

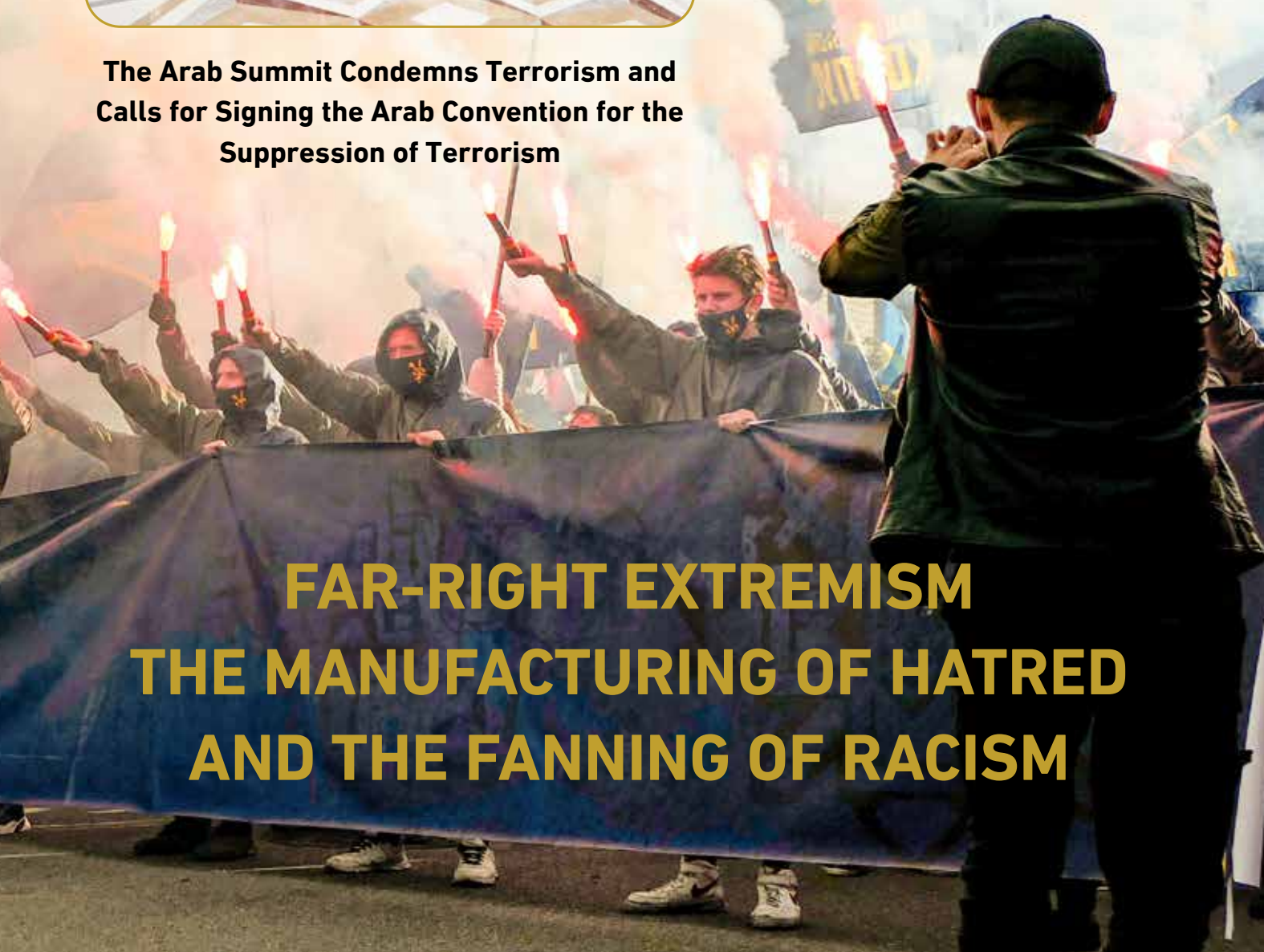


AtTAHALOF

IMCTC Quarterly Magazine



The Arab Summit Condemns Terrorism and Calls for Signing the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism



**FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM
THE MANUFACTURING OF HATRED
AND THE FANNING OF RACISM**





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IMCTC Quarterly Magazine

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Director General

Major General Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Moghedi
Secretary-General of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism
Coalition/Acting

Editor-in-Chief

Ashour Ibrahim Aljuhani
Director of Research and Studies Department

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TAOQ RESEARCH

E-mail: info@taoqresearch.org

Phone: +966 114890124



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FEATURE



17

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAR-RIGHT



20

THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN EUROPE



24

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN THE UNITED STATES



28

FAR-RIGHT FINANCING



32

THE THEORETICAL FAR-RIGHT A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE



06

GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2023



10

INVESTIGATING THE PHENOMENON OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON MOSQUES IN WESTERN SOCIETIES



14

**JACINDA ARDERN
A COUNTER-EXTREMISM
POLITICAL ICON**



35

AL-GAMA'A AL-ISLAMIYYA IN EGYPT





The Arab Summit Condemns Terrorism and Calls for Signing the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism



The final communiqué of the Arab League Summit held on March 19, 2023, denounced the criminal acts by terrorist groups and organizations in Arab countries and all over the world. It called upon Arab countries that have not signed the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism to do so.

Furthermore, in his inaugural speech at the 32nd Arab League Summit, Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, speaking on behalf of King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, emphasized that Saudi Arabia is committed to preventing the transformation of the Arab world into a conflict zone. He firmly expressed the shared exhaustion experienced in the Arab region towards ongoing conflicts, recognizing the adverse consequences of prolonged turmoil that has hindered development and inflicted extensive suffering.

The Summit supported the efforts of the Somali government in its war on terrorism, particularly Al-Shabaab terrorist group, and commended the counter-terrorism efforts of the Somali National Army. It also affirmed the established right of member countries to fend off any aggression against their communities, citizens, state institutions,

and governmental bodies. This is in addition to their right to take all necessary measures to prevent threats and aggression against their security in accordance with the Charter of the Arab League, the UN Charter, and IHL rules.

Under the provision of “maintaining Arab national security, countering terrorism, and developing the Arab counter-terrorism system”, the Arab League called for extensive efforts and coordination with the international community and its international and regional organizations to counter terrorism, particularly in the field of CTF, tracking foreign terrorists’ travel, restricting their ability to travel from country to country for shelters, and adopting the necessary legal procedures to prevent terrorists from utilizing information and communication technologies in terrorist acts.

It also called for greater cooperation within the framework of the Arab Convention on Combating Cybercrime (ACCC), as well as the establishment of collaborative efforts to deny terrorist organizations the opportunity to use technologies and social media in propaganda inciting hatred and sedition. This is in addition to maintaining the FTF database and the Unified Arab List of Designated

Terrorist Organizations (a blacklist of terrorists, their leaders, and financiers) and exhorting Arab governments to provide them with the necessary data.

The Arab League also called for passing laws and legislations and for taking the necessary measures and procedures to criminalize extremist and takfirist (excommunicational) ideologies, which fuel terrorism and incite sectarian strife. It called upon the General Secretariat to promote coordination with Arab counter-terrorism entities and to keep cooperating with the relevant regional and international organizations.

It also urged Arab countries to criminalize travel to join terrorist organizations abroad or engage in combat by enacting appropriate national legislation or prosecution, and to make forgery of identity and travel documents for travel to conflict zones a crime punishable by harsh penalties under national law.

The Arab League emphasized the importance of continuing to coordinate Arab positions in regional and international organizations and conferences where Arab countries participate in combating terrorism, as well as maintaining support for existing cooperation between the Arab League and regional and international organizations and specialized agencies concerned with counterterrorism. It stressed the need for concerted efforts by the international community to reach a comprehensive agreement on international terrorism, in order to make it an effective tool in combating terrorism. Furthermore, it highlighted

the importance of bolstering existing cooperation between the Arab League and the United Nations, as well as implementing joint programmes in legal and judicial cooperation in counterterrorism in accordance with the outcomes of the two systems' regular meetings.

The Arab League welcomed the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting between the organisation and the European External Action Service (EEAS), which took place via video conference on November 30, 2022, as part of the two entities' joint legal and judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism. It also welcomed the outcomes of the Regional Programme for Arab States to Prevent and Combat Crime, Terrorism, and Health Threats, and Strengthen Criminal Justice Systems in Line with International Human Rights Standards (2016-2022), which was held in Cairo on December 13-15, 2022. In addition, the Arab League and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime signed a regional framework for Arab countries for the period 2023-2038.

The Arab League called upon its member countries to submit comprehensive reports to the General Secretariat on national counter-terrorism initiatives, the outcomes of counter-extremism conferences and seminars, photos, documentaries, and publications on the tragedy endured by terrorist victims to be featured on the Arab Day to raise awareness of the pain of terrorist victims. It further urged Arab countries and institutions of unified Arab action to mark the occasion and to notify the General Secretariat of any actions launched in this regard. ■





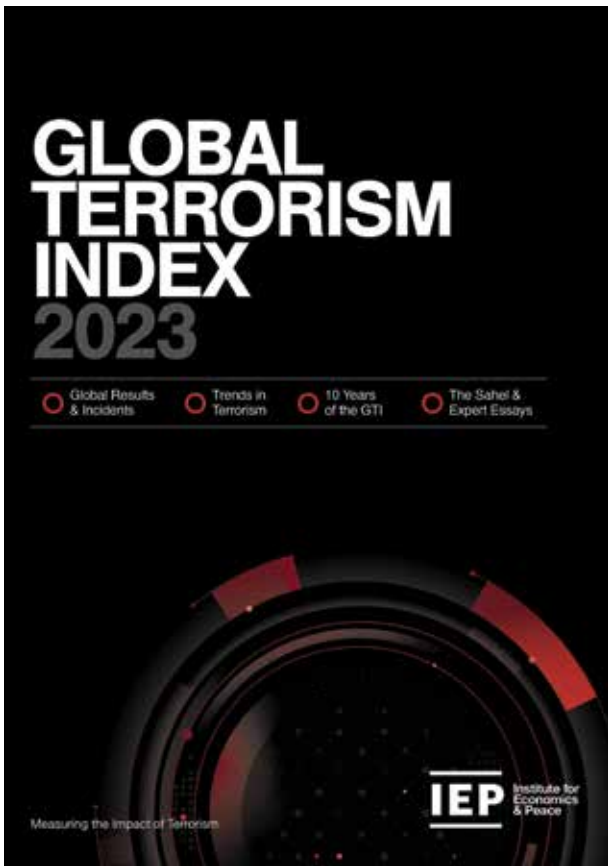
Global Terrorism Index 2023

Terrorism Finds a New Home: The Shift from the Middle East to the Sahel Region

■ Dr. Hani Ramadan Zarad

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) released the tenth edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI 2023), featuring the number of terrorist attacks in 2022 and the number of fatalities, the most violent groups, the most afflicted countries, terrorist trends and patterns, terrorist groups' geopolitical motives and ideological goals, and their agendas and tools. The report covers 163 countries, accounting for over 99.7% of the world's population.

■ Journalist and researcher, Saudi Research and Media Group.



Decline in Fatalities

GTI 2023 reported a 9% decline in terrorist-related fatalities in 2022, totaling 6,701 deaths compared to 7,142 in 2021, and 38% fewer terrorist operations than the peak in 2015, when the index recorded 10,881 deaths. Terrorist attacks fell by 28% in 2022 for the first time since 2019, with the index recording 3,955 attacks in 2022 compared to 5,463 in 2021.

Nonetheless, terrorist attacks in 2022 were more deadly, each resulting in 1.7 deaths compared to 1.3 in 2021. Of the 163 countries covered by GTI 2023, 121 recorded no deaths from terrorism, which is the highest number since 2007. The report highlights various factors contributing to the decline in both the number of attacks and casualties, with particular emphasis on reduced violence in the Middle East, evolving political changes in Afghanistan, and enhanced coordination and collaboration in counter-terrorism efforts. In addition, while terrorism was receding in the MENA region, it started racing towards the Sahel Region which became a terrorism hub after recording 43% of the global total of terrorism-related deaths in 2022 compared to only 1% in 2007. It is worth noting that nearly 73% of the

terrorist-related fatalities in the Sahel Region in the same year were reported in Burkina Faso and Mali alone. The escalation of violence in these two countries also spilled over into neighboring nations, with Benin and Togo experiencing the highest rates of casualties according to the GTI.

