

# **Global Jihad:**

## **Case Studies in Terrorist Organizations**

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## Introduction

In the book *Global Jihad: Case Studies in Terrorist Organizations*, written by Ingrid Borárosová, Aaron T. Walter and Ondřej Filipec, eight of the most important Jihadist organizations are introduced. The book is divided into two parts. In the first part the concept of Jihad is presented with special focus on Islamism and radical interpretation of Salafism. A special chapter is dedicated to terrorism and media, especially medial strategies and the presence of Jihadist groups in new media. The last chapter is of theoretical introduction presenting selected and highly actual issues of international law.

The second part of the book consists of eight case studies dedicated to jihadist organizations which are most relevant in the contemporary medial context. Selected organizations are very diverse in their nature. Some are focusing on state building and territory control, some are working like a hub or international network, while others have more of a regional focus. Despite sharing similar ideological backgrounds based on radical interpretation of Islam they are all unique. For this reason, the authors of the case studies presented in this volume have been left flexibility regarding the form of their individual studies.

However, the main aim of the case study is to present deeper insight into the jihadist organizations in order to explore their historic background, aims, activities, structure and leadership. For this reason the authors followed only the recommendation of the structure which might slightly differ in some cases. From the methodological point of view, all case studies provide deeper understanding of jihadist organization and thus might be considered intrinsic case studies based mainly on a descriptive method.

The book is divided into eleven chapters. The first chapter presents basic ideological background which is similar to jihadist

terrorist organization. For this reason it focuses mainly on selected aspects of Islamism, especially the concept of Jihad and introduces basic principles of Salafism. The second chapter is dedicated to the role of media which are an important intermediary between terrorist organizations and the audience and which strongly contribute to the environment in which Jihadist organizations operate. This is also true for international law related to international terrorism. For this reason the third chapter introduces some important topics related to terrorism, especially the issue of legal resources, human rights and child soldiers.

The second part of the book is opened by chapter four dedicated to Al-Qaeda, the militant Sunni Islamic organization which follows the ideology of Salafism and a well-known name after the horrific terror attacks on September 11, 2001. But there is more to al-Qaeda than this single event. From its origins to its ideological struggle with the Islamic State there is more than a terror organization founded by Osama bin Laden. The fifth chapter is dedicated to the organization known as the Islamic State (or better Daesh) also called in Western media, ISIS. The organization is infamous for its brutal executions of captured enemies and barbaric demolitions of cultural heritage. Moreover, it is the first terrorist organization in history which controls huge areas in Iraq and Syria and spreads the idea that they created a real Islamic state. The initial success of the organization in the context of the Syrian civil war attracted jihadists and donors from around the world. As a result, the Islamic State is the most powerful terrorist organization and a great danger for international security.

The sixth chapter focuses on Daesh's rival, Al-Nusra Front. This organization has grown to be a similar threat for global security as its above-mentioned counterpart. Al-Nusra Front formally known as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) can be considered as the official al-Qaeda (AQ) affiliate in Syria and it is able to operate with strategic, intelligent planning and follow-up in sophisticated actions. ISIS and

JN are rivals, although their strategic goals overlap. The most dangerous feature about JN is also the main difference to ISIS. ISIS's creation of its own self-announced state – was done through force, by conquering territory. JN is preferring to select different methods and operating by provoking of social and religious transformations, unrests and infiltrating into the local revolutions with a patience and planning. The current situation in Syria region has created almost ideal conditions to execute the strategy of JN, steered indirectly by Al-Qaeda.

The seventh chapter is dedicated to the organization Al-Shabaab (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen) which can be translated as „Mujahideen Youth Movement“ and is one of the dominant forces in Somalia since 2006. The group has been formed as the hard-line militant wing of Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which tried to create a rival administration to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. However, the war with Ethiopia led to increasing tensions within ICU and secession of Al-Shabaab after ICU disintegrated following several defeats. Al-Shabaab continues to fight against the government and which continued to fight against the government and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces. The main aim of the group is the creation of a Somali caliphate in “greater” Somalia, however the organization is active also in Yemen and other areas in the “Horn of Africa”.

The eighth chapter focuses on another Africa based organization called Boko Haram, Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad. Boko Haram has operated since 2002 in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon where their militants controls over 50,000 square kilometres. The ninth chapter focuses on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) founded by the Turkic-speaking militant Uighurs the ethnic majority in northwest China in the province of Xinjiang.

The tenth chapter focuses on the small jihadist organization Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya which operated from the 1990s to 2011 in the North Caucasus area. However, activities of former jihadists are still relevant as many of them joined as fighters for Daesh. The last chapter explores Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the militant Sunni Islamic organization which follows the ideology of Salafism and is a well-known name in the region of Kasmar especially after the horrific terror attacks in Mumbai, 2008. But there is more to LeT than this single event. From its origins in the 1980s to its ideological struggle there is more than a terror organization connected to al-Qaeda.

We hope that case studies will be found useful by scholars interested in the international security, their students as well as security experts working in the public administration.

Authors



## *Part I*

### **1. Introduction to Jihadism**

This chapter explores the phenomenon of religious terrorism<sup>1</sup> in relation to radical Islam, which is not a simple task due to several reasons. The first reason is that there is no single interpretation and definition of what is radical Islam and where the borders between radical and moderate Islam are. The second obstacle lies in the roots and aims of Islamist terrorism and the impossibility to distinguish between clearly religious and political aims. Radical Islamism connects both: radical religion and extremist politics.<sup>2</sup> For these

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<sup>1</sup> There are many definitions of terrorism. While some are focusing on what terrorism is, another focus on what terrorism is not mainly with focus on distinction between terrorism and guerrilla or regular war. In this book terrorism is understood in its wide connotation as an act of religiously or politically motivated violence in order to spread fear. As pointed out by Jessica Davis (2017: 8): terrorism may also refer to the pursuit of power or acquisition of power to achieve political aims (Bruce Hoffman), violent tactics of non-state actors with political objectives (Walter Laquer) or act of violence designed to influence audience (Martha Crenshaw).

<sup>2</sup> Extremism, similarly to terrorism, has many definitions and is a rather wide term which is often used as a synonym for radicalism or fundamentalism. The understanding of these terms vary according to authors. For example, in relation to far right movements the distinction between radicalism and extremism is that while radicalism is opposed to the constitution, extremism is hostile to the constitution (Mudde 2000). Others see extremism as the state to which one gets through the process of radicalisation (see chapter 1 in Pisiu 2012). Similarly, fundamentalism has been often used in

reasons in order to understand Islamist terrorism this chapter deals with the concept of Islamism and discovers radical form of political Islam and then explores its most mobilizing element, the Jihad. Because Islamism is a very heterogeneous ideology the chapter focuses on the thinkers and scholars who defined core elements of Islamism. Similarly, the part dedicated to Jihad focuses mainly on the term explanation.

