

### ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

# CRIME OF SYMPATHY FOR AND PRAISE OF TERRORISM & EFFECTS THEREOF ON SOCIETY

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### CRIME OF SYMPATHY FOR AND PRAISE OF TERRORISM & EFFECTS THEREOF ON SOCIETY

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#### **Abstract:**

Peoples, all over the world, of all classes, identities and affiliations, have suffered -and are still suffering- from terrorism! Every year, our world witnesses terrorist attacks; their methods differ and vary, but they all have the same objective: killing, destruction and spreading terror among people! There is no doubt that sympathizing with or praising this crime has no justification. Plus, the feeling of sympathy is no less a heinous crime than the crime of terrorism itself! In this paper, the researcher highlights the concepts of crime, sympathy and terrorism; attributes of sympathy for and praise of terrorism; effects of such sympathy and praise and finally the prevention and combat mechanisms to reduce sympathy for and praise for terrorism. The research reached a number of conclusions and recommendations, including the need to clearly and genuinely pay attention to the matter of sympathy for and praise of terrorism, which, despite its morality, has other aspects that only become clear after a period of time. Moreover, the research recommends that studies and research centers shall pay attention to this matter, highlight all of its aspects, understand its causes and provide recommendations to all concerned parties, including security authorities, to help in limiting the increase in the phenomenon of terrorism. Additionally, the research highlights the necessity of family, education and media playing their role. Importance of this role is clarified in the present research. Since the problem affects all fields and industries of the society, it is necessary for everyone to cooperate and show a common interest.



## Preface:

Phenomenon of terrorism is a heinous crime with the sole objective of killing, destroying, and spreading terror among people and intimidate them by spreading harm or endangering their lives and security. Terrorism is a crime that is neither linked nor related to specific religion, race or people, nor is it restricted to a certain country or region. Peoples all over the world, of all classes, identities and affiliations, have suffered -and still suffering- from terrorism!

Every year, our world witnesses terrorist attacks; their methods differ and vary, but they all have the same objective: killing, destruction and spreading terror among people. Terrorist attacks leave tens of thousands of victims every year! In 2021 for example, it took live of more than 23,000 victims, according to Statista.com.

Furthermore, there are negative impacts to all social, cultural, economic and security areas, which leads to instability, decline in economic development, erosion of human capital, disintegration of societies and spread of despair among its members.

There is no doubt that sympathizing with or praising this crime has no justification. Plus, the feeling of sympathy is no less a heinous crime than the crime of terrorism itself! What makes it even worse is that even the innocent victims as well as individuals and communities suffering from terrorist attacks lack proper care and attention, not mentioning providing them with assistance and psychological, moral and emotional support in order to overcome such negative effects and pain that terrorist acts left on them. In this paper, the researcher aims to clarify and analyze the attributes and forms of sympathy for and praise of terrorism, in addition to clarifying the effects of such crime on society, threat to security and escalation of violence levels and hatred among society members. Moreover, the researcher, using the descriptive approach, suggests prevention and combat mechanisms to reduce sympathy for and praise of terrorism.

### First Aspect: Definition of Terms

First, the terms which the researcher addressed will be defined to help in understanding the study clearer to convey the idea accurately and systematically and avoid conceptual confusion. They are three basic concepts in the study: crime, sympathy and terrorism.

#### 1. Crime

"Crime is the sin. To commit crime with someone is to accuse them of a sin they did not commit," Mukhtar al-Sihah.<sup>1</sup> Crime is taking actions against the truth, justice and right way. In the Quran, there is "Indeed, the wicked used to..." and "Indeed, the wicked are 'entrenched' in misguidance, and 'are bound for' blazes." So, linguistic meaning of crime is doing something that is not endorsed and frowned upon. Criminal is the one who commits something that is not endorsed and persists in doing it without trying to quit it.<sup>2</sup>" In Oxford Dictionary, crime is defined as "an action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law."<sup>3</sup>

