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SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES THE CHALLENGES OF TERRORISM AND CONTAINMENT EFFORTS



**JEDDAH SUMMIT CALLS FOR INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM**



KENYA JOINS IMCTC





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The Jeddah Summit Calls For Enhanced International Cooperation In Combating Terrorism

IMCTC Applauds The Summit's Final Communiqué



Jeddah Security and Development Summit was held on July 16, 2022 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and US President Joe Biden participated in the summit at the invitation of **King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**. Several challenges requiring joint cooperation were discussed to ensure security, stability, development and welfare in the region.

The Summit emphasized the common visions towards a number of issues, including: rejecting terrorism in all its forms, denouncing the attacks committed by Houthis against civilians and power facilities, the need for reinforcing regional and international counter extremism and terrorism efforts, preventing terrorist group financing and armament, and cooperation and coordination between countries to develop the joint defense and deterrence capacities in order to combat the excess risk of drones.

The Crown Prince, HRH Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, expressed hope that the Summit would usher in a new era of cooperation and deepened strategic partnerships in confronting global challenges, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic,

which necessitates increased international efforts to revive the global economy. For the sake of regional stability, the Crown Prince urged Iran to cooperate with other countries in the region and refrain from interfering in their internal affairs. He reiterated Saudi Arabia's support for all efforts aimed at resolving the Yemeni crisis and stabilizing the armistice. He stated that the region's future requires embracing visions that prioritize security, stability, and welfare, establish mutual respect among countries, and strengthen cultural and social ties.

US President Joe Biden confirmed the support of US partners and allies in resolving the region's problems. He stated that Iran is still a threat to Middle Eastern stability. However, there is still a strong desire to address such threats. He also stated that the US government will support its allies, will never allow Iran to become a nuclear power jeopardizing freedom of navigation, and will strengthen air defenses and early warning systems for its allies to counter potential air threats.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, highlighted the young generations' hopeful aspirations for the future, the need for nurturing this spirit and strengthening their trust that their countries



are on the right track. He asserted that UAE believes that peace, dialogue and coexistence are indispensable for immunizing future generations.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi demonstrated that it is time to join efforts to end protracted conflicts and civil wars that have been racking the region's population, wasting their resources and paving the way for external intervention in these countries' internal affairs, unlawful attacks on their territories, fate and resources. President Al-Sisi reiterated his country's commitment to combating extremist ideology and terrorism, as well as eradicating all armed organisations and groups operating in the Arab World. He urged countries that provide terrorist groups with shelter, funds, weapons, and training to reconsider their stance and recognize that national security is a non-negotiable red line that must never be crossed.

Jordan's King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein drew attention to the adverse effects of the Russian-Ukrainian crisis on energy and food security, as well as the region's persistent conflicts, which call for regional cooperation in these domains.

He asserted that the region has been significantly threatened by arms and drug trafficking, and that Jordan is responsible for upholding security along its borders on behalf of the entire international community.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, said that the Summit is a good opportunity to strengthen the historical ties of friendship and the strategic partnership between Gulf and Arab countries and the US, noting that maintaining regional security calls for joint cooperation and reaching a political resolution to the Yemeni crisis.

The Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, stated that the stability of Gulf States is crucial for the entire region and the world, and that development necessitates the elimination of conflicts and disputes. He also reaffirmed his country's unwavering commitment to keep nuclear weapons out of the Gulf region and the Middle East.

He went on to say that appealing to international law and the UN Charter by conflict parties saves people from significant losses and sorrows. The Emir of Qatar praised the Yemeni crisis' truce as well as Saudi Arabia's initiative in this regard.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi highlighted the immense cooperation with his Arab neighboring countries, which made a prominent contribution to the fight against terrorism and to defeating ISIS. He asserted that there is yet a long way to go to finally uproot extremism, which requires reinforced national, regional and international efforts to develop a comprehensive policy to combat terrorism and dry up its financial wellsprings through joint security cooperation and information and expertise exchange.

Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait, expressed hope that through collaborative efforts, we will address the current tragic situation in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Afghanistan, as well as regional issues that continue to wreak havoc on regional and global security.

IMCTC praised the final communique of Jeddah Security and Development Summit since it aligns with its policy and promotes its plans and objectives in fighting extremism, violence and terrorism. ■



DRUG TRAFFICKING AND TERRORIST FINANCING IN ARGENTINA: A CASE STUDY OF HEZBOLLAH

■ Dr. Federico Saettone

Terrorism and drug trafficking have a mutually beneficial relationship. Terrorist organisations rely heavily on the trade and trafficking of these lethal toxins for financial support. Given how difficult it is to track them, they are crucial to their continued existence and subversive acts. The Global Financial Integrity (GFI) organisation estimates that the total amount of funds raised from drug trafficking is between \$426 and \$652 billion per year. In recent years, the line between criminal and terrorist networks has become increasingly blurred.

■ Political Sciences Professor and Researcher, Argentina.

Different Patterns

In May 2021, the Early Warning Center (EWC) for Strategic Studies conducted a study that revealed the various patterns of terrorist organisations' involvement in drug trafficking. It begins with limited involvement, such as illegal taxation of smugglers passing through their zones of dominance in exchange for protection, and progresses to drug production. According to the study, terrorist organisations control large portions of state roads used for drug trafficking in Central Asia, West Africa, the Sahel Region, East Africa, and other regions.

Given the availability of raw materials required for the production of drugs in Argentina, particularly cocaine, the city of Rosario, Argentina, is considered a drug trafficking transit centre for neighbouring states. According to judicial sources, the drug trade generates significant financial revenues for the city, totaling approximately €3 million per month. A new type of terrorism has recently emerged as a result of a land dispute between drug trafficking gangs. Argentina's federal security and public health authorities are thus dealing with a major challenge.

Terrorism in Argentina

Before digging deeper into the relationship between terrorism and drug trafficking in Argentina, it is important to distinguish between two types of terrorism that the country has experienced. The **first type** is state terrorism, which was first introduced to Argentina during military rule in the 1970s. This type of terrorism is simply a set of secret government practises, such as illegal arrests, torture, and enforced disappearances of people who have gone missing for years. It is a military response to armed gang violence in Argentina and some North American states.

Terrorist incidents of the **second type** include the March 17, 1992 attack against the Israeli embassy in Buenos

Aires, which killed 29 and injured 129, and the July 18, 1994 attack on the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA), a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people and wounding hundreds more in the country's deadliest-ever attack. The two incidents were blamed on Hezbollah by the Argentinian government.

Years after the previous incident, the Argentinian government made changes to the country's intelligence apparatus and established two national agencies that are governed by the National Congress and staffed by public servants. The Ministry of Defense oversees one of the two strategic intelligence organisations, and the Ministry of Security oversees the criminal intelligence agency.

Drug Trafficking

Until recently, Argentina was considered a hub for the transportation of drugs from neighbouring nations—particularly cocaine—to Europe and other countries. The Paraná and Uruguay rivers have seen a lot of trafficking in illegal goods. Later, Argentina turned to a manufacturer of these narcotic compounds. With the start of the twenty-first century, Argentina became one of Latin America's top consumers of cocaine, with Brazil topping the list.

No criminological research has established a direct connection between drug trafficking and terrorism in Argentina. However, investigations carried out by international state bodies, including the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), show that terrorism financing is being carried out by criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking in some parts of South America, most notably the Tri-Border Area (TBA) between North Argentina, Southern Brazil, and Southeast Paraguay. This region, which lies near the Iguazu Falls, is marked by its lax border oversight in the cities of Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil), Ciudad Del Este (Paraguay), and Puerto



Iguaz (Argentina). For trade coming from the three countries and Colombia, this area has developed into a trans-trade zone, a route that has been used by criminals.

Investigations have revealed Hezbollah's involvement in criminal activity there, including the trafficking of drugs, arms, and money-laundering. Several Hezbollah supporters from the Lebanese population had moved there during the Lebanese Civil War in the 1970s, taking advantage of the unstable security situation. Security forces reportedly detained a criminal organization under the leadership of Nasser Abbas Bahmad, a Lebanese resident of Ciudad del Este and one of Hezbollah's most influential figures, according to a report by the Al-Arabiya channel. Bahmad set up a route in the tri-border area to transport cocaine from Latin America to global markets. The research also claims that Hezbollah has a sizable network for funding its activities in the tri-border region, including drug trafficking and money-laundering; its abhorrent activities spread throughout Western Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

Freezing Hezbollah's Assets

Following the Cold War with the former Soviet Union, the United States made combating international terrorism and drug trafficking a strategic goal for its national security. It also prioritizes anti-money laundering and regional trade control due to their links to terrorist financing.

In this regard, most Latin American countries worked together to achieve that goal, and they joined the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT), which was established in the early twenty-first century. Following Ar-

gentina's admission, the country established the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), a financial intelligence institution dedicated to combating financial crimes such as CTF, AML, and corruption.

FIU has the legal authority to freeze assets if it discovers any such operations, making Hezbollah the primary target. Hezbollah is seeking financial resources for its branches around the world and for the tri-border region in particular, according to a report from the FIU. This is especially true in light of the international sanctions placed on the Iranian dictatorship which supports this terrorist group. Hezbollah has made Argentina a hub for its terrorist activities in order to accomplish its evil objectives and raise the funds required to finance its terrorist activities.

As a result, the FIU declared in July 2019 that Hezbollah and its members' assets had been frozen. Jorge Faurie, the country's then-foreign minister, declared the Lebanese Hezbollah a terrorist group on the sidelines of the Second Western Hemisphere Counterterrorism Ministerial Conference that took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in July 2019. Argentina was the first South American nation to do so. The assets of seven suspects in the AMIA attack, the majority of whom are Iranian, were frozen by FIU in August 2019. Interpol has issued international arrest orders, or «red notices» for these bombing suspects.

Argentina's Federal Security

Argentina is a federal state of 23 provinces and one independent city, which is the federal capital of the state, Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires has a provincial-like autonomy,





and each province has its own constitution, but follows the federal system. Each province, even the capital, has its own police force and judicial authority, in which the federal government cannot intervene, except for the Supreme Court in some cases.