## **1.2. Islam and Islamism**

Similarly, to other religions Islam also has its potential being misused or misinterpreted. As noted by Nurettin Uzunoğlu, many misunderstandings may occur due to wrong translations of the Quran because many of the reprinted translations are written in an archaic, Biblical style which is hard for new generation to understand. Moreover, a number of translations have been done by non-Muslims with no direct experience of Islam and thus without any explanatory commentaries (Uzunoğlu 2010). Another aspect is the complexity of issues the Quran covers. Next to the religious issues including eschatology and normative religious practices the Quran also covers various aspects of law, including criminal law or family relations, ethics or code of conduct and relations towards other religions. In this sense Islam is not only religion, but the way of life which regulates many aspects of human existence.

Moreover, Islam is not based only on the Quran, but also on the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet Muhammad) and Hadith (collection of reports quoting the Prophet Muhammad), Qiyas (Islamic jurisprudence) and Ijma (Consensus of Islamic Scholars).

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relation to religious “fanatics”, following strict, literal interpretation of the religion and/or strict adherence to its basic principles.

Next to the primary sources there are also secondary sources of Islam such as Istihlah (Permissible actions), Istihsan (Jurist preference), Maslaha (Public interest) and Urf (Knowledge of the society). Despite attempts of Islamic scholars to unify interpretations of Islam, there are many divisions inside the religion, making Islam one of the most heterogeneous religious systems with a number of schools within Sunni and Shia jurisprudence.

For the reasons above it is hard to define political Islam which is often used as a synonym for Islamism. However, Islamism is rather neologism, that is closely bound to Islamic militancy or fundamentalism and which comes into popular and pervasive use (Martin and Barzegar 2010: 2). For this reason we believe that political Islam has much more extensive theoretical base than newly developed concept of Islamism. In other words, political Islam has been present since the prophet Mohammed (see Skelly 2010). However, some will disagree even with this simplification. As for example Nazih Ayubi points out, political Islam in its modern way started to develop after the First World War (Ayubi 1991).

There are many definitions of Islamism, however, for the purposes of this book we understand Islamism close to definition of Mehdi Mozaffari (2007): *“Islamism is a religious ideology with a holistic interpretation of Islam whose final aim is the conquest of the world by all means”* (Mozaffari 2007: 21). This definition may be considered as rather hard (see the debate presented in a review essay by Crone, Gad and Sheikh 2008), however, the notion involves violent struggle which is the case of terrorist organizations presented in this book and thus fully applicable in our purpose.

However, political Islam as well as Islamism vary due to various interpretations and internal heterogeneity of Islam itself. This contributed to many modifications at the local level from Morocco to Indonesia and in some cases went in hand with attempts to finding

original Islam and resurrect the religious practices from the time of the Prophet Mohammad.

This is the case of Salafism which represents a very wide spectrum of assumptions forming religious and political doctrine. The followers of this doctrine reject religious innovation (*bida*) and take a fundamentalist approach to Islam with support of implementation of Sharia. However, the Salafi movement is also very heterogeneous and divided over tools of how to purify Islam. While a majority of Salafists avoid politics, or are actively participating in politics, some fight violently on behalf of terrorist groups under the label of jihad (Salafi Jihadists). The revivalist Salafi movement dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is closely related to Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) who advocated and promoted teachings of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (died 855) and Taqi ad-Din ibn Taymiyyah (died in 1328) and Ibn al-Qayyim (died in 1350). For this reason, the Salafi and Wahabbi movement is synonymous; however, the Salafi doctrine is more complex and also heterogeneous regarding the adherence to Islamic schools (*madhahib*). Nevertheless, the revivalism is an important aspect of political Islam which was strengthened in the 1920s and is closely related to the termination of the caliphate by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1924. Four years later Hassan al Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood with the aim to restore God's sovereignty and to promote the government which operates on the basis of Muslim norms and values (Turner 2012: 177) and is thus incompatible with the secular state. These ideas resonated in Muslim societies and became a source of inspiration for radicals, including Al-Qaeda leaders Abdullah Azzam and Ayman al Zawahiri.

Revivalist ideas are also compatible with the concept of the Islamic state, which has been developed by Islamic scholars. The idea is not new nor the attempts for its implementation or at least to establish Muslim government guided by Islamic law. Islamism in

more or less moderate versions are found in countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Gambia or Mauritania and in the last four years also in *sui generis* radical implementation by Daesh.

Probably the most influential of scholars developing the idea of an Islamic state was Indian-Pakistani thinker Abdul Ala Maududi, who presented his ideas in the book *The Islamic Law and Constitution* (1960) as follows: *“A state of this sort [Islamic] cannot evidently restrict the scope of its activities. Its approach is universal and all-embracing. Its sphere of activity is coextensive with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every aspect of life and activity in consonance with its moral norm and programme of social reform. In such a state no one can regard any field of his affairs as personal and private. Considered from this aspect the Islamic state bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist or Communist states.”*(Maududi 1960). He claims, however, that the Islamic state differs from totalitarian and authoritarian states, because individual liberty is not suppressed and that there are no traces of dictatorship in it. According to Maududi, the Islamic state represents the middle course and embodies the best that human society has ever evolved: *“The excellent balance and moderation that characterize the Islamic system of government and the precise distinctions made in it between the right and wrong elicit from all men of honesty and intelligence the admiration and the administration that such a balanced system could not have been framed by anyone but the Omniscient and Well-Wise God”* (Maududi 1960). A similar stance is held by Sayid Qutb, who considers individualism and personal freedoms as being strongly linked to the “barbarity” of the decadent capitalist society (*new Jahiliyya*) and thus must be limited by submitting to the social norms presented by Sharia, which enables individuals to develop in a good way (Qutb, cited in Toth 2013). For this reason Qutb called on Muslims to follow and imitate the revolutionary deeds of the

Prophet Muhammad, who ended the era of ignorance of the Arabia tribal polytheism and destroyed jahiliyya in his lifetime (Ungureanu 2010: 185).

The words of Qutb or Maududi might look exhilarating, but are in deep contrast with western values, touching core aspects of liberal democracy where public or political and private or personal is separated and protected. Penetration of the personal spheres or their control is associated with violation of freedoms and associated with the totalitarian regimes. Maudie's interpretation at least limits the thinking and behaviour of an individual, who loses its individuality and starts to behave like others, within the clear boundaries of strict norms presented by Sharia. This tendency corresponds to the thoughts of Hannah Arendt, that one of the main features of totalitarian regimes is the disappearing distinction between personal and political life, and the destruction of individual personality (Arendt 1958: 338). In this sense, Islamism is anti-individualistic and it also shares an anti-democratic attitude, as expressed by Qutb: *"True source of authority is God alone..."* (Qutb 2005). Democracy in Qutb's conception is only another man-made system of rules without God's legitimacy (Toth 2013). Both democracy and capitalism are not preferred; moreover they are blamed for the moral downfall of the people, while the concept of the Islamic state is a preferred and desired goal of the society. As Maududi pointed out, the Islamic state is an ideological state and its objective is to establish that ideology (Maududi 1960). In this sense Islamism is anti-democratic in its nature.