Crime may be defined from several perspectives. From a sociological perspective, it is every action conflicts that with what is beneficial to the public and just in their view. It is every act a person commits for purely individual motives and disturbs the life of the public and conflicts with the prevailing moral standard at a specific moment in time. It is any violation of any code of conduct, whatever this code may be. It is anti-social behavior directed against interests of the society as a whole. It is violation and breach of the public's moral rules and standards. From a psychological perspective, psychologists view criminal behavior as anti-social behavior, which is undoubtedly similar to any other type of abnormal or bizarre behavior. That means a criminal is no different from a sick person. In psychology, crime is defined as the satisfaction of a human instinct in an abnormal way that no ordinary man does not follow to satisfy the same instinct. This is due to a quantitative defect or qualitative abnormality in this instinct, accompanied by one or more mental health disorders. At the time of committing the crime, there is

a collapse in the sublime instincts and a disregard for fear of punishment. From a legal perspective, crime is an activity a person performs, whether positive or negative, for which the law stipulates one of the penalties stated in the Penal Code.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, based on the above, crime is every transgression, wrongdoing, omission, violation, breach of the laws and violation of the sanctities of others the perpetrator thereof is deemed a criminal.

#### 2. Sympathy

In Mukhtar al-Sihah, "sympathize is to bend. Stick sympathies means it bent. Pillow sympathy is to bend. Sympathies with someone is to lean for them."<sup>5</sup>

Oxford Dictionary defines sympathy as "the feeling of being sorry for somebody; showing that you understand and care about somebody's problems." APA Dictionary of Psychology defines sympathy as "feelings of concern or compassion resulting from an awareness of the suffering or sorrow of another." It usually involves a desire to help that person or make them comfortable. Sympathy is an expression of a social process involves sharing or dividing pain and misery on an emotional level, motivated by strong feelings originally derived from the concept of the ability to penetrate the other.<sup>6</sup> The origin of the word sympathy goes back to the 1880s, when the German psychologist Theodor Lipps coined the expression "Einfuhlung," which literally means (in-feeling), to describe emotional appreciation for the feelings of another person.<sup>7</sup>

Here, when we talk about sympathy, we mean the guilty sympathy. Sympathy that is in an undesirable and misplaced form that involves moral and emotional help to the criminal in what he commits of crimes and practices that are considered a transgression, breach and violation of the sanctity of others. It is a feeling of accepting the crime, which is a similar crime, and the guilt of its perpetrator.

#### 3. Terrorism

In Lisan al-Arab, rahib, rahoba or rahaba means to feel afraidofandterrorizedbysomething.Terrorismisan act indicates fear and terror.<sup>8</sup> Security Council Resolution No. (1566) stated that terrorism is a criminal act and reaffirms that "criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act, which constitute offences within the scope of and as defined in the international conventions and protocols relating to terrorism." As stated in the Convention of the Organization of The Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism in the second and third paragraphs of Article (1), terrorism "means any act of violence or threat thereof notwithstanding its motives or intentions perpetrated to carry out an individual or collective criminal plan with the aim of terrorizing people or threatening to harm them or imperiling their lives, honor, freedoms, security or rights or exposing the environment or any facility or public or private property to hazards or occupying or seizing them, or endangering a national resource, or international facilities, or threatening the stability, territorial integrity, political unity or sovereignty of independent States." It also defines terrorist crimes as "any crime executed, started or participated in to realize a terrorist objective in any of the Contracting States or against its nationals, assets or interests or foreign facilities and nationals residing in its territory punishable by its internal law."

Regional agreements state the same definition of terrorism. The Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism as well as the GCC Counterterrorism Agreement both affirmed this definition of terrorism. It definesterrorismas "anyactofviolenceorthreatthereof notwithstanding its motives or intentions, perpetrated to carry out an individual or collective criminal plan with the aim of terrorizing people, threatening to harm them, imperiling their lives, freedoms, or security, or exposing the environment or any facility or public or private property to hazards, or occupying or seizing them, or endangering a national resource."<sup>9</sup>



### Second Aspect: Attributes of Sympathy for and Praise of Terrorism:

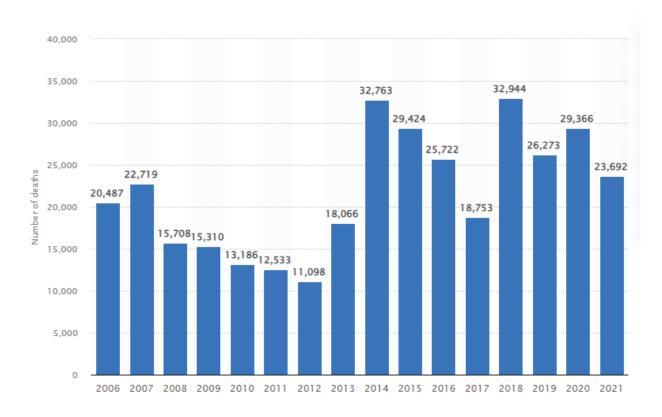
Criminalizing an act is not necessarily measured on a material scale. Rather, the moral aspect may be more significant in its criminality due to its consequences that are no less important than the material aspect. They may even be more painful! There are many signs of moral sympathy and praise that are no less a crime than the terrorist crime itself. The most prominent signs are:

