As such, IS has reopened previously shut schools in its territories and recruits children under the guise of providing free education. IS is known to offer a remuneration amounting to USD$100 on a monthly basis for children (Human Rights Watch 2014). This monetary compensation is appealing for children living in a conflict zone and facing abject poverty due to the lack of employment opportunities for their parents and caretakers. In other cases, this monthly salary remains equally crucial for children who are orphaned as a result of the conflict in IS-held territories.

Roles of the Cubs of the Caliphate

Short-Term Tactical: Operational Victories for IS

IS has recruited children in its ranks for multiple

> " **IS relies on voluntary and forced recruitment to fill its ranks with children for a wide range of operational and logistical roles.** "

tactical 'benefits' including ensuring victories against territorial encroachments, defeating the enemies and gaining international attention through its brutality. Children provide a low-cost pool of recruits that can act as human shields to protect experienced and invaluable fighters from attacks. In addition, IS has also recruited children as fighters to compensate for its shrinking pool of adult fighters (Alfred 2016). As such, children fight alongside adults in the battlefield, handling weapons and at times also acting as human shields.

Moreover, IS has also made use of children as suicide bombers due to their ability to penetrate targets without being detected. A study estimated that 21 child suicide bombers from IS were killed in the first seven months of 2015 alone (Alfred 2016). Specifically, in August 2016, reports indicated that an IS suicide bomber as young as 12 years old, targeted a wedding reception in Turkey killing at least 50 people. IS also uses children in its propagandist videos showing them conducting executions in order to create fear within its enemies and attract international attention. In August 2016, ISIS released a video showcasing five young children of foreign fighters killing five Kurdish fighters (Browne 2016).

Long-Term Strategic: Generational Longevity of IS

IS is geared towards the creation of a state and the group intends to raise future generations of the 'caliphate' through a long-term and elaborate ideological mission. IS is essentially investing in the longevity of its 'caliphate' by educating the children "so that their radical message endures beyond the group itself" (Gorka, Gorka & Herzog 2016). Thus, aside from provision of military training, IS actively seeks to 'educate' its cubs with a multigenerational vision in mind. It has

been reported that after taking control of a territory, IS first closes down existing educational institutes and reopens them under its banner. IS has institutionalised its indoctrinatory efforts through taking control of schools within its territories in Iraq and Syria.

In IS-controlled schools existing textbooks have been rewritten and new ones have been introduced, which focus on Arabic, Maths and Islamic studies removing sciences from the syllabus. As the purveyor of 'Islamic values', IS actively indoctrinates children through a curriculum that demonises the apostates or disbelievers. The books taught in IS schools depict images of weapons and suicide vests (Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies 2016). This systematic exposure and demonisation legitimises violence in the eyes of children and tends to desensitise them. In the long-term the sustained indoctrination permits IS to succeed in creating generations of jihadists who are predisposed to the group's ideological mission and brutality. In this sense, IS manages to ensure that the cubs of today are the lions of the 'caliphate' tomorrow. The institutionalised indoctrinatory efforts are globalised in nature and not limited to Iraq and Syria, as IS has even encouraged the creation of schools in its *wilayats* (satellite provinces). It has been reported that Wilayat Khurasan, the IS province in Afghanistan, is educating local children as young as three years old to carry forward the banner of IS in the future (Gorka, Gorka and Herzog 2016).

Long-Term Impact of the Recruitment of Children

Just as IS has a multigenerational vision while recruiting and indoctrinating children, the results of such efforts also evoke a multigenerational impact. The legacy of war and its psychological aftermath will continue to shape the lives of children who are recruited by IS. Multiple studies have indicated that children who have participated in violence during armed conflict tend to suffer from psychological illnesses, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety. A study focusing on the former child soldiers of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Congo revealed that more than 90 percent of the children exhibited symptoms of PTSD, while others suffered from anxiety (Benotman & Malik 2016). In addition, continued exposure to violence could possibly lead to the steady internalisation of violence as the norm.

> " The legacy of war and its psychological aftermath will continue to shape the lives of children who are recruited by IS. "

In the event of a cessation of hostilities, IS-held territories will be left with children who are heavily indoctrinated and exposed to the horrors of war. In such a scenario, the children who are disarmed and demobilised may pose a threat to peace. The IS ideology will continue to resonate within this generation of children that represent the future of the respective countries. Consequently the participation of children in IS induces a cyclical pattern of violence that is likely to persist at three levels, (a) children involved in violence are likely to fall back towards the same, (b) children will continue to represent and fight for IS in light of the systemic indoctrination (c) and the present generation of children will act as a catalyst for the mobilisation and recruitment of subsequent generations.

