



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
DEFENCE AGAINST TERRORISM



WOMEN IN TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Workshop Report by the NATO
Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism

Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism Workshop

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	4
Acronyms and Abbreviations	5
1. Introduction.....	6
2. Welcome Address	8
3. Opening Remarks	9
4. Presentation Summaries	11
4.1. Recognizing Women's Agency in Terrorism (Dr. Caron E. Gentry)	11
4.2. Why do Women Become Terrorists? Motivations and Recruitment (Dr. Seda Öz Yıldız)	13
4.3. Women as Radicalizers and Recruiters (Ms. Anna Zizola)	16
4.4. Unexceptional Women: Mainstreaming 'Female Suicide Terrorism' (Dr. Katherine E. Brown).....	17
4.5. Women Foreign Terrorist Fighters (Dr. Joana Cook).....	20
4.6. Advancing and Advocating Women's Rights (Dr. Aya Fujimura-Fanselow).....	22
4.7. Lessons Learned from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Contexts for Reintegrating Female Members of Terrorist Organizations (Ms. Alison Davidian)	24
4.8. Advancing Women Leadership and Participation in Counterterrorism: The United Nations Perspective (Dr. Aleksandra Dier)	28
4.9. Enhancing Women's Participation in Counterterrorism: NATO Perspective (Ms. Clare Hutchinson).....	31
4.10. Understanding the Role of Women in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization (Ms. Rasa Ostrauskaite).....	35
4.11. The Role of Women in Al-Shabaab and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Somalia (Ms. Halima Mohamud Mohamed)	38
4.12. Women in Counterterrorism: An Overview (Dr. Richard Warnes)	42
4.13. Women as Security Practitioners (Dr. Joana Cook)	46
5. Key Findings.....	48
6. Recommendations	53
Annex-A: Workshop Program.....	56
Annex B: Biographies of the Speakers.....	58
Annex C: Suggested Bibliography.....	70

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Dr. Zeynep Sütalan
Workshop Academic Advisor

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM: African Union Mission in Somalia

ANP: Afghan National Police

A.S.: Al-Shabaab

CQB: Close Quarter Battle

CRU: Crisis Response Unit

CT: Counter-terrorism

CTED: Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate

CTSFOs: Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers

CVE: Countering Violent Extremism

DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

FGS: Federal Government of Somalia

FSK: Norwegian Army Special Forces

FST: Female Suicide Terrorism

FTF: Foreign Terrorist Fighter

FTP: Female Tactical Platoon

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

OSCE: Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

P/CVERLT: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism

PRR: Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

PVE: Preventing Violent Extremism

RMP CPU: Royal Military Police Close Protection Unit

SOE: Special Operations Executive

SPS: Science for Peace and Security

SR: Special Reconnaissance

TNTD: Transnational Threats Department

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

UNSCR: United Nations Security Council Resolution

UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

US: United States

VBIED: Vehicle-Born Improvised Explosive Device

WPS: Women, Peace and Security

WWII: Second World War

INTRODUCTION

How women relate to terrorism and counterterrorism is predominantly confined to 'victimhood' and 'motherhood', meaning women are generally portrayed as victims of terrorism and seen as 'preventers' in reference to their roles as 'mothers'. However, this reflects only one side of the reality. Negligence of the other part of the reality results in turning a blind eye to the agential power of women both in terrorism and counterterrorism, which can easily lead to security gaps and insufficient counterterrorism and countering violent extremism programming.

The first thing to do is to recognize the agential power of women and their intention and conscious decision to join terrorist organizations. This means that women are neither always pacifist by nature nor are they always coerced or duped into terrorism. Freeing ourselves from gender stereotypes about agential power enables us to see different roles played by women in terrorist organizations from supporters, facilitators, recruiters to perpetrators, propagandists, and ideologues, and thus leads us to a better assessment of the 'threat'. A closer look to the women participation in ISIS/DAESH terrorist organization reveals that women are not just 'wives' of the jihadists, but act as 'radicalizers', 'logistical supporters' and 'facilitators'. Additionally, research indicates that women's participation in suicide attacks is increasing. Notably we are witnessing female suicide bombing attacks as *modus operandi* of Boko Haram. This necessitates special attention to terrorist organizations' choice of recruiting women in addition to the operational advantages of utilizing female suicide bombers. Another threat, with added layers of complexity due to its gender dimension is that posed by the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs). Today women FTFs together with minors is creating a multigenerational problem when their potential as 'supporters' and 'radicalizers' is taken into account. Therefore, programming aimed at tackling with FTFs had to be gender-sensitive.

Women's agential power should also be recognized in shaping the policies and programs to counter terrorism as well as prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) that leads to terrorism. Ensuring participation of women not only in the implementation but also in the design of counterterrorism and P/CVE programming is vital for both achieving effectiveness and for complying with the international legal norms in regard to human and women rights. There is a need to change national institutional and international institutional cultures in the security sector to increase gender awareness and 'meaningful' inclusion of women, because it is not only women's responsibility to ensure gender-sensitive programming. In addition to the challenge of attracting men's attention to gender issues, there is another challenge to overcome women underrepresentation in counterterrorism, which is encouraging women to take part in security forces at different levels. Hence, suitable strategies to attract women to security forces should be developed.

Women have been recognized as an excellent knowledge base in their communities. To what extent this role has been integrated in P/CVE programs is still disputable, especially without endangering the women concerned. A similar case applies to women's being 'primary influencers' in their societies, and thus 'preventers' of radicalization. However, it is highly questionable whether this role applies to every case. Therefore, contextualizing women's role and influence in their societies is important to ensure appropriate programming. Overall, a better approach going beyond women as 'the source of intelligence' or as 'preventers' of radicalization is required for effective counterterrorism and P/CVE programming.

Against this background, it is fair to say that women's involvement in terrorism and counterterrorism is one of the least addressed issues in the policy world if not academia. Recognizing these gaps, COE-DAT has organized the workshop on "Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism" on 27-28 May 2019 in Ankara, Turkey in order to bring together academics, researchers and practitioners to discuss the current approaches to and policies of the gender aspect of terrorism and counterterrorism for identifying gaps and coming up with policy as well as future research recommendations. The primary objective of the workshop was to address the terrorist threat originating from women's involvement in terrorism with different roles and what roles women can play in countering terrorism as well as how to prevent women's terrorist radicalization.

The workshop was composed of six sessions and a panel discussion, which are respectively: Understanding Women's Involvement in Terrorism, Comprehending the Complexity of the Terrorist Threat Posed by Women, Preventing Women Terrorist Radicalization, Enhancing Women's Participation in Counterterrorism (The Role of International Organizations), Integrating Women into Countering Violent Extremism and Women as Counterterrorists (Operational Perspective).¹ Each session included both presentations by the speakers and an open discussion. The last panel discussion was dedicated to discuss recommendations for future research and policy making and implementation as well as the summary of the two days' discussions.

¹ See the Workshop Program in Annex A.

This report attempts to convey an overview of the subjects discussed and points raised during the workshop. Therefore, it is primarily based on the summaries of the presentations which were written by the speakers² themselves as well as the discussions held during the workshop summarized and categorized by the rapporteurs and the editor.

COE-DAT anticipates that this report provides insights for researchers, practitioners and policymakers who are working to promote gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the field of counterterrorism.

² See the Biographies of the Speakers in Annex B.

Welcome Address

Col. Soydan Görgülü
Director
COE-DAT

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you here in COE-DAT for the workshop on Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism.

I would like to start by conveying my special thanks to you, the distinguished speakers and participants, for coming. No doubt, without your participation, we would not be able to have this workshop, the topic of which is highly significant, not only for COE-DAT, but also for the global community, of which COE-DAT is a member.

COE-DAT is a NATO accredited Centre of Excellence specialized in terrorism and counterterrorism. I do not want to go into details about COE-DAT since our workshop director will give you a briefing about the center and its activities.

When it comes to the topic of the workshop, I would like to say a few words.

Although the women constitute almost half of the world population today, we are still prone to ignore their presence in many areas. Among them, security may be counted as one of the most men-dominated areas. The role of women in international peace and security has been recognized and emphasized by the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000 and the subsequent thematic resolutions on women, peace and security. As noted in the 2016 dated annual report of the NATO Secretary General, "If peace is to be sustainable, it must be inclusive". Acknowledging and promoting the role of women in preserving and maintaining peace is undeniably an important step. However, it is just one side of the coin. What we should also realize and pay more attention is the fact that women are also part of the security challenges.

Terrorism today is one of the most significant security challenges and especially for the last two decades, much ink has been spilled on the different aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism, but gender aspect of terrorism has still been the less addressed dimension. It is the identification of such a gap together with NATO's commitment to implement UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security that COE-DAT has decided to discuss the role of women in terrorism and counterterrorism, starting with this workshop.

I think recognizing women's deliberate choice to become a terrorist is an important starting point for overwhelming the gender stereotyping. Understanding the different roles women play in terrorism like "perpetrators", "supporters", "recruiters", or "mobilizers" and the motivations behind has important outcomes for counterterrorism efforts. Therefore, preventing women terrorist radicalization is as important as integrating women into counterterrorism and countering violent extremism that leads to terrorism. When it comes to engaging women in counterterrorism, the efforts should go far beyond the 'involvement' of women, and foresee a 'meaningful' participation of women both in the security sector and countering violent extremism.

I believe this workshop is a significant venue for discussing different roles women play as they relate to terrorism and counterterrorism, which is vital for a comprehensive and multistakeholder approach to addressing terrorism. With your contribution to this workshop, COE-DAT is going to publish a report as an end product, and will share this report with the community of interest.

I wish you all very fruitful discussions during these two days and a pleasant stay here in Ankara.

OPENING REMARKS

Col. Daniel W. Stone
Deputy Director
COE-DAT

I would like to welcome you all to COE-DAT and thank you for your participation in our Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism Workshop.

Each of you comes to this workshop with particular expertise and insights into terrorism and specifically the role women play in terrorism.

What I am looking for at the end of this workshop is more questions than we started with. With your help we can identify what we don't know; what questions need to be researched to explain and understand the complex role women play in terrorism. Ultimately, together we will identify what we don't know or don't understand for future research.

For me, the genesis of this workshop came about due to the cursory treatment of women in relation to terrorism as victims for the most part that does not fit with my operational experience of women in terrorism. I believe the position and role of women has not been sufficiently addressed in the literature, despite acknowledgements that women are being radicalized and women are committing acts of violence. Little is known about how women participate in extremist movements or what motivates them to join such movements.

In Afghanistan, I watched women pass through checkpoints without being searched even though the day before a woman perpetrated a suicide attack because the prevailing culture worldwide views women as mothers and nurturers and does not see women as actors of violence. The role of women as recruiters and perpetrators is almost completely ignored or significantly downplayed. This attitude blinds us to the reality that women are actors and have agency. Interestingly, women's rights organizations are remarkably disconnected from the issue of radicalization.

To explain my thoughts I will first tell you that I am a fan of old "Spaghetti" Western movies. Initially, I described this workshop as "Women in Terrorism: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" in reference to the Clint Eastwood movie of the same title: "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly."

For me this is an apt description as it truly describes the three roles women play in the world in general and terrorism in specific (these can just as easily explain the roles men play). Just as in the movie, women are a stabilizing force that keeps others from becoming radicalized or aids in de-radicalization: the Good. Women also sit on the fence and take no part in preventing radicalization nor are they radicalized: the Bad; those who do nothing. Finally, women have agency in terrorism and are actors that both recruit and actively engage in terrorism: the Ugly.

This workshop is designed and structured to analyze and develop concepts concerning the role women play in terrorism, specifically addressing areas such as:

- To develop a greater understanding of what motivates women to join extremist groups, how they become radicalized, how women are used to radicalize others, how women recruit others, what roles they fulfill in the groups, what activities they accomplish as perpetrators of violence for the groups, and to what level women participate at leadership levels within extremist groups,
- To develop a greater understanding of the positive effect women have on preventing radicalization, how women de-radicalize others, and the role women play in the counterterrorism narrative.
- What is the security threat "Black Widows" and returning women terrorist fighters pose to NATO and other nations
- The seeming conflict between the idea of gender equality and often gender repression of terrorist organizations
- Individual factors for joining
- Social factors that drive women to join

- Are women coerced into joining?
- Role as recruiters
- Role as perpetrators of violence
- Discourse of women adherents of religious communities that subordinate women and the role women's rights advocates could play to fight radicalization
- Gender aspects of terrorism across the spectrum of terrorism (including religious based, right-wing, left-wing, and others)
- Positive ways women influence to keep people from joining terrorist groups
- Role women play in de-radicalization efforts
- Women in counterterrorism narrative
- What are local contexts of women in Terrorism

I look forward to learning from you and hearing your thoughts these next two days.

RECOGNIZING WOMEN'S AGENCY IN TERRORISM

Dr. Caron E. Gentry
Senior Lecturer
School of International Relations
University of St Andrews

Since women's participation in terrorism has been studied (starting in the 1960s with the development of the Terrorism Studies field), women's involvement has tended to be described or explained in terms of gendered idealizations or essentializations.¹ For instance, in the 1980s, women's participation was described in terms of keeping house or 'mothering' the men²; or in terms of sexuality: they had an erotic malfunction that drove their violence³. These descriptions ignore or deflect away from any political motivation on the part of the women. Additionally, in the 1980s, the West German GSG-9, when combatting the Red Army Faction and its large number of women members, issued the command, "Shoot the women first," as women were assumed to be more violent and ruthless than the men.⁴ This means that when governments, the media, or academics have recognized women's participation in political violence, it has tended to be seen as extraordinary or as something fundamentally different to men's involvement with terrorism. To see women's participation in terrorism as somehow different is related to how gender, amongst other intersectional⁵ factors such as race, religion, class, and/or sexuality, are constructed within a given society. Therefore, in order to recognize women's agency in terrorism, defining what agency is and how it is mitigated by structures is a necessary first step.

In simplistic terms, agency is understood as the capacity to act, typically in a socio-political context. Thus, it relates to people's ability to think and act for themselves, independent of others. Yet, agency is far more complicated than that. Some actors will not be aware of the full range of possibilities open to them. Some actors may have been told or may think that only certain possibilities are available to them. Other actors may not think choice or change is a possibility at all. Alternatively, some actors may make conscious decisions and enact those 'agential' decisions, yet fail to be recognized for them. Thus, agency is complicated by 'structures' that limit a person's choices or for those choices to be recognized by others. 'Structures' are what foreclose these possibilities, forcing or 'guiding' particular people along particular paths. Structures include the aforementioned intersectional factors, such as gender, race, religion, amongst many others. Agency is thus mitigated by the complexity of choice, representation, and relationships in which people find themselves.⁶

11

This becomes all the more complicated when violence is added to the equation. These structures determine:

- 1) How someone might use violence (or not) and how they might support violence (or not); and
- 2) How that someone who uses violence (or not) is perceived by others.

The way that structures determine perceptions is fundamental to how we have historically understood women's involvement in terrorism. It was a gendered structure related to how women's (and men's) roles in society and related to violence that guided the early work on women's involvement in terrorism, leading to overly simplistic generalisations on why a woman would participate in political violence.

To illustrate this point, I begin with the understanding that gender is a social construction. The assumption that men or women have innate or inherent natural characteristics is premised upon biological essentialism, something that is now seen as fundamentally flawed if not false. Gender idealization assumes that men and masculinity are *naturally* tied to superior intelligence, rationality, logic, and the ability to be violent and aggressive whereas women and femininity are the

¹ See Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2007); Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, eds., *Women, Gender, and Terrorism*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Thinking About Women's Violence in Global Politics* (London: Zed Books, 2015).

² Leonard Weinberg and William Lee Eubank, "Italian Women Terrorists," *Terrorism* 9, no.3 (1987): 241-262.

³ *Top Security Project* 197

⁴ Eileen MacDonald, *Shoot the Women First* (New York: Random House, 1991); see also H. A. A. Cooper, "Woman as Terrorist" in *The Criminology of Deviant Women*, eds. Freda Adler and Rita James Simon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 150-157.

⁵ As a feminist, I advocate for an intersectional approach that recognises that marginalisation and harm happens along the intersection of multiple axes, including gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, geopolitical location, etc. See Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1(1989): 139-167.

⁶ See Sjoberg and Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

opposite and *naturally* tied to inferior intelligence, emotion, indeterminacy, and passiveness if not peaceability.⁷ Therefore, if a woman is violent she is seen as somehow flawed or a corrupt version of a woman.⁸ Additionally, racialized assumptions about skin colour and ethnicity also play a role in how a person's use of violence is perceived. Colonial imperialism assumed that white Europeans (and their descendants) were superior in intellect, rationality, and judgment to people of colour. Thus, people of colour were often associated with illegitimate, read terrorist, violence.⁹ In more recent years, when looking at terrorism, this has become particularly problematic with the prominence of neo-Orientalism, which racializes Islam, assuming that all people who live in the Middle East and other parts of the world, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia, are Muslims and, somehow, that all Muslim men are violent. Neo-Orientalist bias believes that Muslim men are prone to hyperviolence (unthinking violence), hyperaggression, and hypersexuality, whereas Muslim women are overly submissive, passive, and victimized by Muslim men. This is particularly clear in the literature that surrounds the War on Terror and the justifications for it.¹⁰

Thus, women who engage in political violence are already combatting several strikes against the recognition of their agency that have to do with these structures that serve as lenses through which one views women. When a woman is violent this is at odds with construction of all women, making her deviant in some way. For a woman who is viewed through a gendered lens: her violence is such an abnegation of true womanhood. Her 'agency' can only be made known through the notion that she has somehow been corrupted, brainwashed, or forced to carry out the violence. For a woman of colour, particularly in a neo-Orientalist understanding of Muslim women, to be violent is to represent a corruption of an assumed hyperpassivity. Because Muslim men are seen as controlling of women, any choice on her part is nullified and only read through the problematic idea of Muslim men's agency. These lenses—gender, neo-Orientalism, amongst others—make it harder to see a woman's actions. She can act, but because of the distortion of these lenses, one is less likely to be able to recognize what those actions are. This has significant impact on how counterterrorism policies are constructed to combat women's participation.

⁷ Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1987).

⁸ Sjoberg and Gentry, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores*.

⁹ Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "The Post-colonial Moment in Security Studies", *Review of International Studies* 32, no.2 (2006): 329-352; Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, (London: Zed Books, 2012).

¹⁰ See Caron E. Gentry, "Gender and Terrorism" in *The Routledge Handbook on Gender and Security*, eds. Caron E. Gentry, Laura Shepherd, and Laura Sjoberg (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 140-150; Meghana Nayak, "Orientalism and 'Saving' US State Identity after 9/11," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no.1 (2006): 42-61; Laura J. Shepherd, "Veiled References: Constructions of Gender in the Bush Administration Discourse on the Attacks on Afghanistan Post-9/11", *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no.1 (2006): 19-41.

WHY DO WOMEN BECOME TERRORIST? MOTIVATIONS AND RECRUITMENT

Dr. Seda Öz Yıldız

Police Academy

Institute of Security Sciences

First of all, I thank to all who contribute to organize this great workshop. Again I thank you for giving me this chance to make a presentation about a subject I have been studying on for three years. In twenty minutes, I will try to give an answer to one of the vital questions for us that why women become terrorists. I hope I can summarize the important points in limited time.

As you know, since 1968, with significant changes in terrorist acts, a term of “modern international terrorism” is widely accepted. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, women and girls participated almost exclusively in the former because of the intense significance that religious extremism places on females remaining in traditional roles. Also with the end of Cold War, the number of secular ethno-separatist struggles that women and girls were involved during this period increased dramatically.

The issue of women involvement in terrorism is not only a relatively new, but also a central concern on all democratic countries' policy agenda as in Turkey. Women are much more present in terrorism with different roles; nevertheless, very few works have approached this issue until now.

In my speech, I will discuss possible factors that lead women into terrorism and I will try to give an answer to the question if there are any differences between women and men in terms of their involvement in terrorism. After mentioning theoretical framework shortly, as a case study, I will present the comparison between men and women terrorists first and then DAESH and PKK women followers in terms of their motivations in engaging with terrorism and a based on the findings of our research. In my speech, I suggest gender-based approach as a solution in counter-terrorism efforts.