GTI 2023 recorded a slight rise in deaths in Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America. Europe recorded 27 deaths in 2022 compared to 8 in 2021, including 17 in Turkey, the most afflicted country in Europe, followed by Greece, which recorded 35 attacks in 2022 compared to 53 in 2021, with no deaths reported since 2013. No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks in Greece, whereas they were blamed on unknown far-left and anarchist groups. North America recorded 7 deaths in 2021 and 11 in 2022. It witnessed the bloodiest attacks where an armed man killed 10 civilians in a market in Buffalo, New York; the authorities reported that the perpetrator was racially motivated against the black community.

The Deadliest Groups

GTI 2023 indicated that four terrorist groups were the deadliest in 2022 for being responsible for 47% of the total terrorism-related deaths around the world:

1) Daesh: Daesh launched 634 attacks, killing 1,833 people in South Asia, the MENA region, sub-Saharan Africa, Russia and Eurasia, and Asia-Pacific. Iraq was the most afflicted by Daesh's attacks which amounted to 183 attacks, the most violent of which was in January 2022 in an attempt to free some of its members held in Senaa Prison in Syria. Two truck bombs were planted outside the prison and around 200 militants stormed the building, killing 154 of the Syrian forces while 120 were injured.

2) Al-Shabaab Group in Somalia: The group carried out 315 attacks, killing 784 people, 23% more than 2021. 93% of their operations were carried out in Somalia and 7% in Kenya. Their attack on the Ministry of Education was the deadliest, whereby two truck bombs were planted outside the building, killing 120 people. Their operations mostly rely on bombings and armed attacks. 63% of the 2022 deaths resulted from bombings and 32% from armed attacks.

3) Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA): BLA carried out 30 attacks, killing 233 people. This is the highest number of fatalities reported in the last two decades, and it is nine times higher than the 26 terrorist deaths reported in 2021. The bloodiest attacks occurred in 2022, with 7.7 people killed per occurrence, up from 1.5 in 2021. According to the BLA, the most heinous incident occurred in February



2022, when militants attacked two separate Pakistani Frontier Corps (FC) security sites, killing 195 troops. BLA's preferred modus operandi is 50% booby-trapping and 33% grenade attacks.

4) Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM): JNIM carried out 27 attacks, killing 279 people, with 48% of the attacks taking place in Burkina Faso and 43% in Mali. The deadliest occurred in Burkina Faso, where insurgents killed 27 soldiers and 10 civilians. Armed attacks accounted for 81% of all JNIM attacks, and death rates increased from one per incident in 2021 to nearly two in 2022. The terrorist group expanded its operations beyond the Sahel Region, launching their first strikes in Benin and Togo. It used people's grievances and the country's severe social and economic situation, particularly in northern and central Mali, to win and recruit new supporters. Furthermore, military forces are still said to be the primary target of the four aforementioned groups.

The Most Afflicted Countries

GTI 2023 recorded the countries most afflicted by terrorism in 2022 as follows:

Afghanistan: Afghanistan ranked first in GTI for the fourth year in a row with 9% of the global total deaths from terrorism. Terrorism in Afghanistan extended to reach 26 out of 34 provinces. Most deaths resulted from attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP).

Burkina Faso: Terrorism climbed in Burkina Faso from 224 to 310 incidents in 2021-2022, the largest number of attacks ever. Burkina Faso saw the greatest rise in terrorist deaths, with 1,135 in 2022 compared to 759 in 2021. 71% of the attacks occurred near the borders with Niger, Benin, and Mali. Although al-Qaeda's JNIM is the most prominent

in Burkina Faso, 88% of the assaults and 87% of the resulting deaths were blamed on unknown parties, making Burkina Faso the country with the highest rate of unclaimed terrorist acts in the world.

Somalia: Terrorist attacks in Somalia declined by 10% in 2022 compared to 2021, totaling 299 assaults. Meanwhile, terrorism-related deaths increased by 14%, totaling 755 deaths. This data demonstrates increased bloodthirstiness, with an average of 2.5 deaths per attack compared to 1.9 in 2021. The terrorist group Al-Shabaab is the deadliest in Somalia. It is to blame for 97% of terrorist-related deaths.

Mali: In 2022, Mali experienced its highest death toll despite a reduction in the number of terrorist attacks, which became more severe and widespread, with each attack resulting in an average of 3.5 deaths compared to 1.7 deaths in 2021. JNIM was responsible for twice as many deaths as those of their own members. Furthermore, there was a record-high number of attacks and deaths among Daesh members in Mali, with 19 attacks resulting in 243 deaths. However, 61% of these deaths remained unclaimed.

Syria: In 2022, there were 447 recorded deaths in Syria, which is 10% less than the previous year. This reduction in fatalities was due to a significant decline in terrorist attacks, with the rate being the lowest in three years. Despite this, the Syrian army remained the primary target, and the northern and eastern border governorates were the most affected, with 47% of the attacks aimed at Deir ez-Zor and Aleppo governorates. Daesh remained the deadliest terrorist group in Syria for the ninth consecutive year, responsible for 77% of total deaths and 52% of all terrorist attacks.

The Middle East

GTI 2023 addressed the features of terrorist activity in the MENA region over the past 10 years (2012–2022), confirming the reduced impact of terrorism over the past few years. The escalating number of attacks coincided with the rise of Daesh in Syria and Iraq; it reached its peak in 2016, accounting for 57% of global deaths, then declined after de-escalation to 12% in 2022.

Even though Daesh's terrorist activity has declined significantly over the past four years, it remains a serious threat to the security of the region. In 2022, Daesh carried out 42% of terrorist attacks in the MENA region. After its defeat, Daesh's preferred modus operandi and arms changed. Suicide bombings dropped to only 6 in 2022, killing 8 people only compared to 1,947 deaths in 2016.

The goals of terrorist attacks also changed. In 2012, 30% of



Why Terrorism Subsided in 2022

- Reduced violence in the Middle East;
- De-escalation in the Syrian War;
- Evolving political changes in Afghanistan;
- Enhanced coordination and collaboration in counter-terrorism.



attacks targeted civilians. This percentage dropped to 17% in 2022. Meanwhile, the rate of attacks targeting the army and police increased from 45% in 2012 to 64% in 2022. GTI 2023 attributed this to the overall weakness of terrorist organizations in the region. Thus, they are keen on keeping people around them as a social incubator. Moreover, targeting government or military headquarters allows for greater strategic use of limited resources alongside the ability to enhance the legitimacy of those organizations among civilians.

The countries most afflicted by terrorism in the Middle East are Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Algeria, and Libya. No other country in the Middle East witnessed any terrorist attack over the past five years, namely Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Morocco.

Over 15 Years

GTI 2023 examined the aspects and patterns of terrorist activity spanning the previous 15 years, pointing out it was most prominent in Iraq and Afghanistan. Pakistan witnessed an increased terrorist activity in 2008–2013. Following the Arab Spring and the rise of Daesh, terrorism escalated in the Middle East, particularly in Syria and Iraq, and it rose significantly over the past five years in Nigeria and the Sahel Region after the defeat of Daesh in Syria and Iraq. This was demonstrated in the Index as follows:

A. Conflict zones: Terrorism has been predominantly fueled by conflict since 2007, as indicated by the

fact that 132,863 out of 138,000 terrorism-related deaths between 2007 and 2022 occurred in countries experiencing ongoing conflicts. The 15 nations that have been most severely impacted by terrorism in 2022 are all grappling with conflicts. The report attributes this trend to the inadequate functioning of State institutions. Furthermore, in civil conflicts, rebels and paramilitary groups often resort to terrorism as a tactic.

B. Terrorism in the West: Terrorism in Western countries represents a small percentage of terrorism around the world. Around 885 out of 137,000 deaths resulting from terrorism around the world in 2007–2022 fell in the West, accounting for a meagre 0.65%.

C. Environmental Threats: Although environmental changes are not the sole cause of terrorism, they can exacerbate existing risks and destabilize communities, creating conditions that are favorable to terrorist organizations. Of the 830 million people worldwide who suffer from food insecurity, 58% live in the 20 countries that are most affected by terrorism. In addition, the scarcity of water resources is a contributing factor to terrorism, with the number of water-related incidents tripling from 2000 to 2022. For instance, Iraq had the highest incidence of water conflicts, followed by Somalia, Yemen, and Sudan, which have all experienced high levels of terrorism in the past two decades. ■



Investigating the Phenomenon of Terrorist Attacks on Mosques in Western Societies

■ Dr. Salim Alwan

While the Christchurch shooting in New Zealand stands out as an exceptionally brutal and violent attack, it is not an isolated incident targeting mosques in Western countries. Such attacks have been on the rise since the events of 9/11 in 2001, signifying a disturbing trend of growing Islamophobia, hatred, and intolerance towards Muslims, which frequently escalate into acts of violence. The principles of peaceful coexistence and integration between local communities and Muslim expatriates are seriously threatened by this violence.

■ Secretary General of Darulfatwa, Australia.



Frequent Attacks

Some attacks on mosques in Western countries in the second decade of the 21st century reveal the extent of hatred and bigotry harbored by the assailants. These attacks have varied from pelting stones to car ramming, throwing Molotov cocktails, setting buildings on fire, and firing live ammunition at worshippers. Additionally, anti-Muslim expressions and slogans are clandestinely written on the walls of mosques. Verbal and physical harassment of mosquegoers, as well as indirect attacks through intimidating emails, aimed at instilling a state of terror among Muslims, are also prevalent.

In mid-March 2019, the most brutal and atrocious incident occurred when an armed assailant carried out a horrifying terrorist attack inside the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Center in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand. The attack resulted in the tragic deaths of approximately 50 individuals and injured 50 others while they were waiting for Friday prayers.

On January 29, 2017, six individuals were killed and eight others injured when three gunmen opened fire on approximately forty people who were performing the evening prayers at the "Grand Mosque of Quebec" inside the Islamic Cultural Center in the Canadian city of Quebec. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described the attack as a terrorist assault on peaceful Muslims.

On October 16, 2016, unidentified attackers threw stones at Ranchlands Musallah of the Islamic Association of North West Calgary (IANWC), Canadian province of Alberta, breaking its windows. The attack was a week after a similar one on the Calgary Islamic Center SW Masjid (CICSW), where windows were shattered, a copy of the Quran was burned, and a hate message was left behind.

On June 10, 2016, the US authorities arrested a major, who was indicted on charges of ethnic intimidation for throwing pork near a mosque in North Carolina accompanied by death threats while Muslims were preparing for prayers in Ramadan.

In 2015, demonstrators attacked and destroyed a Muslim prayer hall in a popular neighborhood in Ajaccio on the island of Corsica, South France, burning copies of the Quran, and writing anti-Arab and Muslims slogans on walls. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the attack was "an unacceptable desecration".

On March 12, 2012, Molotov cocktails were thrown at a mosque in the Anderlecht neighborhood of Brussels, Belgium, where the imam died trying to extinguish the flames and a large part of the mosque was destroyed.



The investigations conducted following these incidents and numerous others have revealed several possible implications behind the targeting of mosques in Western countries through acts of terrorism, including the following:

Hatred and Racism: Such incidents reflect hatred and racism towards Muslims. There has been a discourse of hatred in Western countries against foreigners in general and Muslims in particular, who are perceived as invaders threatening the homogeneity and culture of Western society. Such a discourse blames them for all social problems. It grew stronger with the political rise of the far right following the terrorist attacks of al-Qaeda and Daesh, so much that it often attracts many voters.

The media also plays a significant role in inciting hate against Muslims via news, programs, dramas, movies, and documentaries, as well as novels and historical writings aiming to misrepresent Islam by denigrating it as inspiring terrorism. It promotes the idea that Muslim communities in Europe are a threat to the national identity and that Muslim culture does not align with human rights and democracy.

In addition, there are funded networks that operate as non-profit organizations disseminating misinformation regarding Muslim communities and motivating the Western Community to perceive Muslims as violent, intolerant, and terrorist individuals. Moreover, supporters of far-right parties in Germany attempted to fuel anti-Muslim sentiment following the December 19, 2016, Berlin attack

that killed 12 people to gain support from anti-immigration campaigners. They also staged a protest at the attack site near the Memorial Church, shouting anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim slogans, blaming them for the attack.

According to a Pew Research Centre study released in June 2016, a sizable portion of European communities believe that the influx of immigrants into European countries will increase the risk of terrorist attacks as well as have a negative effect on socioeconomic conditions by displacing European citizens from positions of power and privilege.

Numerous hate groups that support violence against people or groups based on their racial, religious, or even unique national qualities have emerged. They use a variety of strategies, including cyberspace, which offers them unprecedented access to diverse audiences.

Parallel to this, the social context in Western countries, particularly in European ones, appeared to be packed with tendencies to exclude Muslims and discriminate against them religiously, culturally, economically, and politically, as manifested in the speeches of some Western figures, institutions, and social practises.