There are several other important thinkers who defined and contributed to modern Salafism. For example Muhammad Rashid Rida, who was concerned with the decline of Muslim societies in the context of European colonialism. His aim was to overcome Muslim division by abandoning deviant forms of Islam and in restoration of pure Islam by ecumenical reconciliation between Sunni and Shia

(Halverson 2014: 505). These views are similar to those of others more contemporary scholars and clerics such as Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albani or Muhammad ibn al Uthaymeen. Similarly, an important figure for the Salafi movement was Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz, the Grand Muffti of Saudi Arabia who constantly supported Dawah organizations<sup>3</sup> all around the World. Baz also in the 1990s supported Taliban fighters, who were seen as real Salafi warriors (Lacey 2009: 198). It could be said that the Salafi movement is one of the most viable doctrines in contemporary Islam, which is being developed and has seen attempts at implementation.

While the Muslim Brotherhood and its leaders helped to develop the doctrine, today there are dozens of important Salafi organizations in the world who follow, develop or change the notion of Salafism. These ranging for peaceful Salafists to the most radical and violent, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. However, among many there was also for example famous Lashkar Jihad Militia in Indonesia, which was Islamist and anti-Christian organization, Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria, ultra-conservative Islamist party Al-Nour in Egypt or the Authenticity party with similar views. In Saudi Arabia there was Akhwan, the first Saudi army made of nomadic tribesmen, or Al-Shbhash religious movement in Lebanon following the teaching of Abdullah al-Harari. Salafism is thus adapted to local political culture and realities which contributes to its variability. Moreover, Salafism has great potential for mobilization, due to the concept of Jihad.

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<sup>3</sup> *Dawah* means invitation to Islam through conversation. Similarly to Christianity, Islam is also a missionary religion.

## 1.2 Jihad and Jihadism

As noted earlier the tools of how to promote the ideas of radical Islamism or Salafi revivalism vary from political activism to violent means. These purposes serve well the concept of Jihad. It is very hard to bring an exact definition of what is meant by the word Jihad and what are key elements as there are many interpretations. Literally Jihad is translated as “striving” or “struggle” but the content of the meaning ranges from pacifist individually internally aimed struggle to violent collective and externally aimed struggle. For some scholars Jihad may be aimed at the building of a state or similar virtuous activity, for others Jihad in its violent form of “holy war” may be considered as the sixth pillar of Islam and religious obligation, as prescribed in the Surah 2:216: *“Fighting is obligatory for you, through it disliked by you; but it may be that you hate a thing although it is good for you, and love a thing although it is bad for you. Allah know, but you know not”* (Q 2:216). As in other cases, this Surah strongly depends on the interpretation. As commented by Professor Nurettin Uzunoğlu, war is not something people like, but sometimes is necessary, especially wars against oppression and cruelty to defend freedom and justice. Jihad is not an aggression (Uzunoğlu 2010: 33). However, radical Jihadists will not share this point of view and opt for the alternative utilitarian interpretation which matters a lot in understanding the meaning and mobilization of fighters.

In the Quran, there are 24 Suras which directly or indirectly refers in 164 verses to Jihad. While some are aggressive *“When the sacred months are over, say the polytheists wherever you find them, and take them captive and besiege them, and lie in ambush for them everywhere. But if they repent and establish the Prayer and pay the Zakât, let them go their way. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”* (Q 9:5), some are defensive, forbidding wars of aggression: *“Fight*



*for the sake of Allah those who fights against you, but do not attack them first. Allah does not love aggressors*” (Q 2:190) or even highlighting tolerance and peace: “*There is no compulsion in religion. True guidance is distinct from error. But whoever disbelieves in Tâghût and believers in Allah has grasped the strong handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*” (Q 2:256). The different attitudes of Jihad are problematic for interpretation due to the contest over the abrogation principle in Quran. For example some scholars claims that the “Sword verse” Q 9:5 abrogates earlier verses, while others disagree.<sup>4</sup> As a result verses about Jihad are possible to interpret in both defensive and offensive ways depending on specific cultural and historical contexts.

As pointed out by Kamarulnizam Abullah and Mohd Afandi Salleh (2015) there are several types of Jihad according to intention. We can distinguish for example *Jihad an-nafs* (against one's self), *Jihad ash-Shaytan* (against Satan), Jihad against the *manafiqin* (hypocrites) and *kuffar* (disbelievers) and Jihad against oppressing and unjust leaders (Abdullah and Salleh 2015: 5). This implies that Jihad may vary from spiritual to physical form and from an individual duty (*fard ain*) to collective one (*fard kifaya*). However, Jihadi terrorist organizations are dominated by the *qital* (war) form

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<sup>4</sup> The contest over the principle of abrogation is one of the key challenges in the interpretation of Quran. See for example John Wansbrough's *Quranic studies: Sources and methods of scriptural interpretation* (1977) and *The sectarian milieu: Content and composition of the Islamic salvation history* (1978) and the opposing text by Estelle Whalen or John Burton's *The collection on the Quran* (1977) and its challenge by Harald Motzki in *The Collection of the Quran: A Reconsideration of Western Views in Light of Recent Methodological Developments* (2001) or Ghulam Ahmad Parwez's *Theory on the Surah Al-Baqarah*.

of Jihad against enemies (USA and Western powers) and despite collective aspects of fight, Jihad is considered an individual duty as well. This is best expressed by Osama Bin Laden who in 1998 declared Jihad on the United States, claiming that: *“the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies – civilians and military – is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it, in order to liberate al-Aqsa Mosque and the holy mosque from their grip in order for their armies to move out of all the lands of Islam, defeated and unable to threaten any Muslim”* (Friedenberg 2012: 51). Al-Qaeda views on Jihad represents one of the most aggressive forms which inspired other terrorist organizations around the World and later allowed Al-Qaeda to transform itself into franchise offering Salafi supporters the label of true Jihadists.

Individuality plays an important role in another type of division between “greater Jihad” and “lesser Jihad”. Greater Jihad may be characterized as the individual struggle and internal effort to lead a pure<sup>5</sup> and good life, while lesser Jihad is the physical, violent form of Jihad. Both greater and lesser Jihad has developed regarding the place and historical context.