As we all know, understanding terrorism is problematic since it is politicized and frequently associated with broad targeting of Muslim communities especially in Western countries nowadays. But I suggest that before terrorism, we need to discuss radicalization process as the first stage. Because I claim that a terrorist activity is the next stage of radicalization. It is important because prevention mechanisms are more effective before radicalization appears. If one is radicalized and shows it in behavioral stage as terrorism tackling with this issue is getting more difficult both at the individual and state level. So at this point, there are many theories that try to explore or understand radicalization. By the way, I want to point out that if we define radicalization as a process by which an individual, or a group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social or religious ideas that reject the status quo or contemporary expressions of the nation; we cannot limit it to one religion as Islam or one ideology as Marxism etc.

Radicalization process differs for each person, although there are common underlying ideological, psychological and community-based factors contributing to one's susceptibility to terrorist propaganda. So generalization or stereotyping does not work as a solution; we need to develop tailor-made solutions. One of the tailor-made solutions can be gender based approach.

As I said that there are a lot of theories that try to explain the radicalization process including both cognitive and behavioral components that correspond to the legal criminal requirements of intention and action for terrorism. But I suggest that lack of gender based approach is leading to a gap in understanding of the phenomenon.

Although women have historically been participants in terrorist groups in Sri Lanka, Iran, West Germany, Italy, and Japan and other countries, very little scholarly attention has been directed toward the following questions:

1. Why do women join terrorist groups and what types of role do they play in these groups?
2. Why do terrorist organizations recruit and operationalize women?
3. How does this process proceed within societies that are usually highly restrictive of women's public roles?

Answering these questions may facilitate the creation of a comprehensive strategy for combating terrorism and limiting political violence. And I claim that gender-based approach in terrorism can give an answer to these questions.

In fact, women terrorists are a kind of “blind spot” in counterterrorism. According to research regardless of region/religion/ideology, women’s involvement in terrorist organizations highlights three main assumptions.

First, there is a general assumption that most women who become involved with terrorist organizations do so, for personal reasons, whether a personal relationship with a man or because of a personal tragedy (e.g., death of a family member, rape). Research shows that personal reasons are main motivators for women terrorists compared to men.

Second, because of traditional gender roles, women are not considered credible or likely perpetrators of terrorist violence. They can more easily carry out attacks and assist their organizations.

As a result, women are able to use their gender to avoid detection on several fronts: first, their “non-threatening” nature at the most basic level results in their being simply not considered important enough to warrant investigation; second, sensitivities regarding more thorough searches, particularly of women’s bodies, may hamper stricter investigation; and third, a woman’s ability to get pregnant and the attendant changes to her body facilitate concealment of weapons and bombs using maternity clothing, as well as further impeding inspection because of propriety issues.

Finally, popular opinion typically considers women as victims of violence, including terrorism, rather than perpetrators, when considering women from states and societies that are believed to be extremely “oppressed”.

At the Turkish National Police Academy, we conducted a lot of research on the main motivations of terrorists. We conducted a lot of interviews with convicted members of different terrorist organizations. So we found different ideological, political, social and individual reasons for joining terrorist organizations. Of course, the findings are more detailed and longer, but I will try to summarize the main motivations or reasons. Generally there is no concrete difference between men and women in some motivations, but in terms of gender roles we found out that some reasons can be different. For example exploitation or sexual abuse is an issue of prominence for women terrorists. It is interesting that this can be a reason before or result after recruitment of women in terrorist groups.

According to traditional gender roles women are viewed as having the tendency to refrain from high levels of violence and behaving moderate and compromisers. This approach can lead us to deny, ignore and diminish the potential of women in terms of violent extremism even though terrorism.

We can frame female radicalization considering “four R’s: Revenge- Redemption- Relationship-Respect”. According to gender based approach, we can suggest female terrorists emphasize personal playing stereotypes, which depoliticizes female violence as we see in PKK terrorist activities. In fact, women, like men, have political and personal reasons for choosing violent extremism. These reasons can be read as “gendered”.

Also I want to share the summary of findings of research we conducted on PKK and DAESH women terrorists as in two different ideological backgrounds. Female radicalization in terms of DAESH, was perceived to be driven by factors related to grooming and/or exploitation, the lure of marriage and the desire to achieve social status through association with a male jihadi. On the other hand, from the perspective of PKK women terrorists, the main motivation stems from anger and to stand against traditional role of women in their society. Both DAESH and PKK women terrorists declare their basic motivation as “emancipation and escape from their original social sphere”.

The research found frequent reference at the community level, socioeconomic disadvantage, a perceived lack of belonging and failed integration are important factors in radicalization. Especially failed integration and lack of belonging is common factor that relates both PKK and DAESH women terrorists. Personal discrimination (for example religious discrimination for DAESH women and ethnic/political discrimination for PKK women) and perceived injustice in state level makes radicalized individual as “active” in violent extremism.

Finally, I want to mention about the role of media that needs to be discussed. When one considers the role of the mass media in regard to countering terrorism one must remember that radicalization is first step of violent extremism and terrorism, so all of them have psychological dimension. Radicalization spread out by media to report actions and propaganda. The target society’s view of women as actors in general and as capable of violence within the receiving society in particular is crucial to how see the impact of the use of female participants in the terrorist organization. Terrorists’ being labeled as “hero”, “martyr”, “black widow” or “immortal” in media can attract women and can be an effective factor for women

radicalization. And as I said before since prevention of radicalization is easier and more effective than deradicalization/ rehabilitation or counterterrorism, I think firstly we should focus on this stage which is much more important than others.

I tried to summarize deep and long research findings about the reasons and recruitment of women in terrorist organizations in limited time. The main suggestion of my presentation is focusing on the importance of gender based approach in counterterrorism. I think this workshop is an indicator that we all are aware of this approach. In conclusion, in terms of preventing terrorism, it is time to focus on subtitles by now: such as youngsters, immigrants, minorities, women etc. under all these subtitles we need experts anymore. So gender analysis of terrorist women's experiences does not simply "add something" about counterterrorism, but transforms the things we know about general terrorist activities undertaken.

WOMEN AS RADICALISERS AND RECRUITERS

Ms. Anna Zizola

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Women's role in terrorist groups, especially in ISIS, cannot be confined within the concept of "jihadi brides". Women in the so-called Islamic State were active supporters, recruiters and radicalisers of other potential jihadists. The case of the Italian jihadist Maria Giulia Sergio, aka Fatima, sets a perfect example of women's active role in terrorist groups. Maria Giulia, Italian woman from a Christian family, managed to radicalise her whole family and convinced them to join her in Syria, where she was supporting ISIS as recruiter. Other women had an active role in spreading extremist messages on social media and in recruiting other women from Western countries. Many of them were converts coming from the UK, France, the US and other Western countries.

What led these women to Syria was not the mere fulfilment of a romantic dream, but a real political commitment, alongside a physiological push, which, according to my research results, stem from the optimal experience of the flow of consciousness, a state in which an individual feels fully alive and entirely absorbed by the excitement of a life project. As proved by several researchers who investigated the mechanisms behind the flow of consciousness, group dynamics facilitate this kind of optimal experience.

As regards the psychological push, some common psychological factors that contributed to trigger episodes of flow of consciousness among Western women terrorist fighters were as follows:

- need for romanticism and adventure / the presence of a mentor
- need to feel important / empowerment
- a fragmented conscious and a subconscious search for a more meaningful life
- subconscious depression that leads to self-destruction
- desire for adventure often due to a troubled childhood or a trauma

Women's Active Role Within ISIS

Within the so-called Islamic State, or Caliphate, women were not necessarily confined to their role of mothers and wives, but could have access to some institutional assets of the newly founded state, such as ISIS moral police, the Hisbah. Within the moral police, women were in charge of reporting and punishing women who were not complying with the Shari'a law. Another major role played by women was that of the online recruiters. Female recruiters used online platforms and chat-lines to celebrate terror attacks, condemn the "kuffar" (disbelievers) and convince other young women to leave the West and join the Islamic State.

Slogans such as the one shared by British recruiter Umm Muthanna al-Britannia "living the life", while brandishing an AK-47, succeeded in conveying a sense of empowerment to other women who dreamt of being part of a meaningful political project that would give sense to their existence. Martyrdom (shahadah) was also described as heroic and meaningful action that women could be allowed to perpetrate in the so-called Caliphate.

Flow

Hungarian-American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, one of the co-founders of positive psychology, was the first to identify and research the so-called flow experience. Flow occurs when your skill level and the challenge at hand are equal. Episodes of flow of consciousness result from the combination of cognition, emotions and motivation. The flow is a subconscious force, dominant over values, that leads to extreme experiences.

Professor Yuval Noah Harari, historian and philosopher, carried out research on what he defined as "combat flow", the flow experienced by soldiers during a conflict. American researcher Michael Condren studied the relevance of group dynamics in optimal experiences. In my research, I applied the same theories, with similar focuses, to the case studies analysed. Optimal experiences were present in all cases, even though described in different ways and triggered by different factors. Group dynamics always enhanced the feeling of empowerment in female subjects, who felt more confident and prone to engage in acts of violence in the name of the cause they were fighting for. The role of mentors within groups was deemed crucial in all analyses, as they contribute to facilitate flow experiences, by increasing the level of motivation, emotions and cognition among group members.

UNEXCEPTIONAL WOMEN: MAINSTREAMING 'FEMALE SUICIDE TERRORISM' (FST)

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Introduction

Women are involved worldwide in activities on behalf of terrorist organisations and have been crucial to these groups' successes. Until recently however, women's participation in 'suicide terrorism'¹ was considered a statistical anomaly and a deviation from standard operating procedures. In 2017, women carried out 17% of terrorist suicide attacks worldwide; between 2011-2017 of 338 suicide attacks carried out by Boko Haram, 244 were by women.² The conditions or criteria under which terrorist groups are willing to use women are expanding. ISIS appears to accept women's inclusion in suicide attacks when they occur outside their territories, no longer simply a last resort. Additionally, while some women are coerced into joining, and a minority appear to have had their suicide belts triggered by another³, women's testimony in the form of videos and letters declaring their agency and reasoning in carrying out the attacks, as well as decades of feminist research, makes it harder to paint women as victims.⁴ Consequently, women's participation in both terrorism generally and suicide attacks specifically can no longer be treated as an outlier. If terrorist organisations are mainstreaming women, then so should our analysis, and counter-terrorism measures.

Beyond a descriptive account of increasing significance there are three core relationships to analyse: the relationship between the group and individual in female suicide terrorism (FST); between systems of life and death; and, the attack and its aftermath. FST is a worldwide phenomenon, not limited to any one cause or ideology; this report focuses on groups linked to *jihadi*-inspired violence but does not prevent conclusions and discussion from being linked and associated with other forms of terrorism.

Relationship between Motives and Actions

Research and policy responses to FST are focused almost exclusively on the individual woman. Analysis and reporting trawls over personal history to determine what anomaly or trigger led a FST to this death.⁵ In cases of 'lone actor terrorism' and those of white men traveling abroad to join terrorist groups, we see similar focus on the individual, with priority given to deviant or toxic masculinity.⁶ Problematically this approach reinforces an exceptionalizing narrative that statistics show is inaccurate; prioritises personal and emotional at the expense of politics and reason; and downplays agency. This reinforces gender stereotypes without offering an understanding of FST.⁷

Given the diversity of women who participate in suicide terrorism, large data sets collecting bio-data of FSTs tend to result in over-generalisation and over-simplification of the complex variables and their relationships, but also learning from a small number of case studies is limited because there is no 'representative sample'. The other problem with focusing on the individual is that data are necessarily limited, as unless the women leave a video or written testimony, we rely on grieving family members' accounts or polemical literature from the group on whose behalf they acted, neither of which can be treated as 'reliable'. Even if they were reliable, we cannot assume alignment between the needs and motives of the

¹ Labelling: 'female suicide terrorism (FST) is common terminology, but 'suicide attack', 'suicide bomber' or 'martyrdom operations' are also used by different groups. David Cook, "Suicide Attacks or 'Martyrdom Operations' in Contemporary Jihad Literature," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no.1 (2002): 7-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/nr.2002.6.1.7>; Assaf Moghadam, "Defining Suicide Terrorism," in *Root Causes of Suicide Terrorism: The Globalization of Martyrdom*, ed. Ami Pedahzur (London: Routledge, 2006): 13-26.

² Jason Warner and Hilary Matfess, *Exploding Stereotypes: The Unexpected Operational And Demographic Characteristics of Boko Haram's Suicide Bombers* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2017).

³ This further highlights the debate over terminology. Remote triggering is difficult to conceive of as suicide. The term, 'human bomb' has been suggested by some.

⁴ Caron E. Gentry, "Recognizing Women's Agency in Terrorism", *COE-DAT Workshop Report on Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, (Ankara, 2019), 11-12.

⁵ Claudia Brunner, "Occidentalism meets the female suicide bomber: a critical reflection on recent terrorism debates; a review essay," *Signs* 32, no.4 (2007): 957-971, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/512490>

⁶ For a discussion on 'toxic masculinity' in terrorism and counter terrorism please see: Elizabeth Pearson, "Why Men Fight and Women Don't: Masculinity and Extremist Violence," *Myth Busting Series* (London: Institute for Global Change, 2018) <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/why-men-fight-and-women-dont-masculinity-and-extremist-violence>; Jossif Ezekilov, *Gender 'Men-Streaming' CVE: Countering Violent Extremism by Addressing Masculinity Issues* (George Washington University 2017). <https://pubs.lib.umn.edu/index.php/reconsidering/article/download/908/978/>; David Durie-Smith, *Masculinity and New War: the gendered dynamics of contemporary armed conflict* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁷ Gentry, "Recognizing Women's Agency in Terrorism"

individual attacker and the group. Instead we should focus on a milieu approach that allows for all of these issues through contextualization.⁸

Looking at group propaganda and actions can help us understand the decision to deploy a woman – to shame men into acting, to avoid detection and increase success rates of individual attacks, to deliberately highlight their cause (thereby picking women with the most traumatic lives). It's also interesting that attacks by women remain limited by the gender ideology⁹ of the group, resulting in all-female cells, family or 'couple' attacks (so women always travel with a guardian), which avoid battlefield exposure.¹⁰ This insight allows us to understand why many ISIS-affiliated women defended cities as combatants and suicide attackers in the early phases of military attacks against them, but as the campaign continued, women surrendered to invading forces to protect the future of the organisation – to be a 'living memory'. This is logical because women are seen as mothers who will train the next generation of fighters, and wider society and militaries tend to accept the surrender of women more readily. In other words, the gender ideology of the group matters in shaping both group and individual terrorist behaviours.

Relationship between Systems of Life and Death

There is a tendency to see suicide attacks as exceptional acts because of an orientalist¹¹ failure to see how death is normalised by terrorist organisations. Suicide terrorism begins to make sense when we understand the integration of systems of life and death.¹² Promises of 'paradise' by ISIS mean death is institutionalised as a feature of political life.¹³ In Arabic the term for martyr is, *shahada*, to witness; the martyr both witnesses and suffers death. The corpse becomes a transcendental witness to the cause, and it judges the living: "I died. Why not you?" This was made explicit following the suicide attack by Wafa Idris in 2002, by the commentary made to shame Palestinian men into volunteering.¹⁴ The suicide terrorist, through ritual and memorialisation, enters the collective memory of the group and becomes the sacred dead. They have larger cultural meanings than individual sacrifice, which are important in maintaining and advancing political power. For ISIS, this was made visible through support and status awarded to martyrs' widows, and for Hamas, in financial security given to their families. These secure a support base and also shape a political order based on sacrifice, collective assurance, and violence. This does not make groups that use suicide terrorism 'death cults', but sacred death does remake the political order. Understanding women and suicide-terrorism requires understanding the women who carry out the attacks, the widows of martyrs, and the wider gendered systems of life and death that support them. Put another way, gendered modes of belief that transcend the individual act shape the wider logic and purpose of FST.

Relationship between Attack and Aftermath

The obsession with FST leads to overestimation of influence and power, and of other 'high profile' women in terrorism.¹⁵ We ignore the wider function of suicide attacks and wider issues of violence that harm women and men.¹⁶ We are distracted from the ways in which terrorist and violent extremist organisations deliberately target women's rights and carry out gender-based violence.¹⁷ A 'matrix of violence' approach helps us focus on the wider human security needs of women living under conditions of terrorism and counter-terrorism. For example, during and post ISIS, there has been a significant increase in domestic violence.¹⁸ This is important: if domestic violence is seen as an acceptable approach to conflict resolution within the home, then it is unsurprising that violence is later used in the public political sphere. Domestic violence is less an

⁸ Elizabeth Pearson & Emily Winterbotham, "Women, Gender and Daesh Radicalisation," *The RUSI Journal* 162, no.3 (2017):60-72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2017.1353251>

⁹ Gender ideology is what the group considers acceptable and desirable relationships between men and women, distribution of resources between sexes, decision-making opportunities and associated behaviours of each sex.

¹⁰ See both Nelly Lahoud, "The Neglected Sex: The Jihadis' Exclusion of Women From Jihad," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26, no.5 (2014): 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2013.772511>; Nelly Lahoud, "Can Women Be Soldiers of the Islamic State?," *Survival* 59, no.1(2017): 61–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2017.1282675>; For a counter viewpoint to Lahoud, please refer to: Charles Winter, "ISIS, Women and Jihad" Breaking with Convention," *Myth Busting Series* (London: Institute for Global Change, 2018) <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/isis-women-and-jihad-breaking-convention>

¹¹ Orientalism is a set of discourses, with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles, that frame the Orient. The Orient is stereotyped, and always positioned as inferior to the West. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979, 1-3 and 5).

¹² Katherine E. Brown, "Gender and the Apocalypse in Daesh" (Paper presented at the *IAIS Visiting Speaker Series*, Exeter University, November 2018).

¹³ Charles Hirschkind, "Cultures of Death: media, religion bioethics," *Social Text* 26, no.3(96) (2008):39-58.

¹⁴ Dorit Naaman, "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: media, gender and performance in the case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers," *Signs* 32, no.4 (2007): 933-955, <https://doi.org/10.1086/512624>; Brigitte L. Nacos, "The Portrayal of Female Terrorists in the Media: Similar Framing Patterns in the News Coverage of Women Politics and in Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no.5 (2005):435-451, DOI: [10.1080/10576100500180352](https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100500180352)

¹⁵ Katherine E. Brown, "White Widows: The myth of the deadliest jihadi women" *Myth Busting Series*, (London: Institute for Global Change, 2018) <https://institute.global/insight/co-existence/white-widows-myth-deadliest-jihadi-women>

¹⁶ Katherine E. Brown, "Blinded by the Explosion? Security and Resistance in Muslim Women's Suicide Terrorism," in *Women in Global Terrorism*, eds. Laura Sjoberg, and Caron Gentry (Athens, Georgia, USA: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 194-226.

¹⁷ Secretary General UN *Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism*. A/70/674 (2015) https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674

¹⁸ Luisa Dietrich and Simone E. Cartr, *Gender and Conflict Analysis in ISIS Affected Communities of Iraq*, Oxfam Report (Oxford: Oxfam International, 2017) <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/r-r-gender-conflict-isis-affected-iraq-300517-en.pdf>

'early indicator' of a man's likelihood of committing an act of terrorism, given the high percentage of domestic violence in all societies, but does point to wider structural conditions in which violence is normalised. This means a human security agenda is vital for the fight against terrorism. Nearly a third of women who have been 'liberated' from Boko Haram have sought to return to the group because the underlying human security reasons for joining have not improved. As Halima Mohamed notes in her report, women of Al-Shabab often have more security, more freedom and more rights than women living outside of their territory.¹⁹ Additionally, focusing on how to stop individual attacks and attackers means less attention is paid to the wider impacts of counter-terrorism measures, including the disproportionate harm to women. The detention of wives, mothers and daughters of Boko Haram leaders by the Nigerian state (to get men to surrender) was one of the reasons given for the kidnapping of the "Chibok Girls". Additionally, rape, sexual assault and other gender-based violence carried out by state counter-terrorism forces against civilian populations, usually but not exclusively against women, are later used as a rallying cry by terrorist groups. In South Sudan in 2016, the UN reported 577 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including 57 girls, some under 10 years old, and even infants.²⁰ Women post-conflict, such as those returning from terrorist organisations (whether kidnapped or volunteers), and those who suffered sexual violence, face on-going stigma and serious unmet psychological and medical needs, because of taboos and a lack of women working in counter-terrorism. This highlights the need for security sector reform. To understand FST, we need to understand how wider human security needs, including those of belonging and welfare, are being met (or not) by the state and her forces.