#### 1. Positive feelings towards terrorists

Among these forms and signs of sympathy for terrorism and terrorist acts are the positive and acceptance feelings that sympathizers have in their hearts for such terrorist acts as well as the feeling of joy and pleasure of their criminal results, not mentioning not showing any kind of sadness or anger at what these terrorists have done! Despite the atrocity and violation of the terrorist act that leaves a number of innocent victims dead, including children and women, those who sympathize with terrorists do not show any kind of sorrow or grief to these actions, but rather try and justify them. How can anyone sympathize with an act committed by individuals whom a number of researchers believe they have deep psychological issues and display aggression, inordinateness, and disorder? They are also believed to be psychopaths (a psychopath is an emotionless person, with hostile behavior towards society, closed-minded, shrill and adamant). They kill in cold blood and are hostile to civilization and development. They are individuals who have a mixture of psychological and social diseases.<sup>10</sup>

#### 2. Negative feelings against victims of terrorism

Contrary to the positive feelings toward terrorists, the researcher also found another form of sympathy, negative feelings towards the victims! In addition to the above, we find that they have negative feelings towards the victims and believe that they deserve what happened to them! Moreover, they go further and try and justify killing of innocents, children and women saying that it is unavoidable consequence, forgetting that the act itself is a disease and a scourge that would not have happened without the presence of such sympathizers who may themselves one day be victims of terrorism, especially that the number of victims of terrorism exceeds tens of thousands annually. In 2021, the death toll surpassed 23 thousand deaths.<sup>11</sup> Such negative feelings exacerbate the suffering of those affected by terrorist attacks and help deteriorate their psychological state. In the end, all of this is in the interest of the terrorist attack perpetrator as one of the goals of terrorist acts is to spread terror. These negative feelings achieve that goal for the terrorists.



Number of fatalities due to terrorist attacks worldwide between 2006 and 2021. statista.com

#### 3. Supporting, endorsing and adopting the ideology of terrorists

Some sympathizers do not settle for positive feelings towardsterroristsandnegativefeelingstowardsvictims, but go beyond that as feelings are just the beginning in many cases and turn into a kind of support and advocacy over time. This may not be material support, but rather moral support by spreading their ideas of justification and praise of terrorist acts or declaring solidarity with them and showing joy and pleasure over their criminal acts. In this case, this is a danger sign and an initial phase. Next step involves them joining terrorist groups. Individual's transformation into being a terrorist does not often come out of the blue, as most cases of involvement in terrorism and being member of terrorist groups result from gradual exposure and socialization towards extremist behavior. It is not unlikely that sympathy in some cases is one of the reasons and phases that precede joining and engaging in terrorist acts whenever the opportunity arises and the right time comes.

#### 4. Lack of security cooperation

Another case and criminal attribute of terrorist sympathizers and supporters is their lack of cooperation with security personnel or investigators in their journey to track down, arrest and prosecute terrorists for their criminal acts, or even attempt to prevent any terrorist act that may result in destruction and death. In case they have any information about a terrorist, they prefer to hide it as they sympathize with them. Rather, they see the matter in the opposite way and do not disclose any information because they see them as innocent people and those who are looking for them are the aggressors and guilty ones! Lack of cooperation in arresting a criminal terrorist or helping in a criminal act, such as terrorist acts, is also a crime punishable by the law for lack of cooperation due to feeling of sympathy.



