

# MATES

MULTI AGENCY TRAINING EXIT STRATEGIES  
FOR RADICALIZED YOUTH



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
MIGRATION AND HOME  
AFFAIRS

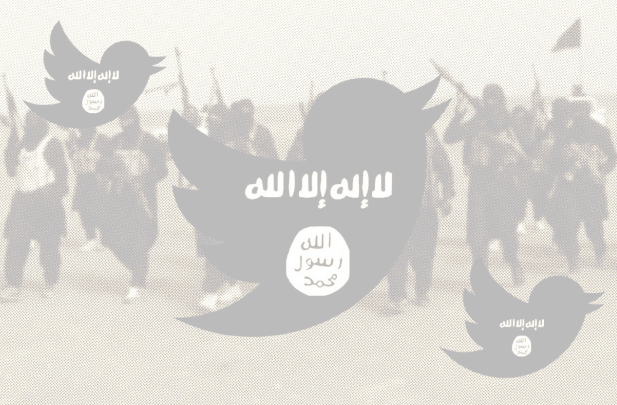


## COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

TOOLKIT FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

*The Case of Jihadi  
Radicalisation*

June 26, 2017



# COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

TOOLKIT FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

ISLAMIC RADICALISM  
AND ITS NARRATIVE

concept and message

section

1



## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE CONCEPT AND MESSAGE

*Islamic Radicalism is a global movement with both religious and political roots that promotes violence as a way of proclaiming the only vision of Islam considered 'proper'.*

This vision translates to

1. Call to holy war to constitute the one and only Islamic State that all Muslims should look up to: the Caliphate.
2. Call to the defense of all Muslim brothers throughout the world who are thought of as harassed and humbled, especially those living in democratic countries in the West.

## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE

### THE ROOTS OF THE MOVEMENT

*The roots of Salafism go back to Ibn-I Taymiyyah, a 13th-century Syrian theologian who influenced later thinkers such as Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab , Hasan al-Banna , and Sayyid Qutb.*

Historically Salafists interpreted the Qur'an and the Sunna in a harsh and strict manner, at times in blatant contradiction to religious observances during the time of Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

Establishing a political community with its own institutions is necessary to grant salvation to the believers – it allows enforcing the *Sharia*, the Islamic Law that leads straight to Allah if properly followed.

This need for a political community led to the adoption of the ultra-conservative teaching of Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) as the ideology for the Saudi state, which became increasingly authoritative.



## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE

### THE ROOTS OF THE MOVEMENT

*From the Islamic doctrine of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab comes Wahhabism, that is a religious movement usually described as "ultraconservative", "austere", "fundamentalist". It is an Islamic "reform movement" aiming to restore "pure monotheistic worship" (tawhid) by devotees.*

Although they have different historical roots, nowadays the terms Wahhabi and Salafi are often used interchangeably.

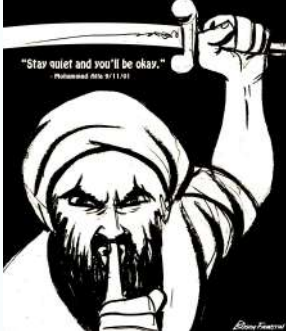
Many scholars and critics however distinguish between Wahhabi and Salafi. According to the US scholar Christopher M. Blanchard, the term Wahhabism refers to "a conservative Islamic creed centered in and emanating from Saudi Arabia", while Salafiyya is "a more general puritanical Islamic movement that has developed independently at various times and in various places in the Islamic world". (Blanchard, C. M., 2006).

In other terms, Wahhabism is a subdivision of Salafism. As a rule, all Wahhabis are salafists, but not all salafists are Wahhabis. (Moussalli, A., 2009). Wahhabism may be considered a political version of Salafism built upon the Salafist ideology.



# ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE

## BIRTH OF THE NARRATIVE



*These movements of thought promote an interpretation of the Qur'an based exclusively on the literal, apparent meaning of the terms, whose definitions are restricted. Examples include:*

The **Jihad** – which the Prophet Muhammad defined as purification of the soul, usually applying to internal struggle. Salafists use this term to refer to a violent physical action. Jihad is a precept for each and every believer, stated in the *Sharia*. *Contrary to the conventional Islamic teachings, Salafists consider jihad as part of the Islamic creed the "sixth" of the "five pillars"*.

The **Ummah** – the community of the believers, those who live by the *Sharia*, the only fellow humans among which the bond of brotherhood is established.

The **Shaheed** – in the Qur'an, those who witness Allah and sacrifice their life for Allah's cause. The fighters who are killed on the battlefield are called Shaheed. Salafists' use this term to refer to suicide martyrs. Suicide as an instrument for inflicting death on enemies is thus considered the most commendable of actions, to be rewarded with great privileges in Heaven.

**Takfir** – the practice of declaring another Muslim a non-believer and thus an enemy of Islam. Individuals who receive this mark of infamy may be legitimately killed.

**Kuffar** – referred to apostates and infidels.

**Shariah** – Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (*Hadith* and *Sunna*), prescribing both religious and secular duties and sometimes retributive penalties for violations.

A woman wearing a white hijab is shown in profile, reading a book. The image is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE

### THE ONE AND ONLY FAITH

*The above determines a vision of strictly Salafist Islam as the only religion capable of saving mankind, a stronghold against everything non-Islamic. Such a message renders an all-too simplistic conceptualisation of good and evil where taking violent action against all aspects of the latter is not only justified, but also necessary.*

Fundamentalists feel that the values underlying today's democratic societies will lead to the corruption of mankind, hence the 'incompatibility' of 'pure' Islam with so-called 'modernity'.

The ban imposed by certain western countries on various types of veils (burqa - niqab - hijab) as people are not allowed to go around with their faces hidden represents one such incompatibility as this is a right guaranteed by Sharia law.

In contrast, democratic countries guarantee the "right to satire" and extend it to religion, whereas radical Muslims label it as blasphemy.



## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE

### THE ONE AND ONLY FAITH

*The Western ways of thought ... [have] an enmity toward all religion, and in particular with greater hostility toward Islam.*

*This enmity toward Islam is especially pronounced and many times is the result of a well-thought-out scheme the object of which is first to shake the foundations of Islamic beliefs and then gradually to demolish the structure of Muslim society.*

-Sayyid Qutb, from *Milestones*, 1964

Sayyid Qutb, Egyptian Islamic theorist, convicted and executed for plotting the assassination of Egyptian president Abdel Nasser, had influence over Islamic terror groups in Egypt and Al-Qaeda leaders Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama Bin Laden, as well as Anwar al-Awlaki.