Vengeance: The far-right terrorist attacks against Muslims are sometimes retaliations against terrorist attacks that targeted Western countries, in an attempt to operate under a delusional moral legitimacy or a fake heroism. The interconnectedness between reciprocal terrorist attacks has become apparent in multiple countries. Following the terrorist attack claimed by the extremist organization Daesh on the headquarters of the French magazine «Charlie Hebdo» in January 2015, six mosques were targeted in armed attacks by right-wing elements.

After the Manchester Arena bombing following a concert by American pop singer Ariana Grande in Britain on May 22, 2017, the rate of attacks targeting Muslims increased about fivefold from before the bombing. 139 attacks were reported compared to 25 in the week before the bombing. Thus, the attack was classified as an act of revenge against terrorist invaders who killed thousands of people on European lands.

Emblems of Muslims

Mosques are perceived unfavourably by some Europeans who think of them as emblems of Muslims and the epicentre of their cultural presence. These individuals are opposed to the construction of new mosques or the renovation of existing ones for fear of them becoming Muslim clusters. According to one study, the reason why British citizens reject the construction of new mosques is their concern

of Muslim clusters forming around mosques, creating an exclusively Muslim community. They are also concerned about the rise of Islamic architecture over urban civilization and Western Christianity and about the Islamization of Europe, claiming that Islam and Muslims pose a threat to European society and that mosques serve as incubators for extremism rather than places of prayer and spirituality.

More Victims: While mosques are gathering places for Muslims in Western countries, targeting them shall lead to more casualties. In addition, successfully carrying out these attacks can inspire other racists to carry out similar attacks in different places.

Reduction of Immigration: Several far-rightists believe that Muslim immigrants to Europe are invaders threatening the Western lifestyle and undermining the social homogeneity and prevailing cultural values. Thus, they are convinced that they must curb such a massive exodus to protect the European identity. Brenton Tarrant, the right-wing extremist of New Zealand, confirmed he was just a regular white man who decided to take action to secure a better future for white Europeans and get rid of Muslim invaders. He said that he represented millions of Europeans and national populations that want to live in peace on their own land, practice their own peculiar traditions, and ensure a prosperous future for future European generations.

Overlooking Right-Wing Extremism

Many Western intelligence services, it could be argued, made a big mistake by focusing solely on terrorist threats attributed to Muslims and failing to pay enough attention to the threats posed by right-wing extremists, despite

their obvious hostility as they carried out regular attacks on minorities. For example, Christchurch has long hosted far-right groups like White Power Skinheads, Neo-Nazis, and fundamentalist and nationalist organisations. These groups advocated their own terminology, such as racial purity and getting rid of immigrants, insulted Muslims, and used cyberspace to disseminate hate speech against Muslims and Islamic figures. Following the New Zealand massacre, multiple investigations criticized security services for their emphasis on tracking and prosecuting Islamist extremists while tolerating right-wing extremism. They urged Western countries to take every necessary measure to reduce the prevalence of these crimes.

Finally, targeting mosques in Western countries cannot be viewed as an isolated incident, as it is fueled by practices that encourage hatred and prejudice against Muslims, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, and dangers posed by groups such as al-Qaeda and Daesh. Simultaneously, the ongoing threats from far-right extremists who see Muslims as invaders and intruders upon Western nations, asking for their annihilation in order to preserve an imaginary purity within these societies, contribute to this cycle of violence.

To break free from this vicious circle, it is essential to rely on moderate factions that can seek common grounds for peaceful coexistence. It is crucial to differentiate between extremism and moderation, avoiding broad generalizations that perceive others as homogenous entities. It should be asserted that terrorism is an inhuman force detached from any religion or country, and that cooperation is necessary to confront and defeat it. In handling such crimes, double standards must not be applied. ■





Jacinda Ardern
A Counter-Extremism Political Icon

Jacinda Ardern is a prominent politician who became New Zealand's youngest prime minister and who spearheaded a counter-extremism and terrorism initiative. She was widely acclaimed for her outstanding efforts in the aftermath of her country's worst terrorist attack in modern history. The 37-year-old prime minister assumed office in 2017.

Quick Responses

In mid-March 2019, New Zealand, a nation known for its tranquility and low incidence of extremism and violence, woke up to the deadliest terrorist attack it had ever witnessed. A right-wing extremist, Brenton Tarrant, stormed into two mosques in Christchurch and shot Muslim worshippers, killing and injuring around a hundred Muslims.

New Zealand's prime minister was quick to respond on several fronts. She promptly called what happened an 'act of terrorism', unlike much of the media that was reluctant to do so. In her speech in the Parliament, she said: "He is a terrorist. He is a criminal. He is an extremist. But he will, when I speak, be nameless".

She showed heartfelt sympathy for the victims' families. She moved from Wellington, Capital of New Zealand, to Christchurch, leading a delegation of prominent figures from different parties to pay their condolences, give them a sense of safety, and listen to what they think should be done after such a tragic incident.

During her visit, she wore a headscarf and greeted Muslims in Arabic. Her actions were greatly admired by Muslims as she tried to console them by hugging the victims' relatives. Observers believed her attire was not a random choice, but rather an intentional one in response to the populist surge and nationalist extremism that have been on the rise for years.

Jacinda Ardern was exceptionally brave when she denounced right-wing nationalism and white-supremacist ideologies. She publicly apologized to Muslims after the inquiry report had confirmed that security services had been observing Islam-driven terrorism for years and disregarding, meanwhile, the threats posed by the far-right.

Christchurch Call

Ardern prioritized tightening anti-terrorism laws and restricting the issuance of arms licences in order to

promote security and combat extremism. She launched an urgent significant campaign to stop hate, violence, and extremism online. The perpetrator of the Christchurch shootings broadcast them live on social media. Extremist online content is thus a phenomenon that has tragically and uncharacteristically been on the rise. It demonstrates how inadequately technology corporations have responded to the online streaming of terrorist content.

The initiative was named Christchurch Call after Christchurch city where the shootings took place. It is an action plan that obliges governments and technology companies to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist content online in an attempt to bring to an end the misuse of social media by extremists and terrorists. The initiative is an international call to action to counter extremism online, and it calls for using technologies ethically to prevent social media users from slipping into extremism. It also includes pledges to promote peace, cooperation, and mutual respect among different cultures, religions, and races.

Ardern met world leaders and heads of major internet companies to ensure the initiative can be operationalized, which was positively received. 50 countries joined the initiative, including France, Canada, Ireland, Senegal, and Indonesia, as well as representatives of giant corporations: Amazon, Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Quant, Twitter, and YouTube.

Counter-Extremism Commitment

Following Ardern's resignation in February 2023, the new Prime Minister of New Zealand, Chris Hipkins, appointed Jacinda Ardern as Special Envoy for the Christchurch Call. The position was created recently to advocate for increased protection from extremism. He stated that Ardern's commitment to combating violent extremist online content is critical to why she should continue this work.

Ardern said she was resigning because she 'no longer had enough in the tank' to do the job. She nevertheless emphasized her continued efforts to spread the initiative and delightedly accepted the new role in the fight against terrorist and extremist content online to work alongside world leaders and officials in transnational companies. She said she felt she owed a duty to the society afflicted by this tragedy. ■



Far-Right Extremism

The Manufacturing of Hatred and the Fanning of Racism.

Experts and researchers agree on the ever-growing risks posed by racist far-right movements, especially with the increasing popular support to right-wing parties and their leaders who espouse an intolerant discourse inciting hate and violence.

The far-right was previously limited to minor anti-immigration groups that posed no substantial threat to community stability. Nonetheless, there has been an upsurge in extremist youth factions misusing social media and enhancing the threat posed by the far-right. This points to a potentially complicated future that could jeopardize community unity and cause turmoil, leading to rising levels of intolerance and hostility, as well as a reduction in ideals associated with tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

At TAHALOF Magazine investigated this subject in the current edition, drawing on the opinions of specialists and authors from around the world. Their goal was to draw attention to the growing risks posed by these movements and how they undermine assimilation and harmony in Western countries.

Amal Mukhtar emphasises in her article «Theorists of the Far-Right» that behind the scenes of widespread violence in the West are professed intellectuals in science and philosophy. They make a vital contribution to shaping the minds of future generations by putting extremist beliefs under the umbrella of free speech and thought at universities and educational institutions. Their speeches, writings, and ideologies have provided a rationale for the far-right's acts of violence, killings, and contempt towards non-white peaceful individuals of other ethnicities and identities. Renaud Camus, theorist of The Great Replacement; James Mason, theorist of Accelerationism; Richard Spencer, founder of the Alternative Right; and Alain de Benoist, theorist of Ethnic Differentiation, were among those mentioned by the author.


Ahmed Askar addressed the upsurge of the far-right in Europe, remarking that it has become a global trend in recent years as a result of the continued support it has received and of its extremist populist ideology. This development has encouraged certain European

governments and parties to turn a blind eye to the ideas of far-right parties, as proven by the outcomes of national elections in some European countries such as Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Hungary. As a result, there have been concerns about the implications of their proliferation throughout Europe, the risks this poses to the future of democratic European communities, and the rise of far-right activity targeting foreigners and Muslims, which compels governments to find a safe political way out of the rampant polarisation.

Stephen Eric analyzed the reality of the far-right in the USA and the drivers of its violence. He emphasized the tendencies of far-right fanatics to privilege ideology over reason and prejudice over science. They believe that the African-American community released criminals into the streets and opened the borders for immigrant gangs from different countries. Consequently, they see violence as the only solution to resolve conflicts and disputes, leading to a frightening increase in the number of armed individuals. Despite attempts to restrict the sale and proliferation of weapons following mass and individual shootings, those efforts have not achieved significant success.

Dr. Ghaleb Al-Zamel addressed far-right financing, outlining the legal and criminal means used to fund their activities, including membership fees, donations from individuals, businesses, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), arms and drug trafficking, and external online support. Far-right organisations' financing methods may differ based on the regimes and financial regulations of the countries in which they operate. Specialists suggest caution while designing a financial monitoring system that tracks and combats financing operations based on understanding the nature of those groups, their activities, and intermediaries.

Sylvie Taussig focused on the theoretical aspect of the extremist far-right, demonstrating that most far-right supporters assimilated the consecutive theoretical concepts and political developments. They were not aloof from the natural progress of notions and approaches, but rather influenced them and were influenced by them. They developed in line with growing philosophical and theoretical insights. ■



Ideological Foundations of the Far-Right Theorists of Racism and White Supremacy

■ Amal Mokhtar

When studying the violence of far-right organizations in Western countries, it is crucial to look beyond their mere formation. Behind the scenes of this violence, there are purported intellectuals from scientific and philosophical backgrounds who espouse extremist views, often leveraging the principles of freedom of speech and thought. Some of these individuals even hold specialized academic positions, playing a role in shaping the minds of future generations within universities and educational institutions. Their ideologies and writings imply a threatening racism disguised in scientific and legal arguments. They use a sophisticated and graceful language that appears civilized, but is actually the foundation and justification of many acts of violence, killings, and contempt by the far-right towards non-white peaceful civilians of other ethnicities and identities in European countries and USA.

■ Editor-in-chief of the Global Scene of Extremism and Terrorism Online Magazine, Egypt.



Cultural Context

As violent, far-right ideologies continue to challenge principles of equality, tolerance, coexistence, and integration, the notion of «scientific racism» has emerged. This concept reached its zenith in 1920 but waned after the devastation of World War II. However, the controversy surrounding it appears to be resurfacing, as Western intellectuals are once again embracing «White» groups and organizations, providing justifications for their ideologies and actions under the guise of protecting white identity rather than overt racism.

Another current still propounds the idea of inherent inequality among different races as an established scientific fact! The English quarterly journal «Mankind Quarterly» stands at the forefront of specialized scientific journals supporting scientific racism, to the extent that it has been described as the «journal of white supremacy.» It has been published from Scotland since 1960.

Right-wing extremists run a series of think tanks, websites, newspapers, publishing houses, and scientific forums, such as American Renaissance (AR or AmRen), an online magazine that started in 1990, and Scandza Forum that is held annually for white supremacists from all over the world in Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland).

Theorists and Intellectuals

1) Renaud Camus: Theorist of “The Great Replacement”

Renaud Camus is a French author, historian, and politician. His anti-African-and-Muslim-immigrants views and statements emerged in the early twenty first century on several occasions and conferences for the far-right in France. He published his well-known book *Le Grand Remplacement (The Great Replacement)* in 2011, in which he presented his views that claim that France and Europe are at risk of being colonized by immigrants.