Conclusion

When we consider women's involvement in suicide terrorism there are three 'lessons learnt' that could enhance counter-terrorism analysis and operations: we must look past individual motives and analyse group behaviours; we must understand how suicide attacks make sense when we consider wider modes of belief; and, understanding suicide attacks means not being 'blinded by the explosion', and thinking about violence more widely. What this brief analysis of FST shows us is that we must carry out gender mainstreaming in our counter-terrorism analysis, operations and strategies.

¹⁹ Halima Mohamud Mohamed, "The Role of Women in Al-Shabaab and in P/CVE in Somalia", *COE-DAT Workshop Report on Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism*, (Ankara, 2019), 38-41.

²⁰ The term 'conflict-related sexual violence' refers to rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and "any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity" inflicted on women, men, girls and boys directly or indirectly linked to a conflict. <https://www.passblue.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/N1708433.pdf>

WOMEN FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

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Women and Minors who Became Affiliated with ISIS

In July 2018 myself and Gina Vale at the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) established the first global dataset on women, minors, and total populations who traveled to ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and those who returned from 80 countries. The report is called, "From Daesh to 'diaspora': Tracing the women and minors of Islamic State."¹ In the first dataset of its kind it demonstrated women accounted for at least 13% of foreign ISIS affiliates, excluding citizens of Iraq and Syria who locally became affiliated with the organization. However, this is still a vast underestimation as reliable data for only 39 of our 80 countries was available – a significant number of countries simply don't account for, or distinguish, women who join or support political violence. The most significant region – the Middle East and North Africa Region – accounted for 15 countries and nearly 19,000 persons, yet only three countries distinguished figures for women. This is a significant concern and means we don't understand the problem of women's participation and support of ISIS fully, and we don't understand full scope of implications for these women and their countries of origin going forward.

Accounting for minors who became affiliated with ISIS – whether those taken by their guardians, who traveled independently, or those who were born into the organization via their parents – also faced a similar concern. Globally minors accounted for at least 12% of foreign affiliates (including those born there). However, only 26 of the 80 countries we examined had reliable and comprehensive figures available for minors suggesting this is a vast underestimation. Furthermore, we believe thousands of foreign children were born while their parents were in Iraq and Syria. We can confirm at least 566 Western European minors were born under 'the caliphate' of 1,500 accounted for. However, the most significant regions such as MENA have no public data available on this.

Women and minors who became affiliated with ISIS are a significant, multi-generational concern that we still do not yet fully understand in terms of scope and long term consequences. While we must view women and minors in ISIS distinctly in terms of their roles, motivations, and the responses we develop for them, we must also be conscious of the unique factors that pertain to women and their children. For example, the international legal norms pertaining to the separation of children from their mothers in cases of returnees, or the tendency by some countries to allow return of children, but not their parents.

Women and Minors Now

The current status of these women and minors is a matter of urgent importance. Of the 7,366 persons we accounted for as returnees (or who appeared to be in the process of returning) women were only publicly acknowledged as 4% of returnees (256). There are several explanations that may inform these low figures. Governments appear not to be publicly announcing this for various reasons – such as security or political (where the discussion of these figures may apply pressure on them to respond). However, for women who may have wanted to leave ISIS territory they faced additional challenges including restricted movement without a male guardian, travel with multiple children, or the high cost of human smugglers. With the final push to defeat ISIS in Syria at Baghouz, and ISIS loss of all remaining territory we have seen an increase of foreign women visible in these areas, who are now largely detained in region. SDF forces have stated they hold up to 4,000 foreign women and 8,000 minors. Yet, the future status of detainees in Syria remains precarious, and we have already seen some women escape from custody. Iraq is currently holding 1,400 foreign women and minors, and at least 100 foreign women have been sentenced to death.

There is a dilemma with what to do with women today. This has been seen most clearly with the case of Shamima Begum in UK today. She was a minor when she traveled, had three children while in Syria and Iraq, and lost all three.

¹ Joana Cook and Gina Vale, "From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State," *International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation* (2018). Available: <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICSR-Report-From-Daesh-to-%E2%80%98Diaspora%E2%80%99-Tracing-the-Women-and-Minors-of-Islamic-State.pdf>

There is now a legal dispute over the removal of her UK citizenship. She wants to come home, as do many of these women. Begum's case really captures the debate today: what to do with these women and minors? Should they be viewed as a threat? How should governments respond? Many cases prove as complex as her own. Furthermore, there is a dilemma with what to do with minors today. Many of these minors were born to foreign parents and many have the right to citizenship of one parent. There are also concerns related to orphaned minors being abandoned in the region. We must consider, are special concerns for young women, and girls in this category being acknowledged and responded to? There is also the concern of stateless minors, or those who cannot receive citizenship of mother like Jordan and Syria.

These women may be viewed as a security concern, and indeed *some* women may pose a security concern. A small proportion of women received some training in weapons handling, infiltration, and other military tactics. Some of these also held roles in *al-Khansaa* brigades and some have committed crimes as part of the organisation against local populations while 'policing' them. All who became affiliated with ISIS lent to the overall legitimacy and success of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. We have now seen women abroad in Kenya, France, Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia and the UK (amongst others) attempt to, or successfully perpetrate plots. However, in all these cases, these women were inspired by ISIS or linked to an individual to the group, and did not travel to/return from Iraq and Syria. However, while a large proportion of these women may not necessarily pose a security threat, though may still hold other concerns, including being invested in ideology of ISIS and caliphate, radicalizing their children or others, or assisting in direct or secondary roles as ISIS continues to be active in insurgent activities. Others may be disillusioned by their experiences, seek disengagement from ISIS and its ideology, and should be supported in their efforts to leave the group. For minors whose only identity may be that with ISIS they may be particularly susceptible to joining non-state groups, criminal activity, or experience a lack of community and belonging which will impact their status going forward.

Policy Implications of This and Preventing ISIS Going Forward

The above discussion raises a number of important policy implications. While we have to consider the shared push and pull factors that lent to so many women joining, simultaneously, we have to consider each woman and minor who became with ISIS on an individual basis and respond accordingly with tailored responses including prosecution, detention, deradicalization, rehabilitation and reintegration where appropriate.

We must better account for women and minors in non-state armed groups throughout the region going forward. This helps us better understand the structure, aims and ideology of these groups. This also assists us in creating more appropriate strategies to prevent and respond to these groups. It ensure that all lines of efforts being developed such as CVE, deradicalization, reintegration account for women and minors - including distinct needs of men and women, female and male children – based on their motivations to become affiliated with the group, the length of time with the group, and roles and experiences within this.

Foreign governments must take responsibility for their citizens recognizing the burden on local resources in Iraq and Syria, the future status of these persons in Syria, the contention with current legal processes in Iraq, and most importantly the right of victims of ISIS to receive the justice they deserve. There are both medium and long-term implications of leaving these foreign citizens in Iraq and Syria as discussed in the previous section. The status and activities of these foreign women in ISIS also prompt particular concerns about post-conflict stabilization, reconciliation, recovery and reintegration measures. Local female civilians suffered some of the worst atrocities under ISIS. Their needs and concerns must be accounted for, engaged and invested in responses going forward, and the important contributions they can make to prevent this group from reemerging, and helping their own society stabilize and recover from this period cannot be understated.

ADVANCING AND ADVOCATING WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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Introduction

This session addresses advancing and advocating women's rights not only in relation to "radicalization," but also more broadly in relation to terrorism and its responses. With respect to responses to terrorism, this includes both counterterrorism (CT) efforts as well as preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), given that advancing and advocating women's rights is relevant across all of these areas. Additionally, the discussion will focus on gender—understood as the social constructions of men's and women's roles—and is not limited solely to women's rights.

What is the foundation for the obligation to advance and advocate women's rights in the context of CT and P/CVE, including with respect to radicalization?

First, States are obligated under international human rights law to incorporate a gender perspective and analysis in their counter-terrorism and P/CVE policies.¹ While advocacy for the inclusion of a gendered analysis at times relies on efficacy arguments, human rights guarantees of non-discrimination and equality *require* that women participate in decision-making. A range of United Nations (U.N.) Security Council resolutions address this obligation as well.² Also significant is the U.N. Secretary General Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism³ presented to the U.N. General Assembly on January 15, 2016.⁴

In their analysis entitled "Gendering Counterterrorism: How to, and How Not to," Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby analyze "opportunities in integrating gender in counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) across a number of areas," as well as "challenges in addressing gender dimensions in each of these areas," concluding with "how a human rights and gender-sensitive way forward might look."⁵ These gender and human rights impacts result both from policies and practices that are directly gendered and also gender neutral with gendered effects; additionally, these impacts encompass both civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.

These opportunities and challenges identified⁶ include the following:

1- *Failure to fully recognize women as victims, including the full range of harms they suffer as victims:* even when women victims of terrorism and violent extremism are recognized, there are gaps, such as: a focus on sexual violence to the exclusion of other harms; failure to recognize gender-based violence against men; and lack of attention to everyday acts of systemic gender-based violence as well as social and economic inequalities that disproportionately impact women and that potentially influence the decision of individuals to join terrorist groups. As a result of these gaps, victims do not receive the full range of legal and social protections and are denied the right to remedy.

2- *Instrumentalist approach:* "using" gender equality as a counter-terrorism tactic, rather than advancing and advocating for the promotion of gender equality as an obligation in itself.⁷ The lack of attention to gender inequalities in society can also contribute to the decision of some women to join terrorist groups when, for example, they perceive that joining these groups will provide opportunities for greater gender parity.

3- *Women as perpetrators:* when it is not recognized that women are also perpetrators, there is a failure to fully understand the conditions that lead women to perpetrate violence. This failure rests on the assumption that, for example,

¹ See, e.g., Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, *Rep. of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/31/65 ¶ 56(c) (Apr. 29, 2016); Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, *Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism*, U.N. Doc. A/64/211 21 (Aug. 3, 2009).

² See Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby, *Gendering Counterterrorism: How to, and How Not to—Part I*, JUST SECURITY, May 1, 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/55522/gendering-counterterrorism-to/>, for a discussion of the most relevant resolutions

³ U.N. Secretary-General, *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism*, U.N. Doc. A/70/674 (Dec. 24, 2015).

⁴ Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/en/plan-action-prevent-violent-extremism> (last visited Feb. 25, 2019).

⁵ Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby, *Gendering Counterterrorism: How to, and How Not to—Part I*, JUST SECURITY, May 1, 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/55522/gendering-counterterrorism-to/>; Fionnuala Ní Aoláin and Jayne Huckerby, *Gendering Counterterrorism: How to, and How Not to—Part II*, JUST SECURITY, May 3, 2018, <https://www.justsecurity.org/55522/gendering-counterterrorism-to/>.

⁶ Unless otherwise cited, the below comes from *id.*

⁷ See Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism* (New York: NYU School of Law, 2011), available at <https://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/locatinggender.pdf> (discussing instrumentalization).

women do not have agency and are all “jihadi brides” or conscripted to join ISIS, rather than understanding that they might join due to other reasons, including ideological commitment or social ties.⁸ This failure also limits the effectiveness of gender-sensitive prevention efforts and DDR (disarmament, demobilization, reintegration) programs.

4- *Women as peacemakers and, more broadly, as actors in CT and P/CVE formation and implementation*: while women’s participation and leadership in CT and P/CVE spaces both online and offline is an essential component of gender mainstreaming, women have generally been excluded from participating fully in such efforts, in violation of the State obligation to ensure non-discrimination and equality. In addition, national security policies, including on P/CVE, do not fully account for gender discrimination and other structural issues that impact women differently; for example, most P/CVE national actions plans do not mention at all or very minimally mention gender and gender equality. A further example of the failure to promote women’s participation in this context can be seen in the context of countering terrorism financing regulations that criminalize terrorist financing through “material support laws” and often prevent women’s groups, including the very ones that engage in P/CVE efforts, from receiving funding.⁹ These groups are thus unable to engage in their work.¹⁰ This impact is felt particularly acutely by women’s civil society organizations that are typically smaller and less financially resilient, making it more difficult to meet compliance requirements associated with counterterrorist financing rules.¹¹

5- *Women as victims of national security policies and practices*: States themselves can commit gendered human rights violations in the name of national security with different impacts for women depending on factors including race, religion, ethnicity.¹² The above example of countering terrorism financing regulations is one key illustration of this.

⁸ See, e.g., Jayne Huckerby, *Gender, Violent Extremism, and Countering Violent Extremism*, JUST SECURITY, Mar. 3, 2015, <https://www.justsecurity.org/20620/gender-violent-extremism-countering-violent-extremism-cve/>.

⁹ Duke Law International Human Rights Clinic and Women Peacemakers Program, *Tightening the Purse Strings: What Countering Terrorism Financing Costs Gender Equality and Security* (2017), available at <https://law.duke.edu/sites/default/files/humanrights/tighteningpursestrings.pdf>.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.* at 38-39.

¹² See generally Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, *A Decade Lost: Locating Gender in U.S. Counter-Terrorism* (New York: NYU School of Law, 2011), available at <https://chrj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/locatinggender.pdf>.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR) CONTEXTS FOR REINTEGRATING FEMALE MEMBERS OF TERRORIST GROUPS

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Between 2011 and 2016, over 42,000 individuals from more than 120 countries joined terrorist organizations abroad.¹ While the majority of foreign fighters are men, recent years have seen the rising participation of women.² An estimated 7,300 foreign fighters are reported to have returned to their home countries.³ Returnees include children born to women who were part of the terrorist group.

The rates of return of women and girls are highly variable between countries and regions. In Southeast Asia, for example, up to 59% of returnees are women.⁴ Some of these women were coerced into joining. Others joined of their own free will, and some followed their husbands. Some of the women returning may be disillusioned and afraid. Others may still have ideological, familial or financial ties but be returning because the terrorist group has been weakened.⁵

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes from post-conflict contexts have long grappled with how to integrate combatants, including females. This paper discusses three key lessons from DDR processes that can and should be applied to the disengagement and reintegration of former terrorists. First, when DDR programmes are not gender sensitive, they do not work for women. Second, a whole of community approach is necessary to ensure the successful integration of men and particularly women. And lastly, in order to take gender into account and engage the whole community, reintegration processes must include women from the beginning, and in every stage of the process.

Processes to reintegrating ex-combatants versus former terrorists: what's the difference?

DDR is widely recognized as one of the key components of a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction strategy and usually follows a peace process and peace agreement. As such, there has been a process that acknowledges and legitimates the grievance of an armed group. This is not the case with terrorist groups. There has been no peace process, and these individuals are not seen to have a legitimate grievance.

DDR programmes are generally guided by a peace agreement and laws and policies which detail how they operate. The most successful DDR programs are ones where the key terms of the DDR arrangements form part of the peace agreement, which has the buy-in of all relevant parties to the conflict. In the case of returning foreign fighters, there is often no clear process with how to deal with them. While global guidelines are beginning to be developed,⁶ even when national policy and programmes exist, they are not well known. This is an area that lacks transparency and data.

Some returning foreign fighters may never come out of jail. Here we need to be careful to prevent radicalization in prison. But some may eventually be released and need to be reintegrated, both economically and socially. It is here that we can draw from DDR programmes in order to ensure disengagement and reintegration policies and programmes prevent further violence and radicalization, mitigate the rise of new splinter groups, and promote social cohesion in societies that are fractured and divided by mistrust.⁷

¹ Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Responses to returnees: Foreign terrorist fighters and their families" (July 2017) available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf

² Data from Syria and Iraq suggests that 10-13 percent of those who joined ISIS between 2013 and 2018 are women: ICSR (2018), From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State, available at <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICSR-Report-From-Daesh-to-%E2%80%98Diaspora%E2%80%99-Tracing-the-Women-and-Minors-of-Islamic-State.pdf>

³ Ibid

⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) Report, Invisible Women: Gendered Dimensions of Return, Reintegration, and Rehabilitation (2019), available at https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/ICAN_UNDP_Invisible_Women_Report.pdf

⁵ Ibid

⁶ For example, the UN's "Key Principles for the Protection, Prosecution, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with links to United Nations-listed Terrorist Groups" (April 2019).

⁷ UNDP-ICAN Report, Invisible Women, 15.

1. When DDR programmes are not gender sensitive, they do not work for women

One of the most reported aspects of the Nepali war between the government security forces and Maoists was its high levels of female participation. Official records put this at about 30% although during the height of the conflict some observers put the estimates around 40%. The Maoist's egalitarian ideology with its promise of gender equality, social justice and social inclusion was appealing to women. Many women saw in the Maoists an opportunity to escape from early or forced marriage, domestic violence, polygamy or the difficult rites and rituals surrounding widowhood. But the bulk of the recruitment took place in the rural and remote areas where there was extreme poverty. Here, the Maoist's targeted recruitment drive required families to contribute at least one family member towards the cause. In many instances, families gave the least valued member of the family - usually the daughter. Women had little say in the matter. As a result, there were large numbers of female recruits from the indigenous communities.⁸

Maoist women were very visible as combatants. There were several female section commanders and vice commanders, and to encourage women's leadership, there were also separate women's sections within brigades, and female only squads and platoons with large numbers of local level female cadres. Despite their subordinate status in Nepali society, within the rank and file, once recruited, women tended to be highly valued and seen as more loyal and disciplined than men.⁹

Having played an integral and equal role alongside men in determining the future of their country, the expectations of Maoist women were high. However, the design of Nepal's reintegration programme lacked a comprehensive understanding of women's roles in combat, and importantly, a deep political resistance to changing gendered norms and power relations. Women were given reintegration packages that included training for stereotypical gender roles. The vast majority of female cadres simply became invisible and quietly returned to their communities deeply stigmatized and disempowered. For many of these women, their lack of skills, access to capital, credit or land pushed them back into the poverty they knew before the war, which many had joined the war to escape in the first place.¹⁰

Experience from Nigeria suggests that this phenomenon carries over to other types of extremist groups. Some women report joining Boko Haram for material and social opportunities not available in their own villages, where they have little access to education or economic empowerment. After their participation in extremist groups, these women return to societies where poverty and social marginalization remain unchanged. Some women have even returned to Boko Haram after completing deradicalization programs.¹¹

The Nepal case shows how women can be both victims and perpetrators of violence – and in many cases, both at the same time; how women may join up voluntarily, motivated by political or social agendas, or be compelled or forced into joining; and how conflict can challenge traditional gender norms, imposing new responsibilities and providing new opportunities compared to the pre-war status quo. Thus, it is essential to understand the multifaceted and complex roles of women in conflict and peace in order to properly design and implement successful and inclusive DDR programmes. With respect to terrorist groups, most intelligence has focused on male recruitment. The ways in which women have been targeted and co-opted have often been overlooked in the information gathering and analysis. Policy makers and governments need to better understand their motivations for joining in order to develop programmes that address women's specific grievances.¹²

Programmes also need to consider how the experience of being part of an armed group may have shifted gender dynamics. Current DDR measures often attempt to return women to the positions they held before the conflict; however, conflict changes not only society, but the women involved in violence. DDR programs that ignore the advancements women make during conflict, and which pressure them to turn to their "proper place" in the home and private sphere fail women. The results of leaving terrorist organizations must outweigh the benefits of staying—for many women, leaving means they will lose power, face social misery, and be offered programs which do not even meet their needs.

⁸ Roshmi Goswami "UNSCR 1325 and Female Ex-Combatants – Case Study of the Maoist Women of Nepal" (2015): 4-5. available at <http://wps.unwomen.org/pdf/research/ROSHMI.pdf>

⁹ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰ Ibid, 10.

¹¹ Hilary Matfess, "Rescued and Deradicalised Women Are Returning to Boko Haram. Why?," *African Arguments*, 1 November 2017, available at <http://africanarguments.org/2017/11/01/rescued-and-deradicalised-women-are-returning-to-boko-haram-why/>; Rebecca Turkington, "Disengaging and Reintegrating Women Extremists", 8 May 2018, available at <https://giwps.georgetown.edu/disengaging-and-reintegrating-women-extremists/>

¹² UNDP-ICAN Report, Invisible Women, 44.

2. In reintegrating women, the support of the community is key

For former combatants and terrorists, the support of the community and family is key to successful reintegration. The transition from violent groups back into the community relies on social institutions to offer non-extremist social networks, economic support, and resources that can positively influence the process of reintegration. Despite the importance of social reintegration to successful reintegration of ex-combatants, female ex-combatants are frequently left to struggle on their own. Women's reintegration is often conceptualized as both a moral and natural thing, whereas men's reintegration is recognized as difficult and important to facilitate.

In Uganda, the government carried out a 20-year conflict against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). One of the hallmarks of the LRA was the abduction of children. Children were seen as easier to manipulate than adults, and the LRA used them to replenish its ranks and force them into combat. Girls abducted by the LRA underwent "military training" but were also forced to become "wives" or sexual slaves of LRA fighters. They usually stayed with the same fighter during their entire time in captivity.

During the reintegration of LRA members, the package for returnees was the same for women and men and failed to address the many unique issues female ex-combatants faced. These included less likelihood of remarrying due to social stigma; the contraction of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (including HIV/AIDS) as a result of sexual exploitation during their captivity; and the challenge of reintegrating with children. Many of the women reported being shunned by their families, who refused to accept responsibility for their children, often referred to as "rebel children", "bush babies" or "Kony's children".

Pregnant women or those with small children returning from terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and ISIS faced similar problems. Research in relation to women returning from Boko Haram shows communities that may be willing to take back returnees but are often wary about accepting their children, who are seen as 'tainted by terrorist blood'. Boy children in particular are regarded with suspicion, as men inherit property in most villages. All this points to the importance of the community for successful reintegration and the need for a whole of community approach when implementing disengagement/deradicalization and reintegration programmes.¹³

Women living in communities play essential roles in determining the success or failure of reintegration programs. When researchers in Sierra Leone asked predominantly male ex-combatants to identify those who played a significant role in helping them reintegrate, 55% named women in the community. Only 20% cited community or traditional leaders, while 32% cited international aid workers. Respondents said community women—including some working through civil society organizations—provided guidance, shared resources, and, facilitated their skills training and education by providing childcare, clothes, and food.¹⁴

Further, women act as community gatekeepers, carrying determinative moral authority, dictating whether returning fighters will be welcomed or ostracized. Women religious leaders, psychologists, teachers, elected officials, civil society leaders, and others can influence who is welcomed into—or back into—communities. Successful reintegration of returnees depends on buy-in from such women, and programmes should consult with women community leaders to ensure they understand and support reintegration. Existing local women's organisations and networks can also act as mediators between the community and the rehabilitation programmers and ex-combatants.¹⁵

Furthermore, women's recidivism is reduced when they have access to peer networks and associations. Women demonstrate a higher tendency to join extremist groups through personal connections. This can have significant implications for how they exit groups, since familial and social ties may be difficult to break, even in cases of disillusionment or cognitive shift. Social science research indicates that women are generally more reliant than men on peer groups and are quicker to form and depend on networks. Individuals go from being part of a group identity and established command structure – from which many derive a strong, positive sense of belonging and solidarity – to a feeling of stigma and a loss of belonging. Losing these forms of support and identity has a particularly acute impact on women's risk of recidivism and recruitment into organized crime. For example, demobilized FARC women in Colombia placed in government-funded homes for female former combatants have indicated these facilities are helpful in strengthening the development of peer networks.¹⁶

¹³ Turkington, "Disengaging and Reintegrating Women Extremists".

¹⁴ Jacqueline O'Neill, *Engaging Women in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration: Lessons from Colombia* (2015): 2, available at https://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Policy_Recommendations_Colombia_DDR.pdf

¹⁵ Rebecca Turkington and Agathe Christien, "Women, Deradicalization and Rehabilitation: Lessons from an Expert Workshop" (April 2018): 6.

¹⁶ Ibid, 5.

3. Women must be included at all stages of the DDR process

In order to take gender into account and engage the whole community, reintegration processes must include women from the beginning and in every stage of the process. The inclusion of women in the peace process from the start of the peace negotiations, and the involvement of gender experts in the rehabilitation planning and implementation processes are essential for effective DDR programmes.

In El Salvador, where high-ranking women in both FMLN (the armed opposition group) and the government were active participants in all phases of negotiations, it was observed that the mere presence of women at the negotiating table was critical as female negotiators were able to object when it became clear that other negotiators had assumed that the only beneficiaries of reintegration benefits would be men. Women had not been included in the agreed list of beneficiaries. In the end, female members of the FMLN received one-third of land redistribution and reintegration packages either as combatants or collaborators.¹⁷

Evidence from the field suggests that women are more likely to participate in DDR programmes with a greater female presence and more likely to speak to other women – particularly in relation to issues of sexual violence, reproductive health and other intimate matters. It is important that the necessities of female former terrorists are not spoken for by men. Designing DDR programs and “pull” initiatives for women with women, especially those who have been involved in such groups themselves is critical for success.

Thus, governments, policymakers and practitioners need the participation of women leaders, former terrorists and civil society organizations in the design of disengagement, deradicalization and reintegration processes to make sure they respond to the specific needs and grievances of women. This requires clear policies and transparency. Input from women and women’s civil society should be deliberately solicited and incorporated into all CT/CVE/PVE planning from the outset.

DDR processes can have a profound effect on women. Women, likewise, can have a profound effect on DDR processes, often determining their level of success or failure.

¹⁷ Democratic Progress Institute, “DDR and Former Female Combatants” (2016) available at <http://www.democraticprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/DDR-and-female-combatants-paper.pdf>

ADVANCING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN COUNTER-TERRORISM: THE UNITED NATIONS PERSPECTIVE

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The United Nations Security Council recognizes the “many different roles, including as supporters, facilitators, or perpetrators of terrorist acts” that women play in relation to terrorism and that require tailored and gender-sensitive counter-terrorism responses.¹ Women are also critical actors in counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE). Both the Security Council and the United Nations system as a whole have made a clear commitment to enhancing women's participation and leadership in efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism.

I. Security Council Framework

As part of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda pursuant to resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions, the Security Council stresses the importance of women's equal participation and leadership in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. The participation of women is essential for the realization of women's human rights and has also been shown to enhance the effectiveness of peace and security efforts.

Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) is a landmark resolution, which recognizes the linkages between countering terrorism, and the WPS agenda. The resolution urges Member States and the United Nations system to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism, including through countering incitement to commit terrorist acts and other appropriate interventions and through building women's capacity to do so effectively.

In the resolution, the Council recognizes the differential impact on the rights of women and girls of terrorism and violent extremism and expresses deep concern that sexual and gender-based violence is known to be a part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups. It specifically calls for greater integration by Member States and the United Nations of their agendas on WPS and on counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism. It also requests the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue throughout all its activities.

The Council has also urged Member States and the United Nations — including CTED, in collaboration with UN-Women — to conduct gender-sensitive research and collect data on the drivers of radicalization for women and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organizations in order to develop targeted and evidence-based policy and programming responses.

The importance of women's participation and leadership in counter-terrorism and CVE efforts has also been emphasised in other Council resolutions on terrorism. In relation to the challenge of returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), for example, resolution 2396 (2017) encourages Member States, as well as international, regional and subregional entities, to ensure participation and leadership of women in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies for returning and relocating FTFs and their families. Further guidance on gender- and age-sensitive responses to the return of FTFs is provided in the *Addendum to the guiding principles on foreign terrorist fighters (2018)* adopted by the Counter-Terrorism Committee in December 2018.²

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on preventing violent extremism (PVE) emphasize the importance of including women in efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism.³

¹ S/RES/2396 (2017), para. 31.

² <https://spark.adobe.com/page/PLwseyOu5efSm/>.

³ https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/72/284; https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674.

II. Women's Roles in Counter-terrorism and CVE

Women are making a critical contribution to countering terrorism and violent extremism. They are at the forefront of civil society efforts, working to build more resilient communities and making an essential contribution to prevention efforts, often at great risk to their own security. Women researchers and academics are advancing our understanding of terrorism, including, but not limited to, its gender dimensions.

However, we should not think of women's participation as confined to the civil-society sphere (as important as the latter is). Women's full participation includes participation in all aspects of counter-terrorism, from policymaking, to the judiciary, to law enforcement, intelligence services and the security sector. It requires women's participation at all levels of seniority, including in decision-making positions. True participation and leadership mean that women get to shape policies and programmes, not just help to implement them.

III. What Difference Does Women's Participation Make?

There are both rights-based and operational arguments for enhancing women's roles in counter-terrorism and CVE.

Ensuring the participation and leadership of women is a matter of women's rights and gender equality. However, this will require more than just increasing the number of women in counter-terrorism institutions or co-opting women into existing approaches. It will require real and meaningful change designed to ensure that women are no longer mere "subjects" of counter-terrorism policies, but rather active agents of change in the design of such policies.

Ensuring equal opportunities for women's participation is thus also an opportunity to improve counter-terrorism and to rethink existing practices that have fallen short. Women diversify the perspectives and expertise that can inform policies and responses, engage with a broader range of stakeholders, and operate in areas that may be restricted by cultural or religious sensitivities. Gender-sensitive CVE needs to address local dynamics and local drivers of radicalization and be tailored to local contexts in order to be most effective. Women's civil society groups operating at the local level play a key role in this, as they have local knowledge and enjoy the trust of, and access to, local communities.⁴

In order to strengthen trust between police and communities, police forces must be representative of, and have access to, the populations under their protection. Women's participation in the military and police has been shown to improve how local communities perceive security forces. This, in turn, improves the latter's ability to provide security. Women in law-enforcement and security forces are more likely to reduce the occurrence of human rights abuses, can access marginalized communities, and can limit the use of excessive force.⁵

This is particularly important since violations of human rights, including when committed in the name of countering terrorism, have been shown to be among the most powerful drivers of radicalization towards extremism.⁶

In short, women's leadership can help to ensure that counter-terrorism efforts are human rights compliant, better tailored to individual needs and local contexts, more geared towards addressing root causes, and thus more effective and sustainable.

However, it is important to stress that recruitment of women as a standalone measure is not in itself sufficient. Being a woman does not make one a gender expert, nor is it incumbent on women to ensure that counter-terrorism measures are gender-sensitive. Both women and men serving in counter-terrorism roles must receive the appropriate gender-sensitive training that addresses a broad range of issues (e.g., gender-sensitive screening at borders, investigation techniques, witness-protection measures (including in cases of sexual violence), and gender-sensitive prosecution strategies).

IV. Risks and Challenges Associated with Women's Participation in Counter-Terrorism

Despite the wealth of arguments in support of women's enhanced participation in counter-terrorism, there continues to be resistance to their inclusion due to political backlash and structural barriers inherent to a system of patriarchy. There is a need to address not only the challenges involved in efforts to increase the number of women involved in counter-terrorism, but also the numerous related risks, including stereotyping and the instrumentalization and securitization of women's engagement.

⁴ <https://www.icanpeacework.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ICAN-UNDP-Rehabilitation-Reintegration-Invisible-Women-Report-2019.pdf>.

⁵ CTED Trends Report: Gender Dimensions of the Response to Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Research Perspectives, pp. 19-20, available at https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Feb_2019_CTED_Trends_Report.pdf.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme, 'Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment,' 2017, p. 73.

Women's effective participation in counter-terrorism and CVE offers opportunities for their empowerment. However, it should not be seen as a substitute for a comprehensive women's rights' agenda and giving women greater say in formal governance institutions, including the security sector.

Analysis has shown that gendered assumptions underlie many CVE programmes. Based on such assumptions, it is often believed that women are inherently more peaceful than men and that, if empowered to do so, they can stop radicalization to violence. The overemphasis on the role of mothers in CVE programming is a typical example of this. Such simplistic assumptions risk perpetuating gender stereotypes and may undermine efforts to achieve gender equality.⁷

Many women's civil society organizations struggle to secure funding for women, peace and security work unless it is tied to CVE. There is therefore a risk that the CVE agenda will be imposed on them, potentially instrumentalizing and securitizing local peacebuilding initiatives.⁸

To overcome some of these risks, it is essential that women be included in, and lead, the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CVE programmes in order to ensure that women are agents and leaders, rather than merely subjects, in CVE.

V. Way Forward

The United Nations system, including CTED, remains committed to enhancing women's participation and to ensuring that gender is integrated across all counter-terrorism and CVE efforts.

For CTED, this includes redoubling its efforts in three key areas of its mandate:

- **Assessment work.** CTED's core mandate is to conduct expert assessments of Member States' implementation of key Security Council resolutions aimed at countering terrorism and violent extremism. Although gender is already integrated as a cross-cutting issue in CTED's country assessments, the CTED Executive Director recently pledged to further strengthen CTED's efforts in this area and to increase the number of recommendations made to Member States concerning gender-sensitive counter-terrorism and CVE policies and any technical assistance needed in this area.⁹
- **Research and trends analysis.** CTED is the lead United Nations entity tasked with identifying trends and emerging issues in the area of counter-terrorism. As such, it is committed to deepening the evidence base on the drivers of female radicalization to terrorism and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights by gathering and disseminating gender-sensitive research and by organizing relevant research-focused events aimed at bringing the latest findings to the attention of policymakers.
- **Engagement with civil society.** In accordance with the Security Council's mandate, CTED remains committed to strengthening its outreach to women's civil society organizations with a view to ensuring that women's and girl's voices are heard and that women and girls can, on a voluntary basis and within a safe space, contribute to the development of strategies to counter-terrorism and violent extremism.

CTED also continues to work closely with UN-Women as a key partner in advancing gender mainstreaming in countering and preventing terrorism and violent extremism.

CTED recognizes that there remains an urgent need to better understand the drivers of female radicalization, the different roles women play in relation to terrorism and violent extremism, and the differential impact of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights. CTED will also continue to support efforts to ensure that women's potential as agents of change in preventing and countering terrorism is fully realized.

⁷ CTED Trends Report, p. 18.

⁸ Duke Law International Human Rights Clinic and Women Peacemakers Program, *Tightening the Purse Strings: What Countering Terrorism Financing Costs Gender Equality and Security* (2017).

⁹ <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/news/2019/04/23/high-level-commitments-event-women-peace-security-preparing-20th-anniversary-security-council-resolution-1325/>.

ENHANCING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COUNTERTERRORISM: NATO PERSPECTIVE

Ms. Clare Hutchinson

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

Terrorism and NATO

- Through the Wales summit in 2014, the Alliance agreed that "Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity as a persistent global threat that knows no border, nationality or religion and is a challenge that the international community must tackle together"¹.

- The primary responsibility to defend citizens and state territory against terrorist attacks lies with individual states. However, there is a clear role for international organisations to play to complement the work of individual states.

- Although NATO has recognised terrorism as a relevant threat since 1991, it was only after the attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, that the Alliance addressed the fight against terrorism through a structured and focussed approach.

- The 9/11 attacks prompted NATO's first, and to date only, invocation of its collective defence mechanism, Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

Why do we need to enhance women's participation? And what role can international organisations play?

- First, we need to consider the different roles women play in relation to terrorism and violent extremism.

The many roles women can play

- Women can play a number of roles:

- ♦ They can be **perpetrators of terrorism**, they can be sympathisers or enablers and they can be mobilisers.
- ♦ They can be **survivors and victims of violence**, and they can be the target of restrictions on women's rights.
- ♦ They can also be **preventers**, peace activists and community leaders.

- We often focus heavily on women as victims and survivors. But I'd like us to think about the other roles women play, as perpetrators of terrorism and violent extremism and as preventers.

Women as terrorists

- Women's participation in political violence and terrorism is not new.

- The first person to be tried in a court of law for terrorism was Vera Zasulich, a Russian anarchist who was charged with attempting to assassinate the governor of St. Petersburg.

- There has been a steady rise in the number of women suicide bombers.

- And a steady rise in the number of western women joining violent extremist organisations.

- In 2005, Muriel Degauque became the first western female suicide bomber. Degauque was a Belgian baker, who married a Muslim man and quickly became radical in her religious views. She committed a suicide car bomb attack against a US convoy in Baghdad.

¹ Wales Summit Declaration, 2004, https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

• One of the most infamous women terrorists of current times is Samantha Louise Lewthwaite/Sherafiyah Lewthwaite/ the White Widow

• Lewthwaite is a British woman who is one of the Western world's most wanted terrorism suspects – being accused of causing the deaths of more than 400 people.

Women as victims and survivors

- Women and girls are often directly targeted by extremist groups.
- Sexual and gender based violence (SGV) is a deliberate part of the ideology and strategic objectives of some terrorist groups.
- Daesh and other groups have used SGV as a means of attracting and retaining combatants by promising wives and sex slaves to its fighters.
- Sexual slavery/trafficking in human beings is a major source of financing for terrorist organisations.

Women as preventers and agents of positive change

- As mothers, daughters, wives and family members, women play a role in spotting the early signs of radicalization, they play a preventative role in stopping family members from joining violent extremist organisations and they can prevent family members from participating in terrorist activities.
- As teachers, community organisers and leaders, women counter and prevent fundamentalist ideology.
- As religious leaders, women embed gender equality principles, uphold women's rights and counter religious fundamentalism.

So what do these multiple roles tell us?

- We must not view women as only fulfilling one role – women play multiple roles.
- We must integrate a gendered perspective across all efforts to counter violent extremism and terrorism – it allows us to respond better and smarter to today's many complex security challenges.
- If we fail to recognise fully the many roles women play, and we fail to integrate gender throughout our work to counter violent extremism and terrorism, we will fail to protect women, we will fail to leverage the full prevention capacity provided by women, and we will fail to combat women terrorists.

UN Global Counter-terrorism strategy and the UN framework on WPS

- In 2000, the UN Security Council kick started the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Through the adoption of resolution 1325, the Security Council sought to address the absence of discussion and understanding of the impact of conflict on women.
- Since 2000, there have been many successive Security Council resolutions that have moved the WPS agenda forward.
- Most recently, the Security Council adopted resolution 2242 (2015) which was the first attempt to develop a framework on the WPS agenda in addressing terrorism and violent extremism. Resolution 2242 made a number of recommendations regarding women's roles in combatting terrorism and violent extremism and highlighted the need for a differentiated gender sensitive understanding of counter violent extremism work.

- Key issues addressed in resolution 2242:

- ♦ The need for greater funding to further gender equality and women's empowerment,
- ♦ Greater integration of WPS, counter terrorism and countering violent extremism by states and the United Nations,
- ♦ Integration of gender as a cross-cutting theme in counter terrorism and countering violent extremism,
- ♦ Ensuring participation and leadership of women and women's organisations in establishing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.

- The UN General Assembly adopted the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, which shifted the focus from a reactive stance to a more preventative approach. This global approach aimed to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter terrorism.

- Fast forward to 2016, and General Assembly adopted its Fifth Review Resolution on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, building on the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and Security Council Resolution 2242.

- The Review noted that acts of sexual violence and gender-based violence are a financing and recruitment strategy used by some terrorist groups. The Review therefore urges all states to:

- ♦ Emphasise the significant role of women in addressing terrorism and violent extremism;
- ♦ Integrate gender analysis to study the impact of radicalization of women to terrorism and the impacts of counter-terrorism strategies on women's human rights and women's organisations;
- ♦ Consult with women and women's organisations when establishing counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism strategies.

What does NATO do to support these efforts?

- NATO, as a political-military Alliance, has unique strengths to contribute to the Global Counter-terrorism Strategy through supporting prevention efforts and building states' capacity.