In order to mitigate such a scenario, detailed disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and rehabilitation (DDRR) programmes need to be prioritised (Benotman & Malik 2016). Even though there is an understanding that the participation of children in violence violates acceptable war conduct, child soldiers remain neglected during the post-conflict restructuration stage after cessation of hostilities. As such, the physical, psychological and social needs of IS-indoctrinated children need to be a critical part of any such programmes. For children who have lost out on proper schooling, while being a part of IS, providing them educational training will create economic alternatives to being a part of a terrorist organisation. Moreover, provided that IS is defeated, educational programmes, vocational training and reuniting abducted children with their family members will be imperative to prevent them from falling back into violence. Such efforts should not be limited only to Iraq and Syria as a portion of the returning foreign fighters comprise children as well. The introduction of sustained and cohesive DDRR programmes in these countries is therefore critical to reduce the

adverse impact of IS indoctrination on children and their participation in violence.

Sara Mahmood is a Research Analyst with the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), a constituent unit of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

References:

Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies. 2016. "The Cubs of the Caliphate: How the Islamic State Attracts, Coerces and Indoctrinates Children to its Cause."

Alfred, Charlotte. "A Shocking Number Of Kids Are Fighting And Dying For ISIS," The World Post, February 19, 2016.

Anderson, Kara. "Cubs of the Caliphate: The Systematic Recruitment, Training and Use of Children in the Islamic State," *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism*, January 2016.

Berti, Benedetta & Osete, Axel Bea. "Generation War: Syria's Children Caught Between Internal Conflict and the Rise of the Islamic State," *Strategic Assessment* 18 (3), October 2015.

Benotman, Noman & Malik, Nikita. 2016. "The Children of Islamic State," *Quilliam Foundation*.

Browne, Gareth. "'British child' shown executing man in shocking new ISIS propaganda video," *Mirror*. August 26, 2016.

Crowcroft, Orlando. "From Boko Haram to ISIS, the use of child suicide bombers has a long and bloody terrorist pedigree," *International Business Times*. August 22, 2016.

Dabiq. 2015. "Shariah Alone will Rule Africa," (Issue 8). pp. 19-20.

Gorka, Sebastian L., Gorka, Katharine C. and Herzog, Claire. 2016. "Rising Threat: Islamic State's Militarization of Children," *Threat Knowledge Group*.

Human Rights Watch. "Maybe We Live, Maybe We Die: Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Groups in Syria."

Singer, Peter W. "Facing Saddam's Child Soldiers," *Brookings Institution*. January 14, 2003.

Singer, Peter W. 2006. *Children at War*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, pp. 116-131.

UNICEF. "New Year in Syria offers little chance of children's education as schools remain targets of conflict," January 6, 2015.

_____

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: ENGAGING PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTORS

DB SUBEDI AND BERT JENKINS

This article examines the roles peace and development actors can play in preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE). It discusses key issues and concerns regarding violence and extremism from conflict, security and development lens, and highlights some preventive ways in which peace and development actors could engage in PCVE.

Introduction

Countries affected by armed conflict encounter extremism of various kinds. This includes those linked to religious radicalisation, identity and nationalism, right-wing extremism, inequality and injustice, as well as political violence. There is an intrinsic link between conflict and violent extremism, whereby the former breeds the latter and vice versa. Violent extremism in conflict-affected countries disrupts security and development and reverses peacebuilding gains. Moreover, it also deteriorates social cohesion between communities that are already divided by conflicts. As such, the article addresses the question of how local peace and development actors can play a role in preventing or at least reducing the prevalence violent extremism.

Peace and development actors refer to non-government and civil society organisations involved in driving change for peace, security and development at the local and national levels. Building durable peace would require, among other things, satisfying 'basic human needs' such as survival needs, wellbeing needs, identity needs and freedom needs (Galtung 1980). Economic wellbeing and development are necessary to sustain peace (Buchanan 2014). Therefore, peacebuilding and development practices complement each other and are pertinent in preventing violent extremism.

Countering Violent Extremism: Issues and Concerns through the Conflict, Security and Development Lens

The nexus between conflict and extremist violence

Considering the varied definitions, this article broadly defines violent extremism as the willingness to use violence, or support the use of violence, to advance particular political, ideological and social beliefs (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino & Caluya 2011). Conflict and violent extremism have a reciprocal relation. Countries affected by armed conflicts experience fragile security situations, bad governance, organised crimes, social and economic inequalities, and political instability that enable extremist groups to mobilise. When extremism is a result of intractable conflict, violent and dispersed non-state armed outfits proliferate, with many using weapons and armed fighters; they even infiltrate political parties and create new terrorist groups, making a conflict complicated to resolve (Oliva, 2015; Quinney & Coyne 2011). Preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) in the field is linked to the underlying conflict, security risks and development initiatives (Holmer 2013). However, these links are either understudied or undermined. The predominant use of force to counter violent extremism could undermine peacbuilding efforts at the fragile nexus between conflict, security and extremism.

Between 1989 and 2014, more than 88 percent of all terrorist attacks occurred in countries experiencing or involved in an ongoing conflict. This figure demonstrates inherent links between conflict and violent extremism. Conversely, less than 0.6 percent of terrorist attacks have occurred in countries that are not experiencing ongoing conflict and violence (IEP, 2015: 71). Between 1992 and 2012, 26 sub-national conflicts have occurred at the margins of relatively strong, as well as weak, states in South and Southeast Asia (SSEA) (Parks, Colletta, & Oppenheim 2013). These conflicts zones are home to armed groups including extremist and terrorist groups. This also reveal the links between conflict and extremism at a regional level, but moreover countering violent extremism in SSEA must obviously entail dealing with conflict and building peace.