His views can be summed up as follows:

First, the traditional French community shall be substituted by another coming from Morocco and Sub-Saharan Africa. Second, the Christian French community that is built on secular values shall be substituted by a Muslim community, which shall be controlled by extremist Muslims over time. Third, current French governments accept such a shift by letting Muslims out-breed them on their own land.

The Great Replacement theory is based on the fact that the French culture is only that of White Christians, and that any immigration from other countries to France is a huge threat to that culture, almost an “invasion”. According to Camus, the upcoming Islamic identity diametrically runs counter to secularism and the French identity. He does not believe in statistics or population-based studies, for he believes they are all misleading and falsified.

According to Camus, the issue at hand is the significant birth rates within immigrant families or French families with immigrant heritage. In his view, there is a clear colonization happening, with Africans being the colonizers and a substantial exodus from one continent to another taking place. He emphasizes that this matter is not solely about Islam, but primarily about African immigration. Camus argues that the demographic colonization of France by African and Muslim immigrants poses a greater threat than the historical French occupation of other nations. He asserts that successive governments tolerate and allow this colonization to occur, unaware of the irreversible consequences it entails.

In 2014, the French Judiciary condemned Renaud Camus on charges of inciting hatred and violence for offensive statements he made against Muslims in late 2010 in a public meeting in Paris, where he described Muslims in France as “the armed wing of invasion, invaders who seek to make the lives of the native population impossible, forcing them to succumb to them or else flee and leave their land”.

Despite Camus’ denial of responsibility for any violence committed by violent right-wing extremists in relation to his alleged theory, the individual behind the Christchurch shooting of two mosques in New Zealand in March 2019, which resulted in the deaths of 51 worshippers and numerous injuries, named his widely-known 80-page online manifesto «The Great Replacement.»

2) James Mason: Theorist of Accelerationism

James Mason is an American neo-Nazi politician who introduced Accelerationism. His views were published in a newsletter in 1980, then were collected in a book titled *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*. He said, “Following the fall of countries and societies, white supremacists will be the only survivors in this full-scale war”.

The writer’s thoughts are based on urging white people, particularly those in extremist groups, to carry out a bloody revolution and bring about a race war that restores and protects the white man’s status, in order to get rid of his enemies from other races, particularly Jews, whom Mason believes are the source of evil corruption in any society. Mason insists therefore that Jews must be destroyed, followed by the worldwide political structure that supports them. To attain these objectives, we must embark on revolutions, terrorism, and bloody wars.

Mason was arrested more than once in 1994–1999 for several reasons. In 2015, the neo-Nazi terrorist network Atomwaffen was founded, which believed in the use of violence and terrorism. Mason was the main advisor to the network, and his book *Siege* its main approach.

3) William Luther Pierce: Nuclear Terrorism

Supporters of White Terror's dreams of creative chaos and the illusion of nuclear terrorism are largely linked to American neo-Nazi author and physicist William Luther Pierce's (1933–2002) novel, **The Turner Diaries**, published in 1978. A study made by the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) concluded that there is an association between the novel and no less than 200 murders and 40 terrorist attacks over the past 40 years. The novel is a fiction that explores the diaries of the hero Earl Turner, a member of a clandestine white-supremacist organization who aims to overthrow the US government, social and media institutions dominated by Jews, African Americans, and other minorities. Turner forms his own unit that operates in coordination with other cells in the organization to carry out guerrilla actions and acts of terrorism, which may eventually topple the regime.

The novel is considered an inspiration to a crime wave in the 1980s where a group named The Order emerged. Its most prominent member was Timothy McVeigh, who detonated a truck bomb packed with ammonium explosives—similar to those described in the novel—at Alfred P Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, killing 168 people. When McVeigh was arrested, pages from the novel were found in the front seat of his car. Moreover, several experts believed that the storming of the United States Capitol following Donald Trump's loss in the last elections was a simulation of a scene from the novel.

4) Richard Spencer: Founder of AlternativeRight.com

Richard Spencer was first to introduce the concept of the Alternative Right in 2010 to describe the trends based on white nationalism. The concept was highly controversial in the media and intellectual circles during the US elections which Trump won in 2016, when Spencer celebrated his victory with Nazi salutes on November 21, 2016. This led to the defection of some groups from the Alt-Right to form the Light Right.

Spencer's views regarding the White Identity and belief in absolute white supremacy in all fields are summed up as follows: "Race is real, race matters, and race is the foundation of identity". He called against refugees, homosexuals, and feminist movements, and called for building a new society, a "white ethno-state" for Europeans through a peaceful ethnic cleansing campaign.

5) Martin Sellner: Between Racism and Multi-Ethnicity

Martin Sellner is the leader of the Identitarian Movement in Austria (IBÖ) and the Defend Europe campaign. He is actually the leader of the Europe-wide Identitarian movement for his proficiency in English and popularity on social media, and herein lies the real risk. He disseminates

notions of ethnic supremacy and racism towards minorities in Europe. Security services intercepted communications between him and Brenton Tarrant, the right-wing extremist of New Zealand who carried out the Christchurch attack, where the latter donated €1500 to Sellner's movement in January 2018.

Sellner claims he is not racist, but rather believes in multi-ethnicity and the right of every civilization to keep its own independent identity. This in fact practically means racial segregation.

6) Nick Land: Theorist of Dark Enlightenment

Dark Enlightenment is an anti-democratic, anti-egalitarian philosophical movement founded by the American Curtis Yarvin. However, the English philosopher Nick Land developed and propagated this theory, which has become the theoretical and ideological reference of the Alt-Right. In his book *The Dark Enlightenment* published in 2013, Land introduced his views that are clearly based on freedom's incompatibility with democracy. He believes that democracy has run out of gas and that elections lost their credibility and purpose. He also believes that racial integration is a lie and that Western reality has proven that white people are still superior to black people in the US and Europe despite equality laws.

7) Alain de Benoist: Theorist of Ethnic Differentiation

Alain de Benoist is a French journalist and philosopher born in 1943, a founding member of the Nouvelle Droite (New Right), and leader of the ethno-nationalist think tank GRECE. He is known for opposing human rights and representative democracy. His writings inspired the Alt-Right in the US.

Ethnic Differentiation is based on the fact that peoples and cultures can flourish on their native land only, that cultural and racial admixtures are factors of degradation, and that multiculturalism is a failed project that only results in a loss of orientation, violence and crime, and a potential "ethnic war" in Europe between Europeans of European descent and Europeans of Arab or Islamic origins.

Tip of the Iceberg

Far-right terrorist operations seem to be only the tip of the iceberg. There is yet a more dangerous, wider base rooted firmly in the minds of some intellectuals, specialists, and the European and American public, which shall become the justification of rejecting the other and resorting to all illegal routes to eliminate him.

This is an ongoing, exploitable philosophical justification for carrying out terrorist operations that may involve the use of nuclear weapons to attain the allegedly lofty aim of white supremacy in its geographical scope, annihilating the other racially, religiously, or culturally. ■



The Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in Europe

Indicators and Repercussions



■ Ahmed Asker

The rise of the far-right in Europe has become a general trend in recent years, with increased support for far-right parties in certain European countries, adopting radical populist ideologies. This was particularly evident in the results of various national elections in European countries such as Italy, France, the United Kingdom, Hungary, and others, which has aroused concerns about the consequences of far-right ideology spreading throughout Europe, the threat they pose to European democratic communities, and the development of far-right activity targeting foreigners and Muslims in particular.

■ Researcher at Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS), Egypt.

Far-Right Contexts

The far-right movement in Europe focuses on various issues, with xenophobia being one of its primary targets. It staunchly promotes national values and emphasizes a strong attachment to a particular political, cultural, and linguistic identity, often displaying inclinations towards religious extremism. The far-right is commonly referred to as a movement or an ideology, and it is occasionally viewed as a political bloc seeking to unite extremist movements or ideologies.

The term 'far-right' refers to white European nationalists who believe in white supremacy, with ultranationalist tendencies as well as religious intolerance and anti-immigration sentiments, especially towards Muslims. It also refers to anti-immigrant parties due to the common stance taken by right-wing parties towards immigrants, whom they see as a threat to the European ethnic and national identity and a major reason for the rise in unemployment and crime in European communities.

There is frequently a tendency to conflate the far-right with right-wing parties, which can lead to confusion. They only seem nominally connected since the far-right movement is a rebranding of hate and of white supremacy. However, right-wing parties are political parties with capitalist ideologies and a traditional political agenda, unlike left-wing parties that adopt socialist economic ideologies.

Right-wing parties also include traditional right-wing parties that aim to preserve traditions and norms within society. They are also politically realistic to some extent. The far-right seeks coercive intervention and uses violence to preserve traditions and norms, in addition to its ultranationalist tendencies as well as religious intolerance and anti-immigration sentiments.

Thus, there is no agreement on an accurate, comprehensive definition of the 'far-right'. However, there is consensus on some aspects and common features, primarily the rising xenophobia and rejection of minorities, defending national identity and traditions, calling for immigration reduction, rejection of all forms of regional integration, even European integration, allegedly to protect national sovereignty, and calling for the dissolution of the European Union and exiting the Eurozone.

Prominent European Groups

The following are some prominent far-right groups and organizations in Europe:

In Britain: The Order of Nine Angles (O9A) that disseminates its ideologies online; National Action; Atomwaffen Division;

Patriotic Alternative (PA) that calls for the expulsion of non-white people from the UK; Britain First that became the largest far-right organization in the UK although it was founded in 2011; and the UK Independence Party (UKIP), which was the largest opposition party calling for the UK's exit from the European Union (EU).

In France: The Operational Forces Action (AFO) group before it was dismantled in 2018; Les Barjols group that was dismantled the same year upon accusations of plotting to assassinate the French President Emmanuel Macron. There are other groups, such as Génération Identitaire; Bastion Social; Combat 18; and the Organisation Armée Secrète.

In Germany: Querdenken (lateral thinker) movement; Pegida movement; Sturmbrigade 44; Northern Eagle group that was banned in June 2020; Reichsbürger movement; Weisse Wölfe Terrorcrew (WWT); and Altermedia Deutschland.

In Belgium: The New Flemish Alliance (N-VA); Vlaams Belang party; Schild en Vrienden (Shield and Friends) movement; and white collars.

Factors Behind the Rise

A variety of factors contributed to the rise of the far-right in Europe in the past years, mainly ideological, cultural, economic, political, and others. Immigration has been a main issue that has had a huge influence on the rise of far-right parties in Europe. All far-right forces agree that immigration is the main cause of European problems and that European identity is at risk and must be protected from this menacing foreign invasion.

Accordingly, far-right parties exploited the immigration issue in marketing the far-right to legitimize their racist anti-immigration discourse and enforce the process of mobilization and polarization of a wide array of Europeans to support right-wing parties in parliamentary elections.

The economic factor is the main reason behind the emergence of the far-right at times of turmoil. Estimates have shown that far-right parties in 20 democratic countries have been the prime benefactor of turmoil that follows crises. The votes of Pro-far-right parties amounted to more than 30% of total votes. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis resulted in a rising new far-right wave in Europe. The failed economic policies led to a growing resentment of a wide scale of citizens at the behest of far-right movements. The situation aggravated due to the social changes that squeezed the industrial working class, which is the main supporter of left-wing parties.



The rise of the far-right is also associated with the unprecedented rising unemployment in European countries in the last decade. Europe had about 20 million unemployed people. To the far-right, immigrants are the reason why there is unemployment since they get paid less than their European peers, besides the cost incurred by host countries in terms of public facilities, education, and health. Even though unemployment rates in EU countries have dropped in 2022 to 6.6% of the total population, i.e., 12.93 million, the European far-right is yet on the rise.

The ascent of far-right movements in Europe has coincided with a concerning increase in Islamophobia. This trend involves the manifestation of hatred towards Muslims and the unjust association of Islam with terrorism. The prevalence of terrorist attacks in recent years in countries such as France, the UK, Belgium, and others has further exacerbated these sentiments. Such a rise prompted some European governments and parties to turn a blind eye to the ideologies of far-right parties to maintain the voting bloc. In October 2020, the French President Macron pointed out that Muslims in France can create their own parallel community and that Islam is facing a crisis all over the world.

The far-right also relies on social media to promote its ideologies and polarize supporters. The far-right discourse targets young people to join it, taking advantage of their anger and frustration with regard to the policies of their governments and how they handle economic crises. It also pushes moderate individuals to espouse the far-right discourse to maintain its electoral political gains.

Signs of Rise

The rise of the far-right in European politics has been a major political phenomenon over the past decade. Support for extremist nationalist parties in Europe has been growing following the Brexit referendum in 2016 and after former President Donald Trump had won the US presidential elections in 2017.