For example in the beginnings of the Muslim Brotherhood al-Banna defined Jihad in its moderate way as an effort of the soul in the path of Islam and the effort to spread of society's Dawah. Once the Muslim Brotherhood became stronger in society with social support, partially exploiting the Arab revolt in Palestine, al-Banna redefined the Jihad in more militant way as the warfare against infidels (Levy 2014: 157). As indicated by Mavani (2011) There is a link between the strength of the Muslim Community (*Umma*) and the interpretation of Jihad. With the rising strength (or expansion), Jihad is being interpreted in the more offensive way. In the early Meccan

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<sup>5</sup> Purity one of the core aspect of Muslim life (see Perlmutter 2014).

period Jihad was aimed to spread the Islamic Message and Faith peacefully while Medinan verses are more offensive (see Mavani 2011: 408) because at that time Mohammed was no more able to avoid violence with Meccans. For example as noted in Surah 2:193, which was revealed in Mecca: *“And fight them until tumult and persecution are no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against the evil-doers”* (Q 2:193). On the other side, the oldest verses regarding Jihad in the Quran (Q 22:39-40) addresses the right intention criterion and proportionality, two key elements of Just war tradition (Silverman 2002: 78). The concept of Jihad developed also through time.

A very interesting work has been presented by Paul L. Heck who analyzed the development of Jihad in the first six Muslim centuries (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> CE). According to Heck it is important to distinguish between historically incidental features of Jihad from those of enduring relevancy. Jihad which has been formulated in response to colonial imperialism is different to the contemporary Jihad despite some elements remain to form the perception. As suggested, contemporary Jihad shall emphasize the relation between religion and the moral life of the polity (Heck 2004: 123). The understanding of Jihad differs regionally (because all regions are under different political situations after the end of colonialism) and according to attitude (philosophical, political, religious, communitarian etc.) and develops over time which has important implications for fights against Jihad.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As noted by Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im (2006) the fight against Jihad will require to change its roots in the culture of violence (An-Na'im 2006: 796). However, as pointed out Nicholas Smidhile even Western societies living in peace are prone to „home grown Jihad“ (Smidhile 2010).

The spread of religion is a very important aspect in Jihad in the geopolitical sense. The world is divided in between *Dar al-Islam* (The house of Islam) and *Dar al-Harb* (The house of War), despite the fact that religious division of the world is not mentioned explicitly in the Quran; it makes sense from the Jihadist point of view. While *Dar al-Islam* may be considered a safe area due to domination of Islam (sometimes translated also as the house of peace) and Muslim government, the *Dar al-Harb* (or referred as *Dar al-Gharb*, the house of West) is seen as the land with absence of Islamic law, and which is inhabited by non-Muslims and thus potential space for expansion.<sup>7</sup> This dualistic World view has been criticized by both Muslims and non-Muslims and resulted in additional perceptions and areas with specific statuses. For example *Dar al-Hudna* (House of Calm) presents the land of non-believers which agreed on truce between wars. This concept is similar to *Dar al-Ahd* (House of Truce) or *Dar as-Sulh* (House of the Treaty) referring to the territory which are inhabited by non-Muslims and have agreed on the mutual peace treaty with provisions about non-aggression. During the period of peace with *Dar as-Sulh* non-Muslims would have to pay *Jizya* or cede portion of the territory (Takim 2011: 10). Much more contemporary applicable term is *Dar al-Amn* (House of safety) which refers to the land where Muslims are allowed to practice their religion (Western democracies), but an Islamic government has not yet been established. *Dar ad-Dawa* (House of invitation) refers to the territory where Islamic law has been newly established (Black, Esmaeili and Hosen 2013: 42). The

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<sup>7</sup> Interpretations of the terms significantly vary. *Dar al-Islam* may be translated as house of peace, rightness and order and *Dar al-Harb* in a opposite way as house of war, injustice and chaos which makes difference as radical islamists may use more sharp division between these two worlds.

division between Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb is interesting also from the philosophical point of view in the context of Social contract theory, where Dar al-Harb may be considered as the state of nature in the Hobbessian sense. Dar al-Islam (contrary to Dar al-Harb) may be seen as the area with existing order made by Islamic Law and thus similar to the concept of social contract derived from Epicurean philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

The division between “us” and “them” on religious or territorial basis makes favourable conditions for radical interpretation of Islam. Despite the rule of non-aggression in Islam (Q 2:190) the violent nature of international relations offers many possibilities how to interpret aggressive terrorist attack as an act of self-defense or response to previous attacks. For example, Osama Bin Laden advocated the 9/11 attacks as the response to the Iraq invasion (1991) and killing of more than one million people (Christie 2014: 165). Even the distinction between military and civilian, armed and unarmed, woman and children played no role for the Osama bin Laden which is in strong opposition to Islamic conduct of wars (Zaidi 2009: 22). Justification of the 9/11 attacks is rather complicated also from Abdullah Azzam's point of Jihadism. As noted by Sebastian Schnelle, Abdullah Azzam could be considered as one of the co-founders of Al-Qaeda in the 1980s who later as a writer and ideologue provided support and justifications to encourage Jihad against the Soviet army (Schnelle 2012: 626). Abdullah Azzam, who is still well known authority among contemporary Islamists, died in 1989 and for this reason his justifications of Jihad have been formed during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and thus have a predominantly defensive connotation (Schnelle 2012:

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<sup>8</sup> For this point we are thankful to Czech philosopher Michal Brumar.

630). Contrary to Azzam's teaching contemporary Jihadists are using offensive Jihad with global ambitions and heavy political content.

Azzam did not expect that Al-Qaeda will rise under the leadership of Osama bin Laden from local terrorist organization to global network with global ambitions. Those included: (1) unifying the Islamic world under a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam; (2) the rejection of secular rule and the institution of the national state which shall be overthrown and a Muslim Caliphate shall be established instead; (3) the liberation of Muslim territories from foreign occupation and (4) the use of Jihad to bind Muslims together and lead them through a clash of civilizations that will rid the Muslim world of non-Muslim cultural and political influence (Piazza 2009: 66). Daesh has developed these goals further and clearly has global aims based on the Global Caliphate and thus global rule of Sharia law.

There are many more thinkers, clerics, leaders or simply terrorists who have developed various aspects of radical Islamism and Jihadism. It is not the purpose of this chapter to provide complex and detailed genealogy of radical Islamism. Yet, there are several contemporary names which should be mentioned. Abu Musab al-Suri holds a very important position within Jihadist community. Al-Suri in his 1604-pages long book *Global Islamic Resistance Call* (Da'wat al-muqawamah al-islamiyyah al-'alamiyyah) outlines the vision of Jihad against the Western World. This book has been labelled the "Mein Kampf" of Islamism because it connects all aspects of this ideology, including Muslim Ummah' superiority towards Crusader-West and Jihadist superiority towards Non-Jihadist Muslims, Injustice made by West to Muslim Ummah and Non-Jihadist Muslim injustice towards Jihadists, Vulnerability of Muslim Ammah and Jihadist Muslims, distrust of Crusader-West and Jihadists distrust of Non-Jihadist Muslims and Helplessness in Non-Jihadist Muslims (Masoud 2013: 11-15).

Moreover, in his work he presents a strategy on how to fight the West. Number of spontaneous terrorist attack will contribute to

radicalization of European society which will start to attack Muslims who will have to choose their side in the upcoming conflict. The purpose of the attacks is to create conflict which will result into civil war that will provide good conditions for victory of Islamism.

