



## WOMEN PROTECTION AGAINST EXTREMISM AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVIANCE VITAL NECESSITY

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Extremism per se is one of the notorious life-threatening evils that undermine communities, demoralize nations, fuel hate, discourage tolerance, cause bloodshed and violate privacy. Sadly enough, women have recently evinced greater involvement in such malice albeit more attributable to men; terrorist organizations have perniciously lured women into conflict – willy-nilly – either by encouragement, intimidation, coercion or otherwise expressed. Women initial contributions were limited to logistics and traditional jobs, acting as housewives, teachers, workers or nurses, who provide and cater for the everyday needs of men, creating an appropriate environment conducive for carrying out subversive tasks. Over the recent years, however, women have assumed more violent missions, such as carrying weapons and suicide operations.

### Victimizer or Victimized?

Compelled to be involved in conflict and violent actions, women usually fall victim to such malice although they have close kinship – wives, daughters, or sisters. Admittedly, women involvement becomes more of subordination. In a similar vein, forced marriage of girls has contributed to the inclusion of women in the labyrinths of violence and terrorism; many female members were kidnapped and forced to stay in dank grottos, stashed away by such terrorist organizations. However, many women have joined voluntarily driven by various reasons: search for money, religious misunderstanding, oppression, humiliation or self-actualization, which they failed to satisfy in their realities.

### Involvement Reasons

Men and women equally share many common reasons that cause involvement in violent extremism, such as religious, psychological, social, economic and political motivations; however, the following special reasons push women into this precipice:

1. Women suffer violence, violation of rights, armed conflicts, intimidation, and domestic violence.

2. Harassment and cyberbullying in private and public places, and workplaces.
3. Human trafficking, and malicious practices, such as child marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and child abuse.
4. Gender inequality, marginalization of women in society, failure to optimize their constructive efforts, leading women to prove their abilities, even by showing violence being their last-ditch attempt.
5. Rape and victimization of honor and sham; a research study conducted by the United Nations shows that 39% of the women involved were raped! This is one of the most common reasons forcing women to join terrorist organizations across areas of conflict.
6. Child marriage to extremists; some parents force their daughters to marry extremists. With forced marriage coming into play, such women continue their matrimony for fear of divorce, which becomes more of deviance.
7. Heated passion for religious harangue of such groups; a research study shows that about three thousand out of twenty thousand foreign fighters who joined ISIS were women. Such research studies were concerned with Western female fighters, and women in Western Asia and North Africa; most of them were attracted by the rhetoric of extremist groups.

### **Development of Women Contribution**

Extremist organizations and the tasks allocated to women have synchronically snowballed into wider development; such traditional minor tasks ballooned into life-threatening mission. In fact, women sometimes can do what men cannot; women co-authored the development of plans and means of implementation, contributing to luring new women and men. Unlike men, women have superior abilities to inflame emotions; women outdo men in recruiting youth through marriage.

Women better provide confidentiality of clandestine movements of materials and supplies; women can easily conceal themselves in disguise and are uneasy to track down. Infamously enough, women deceptively propagandize terrorism via various media outlets and the leadership positions women assume, such as providing training in armed battalions. Women have much contributed to creating a whole raft of websites to widely spread extremist ideology and drum up for the majestic mental image among young men and women for such organizations. Most infamously, women moved up the hierarchy to assume frontline positions to help funneling arms and carry out suicide

missions; the chances of women to escape from the security forces are more fortunate than men.

A research study issued by the Counter-Terrorism Center, West Point, USA, August 10, 2017, shows that the suicide operations carried out by Boko Haram mostly instrumentalized women; the total number of suicide bombers sent by Boko Haram to hit 247 different targets was 434, of whom 244 were female suicide bombers (56%).

The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2019 recorded an increase in female suicide attacks from 4 in 2013 to 22 in 2018, while it recorded more than 300 suicide attacks by women from 1985 to 2018.

The most pernicious task of women is to raise a future generation of terrorist extremists, indoctrinating extremist ideologies into the mindset of youth. Women bring up a generation that believes in such ideologies, which becomes frantically passionate for carrying out all the tasks assigned. Women become more dangerous when returning from strongholds of extremism and conflict areas, unaware of how much their ideologies have changed, which can be called covert extremism. Women still carry out their malice under a socially acceptable cover that is uneasy to bring to focus.