The main indicators of the rising far-right in Europe in the past years include:

1. Expansion of the Pro-Far-Right Voting Bloc: Far-right parties have had some success over the past decade in the presidential and parliamentary elections in some European countries, such as Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, France, Hungary, and Britain. These parties include: Law and Justice party in Poland, Danish People's Party (DPP) in Denmark, Fidesz and Jobbik political parties in Hungary, Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) in Austria, the Social Democratic Party in Sweden, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Golden Dawn party in Greece, and the UK Independence Party (UKIP).

2. The Political Rise of the Far-Right: Right-wing parties are currently progressing at a low rate in European politics. However, this is perturbing in the long run due to the significant influence gained by far-right extremist parties and the electoral gains achieved by their leaders in presidential elections, where they have reached the second position in several European countries such as France and Austria. Some nationalist right-wing parties have

also achieved a significant voting percentage in certain European parliaments, reaching historical levels of over 20% of the total votes in Austria, Sweden, and Denmark.

In the French presidential elections in April 2022, the far-right under the leadership of Marine Le Pen, president of the National Assembly of France, won 41.45% of votes compared to 34% in 2017. The party's parliamentary seats doubled to 89 seats in June 2022, which was unprecedented in the past three decades.

In Italy, Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Brothers of Italy (Fdi) far-right political party, won the Italian parliamentary elections of September 25, 2022. She then became the first woman to hold the position of Prime Minister since 1945 after her party had won 237 of 400 parliamentary seats.

Viktor Orbán was re-elected as Prime Minister of Hungary for an unprecedented fourth consecutive term following the victory of his party, Fidesz, in the April 2022 elections. Fidesz secured an impressive 53% of the total votes, resulting in them securing 135 out of 199 parliamentary seats.

During the 2022 Swedish elections, the political party Sweden Democrats emerged victorious by garnering the highest number of votes, amounting to 20.95%. This translated to them securing 72 out of 349 seats, surpassing all other parties within the right-wing coalition.

3. The Far-right Infiltrating the European Parliament: The European Parliament elections of 2019 witnessed a remarkable surge in far-right parties, which won 105 seats, amounting to almost the third.

4. The Spread of Hate Speech in Europe: The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) issued a report stating that EU countries have been witnessing a rising wave of hate speech on social media. Around 850 hate incidents were recorded in Spain in 2021 with estimates suggesting they could in fact be 6,000, with over 1,000 websites promoting xenophobia and intolerance.

On May 13, 2022, German intelligence services revealed hard evidence convicting the far-right in more than 300 incidents in German apparatuses. Estimates suggest the involvement of the far-right in over 65,000 politically-driven crimes in Germany.

Far-Right Future

The increasing prominence of far-right movements has emerged as a significant global trend, particularly in Europe. What is particularly worrying is that the far-right is no longer confined to small parties with populist ideologies, but has expanded its reach. This development

is expected to have a profound impact on European politics and society. In response, traditional political forces in certain European countries may resort to drastic measures in order to counteract the influence of the far-right and preserve their voting base. Consequently, this could potentially influence the formulation and implementation of key European policies.

With the increasing surge of hate speech, concerns regarding minorities are anticipated to escalate in Europe, posing a threat to the continent's future. The steady growth of far-right factions and their efforts to forge political alliances to advance their extremist agendas and policies, with the objective of gaining complete control over European politics, exacerbate these worries. Consequently, European governments are compelled to navigate a politically viable path to mitigate polarization within their respective nations. ■





Right-Wing Extremism in the United States

Mythopoeia and Political Violence



■ Stephen Eric Bronner

January 6, 2021, has become a symbol of the far-right in the United States, when extremist groups went out in protests claiming that the elections were fraudulently manipulated under a conspiracy by the deep state. These claims persisted regardless of the fact that there was clear evidence of winning by a substantial margin of over seven million votes and the absence of credible proof of electoral fraud. All irrefutable evidence is belied by the incendiary discourse aiming to mobilize the far-right angry masses rebelling against the results of the 2020 elections and seeking to invalidate them by force.

■ Co-Director of the International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue and Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University, USA.

Extremist Practices

The new right-wing extremists have shown their disdain for the federal government through bigoted practices that resemble the blind fanaticism that ignited the American Civil War between 1861 and 1865. These practices include opposing equality and democracy, claiming to feel marginalized due to the bureaucracy and taxes imposed by the federal government, the dominance of liberal elites, expressing concerns about perceived threats posed by highly advanced modern production processes, relying on technological innovation and preoccupation with efficiency and expertise.

Evangelicals are the most practiced right-wing people. Whether religious or secular, right-wing extremists tend to privilege faith over rational reasoning, prejudice over science, and intuition over critical reflection.

Right-wing extremists have worked hard for achieving political success. They have participated in local and national elections, which had low voter turnout, allowing organized minorities to win seats in city councils, school administrations, and other institutions.

Their beginnings were at the end of President George W. Bush's presidential term. After the country had been burdened by the repercussions of the invasion of Iraq and the economic recession of 2007-2008, the Tea Party

movement emerged, a fiscally conservative political movement with far-right and republican tendencies. Following President Obama's assumption of power in 2008 and the intensification of political competition between the two parties, the rhetoric of racist incitement grew and became more prominent. This led to the emergence of a polarized atmosphere in which right-wing extremism flourished. Nationalism quickly became a part of everyday political life, accompanied by an increase in hatred towards foreigners and immigrants.

Similarly, extreme right-wing individuals have made significant contributions to party efforts aimed at restricting voting rights, manipulating electoral districts, banning abortion, closing doors to immigration, and revoking the rights of LGBT and gender non-conforming individuals, as well as reducing taxes for the wealthy and discontinuing social welfare programs.

Myths and Ideologies

Mythopoeia forms the far-right's perception of the world and life. The deeper the right wing delves into ideology, the more fanatical its political affiliations become. Extremists do not allow criticism of their distorted perception of the US. They believe the Golden Age is associated with the dominance of the white man, the supremacy of Christianity, and the continued domination of the rich and proprietors.





They also believe that the promise of seeking happiness at the declaration of independence was directed at them alone, not at workers, people of color (black and yellow), women, Native Americans (Amerindians), Asians, or other groups of people.

To justify this romanticized vision, the far-right has come to assume that exploited and disenfranchised groups are happy with these conditions. Traditional (classical) works of reactionary art immortalize that myth as in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), a movie that celebrates the extremely white-supremacist Ku Klux Klan (KKK) group. Different narratives were told in private and in public and included in school curricula to consolidate and confirm those convictions. Together, these works have forged the belief that those marginalized by their gender, race, culture, or economic status are either too infantilized, too lazy, or too degenerate to seek change on their own. Thus, vulnerable groups lose value, potency, social presence, justifications for objecting to the injustice inflicted upon them, and their ability to rise up to restore their looted rights.

Only one answer makes sense to them and, the more extremist they are, the more this becomes a firm conviction: an evil and cunning cabal has intoxicated those simple souls with crazy notions of equality and incited them to revolt against their preordained inferior status. Whether the conspiracy is led by communists or liberals is irrelevant. The only threat is manifested in the attacks by the disempowered against their legitimate white

supremacist, Christian, male rulers, thereby destroying "the greatest nation on earth".

They also believe that the cabal has let African-American criminals loose on the streets, opened the US borders to immigrant gangs from various countries, and destroyed the morale of the police. Proof of such claims is irrelevant because alternative facts are always available from Fox News and other established right-wing media conglomerates, such as neo-Nazi web-sites. These media outlets have contributed to waves of misinformation that have polarized the country and undermined the realistic, sound discourse, creating differences and contradiction so much that there is no longer a consensus on what constitutes "truth".

Right-Wing Violence

Dissociating from consultative discourse, the far-right resorts to violence as the only way to settle disputes. There are now more than 500 million weapons in the US. In the wake of hundreds of mass and individual shootings, liberals and other left-leaning individuals have sought to curtail gun sales with scant success.

Not only right-wing extremists, but mainstream conservatives also oppose even the most modest reforms such as the bans on AK-47s. Especially given the many extremist militia actively operating in the US, indeed, the debate over gun control is not simply about the constitutional right to bear arms, but also the ability to





employ constitutional debate and democratic freedoms to destroy democracy.

In the aftermath of the January 6th insurrection, extremist factions such as the «Proud Boys» and the «Oath Keepers» sought to downplay the gravity of the event, portraying it as a peaceful gathering. Some went as far as attributing the organization of the insurrection to anti-fascist anarchists known as «Antifa» or protesters advocating against institutional racism associated with the Black Lives Matter movement. Meanwhile, other right-wing extremists dismissed the entire incident as «fake news,» vehemently denying its occurrence. However, the undeniable truth remains that the insurrection was indicative of a disturbing new trend, wherein right-wing extremists attempted to seize control of state assemblies, targeted and assaulted election observers, illegally entered the residence of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, resulting in injuries to her husband, conspired to kidnap Governor Gretchen Whitmer (Michigan), perpetrated attacks on synagogues and black churches.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia have run rampant, and racism has become part of the usual political discourse. Calls for censoring critical interpretations of American history and «objectionable» narratives, especially those written by people of color, have grown louder. Instances of disruptions in city council and school board meetings, highlight the rampant gangsterism within the far-right movement.

Political and partisan lobbying by extremists has led to the formulation of an agenda that revolves around the notion of white men being the oppressed minority, advocating against immigration under the guise of protecting the They also promote opposing critical interpretations of American history as an alleged patriotic obligation, opposing reproductive rights in the name of upholding the supporting the death penalty as a means to combat crime, opposing efforts to enhance voting accessibility in order to ensure fair elections, and advocating for tax cuts for the wealthy and the reduction of welfare programs as the sole solution to creating an inclusive economy.

The policies of right-wing extremists primarily favor Christian Evangelicals, religious zealots, white nationalists, extremist gun enthusiasts, outright Nazis, and conspiracy fetishists. Despite being a minority, their provocative methods grant them a disproportionate amount of power relative to their numbers.

In conclusion, it is crucial for thoughtful politicians to adopt strong and principled positions in advocating for egalitarian economic policies, expanding civil liberties, and upholding the values of liberalism. Timidity has never been effective in combating fascism. Elected officials, the media, and the public must collectively address right-wing gangs and exert pressure on the judicial system to prosecute and suppress their activities. Additionally, engaging with young individuals and utilizing media creatively are essential in conveying the truth about extremists to independent voters. ■

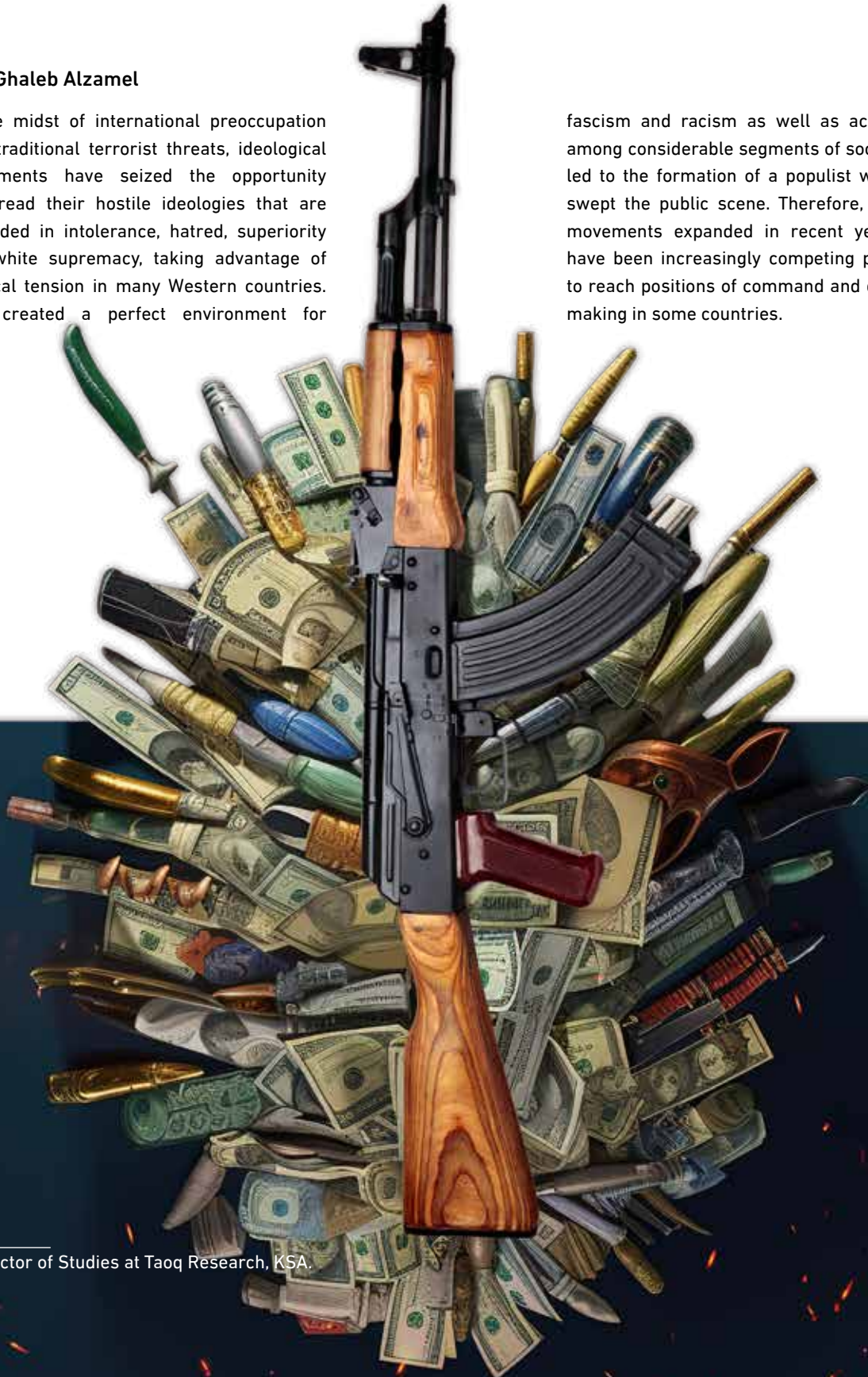
Far-Right Financing

Sources of Intolerance and Hatred

■ Dr Ghaleb Alzamel

In the midst of international preoccupation with traditional terrorist threats, ideological movements have seized the opportunity to spread their hostile ideologies that are grounded in intolerance, hatred, superiority and white supremacy, taking advantage of political tension in many Western countries. This created a perfect environment for