Indeed, existing conflicts breed extremism. The latter in turn produces far worse dynamics of violence, which is inflicted by both local and foreign actors and harms people locally as well as far afield. For instance, ongoing ethno-religious violence led by Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) in Sri Lanka, and Buddhist monks against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar is predominantly inflicted by local groups, which have adverse consequences for politics, economy, security, national reconciliation and social cohesion. Addressing the violence between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar is necessary to achieve social justice, social cohesion and address national reconciliation in order to build peace in Myanmar. Additionally, conflict zones across the world have been targets for expansion and recruitment by foreign or transnational extremist groups such as the Islamic State (IS). The so-called IS *Wilayats* (governorates) and local affiliates and supporters are located in war zones in Syria and Iraq as well as other conflict affected countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, the Philippines, and Indonesia (Gunaratna & Hornell-Scott, 2016). Thus the impact of violence emerging from the nexus between conflict and extremism is pervasive. Extremism affects peace and conflict dynamics not only at the local level but also across borders. As such, both local and transnational impacts of violence have to be central foci in PCVE policies and actions.

Securitisation of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) discourse to a 'soft security approach'

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the CVE

" The soft security approach is based on understanding social, cultural and political drivers of violence, including the contexts and dynamics that enable extremist ideas to emerge, grow and sustain . "

policies adopted by Western developed countries took an 'interventionist' approach, also known as the 'hard security approach.' This approach involves surveillance, policing and the implementation of anti-terror laws (Spalek & Imtoual, 2007). The lack of a clear distinction between the concepts of 'extremism', radicalisation and 'terrorism' amongst countries waging the 'War on Terror' culminated in a policy discourse that favoured military solutions to combat extremism.

With the rise of what is known as 'home grown' extremism (see COPS, 2014) in developed countries, PCVE policies have gradually tended to combine the hard security approach with what is known as the 'soft security approach.' The soft security approach is based on understanding social, cultural and political drivers of violence, including the contexts and dynamics that enable extremist ideas to emerge, grow and sustain (Stern, 2009). This approach facilitates community partnerships and social integration, and aims at promoting social cohesion. For example, such an approach has been adopted by Australia through its 'Living Together Safe' Programme and the 'Building Community Grants Programme' (BCGP). However, the US and other Western countries continue to elude 'soft security' when it comes to dealing with extremism abroad. Even though there is a growing recognition of involving multi-

stakeholder partnerships - engaging the community, youth, women, religious leaders and the private sector - yet, militarism remains a major approach in fighting extremism in the Middle East and Africa for many Western countries such as the US, UK, France and Australia (Holmer, 2013).

The combination of hard security intervention with a soft security approach for PCVE indicates a gradual policy shift in dealing with extremism, at least in principle. But in practice, it also exhibits an inherent contradiction because while it encourages some form of partnership between security forces and local actors, it also simultaneously continues to securitise PCVE policies and actions on the ground through the ways in which security forces are involved in implementation. Ideally the blending of a hard security approach with a soft security approach may be desirable in dealing with extremely violent groups such as IS. However, the way in which all forms of extremism is constructed as a national and/or international security threat, not only securitises the PCVE discourse but also limits the roles that peace and development actors can play as peacebuilders locally. Examples from Kenya and Uganda, among others, have demonstrated how de-securitisation can actually work, in the sense of how PCVE policies and programmes determine the extent to which peace and development actors rather than security forces bring positive changes through PCVE actions. The Kenya Community Support Centre (KECOSCE) in Kenya and the Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF) in Uganda, for instance, made notable contributions to increasing the resilience of youth by disseminating counter-narratives to violent extremism and providing safe space for dialogue among the communities, with public institutions, local government officials, politicians and development actors dealing with grievances so that it ultimately fosters social cohesion (Hadji & Hassan, 2014).

Emerging enabling policy environment

In the last decade, several initiatives have culminated in the broadening of policy and frameworks that are likely to foster peace and development actors' proactive roles in preventing extremism. In 2006, the United Nations adopted the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In 2014, this culminated in the UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which encourages UN member states to counter violent extremism as the first

> " the extent to which peace and development actors can involve themselves in PCVE works at the local level will depend largely on several national and local factors. "

step to preventing terrorism. The Resolution also urges the empowerment of youth, families, women, religious, cultural and educational leaders and other relevant members of civil society in PCVE. Similarly, UN Security Council Resolution 2250, adopted in 2015, urges member states to increase representation of youth at the decision-making levels, including in government institutions, as a mechanism to counter violent extremism. The Amman Youth Declaration on Youth, Peace and Security 2015 provides another notable framework to facilitate youth participation in preventing and countering violence (Global Forum on Youth Peace and Security, 2015). Likewise, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which highlight the imperatives of peace and human security for sustainable development, also encourages a multi-stakeholder collaboration at different levels, between state and non-state actors, to achieve peace, security and development.