Argentina has three federal forces: Gendarmerie, Coast Guard, and Airport Security Police. They all operate with a national mandate to combat crimes of drug trafficking, terrorism, tax evasion, human trafficking, and money-laundering. This means that the fight against drug trafficking in Argentina and the prevention of terrorism are sub-servient to the federal security and justice system. Moreover, operations of the federal forces and the provincial police are coordinated by the National Homeland Security Council. The provincial justice system is authorized to investigate and prosecute all types of crimes except the federal crimes previously mentioned.

The fight against drug trafficking and terrorist financing has drained the financial and human capacities of the federal forces. Besides, these crimes have sent a rising number of prisoners to Argentina's federal prisons. Accordingly, the government approved the De-federalization Law regarding drug crimes, giving provincial authorities the power to conduct trials in low-level drug cases and take necessary action. In other words, this de-federalization allows federal

forces to act against high-level drug cases and CTF with all its capacity.

The law was approved by a number of provinces, including Santa Fe, one of Argentina's four industrial provinces, and Rosario, an economic city near Paraná River. Other provinces rejected the law. In recent years, the city has become a breeding ground for conflict between gangs involved in small-scale drug-trafficking operations. Consequently, armed assaults against homes and offices of judges, prosecutors, and their families became a common practice. These criminal gangs even opened fire on Santa Fe's Governor's residence. Gun assaults against gas stations, schools, trade associations, and overcrowded restaurants are currently reported.

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the close relationship between drug trafficking and terrorism financing. Terrorist groups do not shy away from any activity that finances their crimes, as in the case of Hezbollah. This requires international cooperation to eradicate such activities. Terrorist incidents in Rosario that may possibly reach other cities show how these criminal gangs compete to dominate the drug trade, with a predetermination to terrorize civilians. Is this perhaps a sign for a new form of terrorism emerging in Argentina? ■



TERRORISM MEMORY



Oklahoma City Bombing: In Memory of the Victims

On April 19, 1995, at 9 am, Timothy McVeigh, a former US Army soldier, and his friend Terry Nichols detonated a truck packed with 2.2 tons of explosives composed of more than two tons of ammonium nitrate fertilizer, fuel oil, and other components outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in the middle of Oklahoma City.



Within moments, the surrounding area looked like a devastated warzone. A total of 168 people were killed, including 19 children, while more than 500 were injured. A third of the building had been razed, with many floors levelled to the ground. Over 300 buildings nearby were damaged or destroyed and dozens of cars incinerated. 7,000 people lost their jobs. It is one of the deadliest domestic terrorist attacks in the history of the US to date.

Accusations off the shelf

The US media, as well as numerous commentators and analysts, immediately accused Middle Eastern Muslims of the terrorist assault without any evidence. These wild accusations aroused a severe reaction towards Muslims all over the US. However, after the perpetrators were arrested, they were found to be Christian Gulf War (Kuwait Liberation War) veterans.

The following day, investigators discovered the rear part of the truck bomb and identified the vehicle identification number (VIN), which was used to link the piece to the Ryder rental truck used by Timothy McVeigh to detonate the bomb. The massive investigation conducted by the FBI of the deadly bombing relied on over 28,000 interviews, 43,000 investigative leads, which amounted to more than 3 tons of evidence and almost a billion pieces of information, searched more than 13.2 million hotel registration records, reviewed more than 3.1 million truck rental records, and searched more than 682,000 airline reservation records.

Despite all investigations, the US Congress report, discussed on December 27, 2006, found that the FBI did not carry out thorough investigations or follow additional threads leading to other individuals who assisted McVeigh and Nichols in the bombing either in preparation or implementation. According to the report, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) made a mistake by prematurely putting McVeigh to death in 2001 after he forfeited his right to an appeal. It was observed that authorities ought to have put more effort into his inquiry and should have looked for more information that might have pointed to others who assisted him but went unpunished.

During investigations, McVeigh expressed no remorse for what he had done and sent a letter to *The Observer*, a British newspaper, saying that the bombing was his way to address the US government with the same tone it used. He said: "Borrowing a page from US foreign policy, I decided to send a message to a government that was becoming increasingly hostile, by bombing a government building and the government employees within that building who represent that government. Bombing the Murrah federal building was morally and strategically equivalent to the US hitting government buildings in several places. It was

in this climate then, that I reached the decision to go on the offensive—to put a check on government abuse of power where others have failed in stopping the federal juggernaut run amok ... the bombing was a retaliatory strike ..."

Ripple Effect

The Oklahoma City bombing was a shocking event for Americans, particularly those in Oklahoma City. The *Oklahoma Standard* arose from the overwhelming community response, representing the efforts of thousands of people working tirelessly to identify the perpetrators and repair the damage caused by the bombing. The brave city of Oklahoma was revitalized by the supportive narratives of local clusters who were keen on addressing such consequences that affected hundreds of lives and caused them sorrow and suffering. Family members and survivors of the Oklahoma City bombing responded positively. They worked on justice reform, victim rights, and memorializing the dead in all forms of art.

The Oklahoma City bombing opened a Pandora's Box (a symbol of the world's evils in Greek mythology) of domestic terrorism in the United States. Meanwhile, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 overshadowed the entire situation. However, recent terrorist incidents have drawn renewed attention to this threat, which has sparked violence, division, and polarization in the American society. Andrew Buncombe, a correspondent of *The Independent* in New York, wrote: "The ideology that once put Timothy McVeigh on violent fringe of American political thinking is now much closer to Republican Party mainstream. The threat from right wing extremism is as high now as it was at the time of the Oklahoma City bombing ... and further violent attacks are likely – especially if Donald Trump fails to win reelection in 2024".

Domestic Terrorism

The Biden administration has been alert to the threats of domestic terrorism that caused the Oklahoma City bombing. It issued the first National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism in the US, budgeting over \$100 million of additional resources to the US Department of Justice (DOJ), FBI, and the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for the current fiscal year 2022. This is to provide the FBI with all the resources, investigators, prosecutors, analysts and personnel needed to thwart domestic terrorism.

Unfortunately, the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 blew the whistle of the extremism and domestic terrorism train in the US, propelled by polarization and division. It was the second deadliest terrorist attack in the history of the US. But it did not receive the same response as did the 9/11 attacks in 2001. ■



She said that even though they took away the light of her life, she will help and save them from extremist ideology



Latifa Ibn Ziaten

From a Grieving Mother to a Counter-Extremism Figure

King Mohammed VI of Morocco paid tribute to Latifa Ibn Ziaten. Pope Francis of the Vatican and Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, honored her and granted her the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity 2021.

Latifa Ibn Ziaten, is a 61-year-old French Moroccan activist. She worked in the domain of counter-extremism and promoting tolerance. She became instantly renowned after a serious trauma in 2012 when she tragically lost her son, who was a soldier in the French army, in a terrorist attack by a French terrorist of Algerian origins. This inspired in her a fierce determination for serious counter-extremism work in France and other countries, combating ideological intolerance and all forms of discrimination based on religion, race, language, gender, or color, and instilling the culture of dialogue, coexistence and harmony. In a few years, she turned from a grieving mother into an icon of tolerance and counter-extremism.

Terrorist Incident

Imad ibn Ziaten, 30, advertised a motorcycle for sale on a website. Mohammed Merah (a terrorist affiliated with al-Qaeda's Jund al-Khilafah (JAK-T)) responded, and they agreed to meet in a Toulouse, France, parking lot to complete the purchase. Merah betrayed him by shooting him in the head and fleeing. He later participated in genocides that killed soldiers and children before being murdered by French police.

Latifa Ibn Ziaten, Imad's mother, said that despite her pain and grief, she decided to visit the location where her son was murdered, and found his blood still there. She said it was an indescribable moment. However, she stood strong and went to the murderer's house, desperately searching for answers. She was astonished by the pride taken by the boys of the neighborhood in the crimes of Merah, who called him a hero and a martyr for Islam!

She screamed that she was the mother of Imad who had been murdered by Merah. "Is that something you're particularly proud of?" They were taken aback and apologized before blaming the harsh reality of their lives in those enclosed neighbourhoods. Isolation and exclusion from French society made them vulnerable to terrorist groups. That marked a watershed moment for Latifa Ibn Ziaten. Despite her emotional distress, she said she decided to talk to them, correct their misconceptions, and encourage them to let go of their hatred and grudges. She soon after established the IMAD Association for Youth and Peace.

IMAD Association for Youth and Peace

According to Latifa Ibn Ziaten, the main causes of extremism are lack of good education and job opportunities, low self-esteem, family disintegration, immigration and integration issues, dominant religious misconceptions, and an overheated atmosphere of intolerance, hate, and

conflict. These issues must be addressed through serious collaboration efforts to promote peace and coexistence, protect young people from extremist advocates, and provide them with a better future.

Latifa became an activist since the foundation of her association. She visited marginalized and impoverished neighborhoods around France and all over the world as well as crime-ridden areas. She met and communicated with school and university students, educating them. In addition, she held seminars and forums for youths from different religions, promoting love, tolerance and social cohesion.

Latifa also started a global prisoner movement, believing that the prison is usually a place of hatred where prisoners suffer psychologically. She wanted to listen to them, have discussions with them, counsel them, and encourage them to practise tolerance in their lives both inside and outside of prison, to let go of all hatred and resentment, and to live a new life full of love, fraternity, and harmony.

Awards and Honors

Latifa Ibn Ziaten received awards and honours for her efforts in peacebuilding and immunizing young people against extremism, including the Chirac Foundation prize for deepening a culture of peace, the Marcel Rudloff Tolerance Prize for the most anti-sectarian initiative that promotes accepting the other, and the Legion of Honor awarded by French President François Hollande. Morocco's King Mohammed VI paid tribute to Latifa ibn Ziaten. Ahmad al-Tayyib, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Pope Francis of the Vatican, honoured her with the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity 2021.

Latifa ibn Ziaten's Journey

Latifa ibn Ziaten documented her experience in a book titled *Mort Pour La France: Mohamed Merah a tué mon fils* [Death for France: Mohamed Merah Killed my Son]. She tells the story of her immigration to France and elaborates on problems of immigration and integration, how people of non-French origins can become good French citizens without denying their own origins, and how they can practice their religions without compromising the foundations of the State.