### **Protection of Women**

With this in mind, it is critically necessary to protect women and increase efforts to sensitize women to extremist groups, ideologies or sympathy for their actions. To this effect, women should be armed with orthodox thought as to be protected from ideological deviance. Beyond a shadow of doubt, protection of women is conducive for peace, stability, and prosperity of family and community. Women have a unique and sensitive position at home, making them at the frontlines to best observe the early stages of child extremism. As such, women, par excellence, can in no time intervene to confront such premature scourge sensibly and firmly, while preventing associated negative effects individually and collectively. With this in mind, the following can be reaffirmed:

1. Assuming the responsibility of women towards the ideological, psychological and social formation of own children, their integration into society, along with their interaction with social fabric constructively to be part of the civilized Islamic communities serves as an impenetrable wall against any deviance that could undermine family and society.

2. The responsibility of women is not limited to the family only; rather, it includes various areas, such as education, media, counseling, or advocacy. Combined together, protection of women resonates successfully with many groups in society.
3. Women offer a new vision in the fight against violent extremism, by working with men in tandem; female experience policing has shown that they can make a deeper and more sincere impact.
4. Women contribute to meaningful dialogues through public or youth-oriented media to discuss the problems related to extremism and root causes, and at the same time develop appropriate solutions to confront such scourge.
5. The participation of women in institutions and committees concerned with combating extremism contributes positively to fostering their awareness of the threats of extremism, various methods, manifestations, and innovative modalities; female leaders show qualitative superiority, especially in their engagement in combating female recruitment by terrorist groups.
6. Women can participate seriously in protecting society from extremism, when they are duly qualified by informing women of the psychological, social, economic and mental threats of terrorism, and clarifying the associated effects caused to individuals, families and societies.
7. The awareness of women of the indicators of ideological, psychological and social extremism enables them to take proactive action to prevent it inside and outside the family.

### **Necessary Dialogue**

Dialogue is one of the most important tools for enhancing communication and identifying signs of ideological deviance. It is important for dialogue to start and continue with the different stages of one's life development, as follows:

- A. Engaging with dialogues with children, by parents, teachers and educators, in such a manner that ensures proper upbringing and ideological immunity from extremist ideologies and deviant movements.
- B. Establishing the concept of dialogue in the family, making it the ideal solution to all existing and potential problems.
- C. holding dialogues with male and female students in schools and educational environments to provide a safe environment for expressing opinion, promote critical thinking, and identify the challenges they face to best support them.

D. Entering in dialogues with the returnees from the conflict areas and those who have adopted ideological violence to find out the reasons for joining terrorist organizations. This also includes exposing their ideological fallacies and rehabilitating and integrating them into society.

## Conclusion

Feminist terrorism is a marked manifestation of terrorism in the Middle East and the entire world; feminist terrorism is more dangerous and pernicious to the structure of our societies, especially with the increased tendency towards violence, self-actualization sought by women, and the ability to assume leadership responsibilities that women could not exercise within own families or patriarchal communities. In addition, some western women in particular seek a sense of belonging, living in a homogeneous society, and in an environment in which they practice their most conservative beliefs freely without discrimination or exclusion.

Being brushed aside into a partial eclipse, feminist terrorism has not received due attention by the authorities, at a time when women need greater awareness, and serious proactive policies; feminist terrorism is on the rise. Again, the strategy of terrorism has become more dependent on women in propagandization, putting pressure on the international community by placing women in the frontlines of subversive battles, while instrumentalizing them as combative tools and as time bombs.

With this in mind, all such negatives should be duly addressed; the ideologies that sully and tarnish the reputation of women must be debunked; grievances must be settled; women must be empowered to exercise their rights, fulfill their responsibilities in society without discrimination, psychological and social factors that extremist groups are concerned with to attract women must be confronted. When all such efforts come into play, feminist terrorism can be nipped in the bud in such a manner so that no more female terrorists can be involved in ISIS, Al-Qaeda or Boko Haram, who often end up either killed or captured, or reduced to refugees in camps without personal documents to prove their identities.