Among other important figure is Nasir bin Hamad al-Fahd, a radical Salafist who advocates the use of weapons of mass destruction. In his Fatwa issued in 2003 he advocated the mass killing of Americans as they, according to sources from “other brothers” are responsible for death of 10 million Muslims. For this reason killing similar number of Americans even on their territory is justified (Al Fahd 2003: 8). Al Fahd also justifies killing of innocent children and woman if they dies as a side effect of good intention. For justification he usesthe example from the life of the Prophet Mohammed when his army attacked with catapults a village during the night, where it was also impossible to distinguish between civilian and military, between men and woman or children (Al Fahd 2003: 12). Similar thinking is acceptable to other Jihadists and similar thinking may be found also in the views of Zawahiri.

One of the most influential Jihadists is Abu Abdallah al-Mujahir, an al-Qaeda senior member who is an author of the influential work *The Jurisprudence of Blood* (Fiqh al Dimaa). His texts are compulsory reading in the training camps operated by Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State for great summary of reasons behind Jihad. Moreover, al-Mujahir shifted Jihadism to another level by offering a spiritual justification of suicide terrorism (see Winter and Al-Saud 2016). Suicide is taboo in Islam and considered against Allah’s will. However, when made with the intention of upholding Islam and for the intention of Allah, then the personal and selfish element of suicide is replaced by the “objective” element in the name of Allah and thus helpful for Ummah.

There are other Islamists who contributed to the development of radicalism within Islamism such as al-Qaeda ideologue Abu al-Walid al-Filastini, or SkaykhAbd al-Hakim Hassan, Abu Yahya al-Libi, Husayn, Umar bin-Mahfuz, Abu al-Hasan al Masri, Abu Haf’s al-Muritani, Abu al-Hasan al-Qari and others. It is interesting; however, that majority of them are connected with either the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

### 1.3 Conclusion

Radical Islamism presents ideology which constituted itself as the major anti-democratic force since the fall of Communism. Moreover radical Islamism has some features close to totalitarian ideologies: on one side it has some utopian ideas about creation of the new World based on Sharia law, on the other it shares the conservative sentiment for old ages in the aims of resurrecting the Sunni Caliphate. Unlike other totalitarian ideologies radical Islamism is aggressive and expansive in its nature. Moreover, within radicalism there is strong encouragement for original purity of religion embodied in Salafism which is in principle opposing modernity. This reaction to modernity has also its hostile attitude towards Western civilization which may well serve as the political program and justification for Jihad in its violent form. Jihad in connection with radical Islamism has resulted in Jihadism: the politically and religiously justified violent struggle against everything which is not purely Islamic or which is opposing pure Islam. In this sense Jihadism contains certain paradoxes: zealous and literal fulfilment of Islamist ideology by violent means (extreme Salafism) is not only against the development of society and progress of mankind, but is also against the basic principles of Islam. The religious heterogeneity of Islam as well as misunderstandings regarding Quran and its interpretation makes Islam prone to misuse by radical groups including Salafi jihadists who interpret Jihad in a very utilitarian and aggressive way.

Radical Islamism finds its way within excluded or oppressed communities and is used as a tool of mind control by manipulators with political ambitions. The roots of radical Islam are primary social in nature which might be fought by education, respect and understanding of diversity, to quote from the Quran: *“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you*



*peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted“ (Q: 49:13).*

## 2. Media and Jihadist Terrorism

The relationship between media and terrorism is currently a highly discussed topic. In comparison to the past, media has become an everyday irreplaceable source of information. Most people read news, watch television, listen to the radio and also use the internet. Since media can deliver information to large amount of people immediately, it is a useful partner for terrorism. One of the most basic aims of terrorists and their organizations or groups is to inform people about their existence and to deliver fear and panic to as many people as they can. To pass this message through the media has become the most simplistic way. As Bruce Hoffman the director of the Center for Security said: *"Only by spreading the terror and outrage to a much larger audience can the terrorists gain the maximum potential leverage."* If you imagine that you are a terrorist and you have very limited resources, but you need to make a very strong impression. What is the best way how to gain the best results of a terrorist attack, you have prepared? The answer is to let the media stream it.

Though the topic of media and terrorism is highly discussed at the international level, for example by authors such as Frederick Burton, Michel Wieviorka, Carsten Bockstette and Gabriel Weimann this unfortunately cannot be said about authors in Central Europe, specifically Slovakia. There is lack of serious articles and researchers dealing with this topic. There are a few authors in Czech Republic notably Bronislav Ostránský and Pavel Ťupek, who deal with this topic. The main aim of this chapter is to focus on media coverage of terrorism and the relationship between them. It is argued that this relationship has a symbiotic character which is amongst scholars is a very sensitive topic. However, many authors argue that the relationship between the media and terrorism has been

overestimated, though terrorism expert Walter Laqueur has a different opinion. As he wrote in his book *The New Terrorism*, “*It has been said that journalists are terrorists’ best friends, because they are willing to give terrorist operations maximum exposure. This is not to say that journalists as a group are sympathetic to terrorists, although it may appear so. It simply means that violence is news, whereas peace and harmony are not. The terrorists need the media, and the media find in terrorism all the ingredients of an exciting story.*” (Laqueur, 2000:44) Also examined is how the topic of terrorism developed in the media since the September 11, 2001 attacks and what is the current role of the internet and especially social networks in shaping terrorism today.

In the first part of the chapter, media communication as a tool for terrorism and the strategies which terrorists use to gain their goals through the media are discussed. It is argued that the relationship between media and terrorism has a symbiotic character, which is evident from the fact that terrorists need the media to get worldwide coverage and the media needs terrorism to get followers. The second part of the chapter investigates which forms of the media were attractive for terrorists in the past and which are popular now, with a focus on the possibilities offered by the internet, through easy access and streaming content. Finally, an examination of terrorist propaganda through Jihadi recruitment lifestyle magazines *Inspire* and *Dabiq* is conducted with the primary goal to compare the influence on potential terrorist groups followers.

## **2.1 Communication Strategies**

For terror organizations both large and small, mass media is a very powerful weapon to use in achieving their goals. It is in the interest of terrorists to be part of the most viewed programs and be

on the most visited websites. The visibility of terrorist groups has become one of the most important parts of everyday activity. That's why the publication *Mini-manual of the Urban Guerilla* written by Carlos Marighella, who was a Brazilian terrorist, has become the guide for many terrorist movements all around the globe. In the manual he describes in detail how to gain an advantage over mass media for terrorist groups. According to him it is very important that mass media becomes the tool for propaganda and the psychological war is only one of the techniques based on direct and indirect use of mass-media (Perešin, 2007).