The "Latifa: A Fighting Heart" documentary tells the story of Latifa Ibn Ziaten, a mother who, after her son was killed in a terrorist incident, turned from a grieving mother into a figure of peace, love, tolerance and counter-extremism and terrorism. ■



VIOLENCE AND EXTREMISM IN THAILAND:

HISTORICAL ROOTS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION

■ Dr. Roushdy Taher and Salman Dahong

The escalation of terrorism on a global scale has sparked a race among states and governments to investigate the problem and determine its origins. Political unrest has frequently led to the onslaught of terrorism in all countries. It is not restricted to a particular belief system, way of life, or identity. Extremism, which exists in practically all communities, has given rise to terrorism as a global problem, and Thailand was no exception.



■ **Dr. Roushdy Taher:** Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences, Prince of Songkla University (PSU), Pattani, Thailand.
■ **Salman Dahong:** Full-time researcher in international law with a Master's degree in comparative law from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

Thailand Throughout History

Thailand was named after its inhabiting Thai People (or Tai). It was previously known as “Siam”, then changed to “Thai” in 1949 with the addition of “Land” (i.e., territory or region), and is now known as the Kingdom of Thailand, with Bangkok as its capital.

Islam was introduced to Thailand early in history among other southeast Asian nations. It was Muslim Arab and Persian merchants who introduced Islam to now-existing Muslim areas in the region since the 4th century AH (10th century CE).

Thailand’s southernmost region is part of the Malay Archipelago, which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei, Singapore, and Pattani. The states of Thailand’s far south and its provinces, where Muslims account for approximately 80% of the population, are strategically located; they connect the Malay Peninsula to the Indochina Peninsula. The majority of Muslims in the region are descended from ethnic Malays, who speak the Malay (Javai) language, which is written in Arabic letters and contains many Arabic words. After the Kingdom of Thailand annexed this southern region, most subsequent generations began to speak (Thai) as the official and government language in addition to their mother tongue (Javanese).



Multi-Ethnic Thailand

Thailand’s dominant religion, Buddhism, is practised by 95% of the population. Muslims come in second, with only 4% or, according to some estimates, 12%. Consequently, Muslims constitute a minority in Thailand. Given that Thailand was previously a Muslim country under Muslim rule, the southern states are predominantly Muslim.

According to 2004 statistics, Muslims used to account for nearly 80% of the population.

This historical fact demonstrates that the Muslim population problem in the southern Thai states is not a recent issue, but rather has a long history. The Thai government’s occupation of the Islamic state of Pattani ignited it, and since then Muslims have not settled down since they see their nation’s past as the primary foundation for their independence. The Pattani people are convinced that Bangkok’s leaders have failed to adequately address their issue, let alone find satisfactory solutions to it. This conviction stems from their rage over their worsening economic situation as well as their fear of losing their civilizational heritage and culture in a Buddhist society.

Conflict in the South

It was claimed that the southern regions of Thailand have a majority-Muslim population and that «Malay» is their mother tongue and only language. These people are said to adhere firmly to the principles of the true Islamic religion, which distinguishes these regions from the rest of Thailand in terms of language, culture, and religion. The majority of the locals are of Thai and Malaysian descent, and they have strong ethnic and religious ties to Malaysian regions. Despite this, the locals have little economic influence in their communities, and most of them are engaged in farming, fishing, or the collection of rubber.

The region was formerly known as the Pattani Kingdom, and it was ruled by a Muslim sultan. In 1909, the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Siam signed the Treaty of Bangkok, which established the modern border between Malaysia and Thailand. The provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and Songkhla Satun remained under Siamese rule. Thailand renounced its claim to sovereignty over the states of Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis, and Terengganu, which later became part of Malaysia. Since then, movements demanding secession and independence from the Thai Kingdom have emerged.

The conflict arose again in January 2004 when armed members of Ratchanakarin military base in Narathiwat were described as terrorists, a description repudiated by the Thai government. Some base guards were killed and 400 weapons were stolen.

Extra violent incidents ensued, most prominently:

- On January 6, 2004, clashes broke out between southern Thai Muslims and Thai troops on multiple occasions throughout the state of Pattani leading to the deaths of many members of the Thai forces. As a result, the government imposed a curfew and martial law on «Pattani» and mobilized the armed forces.



Many communities and religious institutions were besieged and searched. Due to the development of dread and anxiety, the implementation of martial law and military regulations in the southern Thai states caused disruptions in social and economic life as well as restrictions on those working in institutions for advocacy, charitable organisations, and education.

- On March 23, 2004, a bombing occurred close to the Thai government's convention centre in Narathiwat. Somchai Neelaphaijit (Abu Bakr), the president of the Muslim Attorney Council (MAC) in Pattani, was killed two days later. The Centre for Human Rights and regional newspapers reacted with a torrent of venom, putting the Thai government in a precarious position.
- Around 128 people were killed on April 28, 2004, when Thai military attacked worshippers at the Krue Se Mosque in Pattani.
- On October 25, 2004, Muslims protested in front of Tak Bai Police Station in Narathiwat to demand the release of six detainees charged with involvement in terrorist attacks. When police officers and members of the armed forces confronted the protesters, some 1300 of them were detained and transported in appalling conditions to the Pattani military base, where 78 people died from suffocation.
- 2005: 5 huge bombings.
- 2006: 8 bombings.
- 2011: 24 bombings in Yala where many Muslims and Buddhists were killed.
- January 2004 – October 2021: 21235 Security incidents in the far south where 7295 were killed and 13550 were injured.

In addition to the sometimes gruesome manner of killing such as lynching and burning alive, some murders occur at random, without distinguishing between Muslims and

non-Muslims. Muslims in southern Thailand are no longer confident in themselves as a result of these frequent horrifying occurrences; explosions can happen anywhere and at any time, including in markets, schools, streets, and even mosques, and people are now living in fear and dread.

Media Representation

Thailand's media fell into the clutches of the globalization of media under American hegemony. In addressing the issue of terrorism, the media generally follows the lead of the Western media, particularly the American, French, and German media, in addition to the Eastern media, which also emulate the Western media in terms of news sources, information and analysis, media reading, and psychological and social interpretation of facts.

Thai media's portrayal of terrorism issues is nothing more than an imitation of the Western media's voice, which they forced on the majority of media outlets worldwide. In the way they handle and interpret terrorist events and data, they are slaves to Western philosophy and society, and their approach to the horrifying reality of terrorism is far from neutral. They provide straightforward, limited interpretations, making rash allegations without solid justification and with little regard for the collective intelligence of the people.

A closer look at the materials published in the Thai media related to terrorism reveals that they are characterized by the following:

1. Media follow-ups of terrorist operations are mostly informative, hasty, and sometimes superficial.
2. Poor media follow-ups, mostly analytical and interpretative, as well as a lack of survey follow-ups, confining media representation to a superficial level.
3. Paying more attention to terrorist incidents than the causes and motives of terrorism.
4. Never engaging experts and professionals to address

aspects of terrorism, and poor cooperation with pedagogical and social institutes fighting terrorism.

5. Falling into either of two traps: understatement or exaggeration of terrorism. This adversely affects the authenticity, access, and influence of the media.
6. Addressing terrorism as an independent phenomenon without necessarily associating it with extremism and violence.
7. Failure to adhere to media sciences' principles and theories, as well as careless usage of effective persuasive introductions. The majority of media content is impromptu and unplanned, which disrespects the intelligence of the audience.

Thailand and Counter-Terrorism

The US annual report on terrorism for 2020 states that the main weakness of Thailand is that it provides easy access to terrorism. However, Thailand never witnessed any cross-border terrorist attacks that year. It only faced violent separatist attacks in the far south of Thailand. Thai authorities confirmed that there is no evident link between local insurgents and international networks.

The Thai government continues to focus on and prioritize the challenges posed by local policies. It is an active actor in the global fight against terrorism, supporting counter-terrorist efforts by joining a number of regional and multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM).

Thailand adopts a counterterrorism plan that was released in 2017. Plans for regional security and counterterrorism are included in the national security strategy (2019–2022), which was issued in November 2019. The government started programmes and dialogue projects to combat violence, including:

1. New Hope

This project began in the early 1990s and is still active in the Islamic community today. Its goals include establishing security and peace in Thailand's southern regions, eliminating all forms of intolerance and conflict between Muslims and Buddhists.

However, the project has some flaws, such as failing to account for religious, cultural, and social differences among Thai people. This sowed discord between Muslims and Buddhists, because Muslims refuse to engage in social and religious activities that combine Islamic and Buddhist provisions in all aspects of life. As a result, the project failed in the Muslim communities of the south.



