

Forum: United Nations Human Rights Council

Issue: Preventing the recruitment and brainwashing of children and adolescents by terrorist organisations.

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Introduction

Through the past decades, the global community has been deeply concerned about the recruitment and brainwashing of children and adolescents by terrorist organisations.

Different groups all around the world are the cause of this issue, the most known are Boko Haram, an Islamic fundamentalist group that has two factions, the ISWAP and the JAS and actively actuates in the north of Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon, and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). These groups actuate due to many reasons such as religion, political ideology, ultranationalism...among others. Sadly this has become a recurrent problem in many zones of the globe such as the African countries or Latin-America. In recent years over 300.000 children have been recruited by this sort of organizations, being around the 40% girls and in Salafi-jihadist groups, women are only available to be wives and mothers, in Boko Haram's groups, girls are usually used as suicide bombers too.

Both hospitals and schools are the places where most children are recruited and kidnapped, these locations are also used as military training camps.

Due to various reasons such as ideology, social pressure, geographic proximity to a terrorist organisation or a mix of all of them, many adolescents voluntarily involve themselves in these groups, which provide them with a sensation of belonging and security even though the majority of them end up fighting in armed conflicts under extremely violent conditions, committing suicide immolating themselves or performing executions without being adults, which are a reminder that terrorism knows no bounds.

Term definitions

ISIS

ISIS is an insurgent paramilitary terrorist group with a Wahhabi fundamentalist jihadist nature, also known as Daesh or Islamic caliphate, that follows a heterodox doctrine of Sunni Islam.

Islamic fundamentalism

Term used in Western culture to describe political streams related to the Islamic religion.

ISWAP

The Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) is one of the active terrorist jihadist factions of the Boko Haram group.

JAS

Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād is the other active terrorist jihadist faction of the Boko Haram group and translated means Group of the People of the Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad.

Salafi-jihadist

Salafi jihadism or jihadist-Salafism is a transnational religious-political ideology based on a belief in "physical" jihadism and the Salafi movement of returning to what adherents believe to be true Sunni Islam.

Wahhabi

Religious movement and doctrine attributed to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Usually described as ultraconservative, orthodox and puritan.

Diaspora

The voluntary or involuntary dispersion of people outside their homeland.

Demobilizing

Taking troops out of the active fire or ceasing military operations.

Background information

Ways and reasons why terrorist organisations recruit and brainwash the youth

An incredibly high number of youngsters "voluntarily" join these groups due to many reasons, among them coercion of sympathetic family members, because they believe that with this action they are protecting themselves, their family and community, looking for a group-based identity, cultural threat, the possibility of economic gain or stability...However we must not forget about forced recruitment, usually kidnapping or trafficking with human beings, a frequent phenomenon to recruit new member is mass kidnapping, that can take place in many locations but is most likely to take place in schools, orphanages...or places where there is a high concentration of young population without strict supervision.

In the globalization and communication era, there are also new "techniques", like disseminating undifferentiated propaganda, for example, video clips or messages. Another way is trying to target more specific individuals who are considered as "easy preys" or introducing "agents" who help to persuade the population or community through personal appeals.

There are plenty of reasons which lead terrorist organisations to recruit children. The first one, in many poor locations around the globe, especially those affected by HIV/AIDS where children constitute over 50 per cent of the population, the youngest ones are not difficult to recruit and persuade to join due to a variety of reasons, and are also way easier to control both physically and mentally. Furthermore, these massive kidnappings provide a fantastic opportunity for propaganda for them due to the hundreds of newspapers that talk about them and their motivations. Also when it comes to the economy, kids are paid less if at all and require fewer resources in order to survive. Lastly, children, especially girls, have been used lately as messengers, spies or undertaking suicide attacks, because they are less likely to be conceived as a menace or danger, also they have less understanding of the risk they are exposing themselves to.

Role of women and brides in terrorist organisations:

When it comes to the recruitment of girls, completely different patterns are used, they tend to be more violent because kidnapping young girls have a greater propaganda value and also contribute to the normalization of these groups. Furthermore, nowadays young girls may see marrying a terrorist as a solution to family conflicts or as a way of escaping from violence. Through social media these groups promote the importance of women and the key role they play in their organisations, and when it comes to reality, its role is completely invisible, except for a few functions. Apart from the typical house chores such as

preparing food or providing medical treatment, completely done by women in these communities, the 75 per cent of the suicide attacks of Boko Harams organisation have been carried out by girls during the last years. Whether the marriage is voluntary or coerced plays a really important role in bonding members.