*To Obama, the dog of Rome, today we're slaughtering the soldiers of Bashar and tomorrow we'll be slaughtering your soldiers [...]*

*We will break this final and last crusade . . . and here we are burying the first of your crusader army [Peter Kassig] in Dabiq.*

-Mohammed Emwazi (aka "Jihadi John"), ISIS operative, appearing in an Islamic State video released on Nov. 16, 2014

As of today, ISIS's radical Salafist scholars and supporters of the ideology of terror are inspired by the reading of Al-Wahab and Ibni Taymiyyah.

## ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE STRATEGIES



*Initially, the fundamentalist message spread globally by personal, face-to-face contact by means of:*

1. recruiters influence within close circles of friendship or family.
2. cultural reflection and literary-scientific production in Islamic schools.
3. preaching in mosques and cultural centres that are widespread and pursue political as well as religious ends.
4. In-person contact in jails where the population of subjects at potential risk of radicalisation is concentrated, given the statistics on criminal records of most jihadists.

# ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE LANGUAGE



Anjem Choudary



Abu Bilal Ismail



Abu Hamza al-Masri

Ahmad Musa

Ali Hammuda



THE LANGUAGE OF PROPAGANDA IS SIMPLE, STRAIGHT, REPETITIVE

LEADS TO STRICT CONCEPTUALISATION (SEE ABOVE), HENCE LEAVING ROOM FOR JUST ONE CHOICE

EXPRESSES THE NEED TO PURSUE THE ULTIMATE GOAL THROUGH VIOLENCE

LEAVES NO ROOM FOR DOUBT



# SUMMING UP

Islamic radicalism and its narrative

## SUMMING UP

### ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE, 1 of 2

## WHAT IS RADICAL ISLAM ?

A global movement aiming at establishing ideologised Islam through the use of violence.

## WHAT ARE ITS SOURCES OF INSPIRATION?

Islamic movements such as Salafism and Wahhabism promoting an all-too literal interpretation of the Qur'an

## WHAT ARE ITS KEY VALUES AND PRECEPTS?

Every good muslim's obligation to fight;  
the utopia of establishing a world Muslim community;  
suicide as martyrdom; and  
punishment for all apostates and infidels.

## SUMMING UP

### ISLAMIC RADICALISM AND ITS NARRATIVE, 2 of 2

## WHO ARE THE ENEMIES OF RADICAL ISLAM ?

Enemies include both Muslims embracing different doctrines as well as all Western countries stemming from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

## WHY RADICAL ISLAM CLAIMS TO BE THE ONLY 'PURE' FORM OF ISLAM?

This is due to a simplistic, all-too literal interpretation of the sacred texts, based on the assumption of self-evidence and basic language



ISLAMIC RADICALISM  
AND ITS NARRATIVE  
channels and media

2

section



## TERRORIST NARRATIVE

### TYPES OF CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

#### *Types of content:*

- a) Literature
- b) Journals
- c) Magazines  
and Instruction Manuals  
(e.g., *Inspire*, *Rumiyah*)
- d) Newspapers
- e) Videos and audio files
- f) Memes
- g) Short books and reports

#### *Distribution channels:*

- a) Encrypted message applications  
(i.e. Asrar al-Mujahideen,  
WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.)
- b) Social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)
- c) Video-sharing platforms (e.g., Youtube)
- d) Forums and websites
- e) Radio stations



## TERRORIST NARRATIVE

*At the top of the content distribution chain are the central propaganda organs, radio stations and publishing houses.*

*These media are managed and controlled by the central media office. The content they disseminate constitutes a prime source and defines:*

- the terrorists' agenda and targets
- principles and rules Muslims must follow
- who the unbelievers are

*They also disseminate*

- news from the battlefield
- personal stories of brave fighters celebrated as examples to follow
- verses from the Quran discussed by imams or reference/inspiring figures
- instruction booklets (how-to guides) explaining how to make a bomb or carry out a knife, vehicle, truck attack, etc.
- *nasheeds*, namely chants whose lyrics hint at certain beliefs, the history of Islam, and religion issues in general, as well as current facts to support and motivate Muslim believers and fighters



## RADICALISATION ONLINE

the role of the Internet

3

section

## RADICALIZATION ONLINE

### THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET

Material is made widely available on the internet – videos and/or e-books are readily accessible through simple links and shareable on different channels (PCs, tablets, mobile phones).

Research mainly shows that the internet:

- creates more opportunities to become radicalised
- acts as an “echo chamber”: a place where individuals find their ideas supported and echoed by other like-minded individuals
- facilitates the process of radicalisation
- complements in-person communication
- increases opportunities for self-radicalisation

*Therefore, the internet is the best tool to spread the terrorist narrative and carry out propaganda and recruitment activities through forums, web sites, social networks, encrypted messaging applications, and video hosting platforms.*

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

central propaganda organs,  
radio stations,  
publishing houses

section

4



## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

CENTRAL PROPAGANDA ORGANS, RADIO STATIONS, PUBLISHING HOUSES, 1 of 4

ISIS's vast propaganda operation involves dedicated media teams from West Africa to Afghanistan who work on the creation and dissemination of the "caliphate" brand. The ISIS media powerhouses produce on average 38 individual batches of propaganda each day – video, photo essays, articles and audio programs.



### Ajnad Media Foundation

Main production company that creates ISIS *nasheeds* (songs)

### Al-I'tisam Media Foundation

*Al-I'tisam* means "sit-in" or "request for protection (from Allah). It is a production institution that has made and distributed ISIS publications for citizens of ISIS-controlled territories..



## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

CENTRAL PROPAGANDA ORGANS, RADIO STATIONS, PUBLISHING HOUSES, 2 of 4



### Al-Furqan Institute for Media Production

The literal translation of al-furqan is “standard, criterion,” for judging the difference between truth and lies.

It is also a name for the Qur’an.

It is ISIS’s oldest media branch for producing propaganda, especially videos. It is ISIS’s official media bureau and receives its material from the organization’s leadership.. It is also acts as an umbrella organization for other media production outlets.



### Amaq News Agency

It is a news outlet linked to ISIS. Created by Syrian journalist Baraa Kadek, who joined ISIS in late 2013, it is often the first point of publication for claims of responsibility by the group.

# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

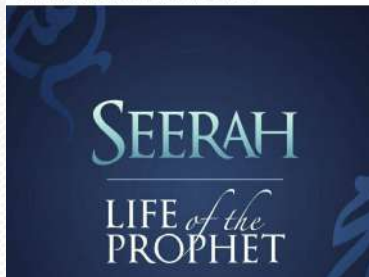
## CENTRAL PROPAGANDA ORGANS, RADIO STATIONS, PUBLISHING HOUSES, 3 of 4



Albayan Radio presents: 'Seerah: The Life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) - The Makkan Period!'