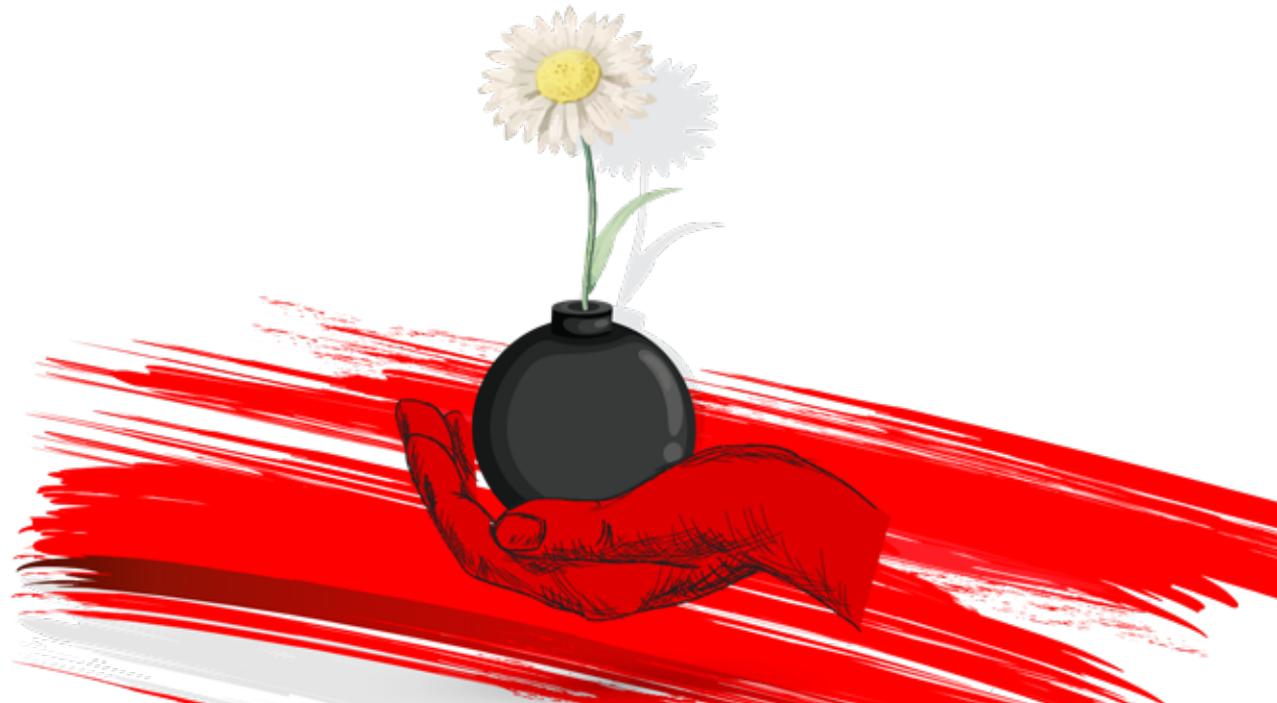
2. Sriwijaya:

The project, which began in 1993, was structured on three pillars: liberty, goodwill, and equality. It promises social and economic development for future welfare and security in southern states, where Muslims and Buddhists will be treated equally. Despite those assurances, learned Muslims recognize the project's danger. They believe it is intended to instill Buddhist culture among Muslim communities while undermining Islamic morals.

3. National Reconciliation Commission (NRC):

It includes members of different backgrounds and perspectives, including prominent Muslim figures, such as the secretary general of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand (CICOT), presidents of the Islamic Councils in the three Thai states, President of Yala Islamic University, president of the Young Muslim Association of Thailand (YMAT), and some Muslim experts, physicians, and politicians.

NRC studies facts and existing circumstances from different perspectives and lays suitable plans, to recover the mutual understanding between all segments of Thailand and maintain security, especially in the three southern states. In March 2006, NRC concluded in three reports that it is necessary to avoid violence at all costs when addressing problems, utilizing proper strategies while taking into consideration the cultural and social variances between people, and making the Malay language a second language in all three states. ■



FAMILY TERRORISM FROM FAMILY SOLIDARITY AND LOVE TO VIOLENCE AND HATRED

■ Yanuardi Syukur

On 13 May 2018, a man, his wife, and their children detonated a suicide bomb in Surabaya, East Java, shocking the entire world. An entire family of six, including Dita Upryanto (48), his wife Puji Kuswati (43), and their four children, committed this heinous murder. Later that same month, the family of Tri Murtiono (50), Tri Ernawati (43), and their three children carried out a second terrorist attack using two motorcycles at the entrance to the Surabaya police station.

In Medan, North Sumatra, there have also been instances of family terrorism, such as the bombing of the Medan police station by Rabbial Nasution, a young man who was born in 1995. The attack was organized and coordinated by his wife, Dewi Anggraini (age 23), who also spoke with terrorism suspects in Medan. She also considered carrying out a suicide bombing in Bali, a major tourist attraction in Indonesia.

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On 15 July 2018, a husband and wife committed another act of family terrorism by throwing an explosive-filled pot bomb at the police station in Indramayu, West Java. The two perpetrators are associated with Jemaah Anshorut Daulah, an Indonesian terrorist organization that supports ISIS (JAD). The two attempted to enter the Indramayu police station while riding a motorcycle. Upon observing this, the police quickly shot the two offenders by way of warning. The two then turned to face the police station's exit gate, threw the explosives at the guard post, and made an attempt to flee until they were apprehended.

These cases show how terrorism has developed into family terrorism. Accordingly, researchers and analysts have been studying the causes and means of prevention of such terrorist acts.

Family terrorism did not emerge overnight by a person or two, but rather developed into a family affair carried out by an entire family. Family terrorism needs to be studied extensively to identify the causes and find effective solutions.

Motives and Causes

Family terrorism occurs for several reasons and is driven by several motives, most importantly:

1. **Extremist Ideology:** A husband and wife from the JAD group carried out a bombing in Makassar in front of

a church to express their contempt for Christianity. In Surabaya, Dita Upriyanto was concerned about leaving his family behind in a harsh, slanderous environment. He therefore thought that carrying out suicide bombings in groups is preferable in order for everyone to "get to heaven together as a family." Dedy Tabrani's 2022 research on the Surabaya bombing explains that the act was driven neither by political nor financial motives, but was rather "the best way to be martyred". From that standpoint, Tabrani sees that terrorists do not only function as extremist religious symbols, but also easily condemn and attack other people outside their groups. Both cases cannot be addressed in isolation from the extremist ideologies of their perpetrators.

2. **Family Solidarity:** Family solidarity, though essentially a human trait, is defined in the context of terrorism as a willingness to live and die together. The father convicted in the Surabaya bombing case imagined himself living in an "Islamic State" in Syria under ISIS. He believed that if he and his family could not live together in a country governed by Islamic Shari'ah, they must live together in their homeland (Indonesia). Their hatred for the Indonesian government, which they believe does not implement Islamic Shari'ah, and Christianity, on the other hand, has driven them to commit suicide bombings in order to spend blissful eternity with the martyrs.





3. **To Promote Family Solidarity, Tasks in Terrorist Acts are Divided Among Family Members.** Dita Upriyanto, for example, was the driver of the car that targeted the Christian congregation. According to the police statement after their bodies were discovered, Dita dropped his wife Puji Kuswati and two daughters at the Diponegoro church with three bombs wrapped around their waists. Meanwhile, his two sons were riding two motorcycles to Santa Maria Catholic Church, carrying bombs. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack via its news agency, Amaq News Agency.
4. **The Role Of Social Media in the Propagation of Extremism.** Dewi Anggraini, the wife of the Medan bombing perpetrator, was an active woman on social media. She is known to have planned a suicide bombing in Bali, one of Indonesia's most popular tourist attractions.
5. **Women as Terrorist Planners and Men as Terrorist Executors,** as in the Medan bombing case, where Dewi Anggraini was the planner and her husband was the executor. This is especially intriguing given how often terrorism and violence were associated with men. In this case, however, planning was an important factor carried out by a woman. Dewi not only served as a terrorist planner, but she also maintained contact with other

terrorist groups in Medan and elsewhere. In this case, Dewi's role appears to be more vital than her husband's.

The JAD terrorist group supports family terrorism in terms of planning and execution, including women and children. Their ideology differs from that of the Jamaah Islamiyah (JI) group, which was responsible for "the most heinous terrorist acts in Indonesian history." They carried out the Bali bombings in 2002, which resulted in 203 deaths and 209 casualties. JL, on the other hand, did not include women or children in the Bali bombing; only men were involved.

The difference in perspectives between JI and JAD is reflected in their attitudes towards women. JI views women as domestic warriors, whereas JAD sees women as battlefield warriors (i.e., they are directly involved in acts of terrorism and can even become terrorists themselves). JAD regards the involvement of women and children in terrorist acts as an honour. This is evident in a number of terrorist incidents, such as the attack by Abu Rara and his wife against Indonesian Defense Minister General Wiranto during a visit to Banten province.

Family terrorism has become a widespread phenomenon in Indonesia, with extremist families believing that carrying out terrorist acts together is safer. They believe that family members love and trust one another, and they are





willing to make sacrifices for one another. For terrorist organizations, families are regarded as a safe haven for defending ideologies and combating the other.

Preventing Family Terrorism

Family terrorism has spread in Indonesia like an obnoxious virus and has become an inspiration for terrorists in neighboring and faraway countries. Thus, proactive measures must be taken, most importantly:

1. **Promoting Religious Moderation:** This is the key to avoiding being misled by extreme right or extreme left ideologies. Every family must instill moderate thinking in order to stay within the bounds of propriety, decency, and the rule of law. Governments are not perfect, but as Muslims, we must respond peacefully and never resort to violence as entailed by Islam. Violence will only destroy the socio-cultural order that underpins all societies.
2. **Condemning Extremist Interpretations of Religious Texts** because they present a narrow indoctrination that leads to rejection and non-recognition of the other. Dedy Tabrani cites “violent scholars” who partially interpret religious texts in fragmentary and out-of-context ways. It is not sufficient to simply blame

violent scholars. A dialogue between all different reform perspectives is required. Islam promotes peacekeeping, order, and reform. All scholars, religious leaders, and Muslim leaders must be committed to reform.

3. **Promoting cultural literacy and citizenship, and raising awareness of every citizen’s human rights and obligations for the protection of the nation and state.** We live in a state system governed by established rules. This requires an understanding of state rules, including citizens’ rights and obligations. We definitely live in a globalized world that requires us to understand, accept, and recognize different cultures in order to be good citizens.
4. **Encouraging the Families of Terrorists not to Follow in their Footsteps.** This approach is crucial for protecting terrorists’ families and preventing new terrorists from emerging from these families. According to research findings, terrorist families do not easily interact with other families. They continue to bear the social stigma attached to them. Terrorist families must be urged to return to a peaceful way of life as good citizens of the country, rather than resorting to violence as terrorists do. ■



COUNTER-TERRORISM IN MALAYSIA: RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

■ Dr. Khairil Azmin Bin Mokhtar

Religion plays an important role in people's lives. It governs the relationship between people and their Creator, regulates their behaviour, aids in the formation of a proper society, feeds the soul, and brings about peace. This makes it nearly impossible to separate man from his religious right. However, some extremist groups tend to violate religious sanctity by using religious texts to further their own interests and agenda. As a result, chaos and subversion prevailed, and security was jeopardized.