In February 2016, the UN Secretary General presented his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which will be reviewed by the General Assembly later in 2016. Coming from the highest authority in the UN system, the Plan calls not only for hard security counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive action to address the underlying causes and drivers of radicalisation and extremism (UN, 2015).

Despite these policy innovations at a global scale, the extent to which peace and development actors can involve themselves in

PCVE works at the local level will depend largely on several national and local factors. This includes the willingness and ability of a state to develop a National Plan of Action on PCVE and what space the plan will have in which to forge a partnership between government, security and non-government actors. One sure way to make this work would be to involve the 'grassroots' and civil society in developing the plan with state. In the absence of such a National Plan of Action, peace and development actors may miss out on formal recognition of a function they are capable of performing well at the grass roots. Without formal recognition, peacebuilding and development actors may be able to coordinate with government, but they would most likely lack legitimacy and necessary institutional support. They may require support from the government for their own protection in the course of carrying out the peace and development work that enables them to engage in violence prevention. The lack of recognition and/or legitimacy can result in peace and development actors themselves becoming targets of security forces, as well as extremist armed groups. Consequently, peace and development actors may end up either ignoring extremism and violence or operating in isolation from the mainstream PCVE discourse.

Way forward

Developing early warning/early response system

Peacebuilding and development actors around the world have specialised in developing early warning indicators of violence, which includes collection and analysis of data and dissemination of information to prevent violence before it occurs. For instance, after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka signed a ceasefire agreement in 2002, violence broke out in an eastern town in Sri Lanka after non-Christian groups destroyed 14 Crosses. Following this incident, the Foundation for Co-Existence (FCE) implemented a citizen-based early warning / early response system in the eastern province which was based on a database of forecasting and analysis of potential violence involving local people. These were instrumental in preventing further violence. Similarly, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed a set of indicators for monitoring violence that could potentially lead to violent extremism and religious fundamentalism

> " Peacebuilding and development actors around the world have specialised in developing early warning indicators of violence, which includes collection and analysis of data and dissemination of information to prevent violence before it occurs. "

in West Africa and the Sahel in October 2014 (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2014). This kind of monitoring proved to be preventative.

Early warning / early response systems works well if they engage local people and are linked to the formal top-down system for response to violence. In Sri Lanka, the FCE-led early warning system could not sustain because it was not linked to the formal ceasefire mechanism, whereas the system developed by WANEP was well connected to the macro-level institution, the ECOWAS. Human rights organisations, including community-based organisations, and women's organisations can collaborate with local security agencies, especially community police to share information needed to counter threats (van Ginkel, 2012). However, it should be ensured that information sharing does not lead to increased security threats to local peace and development organisations themselves.

Disseminating non-violent counter narratives

Because of their continuous presence at the local level, peace and development actors are better suited to develop and disseminate nonviolent counter-narratives to prevent violent extremism. The case of Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, the faith-based civil society

organisations in Indonesia, indicates how civil society organisations can disseminate counter-narratives to violent extremism effectively. In collaboration with local human rights organisations, women, civil groups and local government authorities, these faith-based organisations have disseminated non-violent narratives based on Islam through existing networks such as mosques, schools, hospitals, savings collectives and other forms of delivery services (Zeiger, 2016). Similarly, in Germany, the 'Mothers' for Life' network formed by the German Institute for Radicalisation and De-radicalisation advocates the spread of counter-narratives to jihadist radicalisation, and provides a platform for mothers who have experienced violent jihadist radicalisation in their own families (GIRDS, n.d.).

In this regard, peace and development actors utilise education to promote and foster nonviolence, religious and ideological tolerance and social cohesion.

Integrating Conflict Sensitivity (CS) approach to PCVE

Peacebuilding and development agencies apply conflict sensitivity in their work as an approach in conflict-affected areas. Three key principles of conflict sensitivity include 1) understanding context, 2) understanding the interaction between context and development or peacebuilding interventions, and 3) identifying opportunities to minimise negative impacts of an intervention and maximise positive impacts (Haider, 2014). Integrating these principles makes peacebuilding and development work effective and helps avoid negative consequences. Any intervention targeted to prevent or counter violent extremism inherently interacts with the existing conflict and power dynamics. The possibility of producing either good or bad results depends on the extent to which the actors involved in PCVE are aware of and capable to respond to these dynamics. If the local people, whom the intervention is targeting, do not see the intervention as being neutral or supporting a particular side, then it could worsen the conflict dynamics. This is where a hard security approach alone can produce negative consequences. For instance, indiscriminate violence by government security forces pushed more youth to support the violent Maoist cause in Nepal (Subedi, 2013). Conflict sensitivity could therefore be used as a tool to ensure that intervention for PCVE will not worsen the existing

> **" Peace and development actors who work with local communities have a better understanding of local conflict and security dynamics. "**

conflict but rather help to transform the situation and build peace.