fascism and racism as well as acceptance among considerable segments of society, and led to the formation of a populist wave that swept the public scene. Therefore, far-right movements expanded in recent years and have been increasingly competing politically to reach positions of command and decision-making in some countries.



■ Director of Studies at Taoq Research, KSA.





Reports indicate that the far-right around the world is expanding and growing for years to come. This rise is sustained by growing terrorist threats and confirmed by the statement of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) that far-right cases account for 40% of the cases of extremism that the Organisation fights.

The terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, serves as a stark example of the terrorist threats stemming from the rise of the far-right. Further examination of the evidence surrounding this heinous crime has uncovered the transnational connections that exist among far-right extremists. It has come to light that the accused Australian perpetrator, responsible for the devastating massacre of numerous Muslims, drew inspiration from the Génération Identitaire organization, a far-right political movement, and even made financial donations to its Austrian branch.

From this highly symbolic financial donation, a pressing question arises: What are the financing sources of the far-right that enable its organizations to spend on its agendas and activities? Conversely, how can they be uncovered and how capable are governments of putting an end to them? Specialists advise caution when developing a financial monitoring system based on understanding the nature of those groups, their activities and intermediaries, and ultimately tracking and preventing financing operations. After examining multiple financing methods, researcher Ritzmann argues that unlike traditional extremists, it has been proven that the far-right has an integrated financing system.

Financing is the lifeblood of far-right groups, as well as other terrorist groups which cannot survive without

sources of cash to finance their extremist activities. It is worth noting that promoting hate and fueling tensions between different communities is in the best interest of violent extremist organizations.

An overview shows that far-right groups receive funding from various sources, most notably donations from individuals, corporations, NGOs, and legal and illicit funds. These groups may differ in the way financing is secured and managed in accordance with countries' financial systems and policies, but they do not go beyond the following sources:

Private Donations:

Far-right groups have relied heavily on membership fees as a primary source of financing, which has been a common practice. However, this method has its limitations when it comes to funding large-scale operations. As a result, the principle of donations and gifts has been implemented to ensure substantial cash flows. Many far-right groups have embraced online crowdfunding and donating platforms, which allow them to quickly accumulate significant amounts of money. The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) was among the first to recognize the potential of this approach. In 1984, the group's leader, Louis Beam, established the oldest online bulletin board system called Liberty Net. Its success as a PC platform paved the way for the creation of Stormfront, which later became the first website for white supremacists to communicate and raise funds.

Due to the flexibility and easy procedures provided by crowdfunding platforms, far-right organizations have turned to crowdfunding sites, such as Patreon, GoFundMe, and Kickstarter, which were an important source of



financing for their activities. When these platforms were alerted of the dangers of financing extremist organizations, they prevented them from accessing their services, so these organizations resorted to creating alternative racist platforms that did not last long, such as: Hatreon and GoyFundMe. Although there are some restrictions in place, major crowdfunding companies still allow individuals associated with far-right organizations to receive regular donations from supporters and organize fundraising campaigns.

The Daily Stormer news website, run by neo-Nazi white supremacist activists, exemplifies an individual's ability to raise funds by creating extremist content. The site's founder and editor, Andrew Anglin, managed to finance the continuation of the website from donations, receiving more than \$200,000 via Bitcoin in 2014 alone, as well as announcing the receipt of donations from people in Silicon Valley and Santa Clara, California.

British far-right figure Tommy Robinson, also known by his real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, has received substantial financial support from foreign donors and individual crowdfunding from around the world. These funds have been used to cover legal fees in his various legal cases, including fines such as the £100,000 damages imposed by the court in the defamation case brought by Syrian student Jamal Hijazi. During his two-month imprisonment, Robinson received nearly £20,000 in donations, with some contributions made in bitcoin. He has actively encouraged his supporters to contribute funds to support his political

campaigns. As of October, he revealed having a surplus of funds totaling "several hundred thousand pounds."

A Policy Brief Report, "Buying and Selling Extremism: New Funding Opportunities in the Right-Wing Extremist Online Ecosystem", issued by ASIO in August 2021, confirmed that nine Australian channels sharing far-right content via Telegram, used at least 22 financing platforms, to obtain funds between the beginning of January 2021 and July 15, 2021.

External Financing

An important financing source is from external parties, where far-right organizations can obtain funds from other extremist groups abroad. For example, the Middle East Forum, a strategic think tank in Philadelphia, USA, provided a funding of \$60,000 for demonstrations in support of far-right Robinson, who later admitted that the forum paid £78,000 to cover his legal fees in the contempt lawsuit.

Criminal Activities

Organized crime has been widely utilized by the far-right, particularly in the last decades of the second millennium, to generate high revenues through a number of illegal activities, such as drugs, illicit arms trade, prostitution, extortion, and armed robbery. In the 1980s, white supremacists looted a car transporting money and counterfeited the American currency. So did Timothy McVeigh, the 1995 Oklahoma City bomber, who carried out bank robberies before the attack, an approach adopted by many racist Aryan supremacist groups, including extortion, drug trafficking and armed robbery. In 2020, US authorities successfully



prosecuted dozens of white supremacists on charges of trafficking narcotics, such as methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin. Some extremists were able to use technology in their criminal activities. Anders Breivik financed his deadly attack that killed 85 Norwegian students in 2011 by crossing the credit card limit. Financial and electronic fraud and the theft of credit cards and identity cards have become common and a good source of financing for the far-right, since they are easy to carry out and difficult to detect and track by security authorities.

Licensed businesses

Extremist organizations resort to various methods to benefit from funds obtained from illegal operations, like laundering and legitimizing these funds using clean methods, such as buying real estate, restaurants or gyms, and various commercial activities that earn large sums of money from the sale of goods or services. Among the legal methods of money laundering adopted by far-right organizations are:

1. **Concerts And Music Festivals:** The revenues generated by the musical gathering, which accommodates 6,000 people, are estimated to be over €150,000. In addition to the significant financial benefit, these right-wing organizations aim to connect their supporters, particularly young individuals, through shared social activities that strengthen bonds, foster friendship, and unify their narratives.
2. **Security Companies:** Right-wing organizations tend to establish security companies as a legal cover to train their members to use arms and organize them within a paramilitary framework. They can be employed in organizing events, festivals, and rallies related to far-right activities, especially concerts.
3. **Combat Sports Events:** These attractive events provide huge funds from admission tickets alone, and the organizers ensure that all participants are white, to highlight their superiority and the supremacy of the Aryan race.
4. **Real Estate:** It is an essential activity for making money and laundering the proceeds of other methods.
5. **Online Stores and E-Commerce:** The far-right tends to open various stores. Some prefer popular stores such as fashion stores and restaurants, and others prefer stores that specialize in the needs and favorite tools of racists such as machetes, bows, slogans and racist souvenirs.

With the spread of e-commerce, some right-wing extremists have been active selling a wide range of goods

to support themselves or increase the financing sources of their extremist organizations. T-shirts, coffee mugs, special flags, and souvenirs expressing these organizations have spread in online stores, such as Amazon and social media platforms.

Cryptocurrencies

The security follow-up of far-right financing operations, and the prosecution and freezing of bank accounts have led to the transformation of their activity into a hidden financial world provided by the trade of cryptocurrencies that are not under the control of banks or financial control offices, as an effective way to hide their financial resources, or enable them to transfer funds to supporters. Andrew Anglin, owner of The Daily Stormer website, reports that after his PayPal account was banned and his bank cards suspended, he received a donation of 15 bitcoins, an equivalent of more than \$600,000 at the time. He expressed his sarcasm, saying, "You directed us towards cryptocurrencies, you idiots!"

Right-wing extremists did not stop at Bitcoin, which has carried out transparency procedures that allow the identification of the donor and recipient, exposing donors to prosecution. They quickly started using Monero, a cryptocurrency which makes all transactions hidden. Thus, far-right groups have confined their donations to this cryptocurrency, such as the Proud Boys and the Nordic Resistance Movement, which is banned in Finland.

Government Approaches

The rise and spread of the far-right, as well as its major role in social division, highlighted the importance of monitoring the financing of far-right movements and figures and tracking their suspicious activities.

Government authorities in many Western countries are making extensive efforts to combat money laundering and the financing of the far-right, especially in view of the difficulty of controlling the transactions of cryptocurrencies that enable extremist groups to obtain huge and unsupervised funds, giving them power and media momentum, and increasing their security and societal risks.

Overall, limiting the financing sources of far-right extremism is not an easy task. It requires significant and integrated efforts, continuous vigilance, and proactive responses to changes. However, it is not an insurmountable or impossible task. Drying up these sources of financing is a necessary step to contain and mitigate the dangers of right-wing extremism. ■