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Freedom and Extremism

To confront and eradicate religious extremism, all available means had to be used. Much of the world, including Malaysia, is plagued by religious terrorism and extremism, which has manifested itself in violent acts in Malaysia and most of Southeast Asia, followed by the arrests of ISIS and other affiliate terrorist group members. This prompted the Malaysian government to implement a number of counter-terrorism measures in order to ensure the safety and security of the country and its people. However, challenges to the constitution, international laws, and human rights have emerged. These necessitate striking a balance between maintaining security and stability and safeguarding human rights and liberties.

The right to profess and exercise one's religion is guaranteed by Article 11 of the Malaysian Constitution. According to Article 3, Islam is the official religion of the Federation, but other faiths are permitted to be practised in all areas of the Federation in the spirit of peace and cooperation. Those rights that have limitations and rules yet in the meanwhile they must be respected and protected by the government. They are subject to the law of public order, public health and social ethics.

The government has the power to pass laws to counter the spread of extremist ideology. Article 149 of the Malaysian Constitution grants the Malaysian parliament the power to approve measures required to combat violent extremism. As a result, the Supreme Court issued a warning against using the right to freedom of religion and worship as a cover for engaging in criminal activity or committing crimes motivated by extremism and endangering national security. The court further noted that Clause (5) of Article 11 of the Constitution assertively emphasizes that the provision for religious freedom in that article does not permit acts that are detrimental to morality or public order.

Counter-Terrorism Laws

Malaysia passed a set of counter-terrorism laws classified into two categories:

First, Ordinary Laws. These refer to legislations passed by the federal legislature and state legislatures under their respective constitutional powers. These laws must be consistent with other provisions of the constitution, particularly the ones that deal with fundamental liberties. The Supreme Court is entitled to annul any law had it not complied with the constitution or had it violated any civil rights guaranteed by the constitution. This category



includes the AML/CFT Law, the Proceeds of Unlawful Activities 2001, the Special Measures Against Terrorism in Foreign Countries 2015, and the Penal Code.

Malaysia enforced the Penal Code, namely Chapter VIA on offences relating to terrorism, in cases of religious extremism handled recently by the court. The chapter can be divided into two parts: firstly, provisions on the suppression of terrorist acts and denouncing any support for terrorist acts, which consist of section 130 B to section 130 M, and secondly provisions on the suppression of financing of terrorist acts from section 130 N to section 130 TA.

Second, Special Laws, which are laws passed by the parliament in accordance with Article 149 of the constitution and which deal with organized subversion, violence, and crimes against people. The parliament is empowered to pass special laws under the terms of this article, including those that prohibit acts that terrorize Malaysian citizens inside or outside the Federation, as well as organized violence against individuals, groups, or public or private property, incitement of racial or class hatred, the destruction of public services, or any behaviour endangering public order.

Any provision of the law made in pursuance of Article 149 is valid even if inconsistent with the constitutional rights of life and personal liberty, freedom of movement, rights to free speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of establishing associations, and property rights. Legislations passed

under the constitutional provision to combat subversion and organized violence include Prevention of Crime Act 1959, Internal Security Act 1960, Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012, and Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015.

Types of Crime

The offences under the aforementioned counter-terrorism laws can be divided into ideological offences and criminal offences. **Ideological offences** are offences committed by individuals or groups based on ideological beliefs. These offences may not necessarily cause physical harm to the public. These include the possession of anything that can be used in extremist and terrorist acts, such as pictures, videos, audio, symbols, flags, books and publications, promotional material supporting extremist ideology on social media, or asking for donations. Although an ideological offence is not violent in itself, it potentially leads to extremism, terrorism, and violence. Thus, these offences have been classified as 'terrorist offences' in the Penal Code.

Criminal Offences are offences that inflict physical harm on the public or on individuals. Under current laws, there is no clear distinction between ideological and criminal offences. Thus, they should be approached from a different perspective. In addition, perpetrators of ideological offences should not be subjected to similar treatment or punishment as perpetrators of criminal offences. Imposing severe punishment for ideological offences can have



detrimental consequences in the long run. Rather than punitive or vindictive, the sentence for ideological offences should be restorative and rehabilitative.

Judicial Rulings

One of the roles of the court is to safeguard the legitimate rights of citizens, and to determine the legality of restrictions imposed on them by laws and government action. As part of the check and balance mechanism under the constitutional framework of the state, the court is obligated to protect the rights of detainees and suspects in offences related to extremism and terrorism. The court has the power to nullify laws that violate rights and liberties enshrined in the constitution, and to declare any action or decision made by the government illegal and unconstitutional in case it violates the rights of individuals.

In this regard, the court has taken on numerous cases, such as Ahmed Yani bin Ismail's complaint against the Inspector General of Police, in which several members of Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), a terrorist group active in South-East Asia, attempted to create unrest as well as overthrow the legitimate government through armed insurgency in order to create an Islamic archipelago consisting of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Southern Philippines, and were detained by the authorities. JI members were discovered to have received military training. The court ruled that their malicious actions did not fall under religious freedom and thus were not protected under Article 11 of the Malaysian Constitution.

Because these actions threatened the country's stability, the court ruled that detaining that group was legal and did not violate religious freedom. Detainees who were also JI members were arrested for armed and violent acts in another lawsuit filed by Abdul Razak bin Baharudin & Ors v Ketua Polis Negara & Ors. They did, however, object to their arrest, claiming that it violated their legally guaranteed freedom of religion. However, after a thorough examination of all relevant facts, the court was unconvinced by their claims and upheld the authorities' decision that the detainees' actions were detrimental to the country's security and must be combated. These cases demonstrate that acts of militant religious groups must not be considered within the religious right guaranteed to citizens, or protected by the Constitution.

Summary

Malaysia is making significant efforts to combat extremism, track down extremists and terrorists, and undermine and counteract their activities. Despite the severity of

the measures that are frequently imposed, the extremist ideology that underpins terrorism stays unchanged and is rapidly growing. As a result, the state is determined to eliminate all causes and factors that fuel extremist ideologies and their negative consequences.

Malaysia has implemented a comprehensive strategic plan to combat extremism and terrorism, which includes both strict and lenient measures. However, the ever-increasing threat posed by religious extremists and terrorist groups necessitates increased efforts by law enforcement authorities to protect society and the nation. At the same time, authorities must be more vigilant and tolerant in dealing with cases of ideological offences so that the lawful exercise of rights to free speech and expression, as well as legitimate religious rights, is not hampered. Innocent people who unknowingly fall into the clutches of a terrorist organization must also be assisted rather than punished. Finally, law enforcement forces and religious authorities should continue to collaborate to defeat terrorism and extremist ideology. ■





PHILIPPINES GOVERNMENT AND MORO ISLAMIC LIBERATION FRONT: A STRATEGIC COUNTER-TERRORISM AND EXTREMISM PARTNERSHIP

■ Shamseldin Tayea, Abu Bakr Ali, and Mohammad Makakua

Extremism has been on the rise in recent decades, with some nations—like the Philippines—experiencing a greater level of it than others. The Philippines government sought to develop practical strategies for combating such a catastrophic phenomenon. Military and security forces were adopted as a solution, but no notable results were seen on the ground. Especially in the south, terrorist attacks on the rise, resulting in significant material and human casualties. Therefore, a new strategy has to be used to address and resolve the problem. In response, the government formed a strategic alliance with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front after factions of the Bangsamoro liberation groups split off and turned to violent extremism.

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Mutual Trust

The administration of former Philippines President Benigno Simeon Aquino III saw the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) as a crucial ally in the fight against terrorism and extremism in the area. The Philippines government persisted in pressing ahead with the implementation of its plans to put an end to extremism and terrorism despite the complexity of such challenges. This encouraged more governments to work together under MILF leadership, notably the administration of the late President Rodrigo Duterte.

The MILF welcomed this policy shift and gave priority to putting this strategic partnership's strategy into practice. It created a foundation of confidence and understanding that allowed for the sharing of information and the execution of significant operations against terrorist networks, resulting in the death and the widespread detention of terrorist organization members.

Causes of Extremism

Extremism in Philippines is rooted in the integration policy adopted by the government in the Bangsamoro case,

which resulted in a violent long-term conflict between Bangsamoro liberation movements and the Philippines government. Many Bangsamoro people rejected such a policy, reiterating their wish for Bangsamoro to become a US province or state.

The government attempted to integrate the Bangsamoro people, particularly the liberation groups, using military force. This produced a great deal of resentment, which later turned into protests against the government and the integration project. They continued for a while, but in vain. Nevertheless, the government maintained this approach. The dispute then intensified as the government insisted on implementing the integration strategy in a country where Christians, who make up the majority of the population, are politically, socially, economically, and culturally dominant. This was demonstrated when the government used state-run institutions like schools, colleges, and the media to impose cultural, religious, and linguistic integration on Bangsamoro people, whose predominant culture is Christian, frequently using violence. Such a course of action produced significant results.



Implications

The people of Bangsamoro were disappointed with the integration programme that was imposed on them without their agreement and that ended their hopes for autonomous rule. They became overwhelmed with feelings of injustice, discrimination, oppression, and marginalization when they discovered they were left out of key positions and decision-making. All of this contributed to rage and probably violent extremism.

The incident had long-term effects on every facet of Bangsamoro life. In terms of politics, the people who wanted to exercise their rights to freedom and self-determination lost their sense of political identity. The liberation groups in Bangsamoro, including the Moro National Liberation Front and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, were a direct result of this worsening struggle between the people and their government.

During this time, violent extremist groups like the Abu Sayyaf and Maute groups started to develop. These groups attacked government buildings and employees, kidnapped soldiers, and threatened to kill them if their demands were not met. Naturally, the authorities could not tell the difference between Bangsamoro liberation movements that

struggled for legitimate rights and freedoms and extremist and terrorist organisations. The security situation in south Philippines deteriorated as a result.

With the abandonment of the government's integration programme and the granting of autonomy to Bangsamoro, Mindanao's Muslim region, stability was mostly restored. Additionally, positive efforts were made towards sustainable development, which had a favourable impact on people's lives. On June 7, 2020, Human Relief Foundation Vice President Hussein O'Rourke stated that the unity between Muslims, Christians, and other minorities in the region has become exemplary for other regions around the world.