Peace and development actors who work with local communities have a better understanding of local conflict and security dynamics. Therefore, they are in a better position to share important information that can be useful for both security and non-security actors, which can then be used to design PCVE interventions in ways that increase positive impacts and decrease negative effects. However, the information coming from some local actor may not necessarily be neutral; therefore, it may require careful verification in at least some situations.

Building safe space for dialogue

Dialogue and interaction is necessary to build trust between socially, culturally and linguistically different groups and also to redress false assumptions and negative attitudes towards the other, which fuels extremism. Local community groups are suitable to this role. For instance, in Indonesia, the Gusdurian network has created a secure platform for dialogue, which brings together youth mainly in Yogykarta to discuss and debate religious identity, respect and celebrate the diversity of young Muslims and discuss social solidarity amongst Muslim youth (Zeiger, 2016). In this regard, the peacebuilding community has significant experience of creating safe spaces for interfaith dialogue in order to prevent conflict (Smock, 2002). Peacebuilding actors can transfer this experience and lessons learned to the field of preventing extremist violence.

Promoting an inclusive and integrated approach

Apart from relying exclusively on security

agencies, an integrated approach involving the government, civil society, youth, women and the private sector is necessary in order to prevent extremism effectively. Caution should be taken to ensure that collaboration between security forces and non-security actors does not reinforce a belligerent securitisation. The lack of linkages between policies at the national level with local level initiatives for reducing social injustices and inequalities and poverty alleviation was a contributing factor for the failure of liberal peacebuilding in Afghanistan (Paris, 2013). Indeed, the value of local actors in peacebuilding, development and violence prevention is undisputable; however, the way in which the micro process is linked to the macro process and vice versa is a gap in PCVE programming. Local peace and development actors are well positioned to mitigate this gap, provided that their role is formally recognised in the relevant policies at the national level.

DB Subedi is Adjunct Lecturer in the School of Humanities at the University of New England (UNE), Australia. Bert Jenkins is Senior Lecturer in the School of Humanities at UNE, Australia.

References:

Buchanan, S. (2014). *Transforming conflict through social and economic development: Practice and policy lessons Northern Ireland and border countries* Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.

COPS. (2014). Awarness Brief: Home grown violent extremism.

GIRDS. (n.d.). Mothers for Life Network.

Global Forum on Youth Peace and Security. (2015). Amman Youth Declaration on youth, peace and security Amman, Jordan Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security.

Gunaratna, R., & Hornell-Scott, N. (2016). The Islamic State Willayats and global expansion. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis 8*(8), 3-7.

Hadji, A., & Hassan, N. (2014). The role of CSOs in countering violent extremism (CVE): A case of actors in East African Region: Uganda Muslim Youth Development Forum (UMYDF).

Haider, H. (2014). *Conflict Sensitivity: Topic Guide*. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

Holmer, G. (2013). Countering Violent Extremism: A Peacebuilding Perspective, Special Report 336. Washington D. C.: United States Institute of Peace (USIP).

IEP. (2015). Global Terrorism Index 2015, Institute for Economics and Peace

Nasser-Eddine, M., Garnham, B., Agostino, K., & Caluya, G. (2011). Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review. Edinburgh, Australia: Australian Government, Department of Defence, Command and Control Division, Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO).

Oliva, F. (2015). Falling walls In J. Javan & A. Wieland-Karimi (Eds.), *Understanding new generation of non-state armed groups* (pp. 75-86).

Paris, R. (2013). Afghanistan: What went wrong? *Perspectives on Politics, 11* (2), 538-548.

Parks, T., Colletta, N., & Oppenheim, B. (2013). *The contested corners of Asia: Subnational conflict and international development assistance*. San Fransisco: The Asia Foundation.

Quinney, N., & Coyne, H. A. (2011). *Talking to groups that use terror* Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Smock, D. R. (Ed.). (2002). *Interfaith dialogue and peacebuilding*. Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Spalek, B., & Imtoual, A. (2007). Muslim communities and counter-terror responses: "Hard" approaches to community engagement in the UK and Australia. *ournal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 27*(2), 185-202.

Stern, J. (2009). Mind over martyr: How to deradicalise Islamist extremism. *Foreign Affairs, 89*(1), 95-108.

Subedi, D. B. (2013). From Civilian to Combatant: Armed recruitment and participation in the Maoists' conflict in Nepal. *Contemporary South Asia, 21*(4), 429-443.

UN. (2015). Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism: Report of the Secretary General New York: United Nations

van Ginkel, B. (2012). Engaging civil society in countering violent extremism: Experiences with the UN Global Counter- Terrorism Strategy. The Hague International Centre for Counter Terrorism.

West Africa Network for Peacebuilding. (2014, 21-22 October). *Stakeholder meeting to develop early warning indicators in on violent extremism in West Africa*, Lagon, Nigeria

Zeiger, S. (2016). *Counter narratives for countering violent extremism (CVE) in South East Asia.* Hedayah.