- NATO reviewed its contribution to counter-terrorism efforts and in 2012, the Alliance adopted its Counter Terrorism Policy Guidelines. The approach focuses on three pillars:

- ♦ Awareness of the threat through intelligence exchange;
- ♦ Capabilities to ensure NATO action remains possible despite terrorism;
- ♦ Engagement with partner nations and other international organisations to ensure a cohesive international approach.

- In May 2017, NATO Heads of State and Government endorsed an ambitious and detailed Action Plan to enhance NATO's role in international efforts to counter terrorism. This was updated in November 2018.

- This action plan aims to strengthen and expand NATO's contribution to the broader international fight against terrorism including the areas of awareness, assessment, preparedness and responsiveness, capability development, cooperation with and capacity building on behalf of partners and support to operations.

- NATO recognises the need to understand gender better in order to better prevent and respond to violent extremism and terrorism.

- NATO ensures that we incorporate a gender perspective into our awareness and analysis. We are developing gender sensitive early warning indicators, which feed into our intelligence gathering and analysis.

- The Alliance ensures that a gender perspective is incorporated into our counter-terrorism work, and that we ensure our work does not have an adverse impact on women and girls.

- Through our NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme we have undertaken several projects to consider how women can play a greater role in prevention. An advanced research project led by Morocco and the United States looked at the prevention of recruitment of women to Daesh and other terrorist groups – focussing on concrete measures to prevent women and girls travelling to join terrorist groups as well as how to respond to the tactics used by ISIS to recruit women and girls.

- Another SPS project led by Spain and the United Arab Emirates, focussed on ways to enhance the role of women in countering violent extremism.

- NATO also provides a wide range of training and education opportunities in the field of counter-terrorism to its Allies and Partners.

Conclusion

- The fight against terrorism and violent extremism requires a whole of society approach.

- Women make unique and valuable contributions to various aspects of countering terrorism, including analysis, field work and policy development. They also play vital roles in prevention.

- Women's empowerment and participation are crucial for countering terrorism and violent extremism. When women are empowered socially and economically, violent extremism is less likely to spread.

- We therefore need to increase the participation of women in counter terrorism and NATO will continue to encourage its Allies and Partners to do more to engage women and to systematically ensure gender integration.

UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION

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OSCE

Thank you to the organizers for inviting me to take part in this event. I am really pleased that we are finally exploring a broad range of women's roles – their involvement in violent extremism and terrorism as perpetrators and as victims, but also women's roles in Preventing/Countering Violent Extremist Radicalization Leading to Terrorism (P/CVERLT).

I have centred my intervention around three simple questions: **the what, the why and the how.**

I shall start with my first question: **What are we talking about, when we refer to the role of women in P/CVERLT?**

Women, just like men, have embraced or fallen into various roles: as active or passive participants in violent extremist and terrorist organizations. 1 in 5 who joined ISIS from Europe was a woman. In 2017, women conducted 11 per cent of all suicide attacks. In 2016, women constituted 26 per cent of all those arrested on terrorism charges in Europe, up from 18 per cent the year before. Some have been victimized on a massive scale. Others have been, and continue to, work relentlessly to prevent the spread of violent extremism. In other words, women are crucial anti-terrorism messengers, too. And yet **as a group, women in terrorism and counter-terrorism** have often been invisible to law and policymakers on both national and international levels.

I need to make it clear though: we need to accept that women's engagement in violent extremist organizations is very complex. It is not just a binary issue of perpetrator vs victim. As a result, our response must be **nuanced**; our response needs take into account individual experiences of the person. Just to illustrate: are we talking about someone returning from the conflict zone with three children, or a right wing violent extremist who has actively recruited others and who committed hate crimes.

Women's organizations have been engaged in PVE for a very long time. In fact, they got engaged in PVE long before the international community established this as a term. Yet surprisingly this fact tends to be overlooked. And only recently the topic of women's engagement and efforts in P/CVERLT has started being recognized. We still have a long way to go, but small steps have been made: there is now more research into the role of women in terrorism; more research and publicity surrounding the role of women in PVE; the UN Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) has just established a small team of two which will focus on the role of women in PVE.

Let me go to my second question – why - why do we need to talk about this?

It has been almost 20 years since the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted **UNSCR 1325** on WPS and four years since UNSCR 2242 explicitly addressed the need to increase the role of women in P/CVERLT issues.

The **UN Plan of Action on PVE** of 2016 explicitly addressed the importance of taking the role of women seriously in P/CVE efforts. Yet in one of the most important tools that states have – their national action plans on P/CVE – just a handful of countries bother to recognize the role of women.

There is no doubt that international conferences and workshops like this one are important in order to review the state of play and to share good - and bad - practices because women continue to be underrepresented and underestimated in nearly all security settings and discourses. Even in civil society, where women's organizations have been active on this issue for years, sometimes at great personal cost and risk, the role of women continues to be overlooked by policymakers.

So why do we need to recognize the role of women and in fact engage more women in PVE?

- Because women bring **additional perspectives** to the table;
- Because they **contribute to debunking stereotypes and ensuring that women's needs are taken into account**;

- Because women in the security sector - female police officers, female investigators and managers will not only provide a **different perspective** to countering violent extremism, but also be **perceived differently in the local community**;
- Because mixed teams are more likely to establish **trust relationships** with local communities.

In other words, **gender diversity creates efficiency**. It is by now well known that a diverse security sector equals a better policing response that is able to meet the needs of the entire population. This is also true when it comes to countering violent extremism and terrorism. And yet, despite all the arguments speaking in favour of having more women engaged in CT, we need to continue to make the case for the inclusion of women, because despite all the evidence, progress has been slow and very uneven.

This brings me to the third question that I would like to discuss today: how do we put knowledge into action?

First, let's briefly review what we know:

- Research and data clearly show that gender diversity in building peace and security increases efficiency and sustainability.
- We know that progress in attracting more women into law enforcement structures has been very limited and uneven.
- That strategies to attract women into law enforcement academies have to be adjusted because traditional – or stereotypical - recruitment campaigns that aim at a young male audience simply do not work for women.
- We know that the police in many countries have a reputational problem. Women constitute only ten percent of police services worldwide. The situation is somewhat better in Europe where about 20 per cent are women.
- We know that typical law enforcement approaches may in fact be counterproductive and may not be conducive to community outreach and trust building.
- And we also know that community outreach and trust are vital components of a holistic approach to preventing and countering violent extremism.
- We know that women's organizations must have the space, safety and security awareness to implement their prevention activities in local communities.
- Women's organizations often face specific gendered concerns.
- We know that women returning from the conflict zones often have specific gendered concerns that must be taken into account when devising rehabilitation and reintegration systems.

To put it differently, we know the what, the why and even the how. Let me now explain how we approach the issue in the OSCE.

Since not all of you might be that familiar with the OSCE, let me say a **few words about the Organization**. The OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization that brings together 57 participating States and 11 PfC. The OSCE is a field based organization. The majority of our colleagues are deployed in 16 Field Offices (FOs) in 4 sub-regions: South-Eastern Europe (SEE), Central Asia (CA), Eastern Europe (EE) and South Caucasus (SA). The OSCE has embraced a comprehensive approach to security, taking into account not only politico-military, but also economic and environmental, as well as human rights aspects.

The OSCE approaches gender dynamics in violent extremism and terrorism from several angles: **awareness-raising, capacity-building, and practical tools**.

National seminars on a whole-of-society approach to P/CVERLT. The OSCE has organized over a dozen national seminars. We bring together a wide range of national actors from the security sector, health and education providers and civil society and invited a number of international experts to discuss good (and bad) examples from various OSCE participating States of how implementation of national action plans look at the national and local levels. These seminars,

which are usually held during, or right after, the drafting of a national action plan on P/CVE, have an explicit component on gender mainstreaming and recognizing the role of women in the security sector. These seminars also promote joint reviews and joint implementation of strategies and action plans.

Community Policing. The OSCE has published a very comprehensive handbook on Community Policing and P/CVERLT which is translated into several languages. It is an excellent resource for anyone looking at how to improve local partnerships between civil society and authorities/police. **Furthermore, our TNTD has developed a training course specifically for community policing officers on P/CVERLT.** It goes without saying that gender diversity among the community policing officers is important. In fact, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo held specialized training courses only for women community policing officers on P/CVERLT.

The '**Leaders Against Intolerance and Violent Extremism**'. **LIVE project** is a civil society initiative that engages community leaders. The project aims at empowering youth, women and community society leaders to effectively, safely, and voluntarily speak out, mobilize others, promote and undertake civil-society-led local-level initiatives against VERLT across the OSCE area. What I would like to highlight here is that a special curriculum has been tailored to **the needs of women leaders and organizations**. The curriculum was piloted and finalized last year with participants from six different OSCE pS. The LIVE courses will over the coming period be rolled out through OSCE field operations and partner organizations in a series of train-the-trainer seminars. Our LIVE curricula can be used not only by the OSCE, but also by partners who have their own funding with the objective of making the courses more sustainable.

The OSCE is publishing a **series of handbooks for policymakers and practitioners**, some of which are regionally tailored:

- Civil society engagement in P/CVERLT regionally tailored to SEE and CA
- Referral mechanisms and pre-criminal interventions. (Recently launched in SEE)
- Rehabilitation and re-integration (upcoming)

Last but not the least: Understanding Gender in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Good Practices for Law Enforcement. This handbook is the result of a long-standing effort to collect data from across the OSCE region. We wanted to consider a wide range of challenges that security sector actors working on P/CVERLT face in applying gender-sensitive approaches in their work. The handbook consists of numerous case studies which demonstrate that it is essential to fully integrate a gender perspective into P/CVERLT strategies, policies, programmes and projects in order to increase their effectiveness and sustainability. The handbook also provides policy recommendations and tools to help law enforcement actors integrate gender awareness into their P/CVERLT work.

In closing, I spoke about the what, the why and even the how. The bad news, is that despite all the facts being on the table, political will is still not there and very few governments actually 'walk the talk'. While expert analyses and statistics consistently show that women's involvement is crucial, women continue to be excluded from decision-making processes and often forgotten as a group in fora where policies are elaborated and debated.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AL-SHABAAB AND IN PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SOMALIA

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1. Introduction

Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (al-Shabaab) came together in late 2005 following the overthrow of its predecessor, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). The group has continually posed a threat to the internationally recognized Somalia Government, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the international community.

2. Role of Women in al-Shabaab

a. Marriage Life

The primary role for women in al-Shabaab is as wives to its operatives. Al-Shabaab takes women as young as 14 years old as wives. Normally, al-Shabaab members approach members of the immediate family of the girl they want to marry to seek consent and no girl is forced to become an al-Shabaab wife. However, in areas under al-Shabaab control the immediate family members feel that they cannot say no when approached by al-Shabaab members seeking to marry their women. In such cases, the family members are known to pressure their girls/women to accept and become wives to al-Shabaab members. This is done to ensure that the families maintain favor with the al-Shabaab administration.

Life for women in al-Shabaab controlled areas is limited to taking care of their husbands and children. The women are not allowed to interact with men who are not their husbands as per Sharia law.

b. Hierarchy

There is a hierarchy amongst the women whereby an Umm Shabaab 'Mother Shabaab' is in charge of the women and provides them with their monthly dues whenever their husbands are on the front line. Umm Shabaab also presents any problems the women might be having to the al-Shabaab administrators.

In case of family dispute, cases are dealt with by the clan-elders, but if they cannot resolve the issue it is escalated to the Kadhi court system. The al-Shabaab Kadhi court system is highly respected and its rulings are normally honored.

c. Role in Operations

While there are not any women training camps in Somalia, some women are trained by their husbands at home on basic security and use of weapons. Women's role in al-Shabaab operations is mostly to provide logistical support in terms of securing safe houses, transporting weapons and hiding al-Shabaab operatives especially in areas not under control of al-Shabaab both in Somalia and externally. Additionally, wealthy women have been known to provide funding to the group.

d. General Feeling of As-Wives

A significant number of women in al-Shabaab approve of the majority of their (aS) actions and like living under 'Sharia' law. However, certain actions by al-Shabaab are not approved by the women especially the indiscriminate killing of al-Shabaab members suspected of being spies, the prosecution of dissenting voices within al-Shabaab and the killing of fellow non-combatant Muslims.

3. Case Study of Female Al-Shabaab Operatives

a. DUSIT D2 Attack

On 15th January 2019 at 1430 hours, al-Shabaab launched an attack on 14 Riverside Drive in Nairobi. The attack commenced with one al-Shabaab operative 'suicide bomber' blowing himself outside Secret Garden restaurant followed by four al-Shabaab gunmen armed with AK 47s storming the location. The attack ran into the early hours of the following day resulting in the death of 21 civilians and the five al-Shabaab attackers.

(1) The Role of the Female Operative

Violet Kemunto aka Khadija aka Deej was the highest profile female known to be involved in the DUSIT D2 attack. Khadija is a University Graduate with a degree in Journalism and Public Relations. Khadija was the wife to the leader of the attack cell Ali Salim – who died during the attack. Khadija and Ali got married in early 2018 in a Kenya – Somalia border town then moved to Nairobi. The duo was believed to have been involved in a number of plots in Nairobi including a foiled VBIED plot in February 2018.

Following that failed VBIED plot, the duo was involved in the plotting and execution of the D2 attack. Specifically, Ali and Khadija used their house at a Nairobi suburb as a safe house for the other D2 attackers as well as to store weapons for the attackers. The other attackers unlike Ali, arrived in Kenya a few days prior to the attack and were housed by the duo (Ali and Khadija).

Khadija for her part conducted reconnaissance of the DUSIT complex a week before the attack. Khadija visited a salon in the complex as part of her reconnaissance using the visit to take cell phone video and photos which would later be passed to the attackers. Two days prior to the attack, Khadija left Nairobi and crossed into Somalia a day after the attack. Meanwhile, Ali – her husband led the attackers during their assault on the complex.

(2) Analysis of the Role Played by Khadija

i. Providing Cover for Action

Ali and Khadija lived together in a house at the outskirts of Nairobi for a few months. The house was a stand alone unit with a fence around it which provided some level of privacy to the couple. The presence of Khadija lowered Ali's profile in the area making it easier to blend in as they gave the appearance of a regular married couple which would normally not bring undue attention from the neighbors and/or security personnel.

ii. Reconnaissance

Khadija's biggest role in the DUSIT D2 attack was to conduct reconnaissance on the complex before the attackers went in. Khadija discretely filmed the security procedures at the complex using her cell phone. The video was then used for planning and during the execution of the attack. Khadija was able to collect 'intelligence' from the site without raising suspicion probably due to the fact that she is a woman and able to blend in.

b. 'White Widow'

Samantha Louis Lewthwaite is arguably the most famous western female terrorist affiliated operative in the world. Samantha was born 5th December 1983 in Northern Ireland and converted to Islam in her late teens. In 2002, she got married to Germaine Lindsay. In 2005, Lindsay took part in the 7/7 bombings in London. He conducted a suicide bombing onboard a train travelling between King's Cross and Russel Square tube stations killing 26 people.

(1) Al-Shabaab Association

Following the 7/7 London attacks not much was known of Samantha's actions until 2011 when she reemerged working closely with an al-Qaida/al-Shabaab cell active in South Africa, Tanzania, Somalia and Kenya. Up until 2011, Samantha and a group of al-Qaida operatives to include Comoros born senior leader Fazul Abdallah Mohamed aka Harun Fazul were living in South Africa. During that time, they set up networks for terror financing, planned attacks and obtained weapons. Additionally, members of the cell including Harun Fazul and Samantha obtained South Africa passports.

Based on her irregularly acquired South African passport, Samantha probably left South Africa in February 2011 arriving in Kenya on 26th February 2011 via Tanzania. Samantha and the other operatives then crossed over into Somalia.

On 7th June 2011, Fazul, Musa Hussein – a Kenyan/Somali operative and personal assistant to Fazul and an unknown person were stopped at a security checkpoint in Mogadishu at around 2300 hours. Reportedly, they refused to comply with the orders and the car was shot at killing Fazul and Musa Hussein while the third occupant escaped.

Following, this incident, Samantha is likely to have left Somalia with a group of al-Qaida operatives loyal to Fazul who felt that he (Fazul) was set up by the al-Shabaab leadership following disagreements. According to her travel document Samantha was back in Kenya on 25th August 2011.

Between August and December 2011, Samantha was part of a cell involved in plotting to launch a series of attacks in Mombasa, Kenya. Other members of the cell included Jermaine Grant and Fuad Manswab who left Somalia with her following the death of Fazul. Also in the group was Samantha's husband at the time— name unknown.

In late December 2011, the plot was disrupted by Kenya police and members of the group including Jermaine Grant – UK citizen, Fuad Manswab – Kenyan were arrested while Samantha and her husband got away. On 4th January 2012, Samantha was charged in absentia and an arrest warrant issued on the charges of being in possession of explosive making material.

(2) Samantha's Role in the Disrupted Attacks

Investigations revealed that Samantha played a role in obtaining safe houses for members of the cell, hosting operatives as well as financing the plot. Samantha, her husband and three children used to live together at a house in the Mombasa suburb of Nyali. The house was semi-isolated which offered them operational cover. Additionally, the house was used to store money, communication devices and weapons that would have been used during the attacks. It was assessed that given her profile, Samantha likely took part in the reconnaissance and identification of the target areas. Following the disruption of the attacks, Samantha fled the country and has not been linked to further attack plotting in the country.

4. The Role of Women in Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in Somalia

Women, whether they are combatants or survivors, peace-builders or bystanders, must play a role in the war against terror. Women and men have different experiences in violent conflicts. To begin with, women very often suffer more than men and are more likely to be victimized.

Given that women with links to al-Shabaab have aided the group, conduct operations especially in areas outside their jurisdiction i.e. in Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) controlled areas of Somalia as well as externally, it is vitally important that women specific P/CVE projects are conducted. Within Somalia, P/CVE projects targeting women have to be designed and run by women given the environment.

40

Women have influence on their sons and husbands. Their natural persuasive power can be put into use to counter radicalization. Inclusive counter terrorism measures are now necessary. Women involved in peace building tend to gravitate towards sustained inter-faith and intra-faith relationship building, approaching peace work from a holistic perspective. Their abilities to reach across lines of difference in tense environments, lead non-violent protests, and mobilize communities, as well as their engagement with the theological aspects of gender roles in peace, hold the promise to change discourse and preconceptions about how religious organizations can be involved in peace building.

Women's roles vary between societies. In Somalia, as mothers and wives they can act as powerful role models against violent extremism, as the shapers of family and social norms, and promoters of tolerance and societal engagement. Mothers in particular possess the unique ability to recognize the early warning signs of radicalization in their children — behaviour change, whereabouts and dressing, among other visible changes. They know who their children's friends in school, madrasa, the mosque and so can play a key role in curtailing extremism. However, women lack the skills to intervene because of their triple reproductive, productive and community roles. More women are joining the workforce in formal and non-formal employment. They need to be equipped and supported in their efforts to prevent their children from joining extremist groups, and also to build their own capacity to reject the influence of extremism and violence.

Women's skills and social positions give them different perspectives on issues of peace and conflict, and across the globe, women have demonstrated their abilities to achieve common ground and work effectively to better their communities in instances where men have failed. In Kenya, for example, there are cases of success in curtailing extremism where women have taken the lead. Such success can be replicated in Somalia given the opportunity.

In October 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, urging its member states to ensure the full inclusion of women in all aspects of international peace and security processes. Somalia needs to comply with UNSCR 1325 and include women in all areas of peace and security processes in order to fully prevent and counter violent extremism.

5. Conclusion

The use of women in A.S as combatants is a recently new tactic by A.S and is extremely worrying. Previously, women in A.S controlled areas of Somalia only used to be involved as home-makers for their combatant A.S husbands and their children. Their roles were limited to domestic matters which is similar to the role of women in Somalia generally. However, the recent use of women as combatants as evidenced above demonstrates the dynamic shift in roles of women. Therefore, there needs to be a shift in the role of women in P/CVE. Currently in Somalia there is a returnees program that offers amnesty to men that are former A.S combatants who denounce their allegiance to the group. There is no such program for women due to them being not seen as combatants. Such a program, led by women should be the first of many women led initiatives that can help in P/CVE in Somalia.