• A weekly program presented every Monday night at 9pm by: Sh. Arshad Khan.

• Series resumes next Monday (in sha Allah) only on Albayan Radio. Please tune in & share.



### Alhayat Media Center

ISIS' media production branch.

It produces and distributes propaganda material (videos, subtitles for existing videos, articles, news reports, translated jihadi materials) and targets mainly Western audiences as to recruit new members.

### Al-Bayan Radio

It broadcasts supplications, reports of ISIS casualties, daily reports of military victories, fatwas, lectures and recitations of Qur'an and English-language news bulletin as well.



### Al-Himmah Library

Media arm of ISIS responsible for releasing written material in the form of pamphlets and small booklets.

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

CENTRAL PROPAGANDA ORGANS, RADIO STATIONS, PUBLISHING HOUSES, 4 of 4



### Al-Naba Newspaper

The ISIS' weekly digital newspaper distributed all over the ISIS territory as well as online through the channels normally used by ISIS (such as Telegram and various social media).

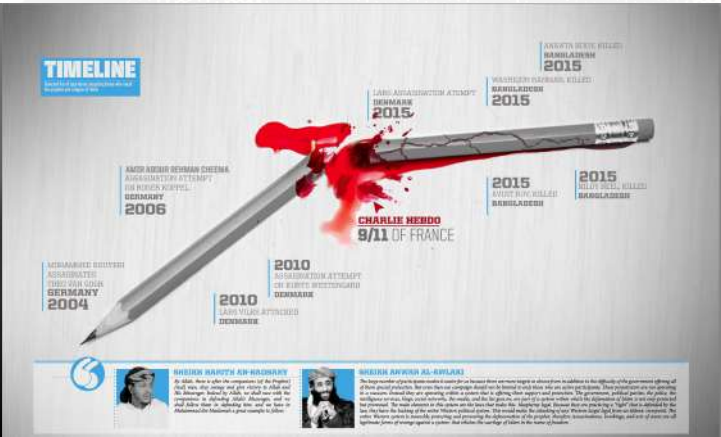
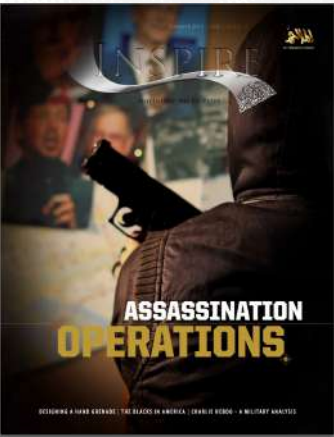


# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

## ONLINE MAGAZINES AND INSTRUCTION MANUALS

First examples of terrorists' instructional manual date back to the late 1800s.  
This trend continued to grow through the 1900s.

To this, the “how-to guide” sections in jihadist online magazines, such as “Open Source Jihad” (OSJ) section of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula’s (AQAP) *Inspire* magazine and the “Just Terror” (JT) section of ISIS’ *Rumiyah* magazine, are nothing new. What distinguishes these instructional manuals is the embedded narrative, designed to justify and inspire terror attacks, including ideological justifications and frantic calls to action.



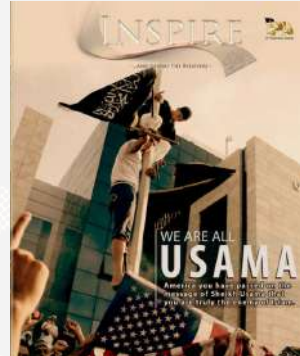
## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE MAGAZINES AND INSTRUCTION MANUALS

### The Inspire case

An English-language online magazine, it was first published by AQAP in January 2010, the brainchild of Americans Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan. Their videos and writings were and still are a source of reference for both homegrown terrorists and foreign fighters.

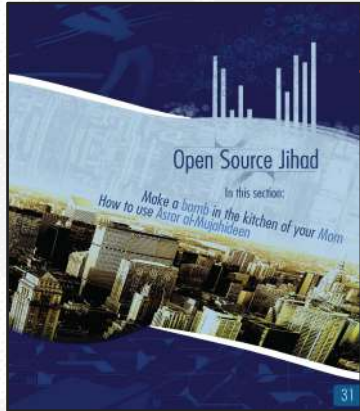
It focuses on inspiring followers to engage “individual jihad” against the West. Its “how-to guide” section OSJ covers a variety of technical advice from training in the use of encryption to using firearms and building home-made bombs.

The technical advice gained from OSJ has been cited by LEAs in many successful terrorist attacks (e.g., the 2013 Boston bombing in which the pressure cooker bomb used was based on OSJ instructions) and apparently influenced “homegrown terrorists” whose attacks were preceded by a pledge of allegiance to ISIS (e.g., the San Bernardino shooters).



# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

## INSPIRE - OPEN SOURCE JIHAD



How-to-guide «Make a bomb in the kitchen of your mom»

How-to-guide «Car bombs inside America»



How-to-guide «Assassination operations»



OSJ Special – The hidden bomb:  
What America does not expect

- Breaching airport security
- Making the hidden bomb
- Field tactics

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE MAGAZINES AND INSTRUCTION MANUALS



### Rumiyah

First published in September 2016, The Islamic State's Rumiyah online magazine is named after Prophet Muhammad's Hadith about Muslim armies eventually conquering Constantinople and Rome.

It is distributed in 9 languages (English, Uighur, Pashto, Kurdish, Indonesian, Bosnian, Russian, German, French).

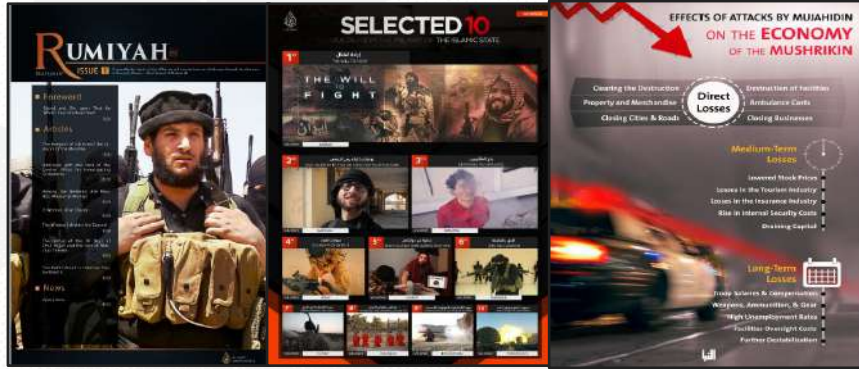
Unlike its predecessor *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah*'s "Just Terror Tactics" section offers instructional guidance for engaging in terrorist attacks.

*Rumiyah*'s JT section is not unique in the operational advice that it provides; similar content was featured in *Inspire* several years earlier.