In recent years, women have gained importance in this sort of groups, and not only to carry out suicide attacks. For example, ISIS has the al-Khansaa Brigade that is exclusively formed by women and used violence to enforce sharia law. However in Salafi-jihadist groups, womens have fewer active participation and combat roles are attributed to men. But women have a key paper when it comes to recruiting new members, especially girls, they promise work and economic stability, those girls see in them an example of family success, a friend and in many cases a maternal figure too.

Ways in which terrorist organisations brainwash and radicalize youth.

The significant brainwashing and radicalization takes place when the members already are participating in the group or are really close to a group, for example when the militants control the education system of the zone. What ISIS did in many communities was changing textbooks and filling them with guns, tanks...images, and involuntarily kids will “adapt” their ideology and become

followers of that group and end up enrolling themselves afterwards. ¹

To ensure the brainwashing of their member’s terrorist organisations they control the

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information new members receive, make sure they are totally dependent and isolate them. Furthermore we can not forget about a more “emotional” approach, by activating their anxiety, fear or feeling of culpability. Also when group-based identity is assumed, individuals lose their personality and beliefs and adapt to the ones the group as a whole has.

Major countries and organisations involved

Afghanistan

Last year, the United States of America signed a “peace treaty” with the political entity of the taliban's, Islamic Emirate actuating in Afghanistan, they promised to liberate 5,000 prisoners from Afghan prisons and to retire their troops. In return, the Taliban affirmed that attacks against the principal Afghan cities and the American troops will cease. However Afghanistan is the country with more victims due to terrorism, and suicide attacks are a recurrent phenomenon and government officials are being murdered continually. Furthermore two of the most important terrorist organisations, Daesh and Al Qaeda, have settled their bases on the country and continuously “importing” and “exporting” new members.

Iraq

Iraq is the second country in the world with more deaths and people affected by terrorism, the principal reason is, like what happens in Afghanistan, there are two big organisations that fight between them for the territory and civilians tend to be the way they show their power. Furthermore there are many communities that support these groups including government officials and public institutions,

due to the fact that they support them economically, so corruption is too rooted in the system to be easily eradicated.

Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populated of Africa with 170,000,000 people, and the second richest. Nigeria doesn't have as many civilians affected by terrorism but it is the house of one of the biggest and more violent groups, Boko Haram. Only since 2004 27,000 people have been killed and more than 1,700,000 people have been demobilized.

Timeline of Events

Sept. 5, 1972

Munich Slaughter

The terrorist group "Black September" murdered 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team and a German police officer. They asked for the liberation of 200 Palestinian prisoners. 5 terrorists were killed and three arrested, no hostage survived.

Dec. 21, 1988

Pan Am flight n° 103

The flight n° 103 took off from London and exactly 38 minutes later the plane exploded killing 259 passengers and 11 more who were on land. This terrorist attack was carried out by the Libyan leader Muammar el Gaddafi.

Mar. 17, 1992

Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires

A terrorist carried out a suicide attack colliding its truck against the embassy, this act generated an explosion that killed 29 people 242 were injured.

Jan. 30, 1993

Car explodes in Bogotá, Colombia

Just two blocks away from the

Ministry of Justice a car loaded with 100 kg dynamite exploded and killed 25 people and 70 ended up injured. This attack was attributed to Pablo Escobar, who employed children to carry out terrorist attacks.

Apr. 19, 1995

Federal building in Oklahoma, United States of America

A truck located just in front the building full with more than 2,300 kilograms of explosives was detonated, destroying partially the ceiling and murdering 168 civilians. This terrorist strike was done because the authors didn't agree with the actuation of the government respect the siege of Waco. At the time it was considered the worst assault until 9/11.

Oct. 12, 2000

Explosion of an american military ship in Amén, Yemen

The US Navy carrier USS Cole, docked in Amén, was refueling when a small boat approached and detonated an explosion that ended with the life of 17 sailors. This attack was claimed by Al-Qaeda.