WOMEN IN COUNTER-TERRORISM: AN OVERVIEW

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Introduction

This note provides a short overview of the roles women have played in operational counter-terrorism, specifically in the areas of policing, intelligence and the military.¹ Within the research field on terrorism, while the majority of the previous focus has been on male terrorists, there is an increasing level of research on women terrorists.² However, less research has been conducted on the role of women in counter-terrorism, and much of this is focused on their role in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).³ Far less examination has been conducted on the involvement of women in the operational roles outlined.

Historical Background: Women in the SOE

Although not terrorism, the utility of women to fulfil specialist operational roles, as agents and in combat, was previously demonstrated by female members of the United Kingdom (UK) Special Operations Executive (SOE) during the Second World War (WWII).⁴ With most of the selection and training conducted in the mountains and lochs (lakes) of the Scottish Highlands,⁵ this required them to complete an arduous commando selection course alongside male colleagues, before training in parachuting, weapons, explosives, unarmed combat, radio communication and agent tradecraft.⁶ Despite their different backgrounds, many were highly decorated and are remembered to this day for their courage and devotion in the face of extreme hardship. Examples include Violette Szabo GC⁷, Nancy Wake GM⁸, Hannah Szenesh⁹ and Noor Inayat Khan GC¹⁰. Of SOE's 55 women agents, 13 were killed in action, 12 by execution, and two died from disease.¹¹

Policing

Since WWII, women have gradually played an increasingly active role in policing, at least within the UK and in most western countries.¹² Currently the Commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police is Cressida Dick and as well as leadership, women officers have played key roles in uniformed response policing, community engagement, investigations and intelligence analysis.¹³ As the following examples show, women officers are also fulfilling more tactical roles:

a. Metropolitan Police SCO 19. The elite Specialist Firearms Command (SCO 19) of the Metropolitan Police recruit female officers who undergo the same selection and training as their male colleagues.¹⁴ This includes women officers amongst the most highly trained Counter-Terrorist Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFOs).¹⁵

b. Turkish Police POH. The Turkish Police Special Operations Department deploys female firearms officers within its *Özel Harekat Tim* (Special Operations Teams) in front line roles.¹⁶

¹ Hannah West, "Women and War: After Afghanistan, there's a chance to deploy gender-led approaches to conflict", *The Conversation*, Sep 22, 2017, <https://the-conversation.com/women-and-war-after-afghanistan-theres-a-chance-to-deploy-gender-led-approaches-to-conflict-79954> (accessed on 08 June 2019).

² Margaret Gonzalez-Perez, *Women and Terrorism: Female activity in domestic and international terror groups* (London: Routledge, 2008).

³ Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Sara Zeiger, and Rafia Bhulai, eds., *A Man's World? Exploring the Roles of Women in Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism* (Hedayah & The Global Center on Cooperative Security 2016), https://wiisglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/AMansWorld_FULL.pdf (Accessed on 10 June 19).

⁴ Beryl E. Escott, *Heroines of SOE: Britain's Secret Women in France* (Stroud: History Press, 2010).

⁵ Stuart Allan, *Commando Country* (Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland, 2007).

⁶ Terry Crowdy, *SOE Agent: Churchill's Secret Warriors* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2008).

⁷ R. J. Minney, *Carve Her Name with Pride* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2013).

⁸ Russell Braddon, *Nancy Wake: SOE's Greatest Heroine* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009).

⁹ Hannah Senesh, *Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary, The First Complete Edition* (Woodstock VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004).

¹⁰ Shrabani Basu, *Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan* (New York: Omega Publications, 2007).

¹¹ Marcus Binney, *The Women who Lived for Danger: Behind Enemy Lines During WWII* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002).

¹² Sandra K. Wells, Betty L. Alt, *Police Women: Life with the Badge* (Westport CT: Prager Publishers, 2005).

¹³ Carol A. Archbold and Dorothy Moses Schulz, "Research on Women in Policing: A look at the Past, Present and Future," *Sociology Compass* 6, no.9 (2012): 694-706.

¹⁴ "Met Police wants more female firearms Officers," *Sky News*, 10 Nov 2018, <https://news.sky.com/video/met-police-want-more-female-firearm-officers-11549414> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

¹⁵ Stephen Smith, *Stop! Armed Police! Inside the Met's Firearms Unit* (Marlborough: Robert Hale, 2013).

¹⁶ See 7.62 Productions, "POH Turkish Police Special Operations Unit – Polis Özel Harekat," 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI0X89zCB4E> (Accessed on 09 June 2019).

Intelligence

In many countries, women have long fulfilled key counter-terrorist roles within intelligence.¹⁷ This is perhaps highlighted by the previous appointments of Dame Stella Rimington¹⁸ and Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller¹⁹ as Directors of the UK Security Service (MI5) and the current Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Gina Haspel.

a. Intelligence Analyst. The role of an intelligence analyst is to collate disparate information from different sources, and to then evaluate, interpret and analyse it, often under time pressure and operational constraints.²⁰ While there are many women involved in such roles, arguably the diversity for such a role is deeper and is by personality type rather than gender. The intelligence analyst role requires patience and mental dexterity, which some more operationally orientated counter-terrorist practitioners are not suited to.²¹

b. Surveillance Team Operator. Women operators have also been active in surveillance teams.²² Mixed teams are often less suspicious and a man and a woman sitting in a car are far less conspicuous than two men.²³ This was highlighted by a French police specialist who explained to the author that as well as national level tactical firearms, the French RAID intervention unit could be used for surveillance. However, he explained that the highly trained and muscular male RAID team members stood out on the street, as they did not look like ordinary members of the public. Consequently, in a very hostile environment, specialist female surveillance operators were regularly utilised as part of UK 14 Intelligence Company operations to counter the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) in Northern Ireland.²⁴ Women now serve in its successor, the Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR).²⁵

Military

In many countries, women have served for years in various military roles, however, more recently they have become increasingly involved in direct operational roles and this has become the subject of significant debate.²⁶ The following examples from different countries and cultures highlight the breadth of operational roles that women fulfil in the military, and more specifically the agency and utility that women operators bring to these roles:

a. Norwegian Jegertruppen

Although all combat positions have been open to female applicants in Norway since 1984, in 2015 the law changed, extending conscription to include all women. It is the first European and NATO country to make military service compulsory for both sexes. In 2014, the Norwegian *Forsvarets Spesialkommando* (FSK-Norwegian Army Special Forces) established the all-woman Ranger Troop ('Hunter' Troop- *Jegertruppen*) based at Rena Leir Camp.²⁷ The unit was initially established as a one-year pilot programme, but it was later extended and in 2017 declared a success. The Troop's main role is to conduct Special Reconnaissance (SR) in and around urban areas.

Combat experience in Afghanistan, in particular the FSK support to Afghan National Police (ANP) Crisis Response Unit (CRU)-222 in Kabul, highlighted the need for women operators, both to engage with local women to gather community intelligence and to assist with women and children.²⁸ Initial screening for the Troop takes five days and includes medical and psychological checks and a series of initial physical tests. Successful candidates then complete a three-week pre-selection course, teaching military patrol skills, before completing 'Hell Week'. Candidates are subjected to severe physical and mental tests. This includes load bearing marches over several days in difficult terrain with limited sleep and food.

¹⁷ See "The Role of Women in Intelligence," *Public Safety*, 7 Sep 2018, <https://inpublicsafety.com/2018/09/the-role-of-women-in-intelligence/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019) and Amy J. Martin, "America's Evolution of Women and their Roles in the Intelligence Community," *Journal of Strategic Security* 8, (2015), <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1479&context=jss> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

¹⁸ Stella Rimington, *Open Secret: The autobiography of the former Director-General of MI5* (London: Arrow Books, 2002).

¹⁹ Eliza Manningham-Buller, *Securing Freedom* (London: Profile Books, 2012).

²⁰ James B. Bruce and Roger George, "Professionalizing Intelligence Analysis," *Journal of Strategic Security* 8, no.3 (2015), <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1454&context=jss> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²¹ "Do Women Make Better Spies?," *Washingtonian*, 2 April 2013, <https://www.washingtonian.com/2013/04/02/do-women-make-better-spies/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²² "Mobile Surveillance Officers", *MI5*, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/careers/mso> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²³ "MI5 Recruits Women at the Gym," *The Times*, 17 July 2006, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/mi5-recruits-women-at-the-gym-g2bj0kd79gk> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²⁴ Jackie George, *She Who Dared: Covert Operations in Northern Ireland with the SAS* (London: Leo Cooper, 1999) and James Rennie, *The Operators: Inside 14 Intelligence Company- The Army's Top-secret Elite* (London: Century, 1996).

²⁵ Sean Rayment, "Army Reveals Secret Elite Unit that Puts Women on Front Line", *The Telegraph*, 04 September 2005, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1497590/Army-reveals-secret-elite-unit-that-puts-women-on-front-line.html> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²⁶ "All British Armed Forces Roles Now Open to Women", *British Army*, <https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2018/10/women-in-ground-close-combat-roles/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

²⁷ Kevin Ponniah, "Meet the Hunter Troop: Norway's Tough-as-Nails Female Soldiers", *BBC News*, 31 March 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39434655> (Accessed on 07 January 2019).

²⁸ Elisabeth Braw, "Norway's 'Hunter Troop': The World's First All-Female Special Forces," *Foreign Affairs*, 8 February 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/norway/2016-02-08/norways-hunter-troop> (Accessed on 07 January 2019).

If successful, ten months of continuation training follows. This includes courses on patrolling, survival, shooting, communications, medical skills, parachuting, winter warfare, close quarter battle and urban reconnaissance; All tested in a final exercise.²⁹ Final physical tests include marching 15km with a 22kg backpack in two hours 15 minutes, 50 sit ups and 40 push ups each in two minutes, six pull ups, a 3km run in 13 minutes and swimming 400m in 11 minutes, the first 25m underwater. *Jegertroppen* are generally aged between 19 and 27 and are often previous high school athletes.³⁰

b. Jordanian Female Engagement Team

Jordanian forces served as part of US led Task Force Spartan in Eastern Afghanistan. Jordan also contributed Special Forces to Task Force 111 deployed in Qalat, Zabul Province in the South and Task Force 300 in Helmand Province, SW Afghanistan. These forces were primarily tasked with community engagement, utilising Civil Affairs and PSYOPS in order to counter grassroots support for the Taliban in their regions. Much of this focused on engagement with women and children in the local community.³¹

Jordanian women officers from the Female Engagement Team proved indispensable for such roles because they had access to areas that their male colleagues were barred from. More importantly, they could directly engage with women and children in the local community. To help communicate with the locals, the Jordanian Female Engagement Team operators took a five-week intensive course in the Pashto language along with a study of local Afghan traditions. When necessary, the Female Engagement Team operators also conducted searches of local Afghan women and children and engaged with them during house to house searches.³²

Jordanian Special Forces Command believes that the role of the Female Engagement Team in building trust with the rural women in their operational areas was instrumental in weakening the appeal and support for the Taliban locally.

c. South Korean Special Missions Battalion

The 707th *White Tiger* Special Missions Battalion is the Republic of Korea's Tier 1 Special Operations Force, responsible for the full range of SOF roles including Counter Terrorism (CT).³³ The unit contains an all-female Company of Special Forces operators.³⁴ They are specifically used in CT operations, for both surveillance and if necessary direct action, where the presence of women is not perceived as posing a threat by the terrorist. For example, disguised as airline flight crew.

d. UK Royal Military Police (RMP) Close Protection Unit (CPU)

The RMP CPU are responsible for the Close Protection (Bodyguarding) of senior British military personnel and high-level diplomatic staff operating in high threat environments. The unit contains a number of female operators.³⁵ All volunteers for the RMP CPU (regardless of gender) undergo the same physically and psychologically demanding selection course to become close protection officers, with a high failure rate.³⁶ Women CPU operators have been deployed in both plain clothes and uniformed close protection roles around the world.³⁷

e. Israeli Search and Rescue Brigade

In Israel, unmarried and medically fit women regularly serve as both conscripts and reserves in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), often as instructors/trainers.³⁸ Along with three regional commands, the Home Front Command contains a highly trained force of specialists in the IDF National Search and Rescue Brigade. The Brigade's units can rapidly respond to the aftermath of either a natural disaster or a terrorist incident, both in Israel and abroad. The original Search and

²⁹ Details from *Forsvaret*, "Jegertroppen i Forsvarets spesialkommando," <https://forsvaret.no/jegertroppen> (Accessed on 07 January 19).

³⁰ On average around a dozen *Jegertroppen* candidates out of 300 pass the annual selection and training process.

³¹ Details for this section mainly taken from Maxim Shepovenko, "Jordanian Joint Special Operations Command" in *Elite Warriors: Special Operations Forces from Around the World*, eds. Ruslan Pukhov and Christopher Marsh (Minneapolis: East View Press, 2017), 164.

³² See Government of Canada, "Improving security through female engagement with the Jordanian Armed Forces," <https://ml-fd.caf-fac.ca/en/2018/06/14778> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

³³ Jeremy Bender, "This Incredible Special Forces Battalion is One of South Korea's Top Lines of Defence", *Business Insider*, 13 October 2014, <https://www.businessinsider.com/south-korean-special-forces-training-2014-10?r=US&IR=T>

³⁴ "Fierce Female Fighting Forces", *Special Forces News*, Aug 2015, <https://www.specialforcesnews.com/2015/08/fierce-female-fighting-forces/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

³⁵ "RMP Showcases Close Protection Unit Skills," *Forces Network*, 5 April 2018, <https://www.forces.net/news/rmp-showcases-close-protection-unit-skills> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

³⁶ "Lover and a Fighter: Royal Military Police bodyguard turned ski champion, turned entrepreneur – The unstoppable Polly Wilton", *Womanthology*, 23 December 2015, <http://www.womanthology.co.uk/lover-and-a-fighter-royal-military-police-bodyguard-turned-ski-champion-turned-entrepreneur-the-unstoppable-polly-wilton/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

³⁷ "Military Police & Close Protection", British Army, Women 100, 05 July 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQSkFT3_wLA (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

³⁸ Orna Sasson-Levy, "Feminism and Military Gender Practices: Israeli Women Soldiers in Masculine Roles," *Sociological Inquiry* 73, no.3 (2003): 440-65, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-682X.00064> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

Rescue Units were founded in 1992 following the First Gulf War, while the Brigade was established in 2013.³⁹ The National Search and Rescue Brigade is predominantly composed of reservists on standby, many of them women, equipped with prepared response kits and ready to deploy immediately. Many of these female operators bring expertise from their civilian employment, such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, or engineers, while others are trained as search dog handlers.

f. Afghan Female Tactical Platoon (FTP)

The Afghan army has trained women commando troops. The Female Tactical Platoon (FTP) volunteers are required to meet the same PT and training requirements as their male counterparts.⁴⁰ The 120 strong FTP supports Afghan Special Security Forces during counterterrorism operations, specializing in the search, questioning and medical assistance of women and children.⁴¹ They have proved invaluable in assisting during house searches, where a key role for the FTP has been searching women and children, which is obviously culturally sensitive in Afghanistan.

g. Palestinian Presidential Guards

The Palestinian Presidential Guards are a West Bank based security force of around 2600 personnel.⁴² The Guards are engaged in personal protection, including that of visiting dignitaries, but are also trained for anti-terrorism missions. Following the cultural and social changes in the West Bank over the last few years, Women operators are now being recruited into the Presidential Guard.⁴³ They are based in the Presidential compound and provide security and close protection, particularly for women officials and the wives and partners of visiting dignitaries.⁴⁴

h. Indian Special Forces Instructor

Though part of only a two-person team with her husband, Dr. Seema Rao has had a major impact on the training of various Indian military and policing special operations forces over the last two decades.⁴⁵ She is an expert in Close Quarter Battle (CQB), unarmed combat and tactical shooting, and along with training an estimated 20,000 or more members of the elite Indian forces, she regularly provides the Indian authorities with security advice and has written a number of books on her areas of expertise.⁴⁶

Conclusion

As the examples demonstrate, though generally in smaller numbers than their male counterparts, women have been involved in counter-terrorism for many years, in policing and intelligence roles. More recently there has been an increase in their involvement in more direct operational roles, including police tactical intervention and military specialist operations.⁴⁷ Given the increasing numbers of women involved in operational counter-terrorism within the fields of policing, intelligence and the military, it is argued that there is a growing need for greater research to understand the specific benefits and agency they bring to these roles, and how better to maximise the potential of such female operators.

³⁹ "Search and Rescue Brigade", *Israeli Defence Forces*, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/search-and-rescue-brigade/> (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

⁴⁰ Martha Schaeffer, "Afghan Female Tactical Platoon Showcases Skill, Encourages Others to Join," *NATO Resolute Support Afghanistan*, <https://rs.nato.int/news-center/press-releases/2018-press-releases/afghan-female-tactical-platoon-showcases-skill-encourages-others-to-join.aspx>

⁴¹ See Marthy Schaeffer, "Female Tactical Platoon Showcases Skill, Lethality for the Fight", *Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (Dvids)*, <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/613978/female-tactical-platoon-showcases-skill-lethality-fight> (Accessed on 09 June 2019)

⁴² See ECFR, "Presidential Guard – PA" in *Mapping Palestinian Politics*, https://www.ecfr.eu/mapping_palestinian_politics/detail/presidential_guard (Accessed on 10 June 2019).

⁴³ Karin Laub, Mohammed Daraghme, "Palestinian Presidential Guard Unveils Its First Female Fighters – Headscarved Commandos Taking New Ground," *The Independent*, 7 Apr 2014, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/palestinian-presidential-guard-unveils-its-first-female-fighters-headscarved-commandos-taking-new-9244604.html> (Accessed on 09 June 2019).

⁴⁴ See "First Women Join Palestinian Commando Unit," *AP Archive*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xWD-VID26E> (Accessed on 09 June 2019).

⁴⁵ Ruchika Shah, "Dr Seema Rao: India's First Female Combat Trainer, Fighting Stereotypes", *India Forbes*, 5 March 2019, <http://www.forbesindia.com/article/2019-wpower-trailblazers/dr-seema-rao-indias-first-female-combat-trainer-fighting-stereotypes/52713/1> (Accessed on 09 June 2019).

⁴⁶ Seema Rao and Deepak Rao, *Handbook of World Terrorism* (New Delhi: APH Publishing, 2012).

⁴⁷ "Female Operators: Women in Special Forces", *Jane's IHS Markit*, 2017, https://www.janes.com/images/assets/262/68262/Female_operators_Women_in_special_forces_edit.pdf (Accessed on 08 June 2019).

WOMEN AS SECURITY PRACTITIONERS

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Particularly since 9/11 there has been a proliferation of women's counterterrorism-specific or other female only units. Such examples include the women's CTU in Yemen in the Central Security Organization; the Daughters of Iraq or Sisters of Fallujah programs; Afghanistan Special Operations Strike Forces "Family Support Platoons"; and Female Engagement Teams, or Cultural Support Teams in Afghanistan, amongst many others in countries around the world. More recently in the conflict with ISIS, we have further more seen women active in the Global Coalition Against ISIS. I discuss these at length in my forthcoming book, *A Woman's Place: US counterterrorism since 9/11*.¹

These units demonstrate the significance and growing prominence of women as security practitioners in direct and indirect counterterrorism activities. However, and perhaps more importantly, are the challenges and hurdles to entry that these women often face.² These include:

- Structural shortfalls, including a lack of basic infrastructure (such as female washrooms, locker areas or sleeping quarters, or even uniforms and equipment appropriate for women)
- Training programs that may not include gendered considerations
- Professional considerations such as limitations to job advancement that women may face, particularly if they have simultaneous family commitments
- A lack of respect from colleagues
- The view that women's units may be perceived as a 'pink ghetto'
- Accusations of 'sexual tensions' when placed in mixed gender units, particularly in combat roles
- A lack of clear mandate, purpose, function when establishing these groups
- Ad-hoc, inconsistent funding and support
- Entry requirements restricted on gender versus a base set of capabilities and skills

This prompts a number of important questions that became visible in my research including what has prompted establishment of these units? There may be a perceived *operational gap* including a previous lack of engagement with local women who may be more likely to engage with female officers/soldiers particularly on sensitive matters, or a lack of specific capabilities to search women or conduct culturally sensitive searches or house raids. Very few units I have noted that were stood up by the US were prompted by anything beyond operational necessity. While this has prompted further buy in from colleagues in cases where women are seen to demonstrably contribute an operational necessity to operations, thereby helping a unit achieve its mission, it can negate from viewing women's participation in all aspects of security as valuable in and of itself.