### Third Aspect: Effects of Sympathy for and Praise of Terrorism:

Sympathy for and praise of terrorism have major negative social effects and clear damage that touches all aspects of life, especially the social aspect. Even though the crime of sympathy is rooted in feelings with a moral aspect, it goes much beyond that, from tolerance with terrorists, having positive feelings towards them and praising their criminal acts, to supporting them and possibly joining them, which creates multiple impacts that cannot be overlooked and ignored as well as many questions about the extent of their influence. Below are the most prominent negative effects and the impacts of sympathizing with and praising terrorism:

#### 1. Spread of terrorism

Reasonably and logically, it is known that supporting, praising and sympathizing with acts increases the difficulty of eliminating them and increases spread of the phenomenon. Sympathizing with and praising terrorism is one of the acts that stimulate its spread. This is for several reasons, including that the sympathizer's sympathy may turn into a kind of support then a kind of cooperation that ultimately leads to involvement in terrorist acts in any way. Plus, the sympathizer may also be part of the reserve base for terrorist groups to be used in times of need or being recruited in the future. On the other hand, a person who sympathizes with terrorists is driven by their sympathy to cover on them, which facilitates their mission in implementing their plans. Rather, they may be a means exploited by them, which ultimately leads to spread of terrorism and increasing difficulty of eliminating it because of this unjustified sympathy in any way. Many countries have sought to enact laws to limit such acts that lead to spread of terrorist acts. In the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288) dated September 8, 2006, in the second paragraph titled "measures to prevent and combat terrorism" it affirms the need "to refrain from organizing, instigating, facilitating, participating in, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities."12 In addition, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has also enacted a system to combat crimes of terrorism and its financing. Article (34) of Council of Ministers Resolution No. (92)

dated 11/02/1439 AH stipulates that "Any person who advocates or promotes a terrorist ideology, a terrorist entity, a terrorist crime or the ideology of its perpetrator, or expresses sympathy therewith, justifies, promotes or lauds his act or crime, or acquires or possesses any type of document, publication or recorded material that includes justification, promotion or praise of a terrorist ideology or terrorist crime with the intention of publication or dissemination, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding 8 years and not less than 3 years."<sup>13</sup>

#### 2. Division of society

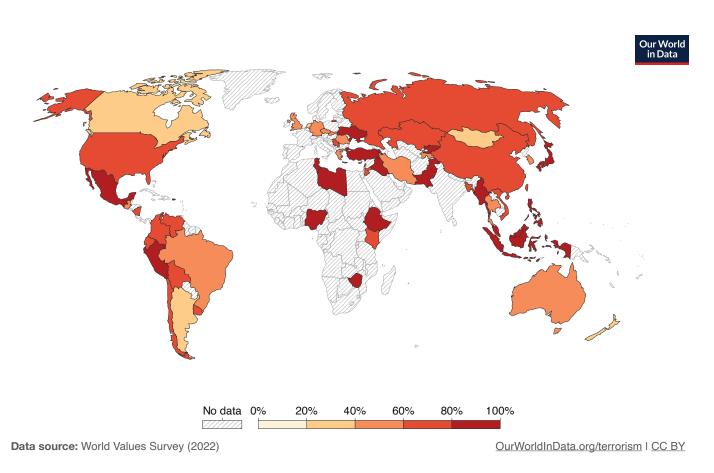
Harmony and cohesion of society are among the most important things that any country relies on in its development. The higher social disintegration gets, the more its progressive movement in all its forms is hindered. Acts of violence, destruction and killing serve as obstacles to the cohesion of society and reasons of its disintegration. Here, as the researcher demonstrates sympathy for and praise of terrorism, he is also clarifying one of the reasons for societal disintegration and division. What the sympathizer does of mentioned-above acts in the signs of sympathy for terrorism is a cause of the disintegration of society and creates a state of doubt, fear and increasing anxiety among society members. The sympathizer here sympathizes and shows support for people who have caused destruction and pain to other members of the society or another important component of the society in which the terrorist lives. This increases manifestations of hatred and contempt among them. Moreover, even that component to which that sympathizer belongs is not the sympathizer's alone, which greatly affects social solidarity and cohesion and plays a major role in enhancing interdependence, trust and unity among members of society. In the presence of such feelings, society is exposed to disintegration and destabilization. Plus, it increases social unrest, acts of violence and conflict between society individuals and groups.