As already mentioned, this relationship between mass-media and terrorist organization cannot be assumed as one sided. Readers and viewers increase as does the financial profits with the use of media. On the other side media also sometimes don't fully understand the political outcomes of their decision of how to cover the topic of terrorism. Since there exists a clear relationship between media and terrorism as many authors argue, this relationship can be described as a symbiotic. Moreover, French sociologist Michel Wieviorka describes the attitudes of terrorists towards the media range from pure indifference to total break (Wieviorka 1993). Wieviorka splits this relationship into four modes:

1. Pure indifference, when terrorists don't try to scare civilians except their victims and they are not interested in propagation of their actions.
2. Relative indifference, when the terrorists are unconcerned to the news about their terrorist acts.
3. The media oriented strategy, when terrorist use the mass media as a tool for spreading their messages.
4. Total break relationship, when terrorist concerned the media organization, editors and journalists as their enemies (Wieviorka 1993: 44).

A more natural relationship was described by Paul Wilkinson who did not agree with Wieworka's model. Wilkinson states that terrorism is a psychological weapon by itself and it depends on spread of the fear to the public. This is also the basis of their symbiotic relationship. His findings are supported by the fact that terrorism lives from publicity and that medial freedom operates in an open society which allows for manipulation and abuse. Professor of political science Abraham Miller noted that, *"terrorism is capable of writing any drama – no matter how horrible – to compel the media's attention ... Terrorism, like an ill-mannered enfant terrible, is the media's stepchild, a stepchild which the media, unfortunately, can neither completely ignore nor deny"* (Perešin 2007). He describes this relation as unnecessary for media and also for terrorism and any of them cannot step out of it.

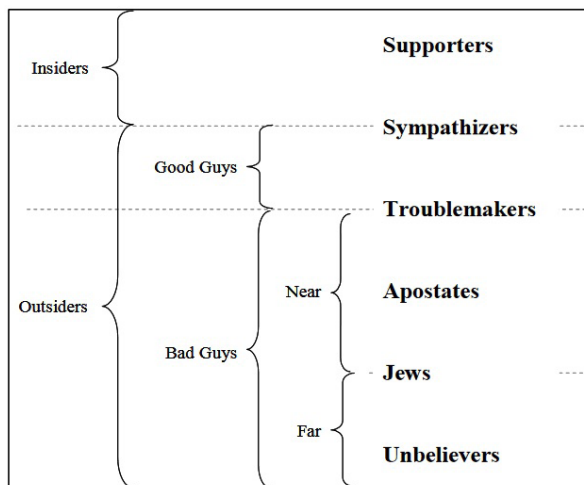
The relationship between media and terrorism is highly influenced by the strategies used by terrorists. These strategies are based on three factors, legitimization, propagation and intimidation. First of all, it is unnecessary for them to legitimize their movements so the Islamic public would not see their acts as a violation of the society norms and the Islamic customs. This is probably the biggest communication challenge they face. Jihadi terrorists see themselves as outsiders and their methods often harm innocent victims, so there is tremendous pressure put on the legitimacy of these groups. What is not very willing for Jihadists is that legitimacy is very strongly based in Islam of which violent methods are strictly forbidden. Another kind of legitimacy comes from community, meaning that communities where terrorist groups operate know their goals and they are accepting their activities. Secondly, there is a need for propagation of their activities and movement to the right audience. In recent decades Jihadi ideology used mainly the strategy of implementing aggressive ideology from the historical context, which

helped them create a universally applicable strategy to achieve their goals. There is the need not only to legitimize their actions but also to spread them to the other Muslim groups worldwide. Since aggression in Islam is forbidden, they tried to create an image of freedom fighters for which it was necessary to use violence, against their will, to eliminate the common enemies of the Islamic world. Aggression and violence has to be communicated as an unnecessary tool to be accepted by wider Muslim society. Thirdly they tried to intimidate their opponents: existing enemies and fellow Muslims who resisted them. They have used similar techniques as big corporations, creating disinformation campaigns and coordinating communication and operations (Steven and Schiefelbein 2006). Firstly they seek to eliminate Jews and all the non-believers from the Arabian Peninsula thereby recreating secular Muslim regimes. Their final goal is to spread Islamic rule through whole world and destroy all enemies (Bockstette 2008).

Strategic communication management in the scope of the terrorist groups can be defined as: *“understanding and analyzing the target audience for attaining long term strategic objectives; sharing specified messages (words and deeds package) with the relevant public in a sustained and transparent course at the most appropriate time, location and conditions via the most appropriate conduit so as to create the strongest influence on the specified target audiences by ensuring the orchestration of the process through the integration of all resources, fields and capabilities”* (Guller 2012). The communication management and strategy of terrorist groups cannot be divided from common political and societal aims, including short term and long term ones. Short term goals can be seen as the aspiration to gain successful propaganda and in the long term is the spread of the information, messages and movement by itself to Muslim audiences worldwide. Very briefly, it can be said that their communication strategy is mostly based on

restructuralization of political speeches and Islamic world (Bockstette 2008). The effectiveness of the terrorist groups communication with the public was pointed out by former Secretary of Defence Robert M. Gates when discussing U.S. strategic communications in 2007, where he noted: *“for example, public relations was invented in the United States, yet we are miserable at communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals. It is just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its message on the internet than America. As one foreign diplomat asked a couple of years ago, “How has one man in a cave managed to out-communicate the world’s greatest communication society?”* (Tokgoz 2008). By this speech given at Kansas University he confirmed how much power terrorist groups gain with the direct or indirect help of media.

**Picture 1: Jihadi Audience Concept**



Source: Corman and Schiefelbein 2016.

The key to understanding the goals of terrorist groups through communication strategies is to fully understand their audience. The way of communication of terrorist groups can be divided into two main categories. First is the communication with insiders, people directly working in terrorist groups. This communication is based on strict control, an orientation to the common goals. People from outside the organizations are split into the bad guys and good guys as you can see in the table below.

The good guys are usually supporters, who offer emotional and material support and also people who could be potentially useful in the future. A relationship with them is also often described by Jihadist as love, friendship and advice. The category in between the bad guys and good guys are troublemakers. Troublemakers are for example standard criminals, bounty hunters and people which were the parts of the fallen regimes and they are considered as a potential threat, but not as dangerous as the bad guys. Bad guys are everyone who are not the good guys and are divided into two groups: near enemies and far enemies. Near enemies are the main aims of the short term goals. Near enemies could be the already mentioned troublemakers, apostates or also the Jews, which are sometimes referred to as the far enemies. Apostates (*irtidād*) are Muslims, who do not agree with the actions and the ways of terrorist organizations, which is translated as those who do not agree with Islam. There is a need for their elimination and also for the elimination of the Jews, who are problematic because they stand in their way to spread the Islamic way to the Arabian Peninsula. The last group, unbelievers, are referred as the far enemies. These are usually foreigners and they stand in the way of the creation of an Islamic state in the whole world (Steven and Schiefelbein 2006).