Sept. 11, 2001

World Trade Center in New York, United States of America

Al-Qaeda kidnapped 4 commercial flights, two of them were crashed against the New York World Trade Center, another one against The Pentagon, and the last one was supposed to crash in Washington but was frustrated by the passengers, the

attack caused 3,000 deaths, 6,000 injured people and 1,721 missing persons.

Oct. 12, 2002

Paddy's pub, Bali, Indonesia

A suicide attack took place in this club and when the survivors run away a bigger explosion took place and was generated by a car. This attack where 202 people were killed was attributed to the terrorist group Jemaah islamiya.

Mar. 11, 2004

Atocha Train station in Madrid, Spain

When the train was most crowded 10 explosions took place, generating 162 deaths and 1,500 injuries. Just 3 minutes later, 4 more explosions occurred in 2 other train stations. Nobody claimed the assault so the suspects were Al-Qaeda and a spanish terrorist group ETA.

Jan. 7, 2015

Headquarters of the weekly Charlie Hebdo, Paris, France

Two men belonging to the Al-Qaeda group broke into the weekly Charlie Hebdo armed with machine guns and killed 11 workers and a gendarme. This assault turned on all alarms regarding to terrorism in Europe.

Nov. 13, 2015

Bataclan theatre in Paris, France

The terrorist group ISIS perpetrated 6 assaults in the french capital, Paris. The most harmful one occurred in the Bataclan theatre. The majority of the terrorists died when they immolated themselves but one escaped and was found the actual year in Brussels,

Belgium.

Mar. 22, 2016

International Airport of Zaventem in Brussels, Belgium

Two terrorist assaults took place simultaneously in Brussels causing 34 deaths. In the airport two explosions took place and all the passengers were completely evacuated. Less than an hour later another explosion took place but this time in the subway station of Maelbeek.

Jun. 27, 2016

Istanbul airport, Turkey

This assault was a triple suicide bombing. Furthermore it happened during Ramadan so a lot of muslims were traveling to see their loved ones. 41 persons lost their lives and this crime was attributed to Daesh.

2000-2005

Child suicide bombers by Palestinian militant groups

Minors have been recruited to attack Israeli targets, both military and civilian, especially during the Second Intifada. This deliberate involvement of children in armed conflict has been condemned by International human rights organizations.

Relevant UN treaties and resolutions

Dec. 17, 1979 - International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages

Member states agreed that: "Any person who seizes or detains and threatens to kill, to injure or to continue to detain another person in order to compel a third party, namely, a State, an international intergovernmental organization, a natural or juridical person, or a group of persons commits the offense of taking of hostages within the meaning of this convention."

Dec. 9, 1999 - International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism

All members states agreed that: "Any person who commits an offence within the meaning of this convention if that person by any means, directly or indirectly, unlawfully and wilfully, provides or collects funds with the intention that they should be used or in the knowledge that they are to be used, in full or in part, in order to carry out:

- a) An act which constitutes an offence within the scope of and as defined in one of the treaties listed in the annex; or
- b) Any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian, or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act."

Sept. 28, 2001 - Resolution 1373

The security council decided that all Member States should take the necessary steps to prevent the commission of terrorist acts and decided to establish a Committee to monitor implementation of that resolution.

[Sept. 12, 2001 - Resolution 1368](#)

The Council stated that it regarded any act of international terrorism as a threat to international peace and security.

Possible Solutions

[Legally prohibiting all forms of violence against children promoting cultural acceptance.](#)

While not all forms of violence necessarily require criminalization, clear prohibition of all forms of violence against children sets the boundaries and empowers authorities to respond effectively to this phenomenon.

[Raise awareness about violence against children and punitive approaches with the collaboration of media campaigns.](#)

Beginning to promote child rights at grassroots level and educating the public on what constitutes violence against children and fostering a better understanding of child rights.

[Establishing detection and reporting mechanisms to avoid invisibility and disconnected intervention.](#)

These mechanisms should be child-friendly procedures and accessible to children, their families and other support persons, and should include measures to protect against reprisal those who report such violence. In many countries

these issues are frequently invisible and the intervention of the police officers tends to be really small or completely nonexistent.

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