_____

REGIONAL TERRORISM FINANCING RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK:
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AUSTRALIA

AGUS SANTOSO & SYLVIA WINDYA LAKSMI

Terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and other extremist and militant groups have used countries like Indonesia and Australia to move terrorism funds across the region. This article outlines a regional terrorism financing risk assessment framework for Southeast Asia and Australia designed to cripple the financial support networks of terrorists and their sympathisers. Continued regional cooperation and collaboration in this aspect is critical in the overall effort to counter the scourge of terrorism.

Introduction

In recent months, successful military operations to re-capture territory from the so-called Islamic State (IS) have broken the group's momentum. With its financial infrastructure considerably weakened, IS' continuing ability to sustain its operations to carry out terrorist attacks has been brought under serious question.

Money, in the form of revenue and assets, has always been a key part of a terrorist organisation's survival. Even before IS' emergence, Al Qaeda carried out a series of high-profile terrorist attacks in early to mid-2000 costing between US$ 9,000 to US$ 500,000. For instance, the estimated cost of the attack to the London Underground on 7 July 2005 was around 8,000 GBP (US$ 9,700), while the terrorist attacks to the Madrid Railway on 11 March 2004 was estimated at around 100,000 EUROS (US$ 110,000). In Southeast Asia, terrorist attacks to the Marriot Hotel in Jakarta and Bali in 2003 were estimated to cost between US$ 30,000 and US$ 50,000. The September 11 terrorist attack to the New York Twin Towers, by far the deadliest and most expensive terrorist attack launched by Al Qaeda, was estimated to cost around US$ 400,000 to US$ 500,000.

To raise funds, Al Qaeda relied on its supporters and sympathisers. Internal sources of financing included the wealth from Al Qaeda's then-leader, Osama bin Laden, various front businesses, wealthy members of Al Qaeda, commodity trading and the group's reliance on the drug trade. External sources of wealth included donations from individuals and charities and returns on investments. Unverified external sources also include state sponsorship. Typically, these were carried out via wire or bank transfers and business transactions. Al Qaeda used the funds to procure weapons and equipment, personnel and logistics. The risks associated with terrorism financing have also raised concerns for governments in Southeast Asia and Australia, as terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and other extremist and militant groups have made use of various means to move terrorism funds across the region.

Overview of Global and Regional Terrorism Financing Risk Assessment Initiatives

Established in 1989, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing (FATF) mandates all jurisdictions in the world to conduct risk assessment on terrorism financing. Risk assessment requires countries to conduct comprehensive assessment, identification and analysis of money laundering and terrorist financing risks. Drawing from those assessment results, the governments design strategies to mitigate emerging threats.

The proposal for a Regional Risk Assessment on Terrorism Financing project (RRA) was first raised at a counter-terrorism financing forum in Sydney in November 2015. Co-hosted by Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (INTRAC) and the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC), the event brought together officials and international experts from multilateral organisations and 19 countries. The RRA formed a key part of the Sydney Communiqué, a joint statement which proposed to develop closer multilateral coordination and strengthening legal, regulatory and operational frameworks to detect, disrupt and prosecute terrorist financiers including those financing foreign terrorist fighters within Southeast Asia. Indonesia and Australia jointly agreed to establish further collaboration and innovation in countering terrorism financing by conducting a series of workshops on terrorism financing and to build a technical group to engage with specialists from the Information and Technology sectors (AUSTRAC 2015).

Terrorism Financing Risks and Threats in Southeast Asia and Australia

In February 2016, a terrorism risk assessment workshop was organised by the US in Bali. The workshop was attended by government representatives from Thailand, Philippines and Malaysia. INTRAC proposed a framework to conduct regional assessment on terrorism financing and to strengthen regional efforts to combat regional terrorism financing. Under the framework, four major terrorism financing risks to the region were identified: self-funding from legitimate sources, cross-border movement of funds/value, the potential misuse of Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) and funding from external sources into the region. These terrorism financing risks were sub-divided into three stages: raising of funds, movement of funds and the use of funds (PPATK-AUSTRAC 2016).

Stage 1: Raising of Funds

Fundraising can be conducted through various means, which include funding through legitimate income, non-profit organisations, social media, crowd-funding and criminal activity.

Generally, terrorism financing through legitimate income occurs in small volumes. These funds are then used to make daily purchases as well as to substantiate organisational costs and social services. Transactions are most often conducted

> " **Fundraising can be conducted through various means, which include funding through legitimate income, non-profit organisations, social media, crowd-funding and criminal activity.** "

in cash or through legitimate financial channels. In some cases, funding sources derive from income, sale of personal items, credit cards, loans, welfare payments and pension funds or superannuation.

While regional authorities have detected only a few cases of terrorism financing through non-profit organisations based in Southeast Asia and Australia, there are a significant number of potentially vulnerable and at-risk non-profit organisations operating within the region. Non-profit organisations have the capacity to raise large volumes of funds and are vulnerable to terrorism financing abuse.

Countries assess the risk of fundraising through social media and crowd-funding. Obtaining proof of user identity and intent to use funds for terrorism will remain a challenge for authorities but the digital information gathered from social media could be used to help deter terrorism financing activity and provide detection opportunities.