## 2.2 Old and New Media

During the 1990's, terrorist groups used for communication the traditional public tools such as interviews, fax, face to face propaganda and also press conferences. The end of 1998 saw the first shift in communication strategies influenced by technological development and spread of Al-Jazeera. Al-Jazeera became the TV station used for sharing terrorist messages and terrorist tapes to CNN and to the other international corporations. An al-Qaeda speaker described the shift and strategic choice of Al-Jazeera amongst the other TV stations and influence of videotapes of Osama Bin Laden in Arab world, noting: „*Sheikh Usama knows that the media war is not less important than the military war against America. That's why al-Qaeda has many media wars. The Sheikh has made al-Qaeda's media strategy something that all TV stations look for. There are certain criteria for the stations to be able to air our videos, foremost of which is that it has not taken a previous stand against the mujahedeen. That maybe explains why we prefer Al-Jazeera to the rest*” (Bockstette 2008). Al Jazeera started streaming content with Osama Bin Laden in October 2001, releasing exclusive videotapes. The messages of Osama bin Laden were not only for Muslim audiences, but the aim was to deliver to a much wider audience, such as the videotape from December 2001, where Osama Bin Laden appeared very distinguished in comparison to previous tapes. On videotape he remained calm, talked very slowly and briefly, without any sign of aggression and did not deny or take responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. This only shows that the target was not anymore only Muslim audience, but much wider public (Matusitz 2012).

After 9/11 the Jihadi terrorist communication infrastructure and methods of communication spread. In this year also was established the As-Sahab Foundation for Islamic Media Publication, which

is the media production house directly connected to Al-Qaeda. This is the source of the main media production which produces videos, interviews, documentaries and news programmes, which are either deliver in hard copy form to Al-Jazeera or streamed online. All the speeches of the senior leadership of the original Al-Qaeda leadership after June 2006 has the As-Sahab logo. The quality, frequency and style of the video messages have become more and more professional and sophisticated. Even when most of the videos are made in Arabic language they often use the English language (predominantly subtitled) which points out that the terrorist groups try to influence the wider public (Bockstette 2008).

In July 2005 in a letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the latter leader of Al Qaeda operations in Iraq, senior Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri wrote, *"We are in a battle, and more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media"* (Rollins and Theohary 2011). Free media are one of the symbols of democratic society. However, sometimes in this competitive condition the race who will first deliver the news directly reacts to terrorist propaganda. Hoffman refers to terrorism that it *"is a perverted form of show business"* and the way how the media inform about it (especially American media) *"a capitulation of American networks before terrorists opinions."* To offer the higher publicity to terrorist action mainly kidnappings creates a big pressure on representatives of governments to respond to the terrorist terms. One such incident which had American TV Network with a hostages crisis in Beirut in 1985 is considered as one of the best example, of how much terrorist groups can actually manipulate the media. It is obvious that the families of victims and also society push public opinion, which has become a very useful tool for terrorists. The Iranian Hostage crisis of 1979–1981 is also often mentioned as the example of how the media creates difficult conditions for the decision of governments. Senator Tom Lantos commented the results of this media

interference as following: *“focusing on individual tragedies, interviewing the families of people in anguish, completely debilitates national policymakers from making rational decisions in the national interest”* (Hoffman 2006: 176). The media anyway often sees this interfering as their fight against the Government for which is more important than the life of civilians. They put themselves into the role of their protectors, as a CBS White House correspondent once explained: *“we are an instrument for the hostages ... We force the Administration to put their lives above policy”* (Hoffman 2006:175).

To spread direct, exclusive and dramatic messages has become the most attractive for the public and that is why the media started to focus more on individual stories than on presenting the whole context. Absurdities and lots of emotions become the basic scope for the news. The more dramatic and emotional terrorist acts become, the longer reporters are able to keep the attention of the audience, which is also the aim of the terrorists. Terrorism expert J. Bowyer Bell often describes the relationship between the media and terrorism by the following quote: *“Don’t shoot, Abdul! We’re not on prime time!”* which shows how it has changed to a tragic comedy. There are also other examples that prove how much the media influences terrorists and how much the terrorists influence the media. For example, the crowd in front of the American embassy in Tehran started shooting only when the Canadian TV crew arrived. Since they turned on their cameras the demonstrators started to shout *“death to Carter”* and burned the American flag. After two minutes when the cameraman signaled the end of filming everything was over. However, the same scenario was repeated afterwards for the French speaking Canadians where the crowd was shouting *“mort à Carter”* (Perešin 2007).

Terrorists have for many years relied on television, radio and print media. The disadvantage about these old media mediums is that they have selection thresholds, which are multilevel processes, which

cannot be directly influenced by terrorist groups. Also the Arabic media started to be very competitive and fragmented after 2003. The increase of satellite television stations meant an increase of competition and also the raise of various opinions about terrorist groups, which did not cooperate completely with terrorist communication strategies. Antipathy against Al-Qaeda developed also in 2003 and with every terror act, there were more and more critical voices from the Arabic public. Research of public opinion also showed decreasing tendencies for supporting the Al-Qaeda especially in the countries, where Al-Qaeda directly operated. Arabic satellite television became one of the main obstacles, when it did not stream Al-Qaeda's agenda and became one of the strongest forces, calling for the change in region. That is why it was necessary to use the possibilities offered by the internet. As Abu Omar expressed it, *"We are the energy behind the path to jihad. Just like the Jihadists reached their target on September 11, we will reach ours through the Internet"*(Bockstette 2008).

The internet thus became the new tool for terrorist groups, which proved itself to be more useful than the traditional media. *„Cyberspace allows individuals to manipulate, use, gather and input information at will on a massive scale“* (Čížík 2016). Terrorist groups use the internet by many ways, one of them is to recruit potential fighters and followers, for propaganda and also for cyber attacks. They use specialized chat rooms, webpages and also the social networks which are controlled not only by terrorist groups but also more and more often by individual extremists. Generally, security experts agree that terrorists use the internet for five general purposes:

1. research and communication,
2. training,
3. fundraising,

4. media operations,
5. radicalization and recruitment (Mantel 2009).

Cybercrime is currently the source of the biggest financial income over drug or weapon smuggling, which used to be traditional income for terrorist organisations. Cyber crime is for terrorists, a high-profit low-risk crime. Some researchers say there is nothing like cyberterrorism since cyber attacks are more annoying, than threatening or fear spreading. It obviously cannot create such an terror as an explosives or gun shooting. However, these networks are spread so much that they can cause economic disruption and also can cause a death of civilians which could be considered as an act of error. There is generally two ways how to define cyber terrorism:

1. Effect based, which notes that cyberterrorism exists, when the cyber-attacks are of such a scale, that they create a situation comparable with the spread of fear by traditional terrorism. These can be caused by other criminals not only terrorists.
2. Intent-based, agrees that cyberterrorism exist when politically motivated cyber-attacks should intimidate the Government or the people about certain political objective or create an economical loss (Rollins and Theohary 2011).