The gendered relationship of security forces and terror groups that they engage is also of interest here. While recognizing that the motivations of state security forces and non-state actors are highly distinguishable, it is noteworthy that both state security forces as well as terrorist organizations often share similarities in the contention of having women take up arms.

Another important question may be: were these units locally established or externally implemented/stood up? This may also impact the support and local buy in to these units and women's roles within them. If locally established to appeal to foreign donors, women's inclusion in counterterrorism forces could be seen as a way of gaining external funding. However, if there is local buy in for such units in the first place, then there is an increased chance that they will maintain support as they may be seen as providing locally derived solutions to local problems. It is also important to note that women's

¹ Cook, Joana. "A woman's place: US counterterrorism since 9/11," Hurst Publishers, London: 2019.

² I discuss these in the MENA region and case of Yemen in Cook, Joana, "Women's role in Yemen's Police Force," Saferworld, Dec. 2014, <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/oldsite/resources/view-resource/897-women-s-role-in-yemen-s-police-force>, last accessed 1 May 2019.

motivations to join counterterrorism and other security roles is also diverse. They may seek to protect or defend their communities, are seeking employment opportunities, and so forth. It is important to be conscious of why women may want to take up such roles, and how facilitating the entry of more women into these in the future can be promoted. How/does their participation challenge gendered perceptions and stereotypes of women in armed forces and in society more broadly?

Finally, there are important concerns about how women's needs, concerns and viewpoints are considered and reflected on in security forces. Are women's concerns getting looped back into programming, planning and other frameworks? What kind of funding, support, training, and mentorship is available for these women? This is a particularly important aspect that does not receive enough attention and is crucial to encouraging and maintaining women's long-term roles and support of state security forces.

KEY FINDINGS

Women's agency in terrorism

- Gender is a social construct, not a biological one. Society has created gendered structures of masculinity and femininity which are also affected by “intersectional factors”, such as race, religion, class amongst many others. These structures aligned masculinity and men with violence, aggression, assertiveness, rationality, logic, while femininity and women with passivity, submission, emotions, frailty.

- There are gender biases and stereotypes which overshadow the agential power of women in terms of their engagement in political violence. These biases and stereotypes around women's agency in political violence lead to diverse reactions from underestimation to overestimation of women although the reality is somewhere in-between.

- Regarding the underestimation of women's agency in terrorism, law enforcement and security forces fall into the trap of these socially constructed biases and miscalculate the potential threats posed by women terrorists. The most common cases can be seen in body-search related cases. Women are not likely to trigger suspicion in terms of perpetrators of terrorism, they are better able to hide weapons and explosives either due to the dress code norms or presumed pregnancy and thus they are often not subject to strict security measures including body-searches.

- The perception that ‘women who use violence must be broken’ leads to the overestimation of women's involvement in terrorism. From that perspective, when women use violence, they are presumed to adopt ‘masculine’ traits, which are read as betrayals of the ‘natural order of things’ based on the assumption that gender is natural. Therefore, since women's participation in political violence is seen as extraordinary or as something fundamentally different to men's involvement with terrorism, this perspective tends to see women as more violent and ruthless than the men once they become involved in terrorism.

- How we perceive race, gender and religion shapes our understanding of women's involvement in terrorism.

- Both men and women have similar potential for carrying out violent acts.

- Both men and women have both personal and political motivations for resorting to terrorism.

Individual motivations or group dynamics

- Radicalization studies have heavily focused on the ‘individual’. However, research has displayed that there are too many variables that count in the radicalization process, meaning that we do not really know what radicalizes people. Certain factors might lead to the radicalization of an individual whereas the same factors might not lead to the radicalization of another individual. In this regard, focusing on group dynamics in trying to answer the questions of why a certain terrorist group exists, what it wants, what are the goals and strategies of that terrorist organization might be of more use. Addressing the motivations of terrorist organizations for recruiting women might provide us with more tangible outcomes for producing counter-measures compared to the effort of trying to understand why women radicalize in terms of understanding women's engagement in terrorism. Focusing on the individual level also has the danger of leading us to mass-stereotyping despite the many other difficulties it posits from prediction to policy formulation. Therefore, paying attention to ‘group dynamics’ will enable the operationalization of ‘radicalization studies’ in terms of counter-terrorism.

Comparing terrorist organizations with different ideologies

- Comparing women's involvement in left-wing terrorist organizations with religiously motivated terrorist organization can provide a better understanding for group level analysis. In doing so, we will be able to deepen our insights about terrorist organizations' motivations and strategies in recruiting women. Such an approach will enable us to cross-check the existing assumptions about women's involvement in terrorist organizations. Also, such an approach may help to explore some patterns of radicalization despite their ideological differences, which in turn can contribute policymaking in terms of counter-radicalization.

Prosecution of women involved in terrorism

- The prosecution of women terrorists or women involved in terrorism is a reflection of how women are seen in their relationship to terrorism. Therefore, we observe two extreme positions. In some cases, women are seen as passive victims of violence, and they get lenient sentencing or are even not tried for any crime, since they are viewed as being duped into terrorism. In other cases, since women are considered as peaceful and non-violent, their use of violence is read as a betrayal to their gender and society. Hence these women get harsher punishment than men.

- No women have ever been charged or prosecuted for a terrorist attack by *Al-Shabaab*, because they are just seen as wives of the terrorists, and not a threat despite the fact that they play an important role in the logistics of the terrorist organization.

- How to address the problem of prosecuting women (foreign terrorist fighter) returnees is a question for the vast majority of the decision-makers.

Holistic view of violence

- We tend to ignore the links between different forms of violence. Research shows that there is a rise in domestic violence in the conflict zones for example in Iraq and Syria. However, we ignore this rise in domestic violence, and choose to focus only on the violence on the battlefield. If domestic violence is normalized, how can we expect to prevent violence on the battlefield? In line with the need to adopt a “whole-of-society approach” in counterterrorism and P/CVE programming, there is also a need to adopt a holistic view of violence and include mechanisms for reducing different forms of violence. If you turn a blind eye to domestic violence, you will miss terrorist violence. Otherwise there is a risk of minimizing other forms of violence. In Iraq, during ISIS control, there was a significant rise in domestic violence. If you want to address masculinity, you need to address these issues also. If you can’t prevent normalization of violence at home, you can’t prevent violence out of the home. We need to see the direct connection between domestic violence and political violence.

- Statistics indicate that men in detention in Iraq have prior sexual crimes. So, we need to accept that different variants of violence have direct connections and prevent all kinds of violence.

- There is a need for a deeper and holistic understanding of other forms of violence, connecting the links between these forms of violence and contextualizing the violence. At this point, one crucial question arises: How can we put into practice this holistic view of violence and turn it into policies to fight against terrorism?

Terrorist narratives

- Terrorist groups intentionally take counterterrorism narratives and reframe them for their recruitment purposes. It is evident in the ISIS narrative of “women in the West do not have rights and women can reclaim their rights with us”. By doing so, they utilize existing discourses, reproduce them and use them again, against us. And we are not aware of that fact. Because several women who believe and feel that they do not belong to the society they are living in, joined ISIS due to their narratives toward women.

- Narratives used by terrorist organizations (especially by ISIS/DAESH), show differences according to different part of the world, which may offer us a better understanding about the motivations of women who decided to join these terrorist organizations, and provide us with material on how the roles of women have shifted after they joined the terrorist organization.

Future trends in women’s terrorist mobilization

- Different jihadist groups assign different roles to women. In Al-Qaeda, women’s involvement was almost limited to suicide attacks whereas in ISIS/DAESH women have been more active. Women moral police units of ISIS (*Al-Khansa* Battalion) are very important and unique, which shows us that ISIS has activated women, making them feel that they have an important role in Islamic State.

• Regarding the future trend in women's mobilization by terrorist groups, the answer to the question will depend on how other jihadist groups perceive the trend of women's mobilization in ISIS/DAESH and Boko Haram. If future jihadist groups reimagine ISIS as a success, they will be prone to follow a similar strategy regarding the role of women in their organization. However, if they see ISIS as a failure, then women's participation will decline.

The rising threat of far-right

• With the global rise of far-right (and alt-right) movements, a shift in radicalism studies is expected. This new phenomenon brings new questions that need to be addressed. How do women see themselves in marriage? Where do women belong in society? The answers could be very similar to the discussions about ISIS/DAESH. We can observe similar motivations of marriage and children in these movements. In terms of women involved in nationalist movements, women are seen as key agents of recreation of the 'nation'. That also brings in another assumption that women involved in nationalist organizations are not 'terrorist', which is another gender-biased assumption we have observed in many cases.

Women Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)

• The general tendency is not to link women directly to ISIS/DAESH, but to associate women with men who are FTFs of ISIS/DAESH. Therefore, women's direct affiliation to the terrorist organization is ignored, and women FTFs are viewed as companion family members. This approach not only ignores women's agential power but also creates obstacles for prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration processes.

• The unavailability of gender-segregated data in terms of returning FTFs is a problem for both research and policy formulation.

• There is a lack of data on women returnees (returning women FTFs). Some countries do not record the numbers of returnees because they either do not recognize ISIS/DAESH as a terrorist organization and/ or they do not label ISIS/DAESH related returnees as a potential security threat.

• In the case of women terrorists/ FTFs, there is often no clear process with how to deal with people who are returning. International efforts to develop guidelines are increasing as in the case of the UN Secretary-General approved "Key Principles for the Protection, Prosecution, Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with links to United Nations-listed Terrorist Groups". Even when national policy and programs exist, they are often not known, because this is an area that lacks transparency. It is very difficult to get information about these programs and evaluate them.

• The complexity of dealing with the returning women FTFs necessitates answers to the following questions: Are the women returnees to be subject to the same PRR process regardless of their roles in the terrorist organizations (no matter whether they had active or supporting roles)? Does the process recognize the way the women were engaged in the terrorist organization, by consent or by force? Does the process take into consideration when these women joined the terrorist organization, does it make any difference if they were involved when they were minors?

• The extended family members of the returning FTFs have gone through grief regardless of whether men, women and children have been brutalized. Therefore, the mental health of not only the returnees, but also the extended family members is an issue. However, this mental health issue of extended family members does not get attention, and in developing countries, it is not possible to carry that burden economically.

Minors

• In terms of women FTFs, the issue has become a multi-generational problem, which brings potential future issues, especially about the situation of minors such as custody issues, stateless minors, etc.

• The issue of orphans and stateless minors in Iraq and Syria has risen due to infants' uncertain citizenship. This problem is mainly tied to unofficial or absent birth registration, illegitimacy of their parents' marriage under ISIS and denaturalization of the citizenship of mother and hence the infant. In those cases, women and minors have stayed isolated in camps, detention centers or rebel-controlled areas and are unable to return to their countries of origin.

Lessons Learned from DDR

- DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration) and PRR (Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration) are different processes. Still, DDR programs offer a set of lessons learned that can widen our perspective about rehabilitation and reintegration of returning FTFs which became a critical global issue after FTFs began to return to their countries of origin. Some basic differences are: First, DDR programs differ in the process since they generally include a peace process followed by a peace agreement legitimizing the armed group. However, in PRR, there is no peace process and individuals are from an armed group that is not recognized to suffer from a legitimate grievance. The second difference is in the policy. DDR programs are guided by a peace agreement and laws and policies detailing how the armed group is going to operate. The third difference is in the size of the targeted group. DDR programs target organized groups whereas PRR programs target smaller groups and individuals.

- Similar to the gender biases in the prosecution of women involved in terrorism, we confront the underestimation of women's agency in terrorism in the case of rehabilitation and reintegration. Women involved in terrorism tend to receive more limited rehabilitation and reintegration support, because women are believed not to pose a significant threat. This, in return, puts them at potentially greater risk of recidivism, re-radicalization and potentially undermines their successful reintegration into society.

- Women's involvement in a certain terrorist organization can change their gender roles while their society remains the same. Therefore, any reintegration program has to take into consideration such shifts in gender dynamics. Current DDR measures often attempt to return women to the positions they held before the conflict; however, conflict changes not only society, but the women involved in violence. DDR programs which ignore the advancements women make during conflict, and which pressure them to turn to their "proper place" in the home and private sphere fail women. Regarding terrorism, the benefits of leaving terrorist organizations must outweigh the benefits of staying. For many women terrorists, leaving means they will lose power, face social misery, and be offered programs which do not even meet their needs.

- DDR processes revealed that the stigmatization of women turns out to be a critical impediment for the reintegration of women ex-combatants into the society. Those women and girls most of the time, returned to their home pregnant or with a child and society in general do not welcome these babies. Besides, these women and girls may return with some diseases like HIV, which deepen the stigma around them as well as make it difficult for those girls to remarry or be accepted by society. Research completed in relation to women returning from Boko Haram shows communities that may be willing to take back returnees are often wary about accepting their children, who are seen as tainted by terrorist blood. Male children in particular are regarded with suspicion, as men inherit property in most villages.

- Lessons learned from DDR processes revealed that support of the community family is key to successful reintegration and that radicalization may happen at the family level; hence, deradicalization should also follow a similar pattern. These provide useful insights for adopting a whole of society and whole of family approach in the deradicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration of the former women terrorists.

- For transferring lessons learned and best practices from DDR processes, there is a need for further discussions and evaluations both for adequate adaptation of these learned experiences and best practices as well as for exploring other possible programs which can offer more insights.

Women's Rights

- There is an issue of instrumentalization of gender equality by states and global institutions. Especially states have begun to accept gender equality as a counter-terrorism policy. As a result of this perspective, efforts about gender equality focus on instrumental tactics rather than promoting and advancing women's rights and consequently this has led to a disconnect between different efforts.

- There is a pushback on women's rights since a rights-based discourse is seen by some as a form of Western imperialism. The only way to reinforce women's rights as well as human rights is to continue pushing for the existing treaties in international law.

There can be no relativism and compromise on the universal rights; human and women's rights. We have to find appropriate mechanisms to promote them.

Communicating gender issues

- Explaining the threat and increasing awareness on the importance of the threat posed by women terrorists, recently in relation to women returnees, is critical.

- To enhance women's roles in counterterrorism and P/CVE, there is an argument made in favor of operational effectiveness. This means that in order to attract attention to the importance of gender, it is necessary to persuade the target audience (men in general, decision-makers at the national and international level) how critical the threat posed by women terrorists or women involved in different roles within terrorism is, and thus how operationally effective integrating women in countering terrorism is. This pragmatic approach based on operational effectiveness is important in terms of communicating gender issues, but it is not a substitute for the implementation of a more comprehensive agenda of advocating and advancing women's rights which foresees the meaningful participation and true leadership of women in decision-making and implementation.

- There are only 15% of women globally in police and border guards, with only 10% in the police. This situation is somewhat better in Europe with 20%. However, the issue of women's recruitment in law enforcement and military is crucial. How to encourage women to participate in law enforcement and military is an issue as important as communicating gender issues and increasing gender awareness of men and leaders in law enforcement and the military. Therefore, the present strategies to attract women into law enforcement and the military have to be adjusted because they are traditional and/or stereotypical generally aimed at a young male audience and thus they simply do not work for women.

The role of leadership

- The leadership of such organisations have a responsibility to push for the normative framework and increasing gender awareness and creating gender equality.

- The role of leadership in raising gender awareness should be accompanied by a cultural change in the institutions (as well as societies) for a meaningful change in favor of the increasing role of women and gender mainstreaming.

Funding

- In programming, most of the P/CVE work falls under counterterrorism and it will be counterterrorism that ensures the funding and that this funding will be channeled to P/CVE.

- Many civil society organizations have difficulty in obtaining funding for their women, peace and security works, and they are mostly unable to get that funding if it is not related to P/CVE. This leads to the risk of securitization and instrumentalization of local women and peace agendas.

- Countering efforts in curbing terrorist financing are preventing the works of civil society organizations working in the field of P/CVE, because their funding is cut. It also applies to many women's organizations that are operating with an agenda of women, peace and security. Therefore, there is a need for discriminatory counter-terrorist financing rules.

Women's participation in operational counterterrorism

- Although generally in smaller numbers than their male counterparts, women have been involved in counter-terrorism for many years, in policing and intelligence roles. More recently, there has been an increase in their involvement in more direct operational roles, including police tactical intervention and military specialist operations. However, there is not enough research done on the role of women in operations and this needs to be looked into further. Thus, given the increasing numbers of women involved in operational counterterrorism within the fields of policing, intelligence and the military, there is a growing need for more research to understand the specific benefits they bring to these roles and how better to maximize the potential of female operators.

Gendered impact of counterterrorism

- There is a belief in critical feminist literature that the Coalition Forces contributed to emasculating local men in Afghanistan and in Iraq, which led some of these local men to use further domestic violence at home. However, by the end of the war, many of these women were left as widows, possibly leaving them vulnerable to radicalization.

FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Gendered impact of counterterrorism

- The gendered impact of counterterrorism is overlooked. There is a need for future research to extend beyond the primary implications of the counterterrorism measures to identify the secondary and tertiary effects of counterterrorism. Discussing the future of the populations directly affected by the implementation of the counterterrorism policies is important. For instance, the widowed population in Iraq became susceptible to terrorist recruitment and radicalization by Al-Qaeda. Similar experiences have been lived in many other conflict zones.

Focusing on terrorist organizations other than ISIS/DAESH

- There is too much focus on ISIS/DAESH. The gender aspect of ISIS/DAESH has been researched for obvious reasons, but there is a need for research on other contexts and terrorist organizations. This research on different contexts should take into account different local factors, for instance, female terrorist radicalization. The research should also focus on context specific obstacles on rehabilitation and reintegration.

Group dynamics

- Further studies need to address the motivations of terrorist organizations for recruiting women from a group level of analysis.

Prosecution of women terrorists

- The number of the published cases of trials of women terrorists is low and there is a need for further studies.
- There is a gap in research in the area of prosecution of women returnees including data about sentences and convictions.

Comparative analysis

- The single case studies on different contexts and terrorist organizations should be fed into a comparative analysis.

Femininity and empowerment

- There is a need for further research that elaborates on the role of femininity and empowerment and how femininities have been utilized in terrorist recruitment by terrorist organizations.

Narratives and counter-narratives

- There is a need for further research on the narratives used by terrorist organizations with a specific focus on how these groups reframe 'women's rights'.
- To formulate effective counter-narratives, there is a need to differentiate between contexts. That is the reason why contextualizing violence is important. For instance, ISIS/DAESH in Iraq and Syria is different from the ISIS/DAESH in East Africa.

Quantitative Assessment

- Quantitative Assessment of women's participation in P/CVE is needed.

Early warning indicators

- There is a need for an inter-disciplinary approach to early warning indicators. It is hard to identify and understand early warning indicators by just looking at gender and terrorism without taking into consideration its intersection with other areas such as cyber warfare, hybrid warfare, social media and propaganda.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender and Human Rights

- We need to develop different messages and ways of communicating these messages of gender and human rights which is digestible for different audiences so they are convinced to cooperate in that area.

Operational effectiveness and rights-based approach

- An operational effectiveness approach and rights-based approach to gender equality are not mutually exclusive and should be utilized to reinforce each other.

Counterterrorism Programming

- The existing Counterterrorism programs are generally reactive and less nuanced and less balanced in terms of gender focus. There should be more complex planning. For instance, these programs should be better equipped to handle the complexity of the threat posed by women terrorists as perpetrators, mobilizers, and recruiters.
- Counterterrorism as well as P/CVE programming should incorporate a holistic view of violence and encourage struggling against different forms of violence including domestic violence.
- Input from women and women's civil society should be deliberately solicited and incorporated into all counterterrorism and P/CVE planning from the outset.
- It should be ensured that all men and women working in the field of counterterrorism get the same gender-sensitive training.
- There is a need to develop discriminatory countering terrorist financing rules with mechanisms to ensure that women's organizations are not deprived of funding.