The new policy exacerbated a climate of resentment and intense hatred towards extremist groups, not just in the south of the Philippines but everywhere, which promoted a secure life for everyone—Filipinos, members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and others—inside and outside the region.

Popular Rejection

Extremist Bangsamoro groups were not well-liked by the general public because they lacked a strong

political cause for their war or a clear vision for society. Additionally, terrorist organisations like Abu Sayyaf and Maute have carried out more atrocious crimes against innocent populations, including kidnappings, murders, and bombings, especially during operations in densely populated regions. They conducted political, social, and economic strikes, ordered people to leave particular locations, and claimed to be in charge of certain places, all of which contributed to the general public's rejection of them.

Significant damage and a high death toll were caused by the 2017 siege of Marawi and the five-month conflict between security forces and the Abu Sayyaf and Maute insurgents. Nearly a thousand individuals lost their lives, 300,000 were compelled to abandon their homes, and important institutions and buildings suffered physical harm. The cost of rebuilding the city was estimated by the Philippines government to be 50 billion pesos, around \$899 million. As a result, public hostility for terrorist organisations and their abhorrent brutality and subversion intensified. Observers assert that being able to comprehend the problems of the Bangsamoro people, granting them some authority, and identifying deprived areas produced individuals who were loyal to the State and assisted in defeating violent extremist groups.

Renunciation of Extremism

In 2019, the government of the Muslim Island of Mindanao was established under the leadership of MILF, paving the door for MILF to lead the interim administration known as the "Bangsamoro Transitional Authority". Additionally, they eliminated extremist groups that continued to oppose the integration programme and peace attempts, which undermined the strength of those groups.

MILF started cooperating with the Philippines government under President Benigno Aquino III. They provided substantial support neutralizing rebels connected to global terrorist networks and dismantling their groups. For example, Filipino bomb maker Abdul Basit Usman was neutralized. He was the mastermind of many extremist operations targeting the Philippines government and its allies. "He was the mastermind of the General Santos City bombing in April 21, 2002, killing 15 and injuring 55. He commanded a set of operations linked to Abu Sayyaf group JL branch in southeast Asia, al-Qaeda, and ISIS".

Bangsamoro transitional authority managed to bring considerable gains to a war-torn region afflicted by violence and chaos, and impeded extremists and militant groups. Military operations of the Philippines government



and MILF, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, imposed heavy pressure on extremists, dispersed them all over the country, and substantially depleted them.

Owing to the close collaboration between the two parties, the joint military operations between the Philippines military forces and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), the military branch of MILF, uncovered a number of terrorist networks and neutralized dozens of extremists and terrorists. The Philippines government benefitted from the counter extremism and terrorism efforts exerted by MILF and the dismantlement of the complex network of international terrorist groups in the region.

Conclusion

The strategic alliance between the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has been highlighted in this article, along with how it helped the fight against extremism. This partnership has successfully addressed numerous critical security issues while dismantling terrorist networks and neutralizing their members. It definitely encourages more similar partnerships to combat such malicious phenomena. This approach sets a framework for counter terrorism and extremism efforts in Philippines, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and other regions. ■



LEGAL EXAMINATION OF TERRORISM GLORIFICATION IN MALAYSIA AND INDONESIA



■ **Dr. Sonny Zulhuda and Muhammad Luqman Haqem bin Roslan**

Terrorism has claimed the lives of many innocent people all over the world. It poses a significant challenge to nations and people, particularly now that social media have become an effective tool for terrorists to spread their ideologies. Young social media users are especially vulnerable to terrorist propaganda. Studies have shown that social media are being used for extremist propaganda, with innocent people being recruited to join terrorist organisations under the guise of political, ideological, and religious agendas.

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The influence of terrorist social media platforms can be observed in a variety of ways, including the glorification of terrorism, which can be interpreted as support, encouragement, or approval of terrorists and their destructive acts, which will in turn prompt more similar acts or offences threatening society and terrorizing people.

Glorification of Terrorism

When a conduct is praised, there is a tacit approval or silent acceptance of that conduct. When society tolerates terrorism, it is vested with some kind of acceptance or support until it is normalized. This sends the wrong message to the entire community. Too often, there are people who can easily take things as they seem to be, thus agreeing to something without proper research or judgement. When social media influencers praise extremist ideology or a terrorist act, their followers will follow blindly.

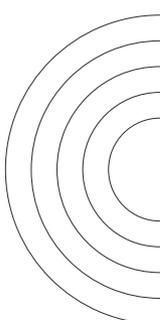
Another problem with terrorism glorification on social media is the tendency of people to copy and circulate statements across these platforms. Given the ease to post comments to original posts (texts, images, or videos), uninformed users would easily show their likes, support, and love; they would even add more comments. At the end, glorification of terrorism easily multiplies across social media platforms.

For example, when a terrorist bombing occurred at a local night club in Malaysia, killing and injuring innocent people, some posted comments that ignorantly praised or endorsed the act instead of giving condolences. Even if some comments did not support terrorists, they sent the wrong message to readers. Though these comments and interactions may pose as personal opinions, they would certainly promote normalization and acceptance of terrorism.

Public encouragement motivates individuals to keep on doing the same things. A study made by a team of anthropologists at Balikesir University in 2015 shows that social support fuels the perpetration of the supported acts. This explains why the cheering of bystanders motivates marathoners to keep on running nonstop. Therefore, if we do nothing to curb the glorification of terrorism, it shall flourish. It is true that the glorification of terrorism on social media is not an actual act of terrorism. However, it shall further encourage terrorists to continue terrorizing people, and it sends the message that violence is the answer to every problem. Thus, it was necessary to stop this glorification by passing strict laws.

Legal Examination

As glorification of terrorism on social media is seen as a step towards terrorism itself, laws were enacted criminalizing it. The United Kingdom, for example, criminalizes the





act of glorifying terrorists or terrorist acts. The Terrorism Act 2006 included new offences, such as the encouragement or glorification of terrorism, the dissemination of terrorist publications, preparation for terrorist acts, or training for terrorist purposes. Thus, posting anything praising terrorist acts has become a crime punishable by law. This includes direct or indirect encouragement of terrorist acts and offences online and over social media. The following paragraphs explore the Malaysian and Indonesian Laws in this respect.

Malaysian Law

The Penal Code in Malaysia addresses terrorism-related offences. It defines a terrorist as any person who commits, attempts to commit, participates in, or facilitates any terrorist act. The word “glorification” was not mentioned. Nevertheless, the law criminalizes the “promotion” or “support” of any terrorist act. It is very likely that the two offences share the same objective which is the glorification of terrorism.

The act of ‘glorifying’ terrorists equals the act of promoting and praising the perpetration of a terrorist act. Promoting may lead to encouraging too. The law defines the term “support” as: using social media or any other means to advocate, support, promote, or facilitate the actions of a terrorist group.

Elaborating on the glorification of terrorism on social media, a High Court case (MLJ 702) in 2018 offers further some insights. The defendant was arrested by the police acting on a report that he was involved in supporting ISIS. Pictures related to ISIS were found on his phone. In addition, investigation established that the suspect had a Face-

book platform with a large number of posts supporting ISIS and promoting terrorism. Based on these findings, the suspect was found guilty and convicted for the offence of giving support to a terrorist group under the Penal Code.

This case was based on the defendant’s show of “support” to terrorism via online postings only, without any intent to take up arms to commit terrorist acts himself. He claimed that he shared those postings on social media without knowing or realizing the sensitivity of the content. However, the court still held the accused guilty of supporting terrorism, even though it was solely on social media. An important remark was made by the judge who stated that hitting the ‘like’ button or any other form of applauding terrorist acts on social media would constitute the offence of supporting terrorism. He added that offences provided in the Penal Code criminalize a wide range of behavior, including violent and non-violent acts relating to terrorism, and giving support falls under this ‘non-violent’ act. It is worth highlighting here that the judge used the term ‘applauding’, which bears the same definition as the term ‘glorifying’. Thus, it is now clear that both terms have the same meaning.

Even though the Penal Code does not use the literal word ‘glorifying’, it uses other terms with similar connotations, such as ‘supporting’ and ‘inciting’. Therefore, in Malaysia, the glorification of terrorism or terrorists on social media is an offence punishable by law.

Indonesian Law

Law no. 5/2018, which criminalizes terrorist acts, is an amendment of the Anti-Terrorism Law of 2002. Article (1) provides that a terrorist act is the use of force, or threatening to use force, to terrorize people, resulting in destruction



and injuries, or causing damage to strategic and vital institutions, the environment, or public or international facilities. This offense is committed with ideological or political motives or to destabilize security. While the Act criminalizes all forms of terrorism, there is no direct provision that criminalizes the glorification of terrorism in general or on social media. This is explicitly different from the Malaysian approach.

The 2018 Law specifies in two places the types of electronic publications that may constitute terrorism-related offences. However, rather than criminalizing the posting of statements that glorify terrorism, only the substantive act of terrorism was addressed. According to Article (1), threats to use force can take various forms, including verbal and written statements, images, symbols, or gestures made via an electronic or non-electronic media. This includes the propagation of terrorism in general through social media. This, however, is not the same as glorifying terrorism. Without referring to statements that glorify terrorist acts committed by others, the Article refers to terrorist statements that amount to threatening to use force, which becomes the foundation of terrorism itself.

Article (13) criminalizes any reference or statement made online or through any publication platform that may provoke or incite others to use force or threaten to use force, which in turn leads to an act of terrorism. Again, this offence does not relate to the glorification of a terrorist act committed by others.

With the absence of a law on the glorification of terrorism on social media in Indonesia, other legislations should be examined to find a solution. In Law no. 11/2008 on Electronic Information and Electronic Transactions, there is

something closer. The Law criminalizes the dissemination of information that is intended to incite hatred among individuals or a group of people based on religious, racial or sectarian sentiments. The same Law may be used against social media posts that glorify acts of terrorism. This may help to prevent any form of glorification of any act of terrorism.