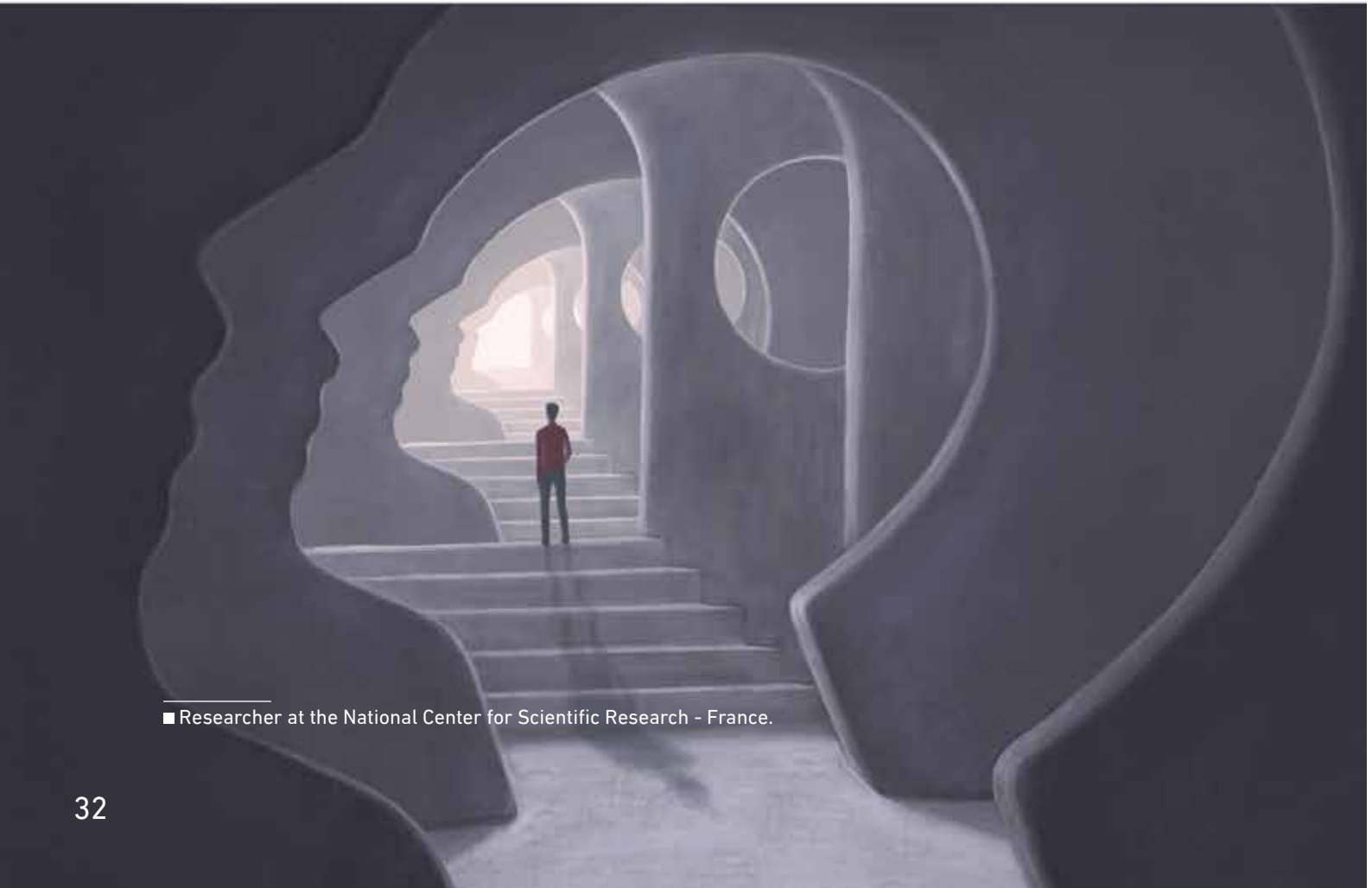


The Theoretical Far-Right a Philosophical Perspective

■ Sylvie Taussig

Philosopher Alessio Moretti developed the concept of “theoretical far-right” as an attempt to understand recent political developments in democratic countries and some other regimes. Before delving deep into soft power practices, the rough grip of the far-right, or the presence of allies or supporters within economic or social circles, we must define the key aspects of the theoretical far-right, which may be vague to readers and researchers. The term “theoretical” draws upon the political fact that there is an ideology with principles circulating among different social classes. Hence, speaking of the theoretical far-right, we must consider its exponents’ intellectual origins. It started by a small group of highly organized intellectuals and theorists, whose views go beyond national differences and are expressed globally.

■ Researcher at the National Center for Scientific Research - France.



Intellectual Origins

The theoretical far-right is neither a conservative nor a reactionary stance, but rather a conservative revolutionary movement that cannot be encapsulated in the political path of the Conservative Revolution. This over-a-century-old movement claims it is based on certain contexts such as Nietzsche's and Spengler's works. However, most of its contemporary supporters grasped the consecutive theoretical concepts and political developments, from Marx to Debord, Gramsci, Laclau, and Hocquenghem. They grasped entire parts of the so-called leftist ideology that did not develop any tools to avoid such appropriation. We shall not, meanwhile, disregard the counterculture: starting from the Futurist philosophy adopted by Marinetti to visual narratives and Jean-Marc Vivenza, the theoretical far-right explores art consciously and creatively but without pedantry. Its exploration was revolutionary, believing it was necessary to overcome divisions and polarization to arrive at "meaning" and "truth".

Religion has not been properly associated with the theoretical far-right. It is arbitrarily identified with Catholic or biblical origins because it upholds some ideals that shape some traditional religions, and less frequently with Islam because of its anti-Muslim political ideologies. That is a clear mistake because Nietzsche's critique of Catholicism is the most scathing there is. Researchers are aware of the relationship between Catholicism and Modern Paganism because they comprehend that time circulates differently from how monotheistic religions perceive it historically, drawing on the mythology of Ragnarök or the Hinduism of the Kali Yuga.

The ideological legacy of the theoretical far-right includes some esoteric works, such as Arturo Reghini's and René Guénon's works, Olavo de Carvalho's astrology, Buddhist sciences, Scandinavian cosmic mythology, and Hindu or Aryan mythology. The mysterious embedding of esoteric works in theoretical far-right discourse reflects a Nazi and antisemitic ideology, though adopting a scientific theory, or more precisely, pseudoscience, which maintains that such religious traditions are fully preserved and get us closer to the original legacy that has been forgotten or modernized. This is not pure syncretism, but somewhat a form of certainty that some religious doctrines have elements of truth that can be found through learning.

In this cyclical time, members of the enlightened elite anxiously await the phase of grand renewal, which can be catastrophic: a widespread destruction, or a methodical reclamation. They are confined within the current dark age, where darkness and obscurity intensify. This age is

characterized by the erasure of boundaries, the dissolution of social classes, the absence of hierarchical leadership, the dominance of materialism and technology, and the prevalence of equality and anarchy. This implies the dominance of political liberalism as perceived existentially. This gnostic (mystical) type of thinking aligns itself through the creation of binary structures that are later deconstructed, transforming them into opposing forces against modernists, starting with Descartes.

Fighting Philosophy

The far right launches a relentless assault on philosophy, according to the perspectives of Nietzsche or Heidegger. Modernity, fundamentally built on contradiction with spiritual truths, is rejected because it has detached itself from truth and immersed itself in the negative nihilism that Nietzsche sought to overcome. It can only be resisted through active nihilistic elitism, which involves the transformation of values by the virile hero advocated by Julius Evola.

Guénon's rejection of modernity, however, is drastically different from fundamentalism as a conservative or a regressive movement that does not share the vision of the church as in the Katechon concept, which holds back or defers the eschaton. On another note, that was the Catholic perspective of Carl Schmitt, who represents the other possibility of Gnosticism, where it is necessary to slow down and halt the inevitable catastrophe. Schmitt believed that this is the historic function of Catholicism. Another theory argues that, on the contrary, it must be accelerated as perfectly manifested in Heidegger's 1945 text, *Die Armut* (Poverty, where the historical situation of (displaced Germans) is encapsulated in the principle: "only the free individual can free another"). These two authors, to some extent committed to Nazism, stand out from the rest and continue to inspire a whole group of thinkers to this day. Therefore, associating them with Nazism or fascism can be considered both correct and incorrect. Here, due to the evolution of events, it becomes necessary to recall Alexander Dugin's concept of the Fourth Political Theory, which differs from capitalism, communism, and fascism. It is characterized by its hidden connection to fascism and the idea of Eurasianism, which is not simply a type of nationalism. The gesture of moving away from fascism as a genuine political movement is not new but creates a state of confusion. The praise of Heidegger or Evola for distinguishing themselves from Nazi biological racism, despite some distortion of reality, is logical, as there is indeed genuine criticism of Nazism by these thinkers, but they are also labeled as shining fascism.



Gnostic People

The theoretical far-right is not a populist movement, but rather an elitist aristocracy that accuses fascism of populist vulgarism and flattering people by claiming that all Germans are elite, drawing on the notion of renaissance incorporating technology. Conversely, there is a global gnostic (mystical) vision that always seeks to narrow down the circle of the elite. The failure of historical fascism prompted Evola to embark on reviving the movement. However, as he presented a world of tradition, and as he influenced a new generation of the far-right, he liberated himself from such populism that used to corrupt the movement. He has become an inspiration to most contemporary theoretical far-right figures, starting from Alain de Benoist, who dedicated a podcast to Evola and carefully concealed some details he did not wish to mention, to Aleksandr Dugin and Steve Bannon.

Nevertheless, the concept of the theoretical far-right broadly refers to the people, but not the people in the sense of the demos or democracy, but rather the people who adopt tradition, which is the opposite of the definition of the individual citizen. This people differs from the masses known for their slavish subordination, as in the "sheep of Panurge" and "the damned." They are distinguished by their Gnostic knowledge, which guarantees salvation. The voice of the people (vox populi) is the voice of the gods (vox dei), meaning "the god who can still guarantee our salvation." They are not the people of equality, but a people who define themselves as the elite.

Conspiracy Theory

The extreme right theory views equality and liberalism as different forms of fascism, imposing an authoritarian single model and a conspiracy orchestrated by a small group that manipulates evil and embodies it. This is a type of deception that leads to self-deception, and it is one of Carl Schmitt's concepts. Conspiracy theory is fundamental to the far right theory and is considered the preferred political approach for managing the masses and shaping the chosen people. It praises individuals who claim to think for themselves, exercise doubt, and adhere to the name of democratic values, although their agenda has nothing to do with democracy.

This fundamental conspiracy of the far right theory is accompanied by a process of redefining and transforming concepts. Liberalism is accused of deceiving others and manipulating them, and of violating the concepts it claims to adopt. Equality is seen as nothing more than manipulation and control. On the other hand, the concept of conspiracy has been reframed, with Alan de Benoist (ADB) writing

a brilliant article titled "Conspiracy Psychology." Here, conspiracy essentially becomes a Catholic characteristic. In this context, since vulgar ethnic racism is rejected in favor of spiritual racism and due to the contradiction of ethnic differentiation in relation to existence with the principle of universality, the extreme far theory presents itself as having cohesive theoretical solutions to the crises of the modern world.

However, the theoretical far right theory believes that the fundamental point is that the world is inherently bad and is continuously worsening until the moment of the great catastrophe or the great conflagration, the moment of the phoenix rising again from the ashes before the destruction occurs once more.

Based on the above, the key words of the policies of the far right theory are the people, elections through conspiracy, political geography, and metapolitics. All these concepts are based on the process of integrating theology and philosophy, invoking the power of linguistic prefixes such as "Méta" and "géo," which can be translated into German as Spenglerian, Schmittian, or Heideggerian.

The Relationship with Politics

The far right theory, which opposes philosophy, is also anti-politics due to the power of the myth presented by Carl Schmitt, sometimes explicitly mythological in "Land and Sea," and sometimes in a less disruptive manner in "The Nomos of the Earth." The continental power of Russia still maintains a certain relationship with truth, unlike the Atlantic universalism of the United States, the empire of the sea and anarchy. Capitalism is no longer just an economic reality but a mythical entity, and the beast of globalization is closely associated with the Atlantic space, which is the space of corruption on Earth, as Dugin says, contrasting with the continental or Eurasian space of tradition.

This dense movement of the far right theory today requires a comprehensive analysis, such as the one carried out regarding the works of Carl Schmitt, to reveal many theoretical pitfalls, in addition to his success in analyzing the far left to the maximum.

In conclusion, the theoretical far right, with its conservative revolutionism, has not been isolated from the natural evolution of ideas and methodologies but has influenced and been influenced, developing in successive stages according to the visions of philosophers and theorists who adopt its intellectual foundations. Researchers and scholars must further study and analyze these intellectual foundations to reveal the truth of the positions it adopts and the approaches it takes in addressing history, reality, and future prospects. ■

Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya in Egypt

A Journey of Blood and Regret

■ Editors

According to the US Department of State, the designation of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group, IG) as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) on October 8, 1997, has been officially lifted after a twenty-five-year ban. This revocation acknowledges Egypt's successful efforts in mitigating the group's terrorist threat and affirms that it is no longer engaged in any form of terrorism or terrorist activities.

In and Outside Universities

IG, first known as the "Religious Group", began its activities in student committees under university administrations. It all started by Engineer Salah Hashem who joined Assiut University in 1972 and led the group instead of university staff members.

Under the leadership of Nageh Ibrahim, who followed Salah Hashem and pushed the group beyond university gates, the Religious Group gained all seats in the Assiut University student union elections in 1978. The group expanded in colleges and was labeled al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG). An organisational structure was established, with each college having its own consultative council (shura council) overseen by an Emir, culminating in a shura council for universities led by IG's senior emir.

IG's steady growth was followed by defections of leaders, as some joined the Muslim Brotherhood while operating under IG's name for a while, while others from Alexandria University founded the Salafist Call organization. A third faction kept operating under the name al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya in Assiut and Minya under the leadership of Karam Zuhdi, Nageh Ibrahim, and Asim Abdelmagid, and united with the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), then split.

Immoderation

IG's immoderate and extremist ideology gave rise to violence and terrorism. It started operating by robbing jewelry shops owned by Christians of Nagaa Hammadi, Upper Egypt. This was IG's first terrorist operation, where some citizens were killed and 4,000 EGP and over 5kg of gold were stolen.

IG organised conferences and rallies and handed out leaflets outside university gates opposing President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem (Israel) and the Shah of Iran's visit to Egypt. It advocated for the introduction of Sharia law, causing the Egyptian government to pass the University Student Law of 1979, which restricted student movements.

IG's activity spread even outside Egypt. It engaged in the Afghanistan war and set up military bases there. Several members were killed, most prominently Ali Abdelfattah, the group's emir in Minya. Allowing some of its leaders to head to Afghanistan influenced the group's reliance on violence. There, IG reunited with EIJ, reached out to other groups, and started Al-Mourabitoun magazine. Since 1986, IG's violence had been on the rise.