JT has focused mainly on simpler, less sophisticated types of attacks. Analysts have noted the similarity in JT's operational advice and the Berlin Christmas market, Westminster and Stockholm attacks.

# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

## RUMIYAH - JUST TERROR GUIDES

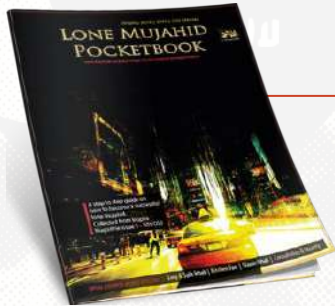


Rumiyah issue 1 cover and top 10 selected jihad videos, Rumiyah issue 6 «Effects of attacks by Mujaheden on the economy of Mushrikin (polytheists).

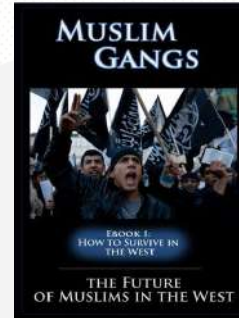
Rumiyah Just Terror Tactics: guides for «Knife attacks», «Vehicle attacks», «Hostage taking», «Truck attacks».



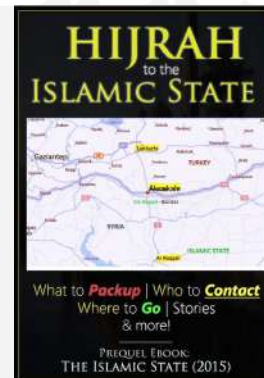
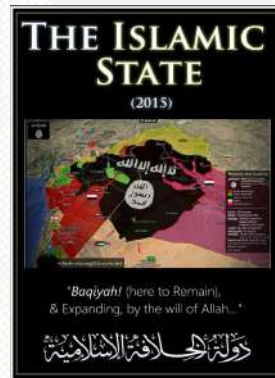
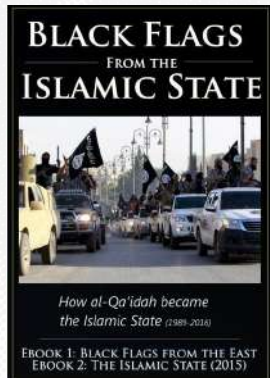
## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT ONLINE INSTRUCTION MANUALS



A 64-page booklet released by AQAP in 2013. It features a compilation of the “Open Source Jihad” manuals from issues 1-10 of its English-language e-magazine, “Inspire”.



Released by ISIS, it provides organizational guidance and a bomb-making manual as well as the ultimate goal to unite all Muslim communities in Europe for the final chapter in ISIS strategy.



The first e-book is about how IS developed, how it grew and its future goals. The second e-book is about the foundation of global jihad, from AQ to ISIS. The third e-book published by an ISIS militant, offers tips on how to make the trip to Syria in order to commit jihad.

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

### THE CHANNELS: ENCRYPTED MESSAGING APPS, SOCIAL NETWORKS, FORUMS AND WEBSITES

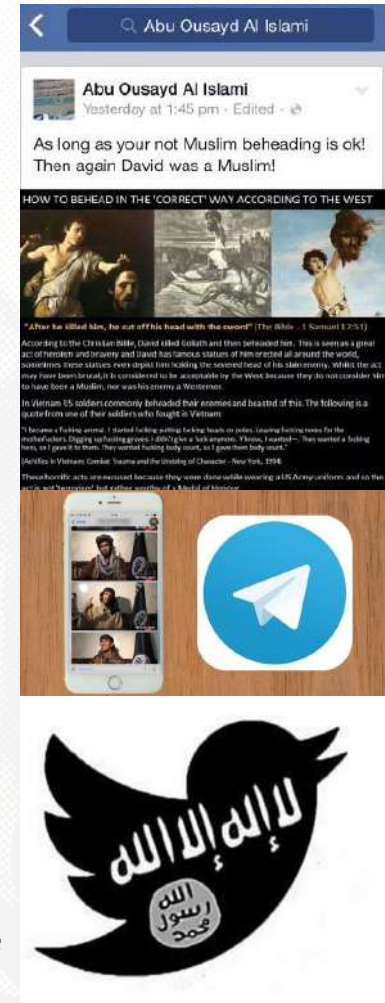
*In the past, jihadist groups tended to prefer using password-protected Arabic-language forums to share and exchange ideas.*

These forums still exist and are still used; however, they now play a role secondary to that of encrypted messaging applications and social networks as jihadists have sought to increase their exposure and accessibility.

Facebook has imposed strict user limitations and regulations that have largely succeeded in banning jihadist propaganda from the platform.

Twitter has long been the most used and is still striving, because of its inherent instant media sharing functions, its built-in capacity for extremely targeted messaging and hashtag searches that remove the need for self-advertising centralised accounts, making it an ideal place for violent extremists to operate.

Recently, Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Microsoft have teamed up to reduce the flow of terrorist propaganda across their services. This coalition got some credit for making progress against content that encourages terrorism, but ISIS-related accounts quickly spring back up under different names after Twitter deletes them. These new security measures have forced most of the terrorist activity onto encrypted services like WhatsApp and Telegram (ISIS heavily relies on the Telegram to share its content and communicate with its members and supporters), and file-sharing platforms like Google Drive, where it is harder to track.



## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT FORUMS AND WEBSITES



Web site of Al-Shaabab («The Youth»). This terrorist group is determined to depose the Western-backed government of Somalia and establish fundamentalist Islamic rule.



ISIS' web site.



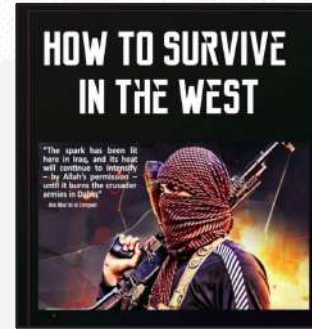
An ISIS affiliated forum hosting video, photos, speeches mainly in Arabic.



# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT SOCIAL NETWORKS



ISIS Twitter account  
#resourcesForTheMujahid  
#RFTM offering all the theory  
and tactics for Mujahid.



An ISIS' e-book distributed on Twitter containing wide-ranging advice for wannabe jihadis on how to build bombs, evade spies and commit credit card fraud.



Facebook page of an ISIS affiliate



A Twitter profile that features a baby's hand holding an Islamic State flag.

# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT ENCRYPTED MESSAGING APPLICATIONS



The most prominent encryption program, Asrar al-Mujahideen ("Mojahedeen Secrets") became popular after being featured in Inspire.

The program allows users to generate a digital "key" that can then be used to encrypt and decrypt text.