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be noted that both Malaysia and Indonesia put forth some laws to prevent supporting, endorsing, or promoting acts of terrorism on social media. While the Malaysian law seems to be more specific and direct in penalizing the act of glorification of terrorism, the Indonesian law is less obvious. The different responses taken by different countries towards the glorification of terrorism do not simply mean different attention levels given to this appalling phenomenon. It is more about the different approaches to the whole issue, including social and political circumstances, such as pressures to allow more freedom of expression and fear of over-criminalization.

Terrorism remains a massive threat to the security of people. It requires developing more legal policies to detect and prevent terrorism and more counter-measures to keep nations and people safe and secure. Finally, laws should be clearer in defining and categorizing offences related to terrorism, including the glorification of terrorism. Ambiguous laws do not only jeopardize the social structure, but also compromise the freedom of expression and the optimal use of technology. In this digital era, legal and ethical guidance towards using social media has now become a necessity to ensure peace, security, and order. ■



AUM SHINRIKYO TERRORIST CULT

From a Surviving Cult to a Bygone Sect

On May 20, 2022, the United States removed five extremist and terrorist groups, including the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo, whose name means "supreme truth", from its list of foreign terrorist organizations. So, what is Aum Shinrikyo? How did it emerge then disappear?

Emergence and Transformation

Aum Shinrikyo was founded in Shibuya, Tokyo, in 1984 by the Japanese Chizuo Matsumoto (also known as Shoko Asahara), and it was given official recognition in 1989. With his publications and the talks he gave at several universities, Asahara was able to divide people all over the world. There were more than 50,000 cult members both inside and outside Japan. The majority of them attended highly prestigious universities. Under academic pressure and awaiting even more pressure after graduation, they joined Aum Shinrikyo, inspired by its glamorous promises to provide them with a meaningful life.

Little by little, the cult turned into a doomsday cult believing the world shall end after a Third World War and that only its members shall survive. Then it became one of the most violent cults and organizations in the history of Japan for its violent practices against its opposition, kidnapping, assault and killing. No other terrorist or extremist organization has been loathed as much by the Japanese people. It became the first "enemy of the people" in Japan. Its leader has been perceived as a symbol of evil. Even advocates of freedom and abolition of the death penalty all called for sentencing him to death.

Terrorist Attacks

In an attempt to kill three judges who were about to rule against the cult in a lawsuit, members of Aum Shinrikyo released the lethal nerve agent sarin in Matsumoto in 1994. The sarin attack on the Tokyo subway during rush hours, which left hundreds injured and 12 dead, introduced the cult to the world on March 20, 1995. The offenders were detained by the Japanese Police, who also seized substantial quantities of the chemicals needed to make 4 million tons of sarin.

Months later, members of the cult carried out several failed attempts to release hydrogen cyanide in various stations. In the wake of those terrorist events, Aum Shinrikyo was designated as a terrorist organization in Japan, the US, the European Union, Russia, Canada and many other countries.

Founder of the Cult and his Ideology

Chizuo Matsumoto was born on March 2, 1955 in Yatsushiro, Kumamoto, Japan to a family of seven children. He graduated in 1977 and worked in Chinese medicine. In 1981, he was accused of practicing medicine and pharmacy without a license and was fined ¥200,000.

He studied several religions and creeds such as Taoism

and Buddhism. After a pilgrimage to the Himalayas in 1987, he changed his name to Shoko Asahara and named his cult Aum Shinrikyo.

Japan Times reported how he justified his cult's Tokyo subway attacks as a "holy attempt to elevate the doomed souls of this world to a higher spiritual stage". He told his followers that the United States would attack Japan and turn it into a nuclear wasteland. He also said he had travelled forward in time to 2006 and talked to people then about what World War Three, instigated by the US, had been like, citing American psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton who wrote a book on the matter. Asahara claimed that Armageddon, which meant the end of the world, was inevitable in 1997.

He even published a seminal book in 1992, calling himself the "Holy Pope", "Savior of the Country", and "Tokyo's Christ". He claimed that he could take away the sins of his followers to whom he could transfer spiritual power and that only they would survive the end of the world.

The Japanese people were taken aback by the emergence of Aum Shinrikyo and its violent and terrorist attacks. Mori Tatsuya, Professor of Information and Communication at Meiji University, was among those who analytically studied this cult. He interviewed members of the cult, including perpetrators of the terrorist attacks and the six members sentenced to death. In 1998 and 2001, he produced two documentaries on Aum Shinrikyo, seeking a logical and scientific interpretation for its terrorist crimes. He stated that each individual member was friendly, nice, and gentle. He asserted that the reason for believing in such criminal behaviour is belief in Asahara's extremist fundamentalist ideology, which is based on reversing religious concepts from uplifting lives to an earnest death wish. He added that Asahara's followers tried to convince themselves that the soul comes back to life after death and that the subway attacks were a good deed for the sake of saving the world.

Inevitable End

Dozens of Aum Shinrikyo followers had undergone trial in Japan; 190 members were indicted, 13 of whom were sentenced to death, including the cult's leader himself, Asahara. The death sentence was executed on Asahara and other six leaders on July 6, 2018. The other six were executed 20 days later on July 26, 2018. Katsuya Takahashi, the last remaining suspect of Tokyo subway attacks, was arrested in June 2012 after fleeing for more than 17 years and was given a life sentence. Makoto Hirata, another member of the cult, was imprisoned in 2014 for the abduction of a man and his involvement in two bombing attacks. ■



SHAME AND PEACEBUILDING: COLOMBIAN COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGIES

■ Carolina Espinoza Robiano

Armed conflict in Colombia is one of the longest in the world of contemporary conflicts, having lasted for almost 60 years. It started in the 1960s between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army (FARC-EP), until the signing of the September 2016 peace agreement after extensive peace talks for nearly four years.

Despite the violence that could amount to terrorism, the heavy toll in lives and property, the lack of security, and the widespread terror, many analysts did not believe that the conflict amounted to substantive domestic or global terrorism, and thus it did not garner international attention.

This article examines the origins of this complex conflict, which resulted in 200,000 deaths and millions of displaced people; subsequent terrorist acts against civilians; Colombia’s response; and the strategic plans developed to establish peace.

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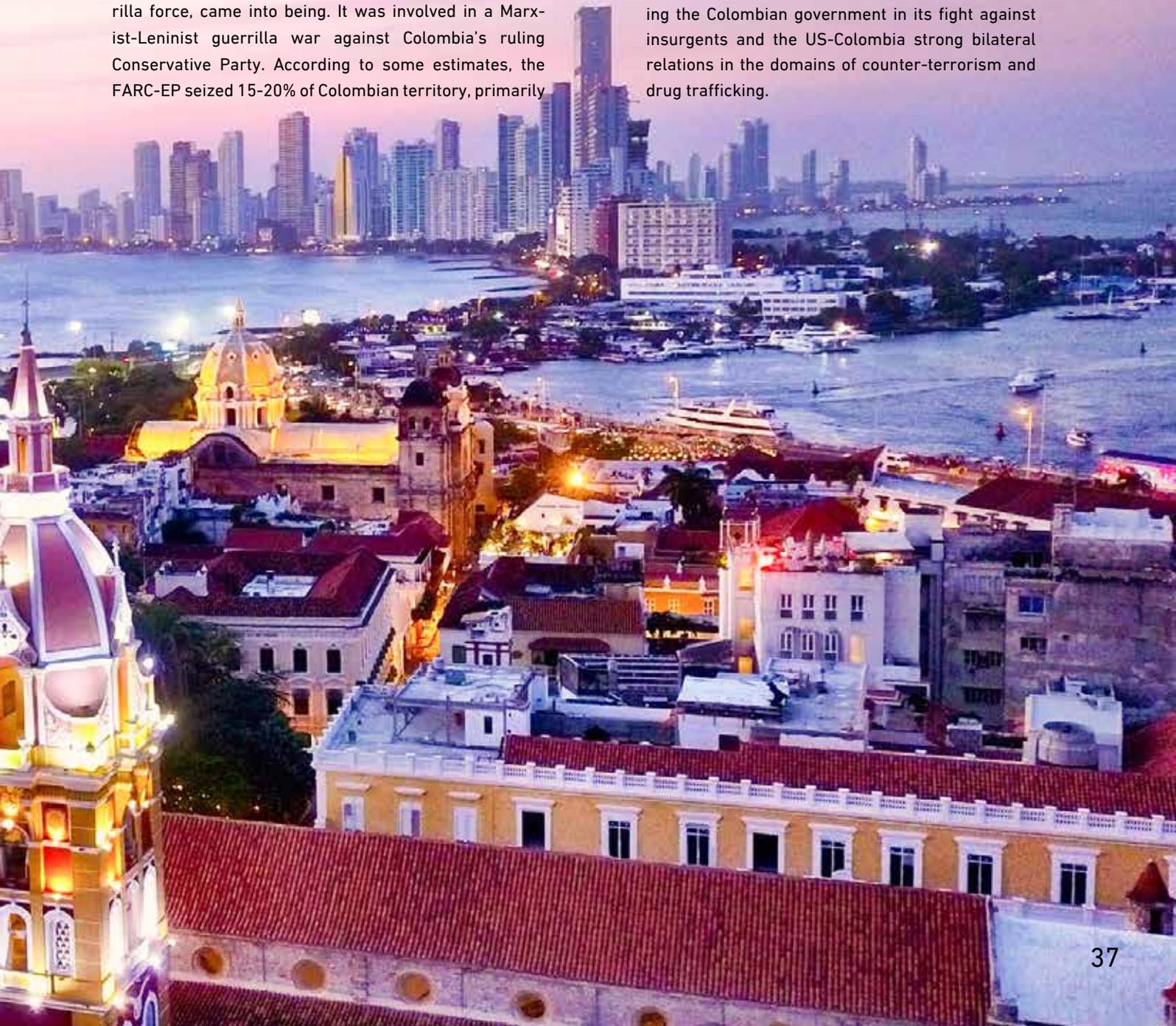
Root Causes

Clashes between conservatives and liberals have erupted since the early 1900s; they peaked in Colombia in April 1948 as a result of hostility between the two factions following the assassination of Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, charismatic leader of the Liberal Party and presidential candidate. He was extremely popular and was on the verge of winning the elections; thus, his assassination sparked the massive riots known as La Violencia, in which approximately 5,000 people were killed. This was followed by a protracted conflict that resulted in over 200,000 deaths and significant migration flows as a result of insecurity and rising unrest.