Recruiting women

- The numbers of women involved in operational areas of counter-terrorism such as policing, intelligence and the military is limited. Therefore, we need to recruit more women in these areas. The present strategies to attract women into law enforcement and the military have to be adjusted because they are traditional and/or stereotypical generally aiming at a young male audience and thus they simply do not work for women.
- Operational-wise deploying women to talk to women in conflict-zones is not sufficient; there is a need for a cultural change in the military. It is important to understand that militaries should recruit the suitable person for the post.
- In order to implement gender-sensitive policies, you need to have enough personnel. For instance, if you have limited female security personnel, you cannot conduct body searches of women effectively.
- While integrating women into counterterrorism, we should ensure that women are not pigeonholed into certain posts such as gender advisors or members of female engagement teams.

Gender Advisors

- Gender Advisor posts in international organizations and operational missions should be a full-time job, not burdened by other responsibilities and should be a profession like a Legal Advisor and Political Advisor.

The rise of the far right

- The global rise of far-right (and alt-right) movements necessitates not only nations, but also international organizations, such as NATO to develop strategies on how to deal with that.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration

- The participation of different women actors in the design and implementation of deradicalization and reintegration processes, which should include transparency as well as clear policies, should ensure that specific needs and grievances of women are responded to.
- Developing institutional networks, for sharing experiences from reintegration and de-radicalization programs, including even the confidential ones, will be useful.
- Further discussions and evaluations are needed to transfer the lessons learned and best practices from the DDR processes to the construction of the rehabilitation and reintegration processes for former women terrorists.
- There is a need to develop programs for psychological rehabilitation for the extended family members of the returning FTFs.

Funding

- Discriminatory counter-terrorist financing rules need to be formulated in order to ensure that civil society organizations working in the field of P/CVE get funding.
- Policies ensuring that civil society organizations with local women, peace and security agendas can get funding without being forced to adopt a P/CVE agenda need to be enacted.

COE-DAT WORKSHOP
Women in Terrorism and Counterterrorism
27-28 May 2019
COE-DAT, Ankara, Turkey

Workshop Director: Ms. Demet Uzunoğlu (TUR)

Workshop Academic Advisor: Dr. Zeynep Sütalan

(TUR) **Workshop Assistant:** Mrs. Aslıhan Sevim (TUR)

Rapporteur: Ms. Alice LöhmuS (EST)

Rapporteur: Mrs. Nebahat Tanrıverdi Yaşar (TUR)

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Monday, 27 May 2019 (1st Day)

09.20 - 09.30	Welcome Address , Col. Soydan GÖRGÜLÜ (TUR A), Director, COE-DAT
09.30 - 09.50	COE-DAT Introduction & Admin Briefing , Ms. Demet Uzunoğlu, WS Director
09.50 - 10.00	Family Photo
10.00 - 10.15	Coffee Break
10.15 - 10.30	Opening Remarks by Col. Daniel STONE, Deputy Director, COE-DAT
10.30 - 11.50	Session – 1 Understanding Women’s Involvement in Terrorism Moderator : Dr. Katherine Brown (University of Birmingham) Rapporteur : Mrs. Nebahat Tanrıverdi Yaşar (Middle East Technical University)
10.30 - 10.50	<i>Recognizing Women Agency in Terrorism</i> - Dr. Caron Gentry (University of St. Andrews)
10.50 - 11.10	<i>Why do Women Become Terrorists? Motivations and Recruitment</i> - Dr. Seda Öz Yıldız (Turkish National Police Academy)
11.10 - 11.50	Open Discussion
12.00 - 13.15	Lunch (at Merkez Officers' Club)
13.30 - 15.30	Session – 2 Comprehending the Complexity of the Terrorist Threat Posed by Women Moderator : Dr. Aleksandra Dier (UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate) Rapporteur : Mrs. Nebahat Tanrıverdi Yaşar (Middle East Technical University)
13.30 - 13.50	<i>Women as Radicalizers and Recruiters</i> - Ms. Anna Zizola (European Parliament)
13.50 - 14.10	<i>Women and Suicide Terrorism</i> -Dr. Katherine Brown (University of Birmingham)
14.10 - 14.30	<i>Women Foreign Terrorist Fighters</i> - Dr. Joana Cook (ICSR, King's College)
14.30 - 15.30	Open Discussion
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee Break
16.00 - 17.20	Session – 3 Preventing Women Terrorist Radicalization Moderator : Dr. Caron Gentry (University of St. Andrews) Rapporteur : Mrs. Nebahat Tanrıverdi Yaşar (Middle East Technical University)
16.00 - 16.20	<i>Advancing and Advocating Women’s Rights</i> - Dr. Aya Fujimura-Fanselow (Duke Law School, Duke University)
16.20 - 16.40	<i>Discussing DDR Process for Women Terrorists</i> - Ms. Alison Davidian (UN Women’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)
16.40 - 17.20	Open Discussion
17.20 - 17.25	‘Hot wash-up’ of day 1 discussions , Dr. Zeynep SÜTALAN, WS Academic Advisor

Tuesday, 28 May 2019 (2nd Day)

09.00 - 10.20 Session – 4 Enhancing Women's Participation in Counterterrorism: The Roles of International Organizations

Moderator : Ms. Rasa Ostrauskaite (Transnational Threats Department, OSCE)

Rapporteur : Ms. Alice LÖHMUS (Bilkent University)

09.00 - 09.20 *UN Perspective* - Dr. Aleksandra Dier (UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate)

09.20 - 09.40 *NATO Perspective* - Ms. Clare Hutchinson (NATO Secretary General's Special Representative on Women, Peace and Security)

09.40 - 10.20 Open Discussion

10.20 - 10.30 Coffee Break

10.30 - 11.50 Session – 5 Integrating Women into Countering Violent Extremism

Moderator : Ms. Alison Davidian (UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

Rapporteur : Ms. Alice LÖHMUS (Bilkent University)

10.30 - 10.50 *Understanding the Role of Women in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization* - Ms. Rasa Ostrauskaite (Transnational Threats Department, OSCE)

10.50 - 11.10 *The Role of Women in P/CVE and CT: The experience of Somalia-*
Ms. Halima Mohammed (Burticon Limited, Kenya)

11.10 - 11.50 Open Discussion

12.00 - 13.15 **Lunch** (at Merkez Officers' Club)

13.30 - 15.30 Session – 6 Women as Counterterrorists: Operational Perspective

Moderator : Dr. Joana Cook (ICSR, King's College)

Rapporteur : Ms. Alice LÖHMUS (Bilkent University)

13.30 - 14.30 *Women in Counter-Terrorism: An Overview-* Dr. Richard Warnes (RAND Corporation, Europe)

14.30 - 15.00 Open Discussion

15.00 - 15.30 Coffee Break

15.30 - 15.40 *Outcomes of Day-1* (Rapporteur: Mrs. Nebahat Tanrıverdi Yaşar)

15.40 - 15.50 *Outcomes of Day-2* (Rapporteur: Ms. Alice LÖHMUS)

15.50 - 16.50 Panel Discussion

ANNEX B

Biographies of the Speakers (in alphabetical order)

ALEKSANDRA DIER

Dr. Aleksandra Dier is the Gender Coordinator at the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED). In this role, she works towards the greater integration of the UN's agendas on Women, Peace and Security, and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, and is responsible for mainstreaming gender in all of CTED's activities, including its expert assessments of Member States' implementation of counter-terrorism and CVE measures.

Over the past decade, Dier has worked for the United Nations in a range of capacities in the areas of peacekeeping, conflict prevention and mediation, sanctions, and counter-terrorism. She was the special assistant to the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, held positions in the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and served in UN field missions in Afghanistan and Burundi.

Prior to joining the United Nations, Dier was a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich and a Volkswagen Stiftung fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin.

Dier received her Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Oxford. She also holds an M.Phil from the University of Oxford and a B.A. from University College London.



ALISON DAVIDIAN

Alison Davidian has over fifteen years of experience in development, gender equality and access to justice issues. She is currently a Programme Specialist on Governance, Peace and Security with UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, based in Thailand. In this role she has co-managed implementation of over \$USD 20 million in governance, peace and security programmes with a focus on preventing violent extremism, anti-trafficking, access to justice, gender sensitive infrastructure and natural resource management.

Previous to this, she was a Policy Specialist in the Peace and Security Unit at HQ where she managed the Transitional Justice portfolio and led the creation of the Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) portfolio for UN Women.

Before her time at UN Women, she worked for organizations including the International Center for Transitional Justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equality Now in Zambia, UNDP Somalia, and the Refugee Advice and Casework Service in Australia.

She has a BA (Government) and an LLB from the University of Sydney, and an LLM from Harvard.



ANNA ZIZOLA

Anna Zizola is a policy and open source analyst, cultural journalist and editor specialized in analytical work related to terrorism and radicalization. After working for six years in the European Commission, in the DG Migration and Home Affairs, she is currently working as open sources analyst in the European Parliament. In 2018, she published the book *Women on the verge of Jihad: The Hidden Pathways Towards Radicalisation*, which she co-authored with Prof. Paolo Inghilleri from the University of Milan. The book discovers the hidden psychological and sociological drivers that can lead young Western women to support jihadi ideology, violence and sometimes suicide. Through real stories, supported by reliable official data, the book provides a scientific analysis of the mechanisms that can lead any “girl next door” to approve and passionately fall for a destructive movement, which she perceives as a heroic, romantic and empowering act.



Anna Zizola is still involved in research projects in the field of terrorism and radicalization and collaborates with think tanks and universities.

AYA FUJIMURA-FANSELOW

Aya Fujimura-Fanselow is Senior Lecturing Fellow and Supervising Attorney of the Duke International Human Rights Clinic. Prior to joining Duke Law in Fall 2017, Aya developed extensive expertise in human rights advocacy, clinical teaching, fact-finding, research, litigation, capacity-building, and coalition-building within the United States and abroad. Her work has primarily focused on gender and human rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights; transitional justice; reproductive rights; and criminal justice with a focus on pre-trial detention.



Most recently, at ESCR-Net (International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) she strategically developed and coordinated collective advocacy projects to advance women's economic, social, and cultural rights. Previously, at the International Center for Transitional Justice, based in New York and Kathmandu, Nepal, Aya spearheaded efforts to integrate gender into all aspects of transitional justice mechanisms in Nepal. As Legal Adviser for International Litigation and Advocacy at the Center for Reproductive Rights in New York, she developed cases to protect and promote women's reproductive rights before regional and international fora. Upon graduating from law school, as a Georgetown Women's Law and Public Policy Fellow based at Bread for the City, she provided legal services to immigrant women to obtain or maintain public benefits and engaged in community outreach and systemic reform efforts. Additionally, while based in Mexico City, she undertook a range of consultancies with key national and international non-governmental organizations (NGO), including Amnesty International, US Human Rights Network, Open Society Foundations, and GIRE, a Mexico City-based reproductive rights NGO.

Her previous teaching experience consists of her work as Crowley Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Law at the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice at Fordham Law School where she led fieldwork and taught a seminar to investigate and subsequently develop advocacy strategies to respond to the human rights violations resulting from the excessive and arbitrary use of pretrial detention in Bolivia.

In addition to serving as a contributing author or researcher on various publications, she was lead author on a report emerging from the Bolivia project ("*We are Left to Rot*": *Arbitrary and Excessive Pretrial Detention in Bolivia* (2013)).

Raised in New York and Tokyo, Aya received her J.D. from Fordham Law School, where she was a Stein Scholar in Public Interest Law and Ethics. Upon graduating, she was awarded a post-graduate Tolan Fellowship in Human Rights and the National Association of Women Lawyers Award for outstanding law graduate. She received her B.A. with honors from Bryn Mawr College.

CARON E. GENTRY

Dr. Caron E. Gentry's main research is gender and terrorism. Her publications include *Mothers, Monsters, Whores* (Zed, 2007) and its revised second edition, *Beyond Mothers, Monsters, Whores* (Zed, 2015) both co-written with Laura Sjoberg. Her articles on gender and terrorism have been published in *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, *Critical Studies on Security*, *International Relations*, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, among others.

Caron also writes on feminist political theology. In this area, her publications include a monograph, *Offering Hospitality* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), and articles in the *International Feminist Journal of Politics* and *Journal of International Relations and Development* (forthcoming).

She is currently serving as an *Associate Editor for the International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Caron has also chaired the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies Section of the International Studies Association and the International Studies Association-West region.

Caron has two main interrelated research areas.

The first is gender and terrorism, in which she explores not just the gendered nature of women's participation in political violence and the narratives that surround them, but how terrorist violence is also gendered.

Her second research focus is feminist political theology in which she articulates an alternative to Christian Realism: feminist Christian Realism.



CLARE HUTCHINSON

The Secretary General appointed Clare Hutchinson as NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in January 2018. She is thus the high focal point on all aspects of NATO's contribution to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In this capacity, her aim is to facilitate coordination and consistency in NATO's policies and activities and to take forward the implementation of the NATO/EAPC Policy and Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.



Ms. Hutchinson is a seasoned gender advocate who has worked as a Senior Gender Adviser with the United Nations for over a decade. She was instrumental in setting the strategic development of Women, Peace and Security for the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping in New York. She also directed the operationalization of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Kosovo and Lebanon.

Born and educated in Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK, Ms. Hutchinson studied theatre and started her career in broadcasting and public relations, working in public radio and freelance reporting in Canada and the UK. She later obtained her Master's Degree in International Relations and a further Master's Degree in Political Research from the University of Newcastle University. She moved to Canada in 1991 and is a Canadian citizen, residing in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Ms. Hutchinson has long been a champion for women's issues, working with women's groups for many years and supporting projects for women's empowerment across a broad spectrum. She worked in the burgeoning ICT industry as a communications expert for internet start-ups and led projects that helped women and young people to utilise technology effectively. She continues to support women-specific technology projects and to mentor young women in the exploration of non-traditional skills.

HALIMA MOHAMUD MOHAMED

Halima is a Kenyan born Somali gender expert with over fifteen years' experience working with Somali women focusing on various issues such as harmful cultural practices (FGM), peace building, de-radicalization, conflict resolution and empowerment, domestic violence and women's rights. She has been involved in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) in the region since 2010.

Currently, she is a director at Burticon Limited; a Research and Analysis Company based in Nairobi though primarily work in Somalia, North East and Coastal Kenya. Halima is also an executive director at Women Centre for Peace and Development. It is a local NGO started in 2016 with the aim of ensuring quality and successful participation of women in marginalised areas in development and political processes and improving the lives and welfare of women in Kenya.

She is also an experienced film and documentary maker, who has undertaken work in horn region and published the first Somali women's lifestyle magazine in 2009, she has taken great strides in empowering and giving a voice to marginalized women in various environments.



JOANA COOK

Dr. Joana Cook is a Teaching Fellow in the Department of War Studies, and a Senior Research Fellow at ICSR. Her PhD examined women in relation to post-9/11 U.S. counterterrorism responses in Yemen and the wider MENA region. Her research more broadly focuses on women in violent extremism, countering violent extremism, and counter-terrorism practices in Yemen and the wider MENA region.

Joana is also a Research Affiliate with the Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS). She has previously worked with Public Safety Canada's Research Affiliate Program (Kanishka); as Editor-in-Chief of Strife based out of the Department; and as a journalist in Canada and southern Africa.



She has presented her research to senior government and security audiences in a number of countries, and at institutions such as Cambridge, Oxford, the London School of Economics, and IISS (amongst others). She has also been featured in media such as Time, the Telegraph, the Huffington Post, the Washington Post and on BBC World News, Sky News, BBC Radio, the National Post and CBC.

She holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Regina, an MA in Conflict, Security and Development, and PhD in War Studies (both from King's College London). In 2016 she was a recipient of the Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund (CCSF).

KATHERINE E. BROWN

Dr. Katherine E. Brown's main area of research is gender, women's participation in religious political violence and state responses to this. Her work examines the ways in which gendered jihadi narratives motivate and enfranchise, and how they combine with everyday experiences of living and politics. She also examines how counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation programmes impact on religious women's rights and Muslim communities. She is committed to human rights and gender-mainstreaming efforts in the field of countering and preventing violent extremism. She has published widely (details of which are listed on her university webpage), and has contributed to public debates on these issues through online and newspaper print articles, radio and TV broadcasts, giving public lectures, and by providing expert testimony for legal cases in the UK. Currently Head of the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Birmingham (UK), she is also an active member of the European Union Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), an editorial board member for the journal *International Affairs*, and has written research for UNDP, UN Women, the UK Commission on Extremism, and a number of international NGOs and think tanks.



A secondary research project looks at the role of humour, laughter and sexuality in understandings of religion and public responses to religious political violence. This is particularly concerned with how satire, public comedians and everyday humour shape understanding of religion and security. The project explores how these informal and everyday reactions to religious political violence may operate as sources of resilience for marginalised communities. She is therefore the founder of the AHRC funded "Humanities for Resilience" an NGO and academic network based in Zambia, Pakistan, Lebanon and the UK, focused on supporting and understanding how the arts and culture may contribute to countering violent extremism.

RASA OSTRauskaite

Rasa Ostrauskaite is Co-ordinator of Activities to Address Transnational Threats at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Having joined the OSCE in 2009, Rasa also served as Deputy Director for Policy Support Service at the OSCE's Conflict Prevention Centre. Previously, she worked for the EU in various capacities: at the EU Council's Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit; as Political Advisor to the EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina; as Political Advisor to the EUSR in the Southern Caucasus; and Senior Political Advisor to the EUSR for the crisis in Georgia. Prior to that, Rasa worked for the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry both in Vilnius as well as in Lithuania's Representations to the United Nations in New York and to the EU in Brussels.



Rasa holds an MA in International Relations and European Studies and an MPhil in Political Science, both from the Central European University. Rasa has a number of publications on the EU foreign and security policy and the OSCE, including two co-authored books.

RICHARD WARNES

Dr. Richard Warnes is a consultant on terrorism and security. He is an associate Research Fellow at RAND Europe and has also conducted analytical work with CBRNE Ltd and CSI. His interests lie in the fields of counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, irregular warfare, policing, intelligence and the military, with a doctorate on *'The Significance of Human Factors in Effective Counter-Terrorism'*.

He has worked on a number of EU FP7/H2020 projects relating to domestic security, counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism as well as EU Impact Assessments on the security of explosives, precursors and CBRN materials. Between 2008-2013 he jointly conducted extensive field research in Iraq and Afghanistan for a Government client project, reviewing capacity building amongst local police and security forces.

Prior to joining RAND in 2007, he served in the Metropolitan Police for nine years, including Special Branch and Counter-Terrorism Command. Before his police career, he served in the UK Army Intelligence Corps as a reservist for seven years and full time for two and a half years, including a tour of Bosnia. Between completing his first degree and military service, he worked for seven years in international relief, travelling extensively in Communist Eastern Europe, MENA and South East Asia.

He is on the Steering Committee of the European Experts Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT) and has been Commissioned as an Officer in an SME role within the UK Army Reserves. He was previously awarded Bramshill (Police Staff College) and Airey Neave Fellowships.



SEDA ÖZ YILDIZ

Seda Öz Yıldız is an Associate Professor in Turkish National Police Academy where she has been a faculty member since 2015. She is the manager of Research Center of Security Management and Training in Institute of Security Sciences.

Öz Yıldız completed her Ph.D. at Hacettepe University and her undergraduate studies at Bilkent University and Middle East Technical University on political science and public administration. Her research interests lie in the area of human rights, homeland security and policing studies. She has collaborated actively with researchers in several other disciplines of criminology and terrorism studies.

She has served as an intelligence analyst for military institutions of the Ministry of Interior between 2000-2005. She has conducted national and international projects on integrated border security, gender perspective in police personnel management, investigations of hate crimes, violence against women and child abuse.

Öz Yıldız is the instructor for human rights, security management, gender and security on graduate programmes. She has a lot of national and international publications on democratic policing, homeland security issues, gender perspective in policing and human rights. She is a gender advisor and trainer of trainees certificated by NATO and RACVIAC.



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