Screenshots of Rakhmat Akilov, the suspect in the Stockholm terror attack, who was chatting with his ISIS handlers on WhatsApp moments after the attack.

Rakhmat Akilov: "I ran over ten people in the centre of Stockholm, now I have to try and take me out of here!"

Tajik handler: "Allahu Akbar, my brother, I love you, how are you stand firm, you are going. Send me a short video."



# MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

## ENCRYPTED MESSAGING APPLICATIONS – TELEGRAM



Military training documents posted in a Telegram chatroom.

Islamic State–inspired news channels via Telegram.



Screenshots from a number of Islamic State supporters' hacking channels.

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT

### VIDEO HOSTING WEBSITES – YOUTUBE

*Until very recently, there were significant quantities of radical materials available on video sharing platforms – mostly on Youtube.*

Following the example of social media companies, YouTube has made a move to wipe off as much *jihadi* content as possible.

However, terrorist material can still be found through archive.org (a non-profit digital library of internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form) like links, even if subject to the release of log-in information.

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT VIDEO HOSTING WEBSITES – YOUTUBE



### BREAKING: ISIS Terrorists Behead British Hostage, David Haines (VIDEO)

Intel Analyst

2 anni fa • 1.580.938 visualizzazioni

The British terrorist of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant beheaded his 3rd victim in front of the camera: This time, a British citizen ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XowakoYkFFc&bpctr=1498545820>



### ISIS video: Children lead captives to beheading, hand knives to executioners

TomoNews US

2 anni fa • 36.610 visualizzazioni

CLICK HERE FOR FULL VIDEO: <http://bit.ly/1bMdg5y> Young boys have again appeared assisting ISIS militants in a gruesome ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aChHHy9XMdg>



### VIDEO Iraq forces dismantle suicide bomb strapped by ISIS onto a child in Mosul

Zoulou WhiteHat

3 mesi fa • 33.699 visualizzazioni

VIDEO Iraq forces dismantle suicide bomb strapped by ISIS onto a child in Mosul 2017...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_niWMXM7A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_niWMXM7A)

## MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT VIDEO HOSTING WEBSITES – YOUTUBE



### Shocking video shows parents sending 7 and 9 year old daughters on suicide missions

New York Post

6 mesi fa • 181.264 visualizzazioni

An extremely disturbing video has emerged in which a Syrian mother and father are seen preparing their two daughters, ages 7 ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PDcs-noMUSg>



### ISIS puppy bomb: Iraqi soldiers defuse explosives strapped to a puppy - TomoNews

TomoNews US

3 mesi fa • 17.624 visualizzazioni

MOSUL, IRAQ – A video released by Iraqi soldiers claims that a small puppy was fitted with explosives by ISIS extremists to be ...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zika\\_VFN1k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zika_VFN1k)



### Inside Raqqa: Women's secret films from within closed city of terrorist sect ISIS

Expressen TV

4.037.180 visualizzazioni

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V28SDigCLek>

The background is a solid orange color with a subtle halftone dot pattern. It features several large, semi-transparent silhouettes of the Twitter bird logo. Each bird silhouette contains Arabic text. The text on the birds includes "لا إله إلا الله" (There is no god but Allah) and "الله أكبر" (Allah is the greatest). One bird in the center has a circular emblem with the name "محمد" (Muhammad) and "الله أكبر" (Allah is the greatest).

# SUMMING UP

media used to spread terrorist content

## SUMMING UP

MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT, 1 of 3

### WHAT KIND OF CONTENT IS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH TERRORIST PROPAGANDA?

Terrorists' agenda and targets, principles and rules radical Jihadis must follow, news from the battlefields, personal stories of brave fighters, verses of Qur'an discussed by radical jihadis imams or inspiring figures, instruction booklets, chants making reference to Islamic beliefs, history, and religion, as well as current events to support and motivate their following of believers and fighters.



## SUMMING UP MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT, 2 of 3

### WHAT KIND OF MEDIA ARE USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT?

At the top of the content distribution chain are the central propaganda organs, radio stations and publishing houses managed and controlled by the central media offices of terrorist organizations. Materials disseminated through TV, radios, and in print (e.g., in the form of booklets) are easily shared on the internet as videos and/or e-books, readily accessible through simple links on forums, web sites, social networks and video hosting platforms, and instantly available on multiple devices (PCs, tablets, mobile phones).

## SUMMING UP MEDIA USED TO SPREAD TERRORIST CONTENT, 3 of 3

### WHAT INSTRUCTIONS CAN BE FOUND IN AQAP AND ISIS ONLINE MAGAZINES AND MANUALS?

How to make different types of bombs, breach security measures, commit homicide, engage in terrorist attacks, and take hostages. They also provide a narrative on the birth of ISIS and the *hijrah* to Syria to engage in the jihad.

### WHAT ARE THE MAIN COMMUNICATION TOOLS? WHAT PURPOSES DO THEY SERVE?

After its initial intensive use for propaganda and recruitment purposes, Facebook has been outdone by Twitter – and, more recently, by encrypted messaging apps (Mujiahideen Secrets, WhatsApp, Telegram), which were originally used for messaging among terror cells and spreading propaganda to incite terrorist activities.

Video sharing platforms, mainly Youtube, offer significant quantities of radical materials. As of recently, YouTube acts significantly quicker to remove all content that violates anti-terrorism laws

KEY MAN PROPAGANDA  
AND INSPIRING FIGURES

Three case studies

section

5



## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

AL-AWLAKI, 1 of 2



Born in the USA in 1971 to parents from Yemen. His father received a doctorate and worked at a US university for a couple of years, before returning with his whole family to Yemen in 1978. In 1991, al-Awlaki returned to the US and earned a BS in Civil Engineering in 1994 from Colorado State University, where he was president of the Muslim Student Association. In 1993, while still a college student, al-Awlaki visited Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Soviet occupation. He spent some time training with the mujahideen who were fighting the Soviets.

From 1996–2001, al-Awlaki was imam of a mosque in San Diego and in Falls Church. His proficiency as a public speaker and command of the English language helped him attract followers who did not speak Arabic. In 2002, al-Awlaki was the first imam to conduct a prayer service for the Congressional Muslim Staffer Association at the US Capitol. Al-Awlaki left the US before the end of 2002, because of a "climate of fear and intimidation".



After spending a few months in the UK, he returned to Yemen in early 2004. He was arrested in August 2006 on charges of participating in an al-Qaeda plot to kidnap a U.S. military attaché. Al-Awlaki was released after 18 months and started providing al-Qaeda members in Yemen with the protection of his powerful tribe against the government. He broadcast lectures to mosques and other venues in UK via video-link from 2007 to 2009. His name came up in a dozen terrorism plots in the US, UK, and Canada.

## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

### AL-AWLAKI, 2 of 2



The cases included suicide bombers in the 2005 London bombings, radical Islamic terrorists in the 2006 Toronto terrorism case, radical Islamic terrorists in the 2007 Fort Dix attack plot, the jihadist killer in the 2009 Little Rock military recruiting office shooting, and the 2010 Times Square bomber.

In each case the suspects were devoted to al-Awlaki's message, which they listened to online and on CDs. In his *44 Ways to Support Jihad Essay* (January 2009), al-Awlaki states that "The hatred of kuffar is a central element of our military creed" and that all Muslims are obligated to participate in jihad, either by committing the acts themselves or supporting others who do so. He says all Muslims must remain physically fit so as to be prepared for conflict.

Al-Awlaki wrote for *Jihad Recollections*, an English language online publication published by Al-Fursan Media.

In 2009, the UK government found 1,910 of his videos that had been posted to YouTube. One of them had been viewed 164,420 times. Al-Awlaki maintained a website and blog on which he shared his views.

In a video posted to the internet on November 8, 2010, al-Awlaki called for Muslims to kill Americans "without hesitation", and overthrow Arab governments that cooperate with the US. "Don't consult with anyone in fighting the Americans, fighting the devil doesn't require consultation or prayers or seeking divine guidance. They are the party of the devils", al-Awlaki said. He was the first US citizen to be targeted and killed by a US drone strike on 2011.



# AL-AWLAKI'S TEACHING WRITINGS

## Al-Awlaki on online terrorist magazines:



Jihad Recollections, August 2009, Issue 3



Inspire, Spring 2014, Issue 12

## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

### SAMIR KHAN



Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1985 to parents of Pakistani descent and grew up in Queens, New York. He graduated in 2003 and the following year he moved to Charlotte, North Carolina with his family. Before leaving the country for Yemen in 2009, he cut off ties with his family: Khan's father did not agree with his son's ideas and had sought help to change his son's radical views on several occasions.

Khan was radicalised by listening to messages of Bin Laden and Malcolm X. He considered both of them “geniuses for having the ability to mold their ideology into simple yet influential messages that can reach the grass-roots level.”



Throughout his career, Khan was influential in the use of social media, helping to pioneer jihadis' embrace of YouTube, the Internet Archives, and other sites on which he frequently posted content.

## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

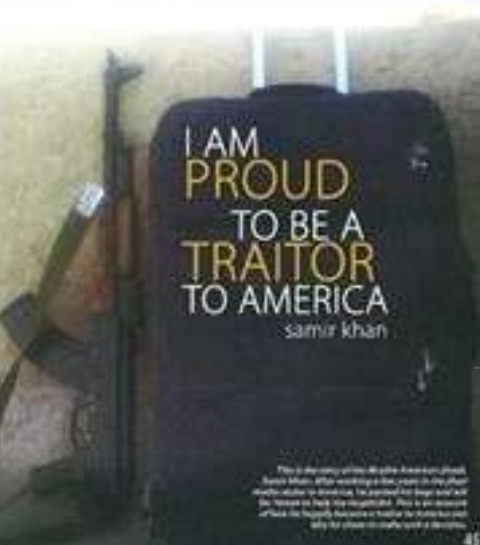
### SAMIR KHAN, 2 of 2



After moving to Yemen, Khan launched the precursor to *Inspire* online magazine, *Jihad Recollections*. The magazine was produced by the Al-Fursan Media Foundation and “seeks to: 1) Tackle issues that are not only happening abroad in the Muslim world, but also focus on domestic issues pertinent to the Muslim community in the West; 2) To clean the image of the Mujahideen; 3) Present well-researched and thought-out articles on relevant issues of interest”.

In July 2010, AQAP released the first edition of *Inspire* which represents an effort to engage the English-speaking world and to recruit English-speaking Muslims to join the cause of jihad. *Inspire*'s primary message to its readers is that they too can be part of Al-Qaeda and its mission, but from the comfort of their own home. Instead of traveling thousands of miles to join the jihad, the reader need only turn on his/her computer and visit websites to receive training – i.e. viewing videos and listening to sermons of their favorite leaders, and learning to handle weapons, explosives and even planning attacks.

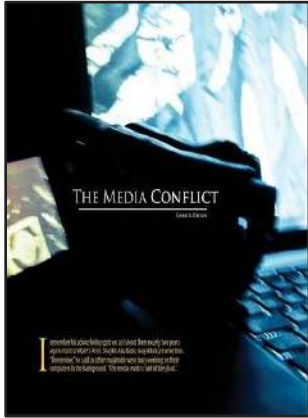
Issue 2 of the *Inspire* magazine featured the Khan article “I am Proud to be a traitor to America”.



“The story of the Muslim American jihadi Samir Khan. After working a few years in the jihad media sector in America, he packed his bags and left for Yemen to help the mujahideen. This is an account of how he happily became a traitor to America and why he chose to make such a decision.”



## SAMIR KHAN CREATOR OF THE INSPIRE MAGAZINE



*In an article in the seventh issue of Inspire, dated Fall 2011, Khan hails Al-Qaeda's "media jihad" as a component in the war against the U.S. that is of equal importance to actual attacks on it.*

It was reported in May 2013 that Al Qaeda devotees native to the United States may be using the instruction manuals that Khan posted online before his death. To date, nearly two dozen young men (and one young woman) have been arrested in the US and UK with writings and magazines linked to Khan in their possession and plans to carry out terrorist operations on their agendas. Khan was killed in the same air-strike that killed Anwar al-Awlaki.

Khan often posted comments about his blog being shut down and moved to other hosts. On January 29, 2009, he wrote about creating a Google group to communicate with his fellow online jihadis: "We have created a Google group for all of those who are interested in staying updated about the situation of this blog. If this blog is shut down again or goes down for maintenance, then members of this group will be notified via e-mail when it comes back up, especially if the URL is changed".



*After his death, AQAP released a document by Khan explaining what potential mujahideen can expect from jihad, titled "Expectations Full". In this 16-page document, posted on jihadi forums, Khan encouraged western Muslims to attack the US on its soil, saying that "the effect is much greater" when the enemy is struck "in its own backyard," and that such attacks are "nearly impossible for them to contain."*

## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

### ABU MOHAMMAD AL-ADNANI ASH-SHAMI, 1 OF 2



Taha Subhi Falaha, known as Abu Mohammad Al-Adnani Ash-Shami, born in Binnish, Syria, in 1977. In 2000, Al-Adnani became involved in Islamic militancy as a pupil of Abu Anas Al-Shami, a senior leader in Jama'at al-Tawhid wal Jihad (militant Jihadist group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who formed the group in Jordan in 1999 and led it until his death in June 2006).