Consequently, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, People's Army (FARC-EP), the world's oldest guerrilla force, came into being. It was involved in a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla war against Colombia's ruling Conservative Party. According to some estimates, the FARC-EP seized 15-20% of Colombian territory, primarily

forests, jungles, and mountainous areas in the Andes foothills. Guerrilla warfare and drug trafficking flared up from time to time, resulting in the secession of the FARC-EP from the Communist Party.

As a result of these clashes and hostile acts, several active, terrorist, and extremist movements emerged, particularly right-wing paramilitary groups appealing to the armed forces, some landowners, businessmen, politicians, and drug trafficking gangs. This resulted in an increased violent armed surge and an unbroken series of massacres and human rights violations that claimed approximately 260,000 lives, left over 45,000 people missing, and displaced 7 million people. The United States designated FARC-EP as a terrorist organization in 1997. This has become an international political trend in the context of supporting the Colombian government in its fight against insurgents and the US-Colombia strong bilateral relations in the domains of counter-terrorism and drug trafficking.





Peace Agreement

In 2016, the FARC-EP and the Colombian government signed a 297-page, six-chapter peace agreement. This article examines two peacebuilding approaches that were implemented following the signing of the peace agreement in order to achieve social reconciliation and integration.

The Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (SIVJNR) stemmed from the agreement, made up of the following mechanisms: the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), the Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission (CEV), the Unit for the Search for People Presumed Disappeared in the Context and by Reason of the Armed Conflict (UBPD), reparation measures for peacebuilding purposes, and guarantees of non-recurrence. This system contextualizes acts committed by FARC-EP as terrorist acts within the framework of internal armed conflict, which makes the penalties incurred less severe than those imposed in a peaceful context.

The JEP was established to handle offences perpetrated during the armed conflict. It was agreed that representatives of the armed forces are authorized to work with the JEP, given that the State is a main actor in this conflict, and that the truth uncovered by military men—even those who committed crimes against humanity—can end years of war and provide redress to victims in a framework of restorative justice.

Analysts confirm that Colombia has been shattered since the conflict, and that healing the subsequent social and cultural wounds begins with a convincing interpretation of the past that gives voice to a large number of people. However, only a reasonable portion of this narrative should be made available to people in order for them to learn from previous experiences and comprehend the atrocities and horrifying consequences of such terrorizing events that threaten their security and existence. This is a good strategy for overcoming the barbarism of terrorism in future.

Because of the civil nature of Colombian society, it is difficult to divide it definitively into victims and terrorists. Victims and perpetrators are frequently confused within the same family or in everyday life. As a result, a multilateral model for establishing the truth was approved in order to listen to all parties. This approach allows victims to be heard unconditionally and their pain and grief to be understood, regardless of their political affiliation or who is to blame for their suffering. In addition to the continuously published preliminary and partial reports, their experiences are streamed directly on YouTube. This undoubtedly entails acknowledging people's suffering and pain, as well



as taking into account people's shame towards terrorists' actions.

This post-war approach differs from others in the absence of a single legal document or the imposition of specific penalties following historic trials. The emphasis has been on attempting to predict various experiences in order to understand the past and accept its flaws.

The aim was to reach the truth about the sequence of events that prompted JEP to open seven macro-cases, where it provided a comprehensive account of the committed crimes. The data gathered by the CEV may answer some pressing questions, such as: What led to all this barbarity? How do perpetrators feel about acts of violence? What explanation could be given to families of victims?

The following shows the cases according to the number of casualties:

1. Illegal Detentions of Individuals by the FARC-EP.
2. Violence in certain Municipalities
3. Assassinations and forced disappearances
4. Armed conflict in Northern Cauca and Southern Cauca Valley Regions.
5. Massacres of members of the Patriotic Union (UP)
6. Recruitment of children in wars.

Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition Commission (CEV)

CEV submitted its final report on June 28, 2022, comprising information gathered via interviews with over 1500 victims



of the conflict living in Colombia and abroad, as well as testimonies of deported Colombians in 23 States. Hearings were held for 30,000 people as well as extensive investigations of 730 cases, and 1195 reports were presented on various violent acts.

Civil society organizations helped prepare for those interviews in municipalities that were prioritized for being hardest hit by the armed conflict. Different parties of the conflict were heard, including FARC-EP. Fourteen dialogues were held to bring the conflicts to a halt and guarantee commitment to non-resumption of hostilities. They included interviews with three former Presidents of Colombia.

The CEV report consists of two parts: the first highlights significant findings and explains the causes that ignited the conflict; the second provides proposed recommendations by CEV. Though this report is legally non-binding, it is definitely morally binding. It aims at rebuilding the social fabric.

The CEV report estimates the total number of fatalities to be almost half a million people. Missing persons are estimated at 100,000, 90% of whom are innocent civilians of the most impoverished strata in Colombia, and around 1 million people were deported for security purposes. The report also uncovered the use of non-conventional weapons, gas tanks for bombing entire towns, and mine-laying at war, which made Colombia the second highest rate of mine-laying in the world after Afghanistan.

Conflict Evils

The Colombian conflict has underscored several evils, such as the rise of security models that achieved significant economic gains from arms trafficking and exploiting the other spoils of war, which hindered the peacebuilding process and misrepresented the relationship between the armed forces and the people. This situation prompted a recommendation to formulate a new military doctrine that would hold officials, military men, and security officials accountable before civilians, restoring and strengthening state authority.

The armed conflict in Colombia also exacerbated the levels of discrimination between people based on race, caste, culture, and gender. Some were awarded privileges often denied to others. This impeded good communication between people and enhanced their sense of injustice, marginalization, and violation of their fundamental rights.

Not only did Colombia suffer from violence, terrorism, and armed clashes during the conflict between a terrorist organization and the state and civilians. It fell into a bottomless pit. This was followed by a complex array of interests for several conflicting actors, which made it difficult to differentiate the “good” from the “bad”. The socio-political roots of terrorism continued to exacerbate conflicts. They stepped into different historical contexts characterized by the absence of political decisions that seek to bring peace. Terrorism flourished over and over in Colombia in the span of sixty years, ultimately regarded by all parties as the only way for legitimization. This led to the failure of political and diplomatic efforts made to bring peace over the years.

Conclusion

A collective sentiment of shame towards the atrocities of the armed conflict in Colombia plays an important role in implementing a strategy for peacebuilding and eradicating terrorism. Not only does this come into play for victims of the armed conflict, but also for the entirety of the Colombian society that has been trapped in a chaotic discourse, due to the violence that threatened social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts, especially with the continued armed activity of a group of insurgents who did not accept the peace agreement, and were inscribed on the “terrorist organizations” list by the US State Department on November 30, 2021. Future indictments will probably be filed against former leaders of FARC-EP, drug traffickers, and perpetrators of crimes against humanity. ■

FOREWORD



AL-ZAWAHIRI'S DEATH AND MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY

The US killed al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone strike in Afghanistan in July 2022; since then, the media have covered the incident in detail, highlighting how the US managed to cut off the head of the snake as it did previously. What is intriguing is the media frenzy over analyzing outcomes, future implications, and potential course of action following the death of al-Qaeda leader. They compete to predict the next successor, exaggerating things as if we were waiting for the next Presidential elections rather than witnessing an existing threat.

This chaotic situation implies al-Qaeda's power and resilience, and somehow bestows legitimacy on the world's most powerful terrorist organization. This intriguing and problematic relationship between the media and terrorist organisations does not help the fight against them; it may even worsen their dire consequences. The media fight bitterly over how terrorist events are covered, attempting to dazzle with filming and directing, either through the venues of terrorist organisations themselves or through other media networks.

It is more like an unintentional collaboration between the media and terrorist groups, promoting their discourse in exchange for a scoop. This begs the question: how far will this relationship go? Is it encouraging or confrontational? Do the media exaggerate these groups' capabilities to get a scoop or to promote Islamophobia?

Several studies claim that the media promote terrorist organisations through irresponsible follow-ups that allow such organisations to incite public opinion, promote their deviant ideologies, flex their muscles, and polarize young people and teens.

Extremist terrorist attacks draw media attention not just because it is their obligation to cover every significant event, but also because the public is fascinated by the dramatic and spectacular nature of terrorism. Michael Getter, Professor at the Department of Economics, Universidad EAFIT, Colombia, confirms the causal

relationship between the media follow-up of terrorism and the latter's considerably increased danger. He also adds that he studied most terrorist attacks that took place in 1970–2012, and concluded that spotlighting members of terrorist groups and their crimes reinforces those groups and leads to further crimes. Ayman al-Zawahiri himself, the second in power in al-Qaeda, confirmed this nuance in a letter he sent to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, saying: "half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media".

A study published in *Alternatives*, issued by the Egyptian Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, states that a group of French media houses set standards for the follow-ups of terrorist acts in the wake of the 2016 Nice truck attack, stressing that photos of terrorist perpetrators are not to be published to avoid their glorification.

We support media freedom, but we also want an informed, accountable media that recognizes its impact on society and aids in counterterrorism efforts. Al-Zawahiri's crimes and the suffering and subversion they caused to innocent people ought to have been the main focus of the news in this case. Thank God the world got rid of his evil. Let us think back to his 1993 car bomb attempt to kill Atef Sedky, the former prime minister of Egypt. He and those with him survived, but an 8-year-old child died. This is in addition to the Luxor massacre in 1996, which had a negative impact on tourism in Egypt and resulted in the deaths of about 60 tourists of various nations.

IMCTC welcomed with relief the death of al-Zawahiri as a terrorist leader and perpetrator of the most vicious acts of terrorism that killed thousands of innocent people of different races and religions. International cooperation to fight extremism and terrorism must be intensified.

We now face the huge challenge of setting disciplines that should contribute to a supportive media in the fight against terrorism and deviant ideologies, to put an end to violence, chaos and destruction. ■

Editor-in-Chief

AtTAHALOF

IMCTC Quarterly Magazine

الائتلاف العسكري لمحاربة الإرهاب
ISLAMIC MILITARY COUNTER TERRORISM COALITION

