



## HOW EXTREMIST IDEOLOGY SERVES TERRORISM

Alhussein Akhdoosh

An academic Researcher, Morocco

Extremist ideology is one of the main pillars of extremism and terrorism, especially when it results in the emergence of groups that call for religion, are closed off, reject any opposition, and oppose any critics of their views, considering them enemies, conspirators and traitors. These are condemned with blasphemy, and their lives, land, and money are deemed lawful. Hence, extremism turns into intolerance, hatred, and violent strife, and becomes a vicious means of terrorism to kill anytime, anywhere.

### Corrupt Interpretations

Extremism has been deep-rooted and ongoing for centuries. The past century, however, witnessed the emergence of extremist takfiri movements that committed murders and sabotage against innocent civilians, drawing on corrupt interpretations and on illogical and invalid arguments. Extremist views still feed into terrorist groups across the world, serving as their frame of reference. The decline in enlightenment movements led by reformist leaders is perhaps one of the reasons why such movements came to light, forcing their deviant interpretations into political affairs.

Ideologues of these movements have promoted threatening views aiming to refine extremist thoughts to face opposing ideologies in the Arab and Muslim Worlds, such as attacking the idea of an open society and describing their opponents as infidels. Radical interpretations of religion resulted in theorizing violence, then in actual practices all over the world.

Extremist interpretations reveal a serious systematic inadequacy, and mixes political strife with religion to sanctify, accept, then adopt such views. This eventually leads to the highest levels of extremism. Given the recent events known as the “Arab Spring” and the insecurity prevailing several Arab countries, some of these extremist groups crawled out of their hideouts to oust Arab regimes and assert their dominance as was the case with ISIS and al-Qaeda in Syria and Iraq. However, the prevailing terrorism is a clear manifestation of the failure of such dynamic ideology and interpretations in

resolving the dilemma of the underdevelopment of the Arab nation. It led to violence, destruction, and subversion, which soon turned into a nightmare for the whole world.

### **Contradictory Discourse**

Extremist ideology was neither able to present a community-based model compatible with the current needs, one that could achieve economic, social, cultural and political growth, nor provide the promised prosperity and welfare. Recent events have shown how hard it is for this extremist ideology to understand its own political and ideological contradictions given its intrinsic contradictory discourse and the obvious gap between its slogans and actual practices. This type of “splinter awareness” is what leads to fragmentation, distraction, and disarray.

Drawing on the reality of these groups, which is characterized by mystery, skepticism, and unclear goals, it could be said that religious extremism is arguably a reaction that indicates unreality and intolerance. This is exploited by extremist movements to propagate their own ideology, which is based on allegiance and their unilateral approach. These movements adopt the Machiavellian principle of utilitarianism, which entails that “establishing a political entity requires deeming opposition evil and exposing their evil whenever the opportunity arises”.

### **Unilateralism**

The prevailing unilateralism and authoritarian interpretation usually lead to extremist ideologies and behavior. Mixing politics with religion and using religion to achieve political gain pave the way to the emergence of extremist groups disguised in religious slogans, historical figures and national considerations. These groups implant terrorists within their religious discourse, including their unilateral interpretations, which aim to take over ideologically, culturally, and politically, resulting in violence and terrorism.

Extremism often adopts a discourse based on interpretation and bigotry as a means of alluring movements and groups to use a violent lexicon based on binaries that feed into the extremism of their followers according to their religious and nonreligious sentiments. These binaries classify people into followers and opponents, believers and nonbelievers. This classification shows the features of these groups’ discourse. At times, a segment is called pious and good, and at other times the same segment is called wicked and corrupt for opposing their ideology. These groups believe that their supporters are dignified believers, whereas their opposers are regarded as blasphemous and immoral.

## Extremism has no Religion

Extremism has no religion, faith, or creed. However, it exists among followers of other religions. In the West, it is depicted as fundamentalism; i.e., a rigid, subjective reading of holy books. Far-right parties and groups emerged in Western communities with vitiated religious and political concepts. Reports suggest that thousands of terrorist crimes were perpetrated by non-Muslims. Muslims themselves have fallen victim to extremism and terrorism. Perhaps the Christchurch shooting, northern New Zealand, of 49 Muslims during the Friday prayer is an example of violent extremism. However, Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's Prime Minister, announced at the time that the perpetrator was a violent far-right terrorist.

Extremist discourse in general is a destructive force that generates terrorist motives and deems killings, destruction, and sabotage lawful. Thus, the extent of damage resulting from extremism cannot be anticipated. Under such an extremist interpretation, followers adopt the motto of "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or an oppressed one". Extremists usually support each other under religious, national, and political slogans.

As per this analysis, extremist interpretations and concepts are responsible for the "demonization" and condemnation of human nature in our religious contexts. They prompt religious groups to assert that political change is a religious duty, even if excessive force is used. ISIS, al-Nusra Front, and Boko Haram, are concrete, practical examples of how extremist ideology serves terrorism. Atrocious crimes were perpetrated under the mantra of Islam and Shari'a.

## Conclusion

The world has resorted, in vain, to counter-terrorism military and security means. Security reports indicate the alarming rise of terrorism in recent years, which confirms that the world treats a symptom, not a disease. Terrorism is a serious plague, but extremism is more threatening and requires well-established counter plans, including efforts exerted by all educational and media entities, civil society organizations, private sector institutions, and families.

These efforts should be integrated within governmental efforts in fighting terrorism, immunizing young generations against extremist and terrorist ideologies, and disseminating true religious interpretations calling for love, peace and mutual coexistence.