Since family is the nucleus of any society, it is not possible to deny the negative impact which sympathizers with and praisers of terrorist acts have on the stability and security of families. Moreover, it is a stumbling block to family stability and an obstacle to performing its functions. Families need psychological health to be able to face what life brings of crises and interact positively with different situations. In addition, families also need sound social relations to ensure their success and ability to overcome obstacles that hinder the establishment of cooperation and harmony and increase tension and conflict, especially those feelings of sympathizing with terrorism and justifying terrorist acts that threaten the security and stability of families because family is undoubtedly one of the most organizations in which an individual feels safe and secure, especially with regard to the emotional aspects of their life.<sup>14</sup>

#### 3. Security threat

Sympathy is one of the reasons for threatening security and stability. Actually, it is a threat to security and stability itself. This is evident as sympathizers provide a fertile environment for terrorist recruitment, and they are also ready to cover up for and help terrorists whenever they are given the opportunity. Despite that their act of sympathy is moral, it is a threat to security because the matter of moral sympathy may develop into something more than that due to the sympathizers' willingness to commit any criminal act as long as the idea is acceptable and such criminal acts have their justifications. According to Our World in Data (ourworldindata.org), concern and fear of terrorism is high in many countries of the world, even those countries that rarely suffer from terrorist acts. Data showed that in most countries more than 50% expressed their concern about terrorism and in some countries, data showed that more than 80% of them expressed concern.<sup>15</sup> This shows that the harm of terrorism extends beyond its victims. It causes a state of anxiety and a feeling of insecurity, even for those countries that rarely suffer from it. On the tourism side, terrorism has a clear negative impact, as France and Belgium witnessed cancellation of more than 10,000 hotel reservations from various foreigners after terrorist attacks they were subjected to. Also, many tourists prefer safe countries, even if they are less developed than developed but unsafe countries.<sup>16</sup>







### Fourth Aspect: Prevention and Control Mechanisms to Counter Sympathy for and Praise of Terrorism

Sympathy for and praise of terrorism presents a challenge that need to be addressed from all aspects, taking all its root-causes into account, to keep this phenomenon in check and prevent terrorists from capitalizing on it for recruiting any sympathizers. Below is an overview of prominent aspects that are crucial for keeping sympathy cases under control.

#### 1. Upbringing

Studying the prevention and control mechanisms necessary for curbing a problem or a negative phenomenon, a researcher sees upbringing as a key element in these mechanisms. Upbringing is a process whereby a humane society is built in a particular time and place, so that the individuals of this so society could acquire various skills, values, tendencies, and behavioral patterns that enable them to deal with the social environment where they were brought up. Accordingly, upbringing starts with building the humane character of an individual, and transforming that individual from a biological individual into a person of character who can contribute to their society and carry its culture.<sup>17</sup> When it comes to upbringing, family is of significant importance; it is the building block of any society. Family is also the most important upbringing and social entity with many principal functions and duties. An individual inherits their family's faith, morals, ideas, customs, traditions, and positive of negative behaviors that allow them to lead a grownup life among individuals of a certain society. Families provide care for their members, and contribute to their discipline during the most critical stage of their lives, a stage with the deepest influence on their characterbuilding, the formation of their tendencies, values, ideas, and the development of their lives in general. It serves as an effective transmitter of community culture. Family also contributes to promoting multiple cultures and community networks.<sup>18</sup> Terrorism is considered a major threat to family. Where there is terrorism, security and stability are replaced with fear and instability, which constitute an obstacle to sound upbringing, given the major role of family in this process. Everyone needs to live in a clam and stable environment; they also need care, support, and attention.<sup>19</sup> From this standpoint, families play a crucial role in preventing its members from sympathizing with, or advocating terrorist crimes. Family coherence and solidarity, promoting an individual sense of belonging to their society, supporting their active role in society, and enhancing respect for others and others' values - all these drive a person to demonstrate a positive behavior, and enables them to distinguish between the right and path, recognize criminal acts and assault, denouncing and rejecting them, and sympathize with their victims, making up some kind of a firewall against the influence of terrorists and their recruitment and exploitation attempts. Family also plays a role in detecting any feelings of sympathy for terrorist crimes, early recognition of the problem to nip it the bud by appropriate means.

Another important aspect of upbringing is education and its potential role in reducing crime, especially sympathizing with and praising terrorists' criminal acts. Education alone cannot prevent someone from committing an act of violence in the name of a violent extremist ideology; however, useful and quality education may help in creating an environment unconducive to the spread of violent extremist acts and ideologies. In particular, educational policies may be formulated to ensure that education settings will not be a fertile ground for violent extremism. These policies may also guarantee that educational content and teaching as well as learning approaches will contribute to improving learners' immunity to violent extremism. Therefore, the role education is not to interrogate violent extremists or identify those who are likely to become violent extremists; rather its role is to provide the conditions that allow learners to develop defense lines against violent extremism, boost their commitment to non-violence and peace,<sup>20</sup> and also foster the humane side in each learner, making them more inclined to abhor all forms of violence and crime and eliminate any cases of sympathy for crime or crime perpetrators, under any circumstances.