Finally, the reliance on criminal proceeds to raise funds varies markedly across the region, but the risk of proceeds arising from the criminal activities of extremist and terrorist groups in southern Philippines is particularly high.

Stage 2: Movement of Funds

The movement of funds can occur through the cross-border movement of cash, money transfers through the banking system, and through

alternative remittance and money services.

Cross-border cash movement activities for terrorism financing purpose are identified as posing the greatest risk for Southeast Asian countries and Australia. Extremists and terrorist networks exploit the porous borders and loose maritime boundaries in many parts of the region to move funds from one place to another.

The most common services misused for terrorism financing are bank accounts (personal and businesses) and international funds transfer instructions. Many terrorist groups operating in the region use third parties such as their spouse's accounts or other family relatives' accounts to obscure money trails. Foreign terrorist fighters also use ATMs at transit points within the region to withdraw cash using debit and stored value cards while travelling to the Middle East.

The risk of remitters being misused for terrorism financing is recognised as an inherent vulnerability. The cash-intensive, informal and low-cost nature of remittance businesses makes them an attractive avenue for moving terrorism financing within the region. Strong links to remitter networks in or surrounding foreign high-risk countries also exist, particularly in the Syria-Iraq region including from Jordan and Iraq. Funds sent to support families and communities in high-risk foreign countries provide opportunities for concealment when funds used to finance terrorism is co-mingled with legitimate remittances.

Stage 3: Use of Funds

Regional countries assess that terrorism financing is likely to be used for two broad purposes, namely direct and indirect uses. Direct uses include the procurement of explosive materials and arms (for operational purposes). Indirect uses include propaganda, recruitment and social services (for organisational purposes). The likelihood of terrorists using funding to directly finance their operations is much higher and entails greater risks than indirect uses of funds to finance their organisation.

Indonesia's Response to Regional Risk Assessment Project on Terrorism Financing

In terms of improvements to government policies on countering terrorism financing, Indonesia proposed the National Risk Assessment (NRA)

> " **Many terrorist groups operating in the region use third parties such as their spouse's accounts or other family relatives' accounts to obscure money trails.** "

on non-profit organisations. The NRA yielded significant findings on highest risk regions of terrorism financing by non-profit organisations located in big cities and also in conflict regions. Indonesia proposed a set of recommendation to establish robust regulations for non-profit organisations. In the near future, Indonesian authorities could manage and monitor the financial flows of donations vulnerable to being misused by terrorists. It is hoped that this initiative would encourage other jurisdictions, especially in Southeast Asia, to conduct similar assessments. Indonesia also committed to a number of priorities in combating terrorism financing. These include the development of a secure and trusted mechanism to improve information flows between governments, a proposal to conduct an in-depth study of cross-border cash movements in the region to monitor and disrupt terrorism financing at critical border points, to examine the impact of potential drivers on the nature and extent of terrorism financing in Southeast Asia and Australia and lastly, to strengthen regional cooperation and intelligence information exchanges with Southeast Asian countries and close partners such as Australia.

Indonesia also identified key vulnerabilities essential to crippling terrorism financing. Payment via prepaid cards was identified as one of the key vulnerabilities. The ability to transfer money anonymously and instantaneously over the globe are viewed as important elements in sustaining the operational needs of terrorist organisations (Choo 2009). Cash-based cards are encoded with data in either a magnetic stripe or a computer chip and preloaded with a fixed amount of electronic currency or value. Such cash-based cards can be redeemed or transferred to individuals and/or merchants in a manner that is similar to spending physical

currency or using account-based cards (e.g. debit cards, credit cards, and charge cards). The use of stored value cards and online payment platforms for terrorism financing is more likely to increase, should detection or disruption of cash, money transfers through the banking system, and through alternative remittance and money services force a shift to more rudimentary transfer of funds. Countries should consider regulating stored value cards to better protect them from misuse and collect valuable customer due diligence and transaction information. Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) and other intelligence agencies need to maintain a close watch on global terrorism risks and shifts to the geopolitical landscape.

Looking Ahead

By assessing the risks of terrorism financing in Southeast Asia and Australia, countries could proactively conduct robust collaboration to disconnect the lifeline of terrorism both in the regional and international level. An outcome of combating terrorism financing through regional cooperation is that governments would be better equipped with the risk assessment knowledge and gain incentive to enhance their efforts in detecting and disrupting the illicit financial flows used to finance terrorism.

Agus Santoso is Vice Head at the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (INTRAC/PPATK). Sylvia Windya Laksmi is a Researcher on terrorism financing based in Indonesia.

References:

Asia-Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). *Multual Evaluations.* Accessed October 16, 2016.

AUSTRAC. *Home: The Sydney Communique.* November 2015. Accessed August 29, 2016.

Choo, Kim-Kwang Raymond. "Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Risks of Prepaid Cards Instruments." *Asian Criminology*, 2009: 11-30.

FATF. *INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON COMBATING MONEY LAUNDERING AND THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM & PROLIFERATION: The FATF Recommendations.* International Report, Paris: FATF/OECD, 2012.