Terrorist Practices

IG's military wing, led by Khalid al-Islambouli, assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on October 6, 1981, during a military parade honouring the Sixth of October War victory. All of the perpetrators were apprehended and executed by a military firing squad. Muhammad Abd al-Salam Faraj, author of *The Neglected Obligation*, was sentenced to death by hanging as well.

On October 8, 1981, members of IG's military wing attacked Assiut Security Directorate and police stations and attempted to occupy the city. Many were killed in a heated battle with the police and special forces, which ended with the arrest of the perpetrators, primarily Nageh Ibrahim, Karam Zuhdi, and Essam Dirbala, who were sentenced to penal servitude for 25 years.



IG continued along the path of violence and terrorism by attempting the assassination of the former interior minister of Egypt, Zaki Badr, in 1989. The police retaliated by killing Dr. Alaa Mohie Eldin, IG's media spokesperson in 1990. On October 12, 1990, members of IG's military wing led by Safwat Abdel-Ghani assassinated Dr. Rifaat El-Mahgoub, speaker of the Egyptian Parliament.

Some IG leaders had just returned from Afghanistan at the time. Talaat Fouad took over as leader. As a result, IG became more brutally hostile and attempted to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak numerous times, most notably in Ethiopia in 1995, and targeted several security officers and political figures. It also carried out several attacks on tourists, most notably on November 17, 1997, when 58 people, mostly Swiss tourists, were killed in 45 minutes at Deir el-Bahari, Luxor, and another attack at the Mortuary Temple of Hatshepsut by six assailants disguised in security officer uniforms and armed with firearms and knives, which became known as the Luxor Massacre or Deir el-Bahari massacre.

Division and Reunion

IG's escalating violence and terrorism were not unanimously approved by its leadership. Leaders who were in prison renounced some of those acts in public statements, saying that terrorist operations have harmed the economy and stability of the country and caused substantial damage to IG, including the arrest of nearly 30,000 members and restrictions on advocacy and religious activities.

At this point, IG took two contrasting paths. Its leaders in prison were reassessing IG's course, past, present, and future. They renounced violence for its adverse consequences, and announced the cessation of all armed operations inside and outside Egypt in a brief statement delivered by one of them to a courtroom full of journalists during the (235) trial on July 5, 1997.

In response, a faction of IG leadership abroad rejected the reassessment and cessation of violence, and practically retaliated with the Luxor Massacre. Refai Taha, the head of IG's shura council overseas, issued a statement claiming responsibility for the massacre. Osama Rushdi, IG's former spokesman outside Egypt, responded from the Netherlands denying any association of the group to the operation, condemned the act and its perpetrators, and said it was an individual case that did not stem from an authorised, institutionalized decision.

This aroused discord inside IG until all leaders agreed on the renunciation of violence, including IG leaders in prison: Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman in USA; Mustafa Hamza,

leader of IG's military wing in Iran; and Refai Taha, the head of IG's shura council overseas.

Renouncing Violence

Consequently, IG renounced all acts of violence, dismantled its military wings, made ideological revisions and published a series of books and studies titled Conceptual Correction Series, which includes: Mubadara waqf al-'unf. Ru'ya waqi'iyya wa-nazra shari'iyya [The Initiative to End Violence from a Pragmatic and a Legal/Theoretical Perspective]; Hurmat al-ghuluw fi-l-din wa-takfir al-muslimin [The Prohibition of Immoderation in Religion and the Excommunication of Muslims]; Taslit al-adwa' 'ala ma waqa'a fi-l-jihad wa-min akhta' [The Exposure of Mistakes made during the Jihad]; al-Nosh wa-l-Tabyin fitashih mafahim al-muhtasibin [Counseling in and Explanation of the Correct Concepts for the People who Exert Hisba]; Istratijiyat wa Tafjirat al-Qa'ida: al-Akhta wa al-Akhtar [Al-Qaeda's Strategy and Bombings: Mistakes and Dangers]; and La lil tafjir [Say No to Bombings].

IG supported the adoption of a peaceful methodology in dealing with reality by publishing 25 books that promote moderate Islamic concepts denouncing excommunication and conflict. These studies were acknowledged and commended by Al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy.

Both regionally and internationally, IG refused to join the "Declaration of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders", founded by terrorist al-Qaeda in 1998. It also renounced the September 11 attacks in USA in 2001, the bombings of residential compounds in Riyadh in May 2003, the Casablanca attacks in May 2003, the Tunisia bombings, and Nice crimes in France, etc. IG urged Muslims residing in Western countries to seek dialogue and peaceful coexistence with those communities.

The group and its party scathingly criticised the terrorist organisation Daesh and cautioned against its ideology and behaviour. Between January and July 2015, IG and its party held over 30 conferences in 20 Egyptian governorates to counter Daesh's ideology, raising young people's awareness to protect them from this criminal organisation, emphasising the dangers of its expansion and membership, and refuting its ideologies, agendas, and political and religious stances.

That was the final judgement given months after the one issued in May 2020 by the Political Parties Department at the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) dissolving the Building and Development Party, IG's political wing, and confiscating their funds to the state treasury. ■



JORAM VAN KLAVEREN

From Islamophobia to Faith and Certitude

■ Ayman Ahmed Mahmoud

He gained notoriety for harboring intense animosity towards Islam and Muslims, staunchly adhering to orthodox Christian principles, and aligning himself with the most extremist faction of the right-wing party. Throughout his political involvement, he actively opposed Muslims and immigrants. Interestingly, he embarked on writing a book that aimed to expose what he perceived as shortcomings within Islam. However, as he delved deeper into his research and compiled arguments, he unexpectedly uncovered truths that contradicted his preconceived notions. These revelations resonated with his intellect and stirred profound emotions within him. This is the political activist and Dutch parliamentarian Joram van Klaveren, who embarked on a fascinating journey from Islamophobia to faith.

■ Author Focusing on Extremism at the Saudi Research and Media Group (SRMG).



Short Biography

Van Klaveren was born in 1979 in Amsterdam, capital of the Netherlands. He was brought up in a conservative Protestant environment. He majored in theological studies at Free University, Amsterdam, and worked in education. He joined the far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) and became a member of the municipal council as PVV's representative in 2006–2009. He participated in the national elections of 2010 and was elected Member of Parliament representing his party. He also became a member of the Provincial Council of Flevoland after the provincial council elections in 2011.

He won the trust of PVV chairman, Geert Wilders, who was very vocal about his hate and hostility towards Muslims; he became his right-hand man and the spearhead of ruthless campaigns against Islam at the Parliament. These campaigns included banning Muslim women from wearing niqab in public places, banning the construction of minarets, fighting Islam in the Netherlands, imposing restrictions on Muslims who are only 5% of the Dutch population, and shutting down Islamic centers. He even dared to call Islam a "lie" and the Holy Quran a "poison".

However, in March 2014, Van Klaveren left PVV since he no longer agreed with the party's course. His decision was also influenced by PVV chairman's comments regarding the Moroccan minority in the Netherlands following the 2014 elections. Wilders was later convicted of incitement to hatred and racism.

Van Klaveren continued as an independent MP until 2017. In May 2014, he had co-founded a new conservative political party known as VoorNederland (VNL). However, the party failed miserably in the national elections of 2017 and did not win any seats in the Parliament. Thus, Van Klaveren exited the political field. He also hosted the daily radio show "Dit is de dag" produced by the Evangelical Broadcasting Corporation (EO), representing conservative and rightist Christians.

In 2018, he started writing a book on what he believed are drawbacks in Islam, but his fair, objective research changed his stance from hostility to finding the truth and believing in Islam and Prophet Muhammad.

Converting to Islam

In October 2018, Van Klaveren embraced Islam and took shahada. He then dedicated his efforts to finding the truth and guidance. He was searching for the true religious beliefs for a long time, but his involvement with the right-wing PVV blurred his perception of Islam. After converting to Islam, he wrote a book in Dutch in 2019 to refute anti-Islam views titled *Van christendom naar islam in tijden van secularisatie en terreur* (From Christendom to Islam in times of secularization and terror). published by Kennishuys, the Netherlands.

The book documents his journey from Christianity to Islam and includes his testimony on faith, commenting on the Quranic verse of Surah Al-Baqarah [2:163]: "And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful": "Believing in the only one God who created the heavens and earth and that between them is the core of Islam. This is true monotheism. God in Islam is not an incomprehensible theological secret, but rather a clear concept that is easily comprehensible by the human mind. Allah is the one true god. He is the God of Moses, Jesus, and the other messengers. After I declared my conversion to Islam, the sky didn't rain gold. I didn't see stars more sparkly. But I felt such a relief, happiness, and joy".

He addressed the relation between Muslims and terrorist attacks, asserting that extremists do not operate out of a true understanding of Islam, and thus take a deviant path. He also highlighted women's status in Islam.

His conversion to Islam was a shock to supporters and opposers; former PVV chairman, Wilders, said that he never expected Van Klaveren to embrace Islam and that it was a surprise akin to a vegetarian accepting a job in a slaughterhouse.

As word of his Islam had spread, many social media users celebrated the news and admired his courage. Van Klaveren was not the first PVV member to convert to Islam. In 2013, Arnoud van Doorn, former member of the municipal council who had produced the film "Fitnah" that offended Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), converted to Islam. ■

FOREWORD



THE INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA A MAJOR STEP TOWARDS A WORLD OF TOLERANCE AND COEXISTENCE

The United Nations commemorated the first-ever International Day to Combat Islamophobia on March 15, 2023, with the goal of reducing the spread of this phenomenon and promoting respect and tolerance among people of different cultures and religions. The resolution, proposed by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), established March 15 as an International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

The date seems to have been carefully selected as it is the anniversary of the gruesome Christchurch Mosque shootings in 2019, when a right-wing extremist stormed into two mosques in New Zealand and shot Muslim worshippers, where 51 were killed and 50 were injured. For years, Muslims have suffered greatly from the despicably rising hate speech and racism, the deliberate misinterpretation of Islam at times, and the ignorance of its truth and tolerant teachings at other times. Terrorist crimes carried out by criminals who falsely associate themselves with Islam are often employed to fuel hate, terror, and fear, and to accuse Islam of advocating violence through their various media platforms. Things got worse with the far-right attempts to fuel hate in Europe for political gain.

This phenomena has accelerated dramatically over the last two decades, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, resulting in increased attacks against Muslims, their holy sites, and religious figures, as well as violations of their personal freedoms. Copies of the Quran have been burned in public multiple times in Western countries, with little official condemnation. Under the guise of free speech and expression, improper pictures were made of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), with full disrespect for the sensibilities of the world's two billion Muslims. This is in addition to several terrorist attacks in which Molotov cocktails were hurled into mosques full of worshippers in Germany, France, the United States, and elsewhere. Muslims were the victims of hit-and-run operations and knife stabbings motivated by misinformation and false claims that fanned hatred and bigotry.

Studies warn of an upsurge in hate crimes against Muslims and how they could spiral out of control. Even a recent UN investigation indicated that discrimination and outright hatred of Muslims had risen like wildfire. Furthermore, fueling enmity will only make the world more miserable and divided, expand the divisions between various people, and spark an endless war worldwide.

IMCTC was proactive in condemning and fighting such practices, prioritizing them among its counter-terrorism efforts. Since its inception in 2016, IMCTC has been calling for not associating terrorism with any specific religion, culture, nationality, or group, emphasizing that all religions call for peace and dialogue and denounce violence and hate. Drawing on IMCTC principles and goals, it appreciates the UN's resolution and applauds the UN Secretary-General António Guterres for his speech on this occasion, in which he stated that Muslims reflect humanity in all its magnificent diversity, showing they often face bigotry and prejudice for no other reason than their faith. It is an inexorable part of the resurgence of ethno-nationalism and neo-Nazi white supremacist ideologies. Guterres noted that Islam has been all about peace and mercy for over 1400 years, and that these values are the essence of the UN Charter and the core of its work towards a world of coexistence and peace.

The United Nations' declaration of an international day to combat Islamophobia is an important first step, but more work is needed to properly prevent hate speech. This unanimous resolution emphasises the importance of practical steps to address hate crimes and discrimination against Muslims, which are essential components of the larger fight against terrorism. One of the most important initiatives required is the passing of anti-hate crime legislation, which holds individuals responsible for such atrocities accountable. Furthermore, initiatives that dispel misconceptions and false claims about Muslims, create awareness of the truth and promote the tolerance of Islam, and foster dialogue, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence are also essential. ■

AtTAHALOF

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