#### 2. Media

Advancement of media plays a crucial and essential role in the formation of terrorist organizations. This role has grown and flourished thanks to an information revolution, expanded satellite streaming, and the emergence of digital media as well as virtual community. Media transmits and spreads information, describes and follows up events, and contributes to shaping public opinion. Terrorist organizations are now equipped with modern technology; they have also used the internet extensively to rally their members, attract new members from all countries, promote their ideas, and communicate with its members to convince them of goals and thoughts. These organizations have found an exit from their isolation through the cyberspace and virtual community.<sup>21</sup> Terrorists exploit various means of communication to propagate their terrorist ideology and support by constantly working on studying the media publicity that highlights their existence and purposes. Some psychological researchers argue that terrorists may refrain from carrying out their missions if they already know that these mission not be in line with the media publicity that expose they inflicted on their enemies, given that psychological warfare is only effective when the public shows an interest in the matter in guestion. Terrorists also use the internet and social networks for mobilization and recruitment purposes to maintain their persistence and survival. They capitalize on internet users' sympathy with their causes, luring young people with moving and passionate rhetoric. They also collect funds through online channels. Members of terrorist cells download demographic lists from online sources to identify terrorist sympathizers and solicit donations for legal entities or institutions serving as a facade for these terrorists.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, it is imperative to monitor terrorist-affiliated websites, channels, and social media accounts, as well as the accounts of those who justify terrorist acts, and take down these channels and websites to minimize their influence on vulnerable people and prevent terrorists from playing with these people's emotions to lure them

to be on their side. It is also important to embark on more programs that highlight how terrorism impacts all aspects of life, and expose terrorists' criminal record by raising public awareness of terrorist crimes against every single component of society, including innocent women and children, and shedding light on terrorism victims and their sufferings.

#### 3. Study & Research

According to studies and research examining criminal behavior, crime, conventional or unconventional, is an act committed by someone with flawed thinking, whether influenced by a combination of moral and psychological factors, psychological and social factors, or psychological and physiological factors. These studies also argue that crime will remain a source of threat to security in its universal conception.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, it is of paramount importance to the intellectual aspect when we discuss the problem of sympathizing with and commending terrorism, now that it became obvious that we are dealing with a deeprooted intellectual problem that needs to be examined with all its aspects taken into account to understand why some people may be driven to sympathize with such crimes against innocents despite their material and moral damage. Hence the importance of think tanks and their role in preventing or minimizing sympathy for terrorist acts by studying the root causes of the problem from all economic, social, and psychological aspects, among others. To minimize sympathy for and praising terrorism, studies and research must be delve into the reasons why people may harbor such sentiments towards this phenomenon, and understand the root causes of this crime from all aspects. In addition, awareness-raising studies and research on the crimes related to sympathizing with terrorism and their potential damage and consequences that affect the entire society; these studies should also highlight the hideous and incriminating nature of harboring sympathy for terrorism, as well as relevant legal consequences, while proposing the solutions or policies that could be adopted to keep this negative behavior in check.



### **Conclusion:**

Having discussed the crime of sympathizing with and praising terrorism and how it impacts society, the results of discussion clearly demonstrate its impact on society. Aside from its moral aspect, this crime may also lead to social disintegration, creating an atmosphere of growing uncertainty, fear, and despair among society's groups and individuals, and disseminating hatred and resentment among them. It also contributes to the spread of terrorism and soaring rates of terrorist acts, making it difficult to prevent them. Therefore, it is imperative to pay significant and genuine attention to this problem, regardless of its moral aspects, because its other aspects do take shape until after some time when they constitute a challenge that is difficult to be addressed after they become more largely and more deeply entrenched. Think tanks bear the primary responsibility for addressing this issue, highlighting its various aspects and delving into to its root causes, and providing relevant recommendations to all the parties concerned, including security bodies, to help in curbing the growth of terrorism. This should not diminish the role of other entities in society, because even families, education, and media could play an equally important role, which has already been clarified hereinabove. Since this issue affects all walks of life, it is incumbent on all members of society to cooperate and demonstrate a shared interest in it.

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