He joined JTJ to fight Bashar al-Assad government, but was deployed to Iraq to oppose Coalition forces which arrested him in May 2005. He was released in 2010. Throughout his time in the Iraq insurgency he gained such a good reputation and trust that Al-Zarqawi allowed him to make executive decisions independently.

In 2014, after the JTJ self-proclaimed ISIL (aka ISIS), he became the official spokesperson and senior leader of the group. He is believed to have been in charge of a special unit, named Emni, established with the double objective of internal policing and executing operations outside the ISIS territory. He is also known with his perfect use of the Arabic language and a soft voice.

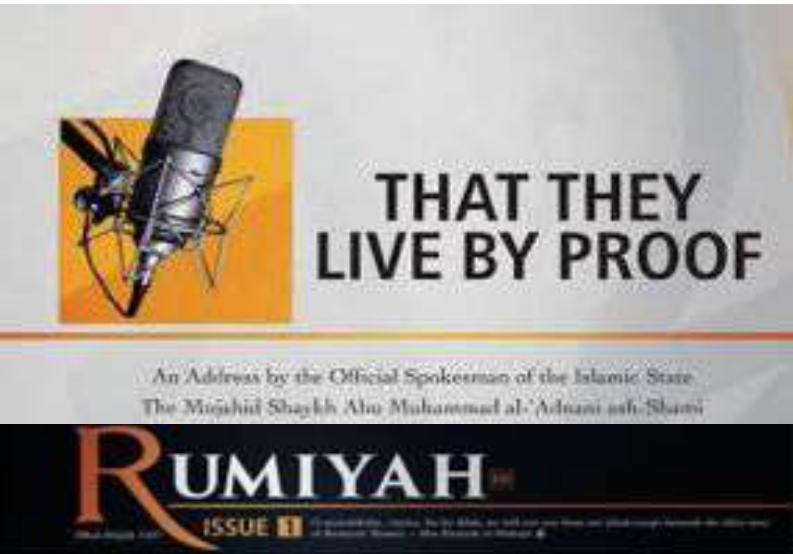
He was killed on 30 August 2016 during a US airstrike.

Among the considerable number of Al-Adnani's speeches, one of the most significant, titled "Indeed, Your Lord Is Ever Watchful", is dated September 22nd, 2014. This was the first official instruction by ISIS to kill "American or European or Australian or Canadian" disbelievers, including "the citizens of the countries that entered into a coalition against the IS. Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car, or throw him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him".

FROM SHAWAZINIYAK / TWITTER  
"Indeed Your Lord Is Ever Watchful"  
A speech by the spokesman of  
#IslamicState|  
[justpaste.it/aladnane1](http://justpaste.it/aladnane1)  
[pic.twitter.com/jallRYcJWD](http://pic.twitter.com/jallRYcJWD)  
#FRIENDS20TH



## KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES ABU MOHAMMAD AL-ADNANI ASH-SHAMI, 2 OF 2



A second relevant speech, dated May 21st, 2016, is titled “That They Live By Proof”. As in the audio file, Al-Adnani called all ISIS supporters in the West who were not able to take hijra (i.e., travel to Islamic land) to join the Islamic State and their jihad, to carry out attacks in the countries they live currently, if they cannot travel to jihad.

He furthermore encouraged his followers to carry out terrorist attacks during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

“Make your deed a source of their regret. Truly, the smallest act you do in their lands is more beloved to us than the biggest act done here”, he said. “Know that inside the lands of the belligerent crusaders, there is no sanctity of blood and no existence of those called ‘innocents’ [...]. So go forth, O muwahhidin [holy warriors] everywhere! It might be that you attain great reward or even shahadah [“martyrdom”] during Ramadan.”

The front cover of first issue of “Rumiyah” ISIS magazine was dedicated to Al-Adnani and praised his life as a jihadist and his “martyrdom”.

SUMMING UP  
KEY MAN PROPAGANDA AND INSPIRING FIGURES

WHO ARE THE KEY MEN AND INSPIRING FIGURES OF THE ISIS/AQ PROPAGANDA?

ANWAR AL-AWLAKI

Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen born to Yemeni parents.

His lectures and propaganda are distributed in the form of videos on Youtube and articles on online magazines.

SAMIR KHAN

Samir Khan, born in Saudi Arabia to Pakistani parents, raised in New York.

His most famous contribution to the AQAP online magazine, *Inspire*, is titled “I am proud to be a traitor to America” – for a reason.

AL-ADNANI

Abu Mohammad Al-Adnani, born in Syria, joined Al-Zarkawi jihadi group on 2000 and became the second in command and the spokesperson of ISIS, upon its proclamation on 2014.

He voiced ISIS’ first official appeal to kill disbelievers in Western countries.

THE MODERATE  
REFORM MOVEMENT  
a legitimate voice

section

6



## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT A LEGITIMATE VOICE



*The voice of extremists does not represent most Muslims and Islam.*

*Indeed, Islam has no hierarchically organised clergy answering to any supreme authority that certifies ‘the one’ doctrine.*

Religious guidance is defined by a group of qualified peer scholars, the *Ulema*, whose opinions inevitably differ.

Therefore, in the post-colonial period a school of thought establishes itself that aims at reforming Islam toward moderate positions and affirming its compatibility with the modern world.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT FROM SUNNIS ACROSS TO SHIITES



*A heterogeneous group of scholars, spread all over the world*

All Islamic movements, from Sunnis across to Shiites, have a moderate stream.

The essence of islamic faith lies in the knowledge of God, to be achieved through reflection or concrete devotion experienced in brotherhoods.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT FROM SUNNIS ACROSS TO SHIITES

- Allows for a freer interpretation of the Qur'an based on different interpretations . The focus is on the deeply spiritual meaning of the religious text, whose mystery is to remain unfathomed, if only in part.
- Examples of holiness for the believers are those who fought their own passions while nurturing their love of God. Focus is first on individuals then the community, basically, if people are devoted Muslims, the community will become an example society.
- Stresses the importance of piety and intimacy in faith, whose essence lies in the direct relationship with Allah rather than in other more 'public' aspects pursued by complying with all the ethical and behavioural obligations set forth in the *Sharia* (which they still observe).
- Is open to dialogue, interaction and living together with believers of other religions.
- it is respectful towards authorities and law and refuses violence.



## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT INTERPRETATIVE ISSUES



*Moderate muslims have approached research on the Qu'ran and the Sunna applying the principles of modern hermeneutics, highlighting some common methodological flaws:*

1. Fundamentalists extrapolate single verses and use and or interpret them instrumentally. Indeed, a thorough understanding of the text demands analysing all *suras* and verses that deal with a certain matter.
2. The so-called *surahs* and verses of violence are part of the Charter of Medina, drafted when the Prophet fled to Medina to escape his persecutors. Some deem that – being the latest – they are the most relevant and abrogate the non-violent verses written previously.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION

*As opposed to the interpretation adopted by fundamentalists, Moderate muslims have concluded that:*

- The *surahs* and verses of violence have no universal value, as they were released in a particular moment in history when a new faith was born and a recently created community needed to remain united against persecutors.
- The Medina Charter was a response to social, daily issues of those times, and the legal and moral rules of behaviour contained therein. Although they are the origins for the *Sharia*, they are no longer to be considered obligatory.
- The *surahs* issued prior to the Medinian *surahs* – the so-called Meccan *surahs* – remain valid as foundations for the faith. Their content is more of a revelational and spiritual nature and promotes mercy and tolerance among people of different faiths.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION, II



- The issue to be tackled in regards to fundamental rights is that man, being created by God, receives his code of conduct by God himself – the duties and rights clearly stated in the *Sharia*.

*This in turn raises several issues: the legitimate killing of apostates, homosexuals, and infidels; the submission of women, and slavery as an institution.*

- Adopting a further principle of interpretation, i.e. the underlying anthropological standpoint that can be found throughout the scriptural body, human dignity and its protection emerge as undeniable values to achieve the well-being of each and every individual.
- Achieved only in modern times, the universal acknowledgement of human rights has been a necessary source of inspiration for Islamic reformists in their quest for an interpretation that reconciles faith with rights.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT

### OPTIONS FOR A COUNTER NARRATIVE

*A good start for counter narrative is to give proper definitions to the terms used by the jihadist propaganda in a misleading way:*

- **Jihad** can have a spiritual meaning – *the great jihad* is the fight against one’s earthly passions in the first place. Violence is admissible only for defensive purposes and is solely an obligation for the community, never for the individual.  
  
“You have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad.” His companions inquired: "What is the greater jihad?" He said: “A person’s jihad against his carnal desires.”  
(Hadith of the Prophet Mohammad )
- The **Ummah** – a community formed by believers only – is but a goal for an ideal society. Since its first appearance in history, Islam has indeed lived in peace with the People of the Book and with other groups. Muslim states at times levied a tax on non muslims that extended the bond of brotherhood to them including solidarity and mutual protection.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT

### OPTIONS FOR A COUNTER NARRATIVE

- The ***Shaheed***, the suicide martyr, is explicitly condemned to hell.
- Under no circumstance can the mark of ***takfir*** be imposed on anyone. No one can be thought to deserve death for professing his muslim faith in a way deemed improper or for embracing other religions.

The Messenger said:

"He who says to his brother 'O disbeliever', then it returns upon one of them."

(Reported by Al-Bukhari, Muslim, Malik, At-Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud)

These interpretations clearly show that the Qur'an does not promote violence, but rather peaceful integration of believers in multicultural national contexts, under the rule of institutions toward which all citizens have legitimate duties of obedience.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT COMPATIBILITY WITH MODERNITY

*The modern islamic moderate thought allow talking about religion in a way akin to that in Western democratic societies.*

- Faith may eventually be seen as an option of conscience guaranteed by the secular under the rule of law.
- The Sharia is considered a broader ethical framework to live by yet not uncritically. It is no longer a list of obligations that remains immutable over time.
- Some elements of the Sharia were imposed in the early days of the rise of Islam. The veil for women – which is not one of the five pillars – is a good example of a behaviour left to the individual's discretion; women can decide whether or not to wear it.

*Hence, prayer can be lived freely along with every other rituals and precepts, the so-called five pillars, the genuine heart of the Muslim faith: the profession of faith, ritual prayers, charity, fasting during the month of Ramadan, and pilgrimage to holy places,*

- The individual, violent jihad is under no circumstances the 'sixth pillar'. It is not a requirement of the Islamic Creed, the *akeeda*, belief system of the Islam.

## THE MODERATE REFORM MOVEMENT PRINCIPLES OF NARRATIVE

*The moderate narrative hinges on the above principles, thus forming a conceptual system just as simple as the Jihadist propaganda – if with opposite ends: non-violent faith.*

Such a system fully responds to each and every believer's expectations and grants everyone the concrete chance of self-fulfillment in Western democratic society: to live one's faith freely in a multicultural context.

It is a system that underlines how violence – if inspired by ideals – is but the expression of a criminal attitude, a shortcut to reaching one's goals that is not to be taken.



# SUMMING UP

moderate islam



## WHAT IS MODERATE ISLAM ?

A cultural and religious movement that aims at highlighting Islam's inherently peaceful and tolerant nature.

## HOW DOES THIS MOVEMENT PURSUE ITS GOALS ?

It proposes the interpretation of holy texts using modern, scientific interpretative techniques.

## WHAT ARE MODERATE ISLAM'S KEY MESSAGES?

The community includes non-Muslims, toward which Muslims have bonds of brotherhood.

Suicide cannot be justified as 'martyrdom'.

No individual can be marked as an 'enemy of faith'.

The use of violence is an obligation of the community only under restricted circumstances.



SUMMING UP  
MODERATE ISLAM, 2 of 2

## WHAT IS JIHAD IN MODERATE ISLAM?

It is by no means a violent action. It is an inner, continuous strive for self -improvement.

## HOW CAN IT BE COMPATIBLE WITH MODERNITY?

Faith is an option of conscience and not a public obligation stemming from the confessional nature of the state.

## WHAT IS MODERATE ISLAM'S COUNTER NARRATIVE ?

A well-structured message, a clear statement: to live freely by the Muslim faith is a viable option in Western democratic countries.



# DOWNLOADABLES

a cross-section, non exhaustive set of documents  
to learn more on topics dealt with in this unit

Where are the  
Moderate Muslims?  
Right Here ↓

Muslims say  
YES to  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Muslims  
NO

# COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM THE TOOLKIT'S DOWNLOADABLES

لا إله إلا الله

الله  
رسوله  
محمد

## radical islam and its narrative



UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS OF WAHHABISM AND SALAFISM



UNDERSTANDING AL-QAEDA'S IDEOLOGY FOR COUNTER-NARRATIVE WORK

## the moderate reform movement



MUSLIM MOVEMENTS AND SCHISMS



HOW ISLAMIC LAW CAN TAKE ON ISIS

Where are the  
Moderate Muslims?

Right Here ↓

Muslims say  
YES to  
LAW is our

Muslims  
NO



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

# MATES

MULTI AGENCY TRAINING EXIT STRATEGIES FOR THE RADICALIZED YOUTH

## COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

TOOLKIT FOR A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

*Understanding Islam and Jihadi Radicalisation* | June 26, 2017