FATF. *Methodology for Assessing Compliance with the FATF Recommendations and the Effectiveness of AML/CFT Systems.* Paris: FATF/OECD, 2013.

Gómez, Juan Miguel del Cid. "A Financial Profile of the Terrorism of Al-Qaeda and its Affiliates." *Terrorism Analysts Website.* 2010. Accessed October 16, 2016.

Kiser, Steve. *Financing Terror: An Analysis and Simulation for Affecting Al Qaeda's Financial Infrastructure.* Dissertation, Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2005.

PPATK-AUSTRAC. *Regional Risk Assessment 2016.* Commonwealth of Australia, 2016.

Simser, Jeffrey. "Terrorism financing and the Threat to Financial Institutions." *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, 2011: 334-345.

————

Submissions and Subscriptions

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis

Launched in 2009, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) is the journal of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). Each issue of the journal carries articles with in-depth analysis of topical issues on terrorism and counter-terrorism, broadly structured around a common theme. CTTA brings perspectives from CT researchers and practitioners with a view to produce policy relevant analysis.

The International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research has entered into an electronic licensing relationship with EBSCO, the world's largest aggregator of full text journals and other sources. Full text issues of Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis can be found on EBSCOhost's International Security and Counter-Terrorism Reference Center collection.

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Counter Terrorist Trends and Analysis (CTTA) welcomes contributions from researchers and practitioners in political violence and terrorism, security and other related fields. The CTTA is published monthly and submission guidelines and other information are available at www.rsis.edu.sg/research/icpvtr/ctta. To pitch an idea for a particular issue in 2016, please write to us at ctta@ntu.edu.sg.

For inclusion in the CTTA mailing list, please send your full name, organisation and designation with the subject 'CTTA Subscription' to ctta@ntu.edu.sg.

RSiS | S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Nanyang Technological University

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore. RSIS' mission is to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of security studies and international affairs. Its core functions are research, graduate education and networking. It produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Region Studies. RSIS' activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia Pacific. For more information about RSIS, please visit www.rsis.edu.sg.

৫০০৪৪

The International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) is a specialist research centre within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. ICPVTR conducts research and analysis, training and outreach programmes aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence and mitigating its effects on the international system. The Centre seeks to integrate academic theory with field research, which is essential for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated groups. The Centre is staffed by academic specialists, counter-terrorism analysts and other research staff. The Centre is culturally and linguistically diverse, comprising of functional and regional analysts from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America as well as Islamic religious scholars. Please visit www.rsis.edu.sg/research/icpvtr/ for more information.
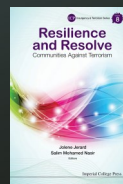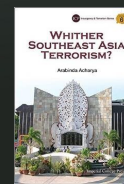
STAFF PUBLICATIONS
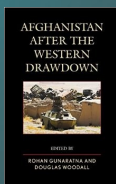
Afghanistan After The Western Drawdawn
Rohan Gunaratna and Douglas Woodall (eds) (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015)
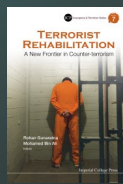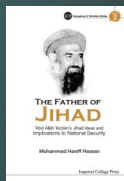
Terrorist Rehabilitation
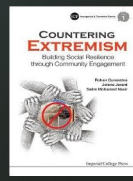Rohan Gunaratna and Mohamed Bin Ali (Imperial College Press, 2015)

Resilience and Resolve
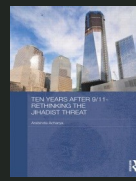Jolene Jerard and Salim Mohamed Nasir (Imperial College Press, 2015)

Whither Southeast Asia Terrorism
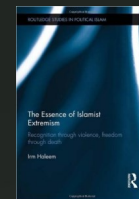Arabinda Acharya (Imperial College Press, 2015)

The Father of Jihad
Muhammad Haniff Hassan (Imperial College Press, 2014)

Countering Extremism
Rohan Gunaratna, Salim Mohamed Nasir and Jolene Jerard (Imperial College Press, 2013)

Ten Years After 9/11: Rethinking the Jihadist Threat
Arabinda Acharya (Routledge, 2013)

The Essence of Islamist Extremism
Irm Haleem (Routledge, 2011)

ICPVTR'S GLOBAL PATHFINDER

Global Pathfinder is a one-stop repository for information on current and emerging terrorist threats from the major terrorism affected regions of the world. It is an integrated database containing comprehensive profiles of terrorist groups, terrorist personalities, terrorist and counter-terrorist incidents as well as terrorist training camps. This includes profiles from emerging hubs of global terrorism affecting the security of the world, as well as the deadliest threat groups in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus. The database also contains analyses of significant terrorist attacks in the form of terrorist attack profiles. For further inquiries regarding subscription and access to Global Pathfinder, please contact Ng Suat Peng at isngsp@ntu.edu.sg.

Nanyang Technological University
Block S4, Level B4, 50 Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798
Tel: + 65 6790 6982 | Fax: +65 6794 0617 | www.rsis.edu.sg