Terrorist groups found a new ally not only in the internet but mainly in the possibilities offered by social media. After 9/11 many terrorists started their activities in cyberspace, which they use to spread their messages and activities. The internet is so important for terrorist groups that various terrorist leaders were underlining the importance of keeping this cyber-jihad alive. They often compare their cyber supporters to mujahideen, which can be very attractive for the people which want to be part of these organisations but are not willing to give up on their comfortable lifestyle or risk their lives

in field. The pros of social media are that they offer two-sided communication, which means that the consumer of the information can spread this information further and became an actor of communication as well. Social media helps terrorist groups to communicate and radicalize western sympathizers and also offer the room for communication of these individuals to bigger organisations. Many Arabic written websites have apparently codes for the next attacks and some of them also offer the guide how to build and use various guns an explosive. This gives life to new generations of terrorists and extremists, different from the ones behind Madrid and London attacks (Rollins and Theohary 2011).

The impressive growth of the importance of social media especially for young people, offered the biggest opportunity for terrorist groups to spread their propaganda, radicalisation and recruitment. The character of social media allows the terrorist to be targeting the selected audience with strategies known as narrowcasting. Narrowcasting is a strategy used by marketing groups to find a potential customer, which fits into the profile group of usual customers. Social networks with detailed information about each account like name, age, location, pictures, videos and more offer the same service to terrorist groups. In closed Jihadi forums are also instruction for various strategies how to use social media websites. As it was noted in 2010 by one user of Al-Qaeda's Fallujah Islamic Network: *"the least we can do to support the Mujahideen is to distribute their statements and releases."* He added, *"we wish from the brothers to also distribute the statement via YouTube and widely . . . and on Facebook"* (Wiemann 2014).

Most used are popular social media sites Twitter and Facebook. However, while Facebook is the biggest social media site, Twitter has become more popular between terrorist groups and is used primarily by the Islamic state. In *The Project ISIS Twitter Census*, it was found that there was minimum 46,000 twitter accounts used by

ISIS supporters. This number is however very conservative, since the maximum assessment was around 70,000 accounts. The project used a dataset of 20,000 followers and tried to create a profile of a typical supporter of ISIS on twitter. Most of the accounts were located in Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia and there was a very small number of active accounts in European countries and actually none in USA. The locations were found by various methods, either the account owner set up the location during creation of account, by using GPS coordinates in their activities in Twitter, by selection of the time zone by user (there is a high possibility that user will choose the correct time zone) or by filling the Biofield, where the user can write 160 characters about himself. Combination of these factors can create quite a clear picture about the location of ISIS followers. In between the followers 73% of them chose Arabic language as their first language, 18% of followers chose English and 6% chose the French language. Typical accounts tweeted in average 7.3 times a day and the whole amount of tweets everyday were 133.42 tweets. It is safe to say that ISIS followers are more active than average users of Twitter. At least 1,000 accounts were suspended in between September and December of 2014 and the users which were more active were suspended much quicker. Twitter was already sporadically suspending accounts earlier in 2014 but started to shut them down aggressively that summer. When the number of suspended accounts were raising, ISIS tried to establish its basis on other social media which only met with the same reaction like on Twitter. The efficiency of the Twitter politics can be prove by the fact that almost 57% of the accounts included in the demographic dataset were shut down (Berger and Morgan 2015). The use of global mass media and internet as the main communication infrastructure led not only to using the internet for streaming videos and using social media websites but also to create blogs, articles and also lifestyle magazines.

Facebook is currently the biggest social network. According to the latest figures in the second quarter of 2016 Facebook had 1.71 billion active users. Terrorists caught up on to the raising popularity of Facebook and has used it to their own advantage. Their motivation was most seen on closed Jihadi forums, where often mentioned a strategy named Facebook Invasion. The general goals of this invasion are:

1. *„Reach the wide base of Muslims who are using Facebook,*
2. *encourage brothers to devise new online media in support of Jihadi media,*
3. *form a solid base on Facebook and shed a light on it as a medium for reaching people,*
4. *move from an elite society (Jihadi forums and websites) to mainstream Muslims, their participation, and interact with them,*
5. *advance media operations and encourage creativity, innovation, flexibility, and change. Reach large [numbers] of Crusaders, broadcast the losses of their armies, expose the lies of their leaders, and call Muslims to Jihad“ (Department of Homeland Security 2010).*

In different forums there are also instructions of how to create an account, add pictures, videos or friends and how to join and create groups. Facebook is mainly used for sharing tactical operational information as a guides of how to build a weapons, explosives, how to pass a borders and also its a gateway to the other terrorist websites. Facebook offers terrorists much better options than closed forums, instead of waiting for people to come to them terrorist can directly target selected individuals (Wiemann 2004).

One of the other important tools in the hands of terrorists is YouTube. YouTube is a giant video sharing service which allows to share propaganda and radical videos worldwide. On 1st of March



2011 Arid Uka, a German based Albanian Muslim watched as many of him before footage of how an American soldier raped a Muslim woman, which was in this case a video posted from terrorists for Jihadi propagation aims. A couple hours afterwards he went to the Frankfurt airport and killed two American servicemen, wounding two more. After he was arrested and police browsed his history on internet it showed especially on his Facebook profile how his interests about topics with Jihadi content increased. Uka had not been a part of any terrorist organisation and he had never visited any of the famous training terrorist camps. His whole radicalisation was based online. Arid Uka is a typical example of the new kind of terrorist which can be recruited, trained and inspired in online platforms (Wiemann 2014).

## **2.3 Magazines**

Issuing online magazines in a Western format looks like a step back from the view of terrorist organisations. Propaganda materials can appeal to the target groups more effective through the internet channels (video messaging through YouTube). However, emphasis on issuing the magazines is based on a regular stream of information to followers and also to recruit new Jihadi warriors. Through this type of media is possible to inform not only about propaganda, but mainly to spread information of how to create weapons and explosives, which could be successfully censored and eliminated by social media and other communication channels. Saving the magazines on the deep web and relatively easy access can create a very powerful weapon also from online magazines. The format of the lifestyle magazines which is very catchy creates an impression of a standard magazine. Media magazine sphere is also as the most of the cyberspace split mainly in between the propagation of the

terrorist organisation of Al-Qaeda and Salafist militant movement Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham's (ISIS).

In 2003 the first professional looking biweekly online magazine Sawt al-Jihad<sup>9</sup> (Voice of Jihad) was published by the Arabian Peninsula branch of Al Qaeda (AQAP). Issues were published online from October 2003 until November 2004, with issue 29 in April 2005 attracting new followers (Bockstette 2008). The last issue of the magazine was issued after a two year hiatus in February 2007 and was orientated on potential terrorist attacks on the oil facilities and to weakening the Western energy interests in Arabian Peninsula. The magazine was mainly used as a propaganda tool of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula during the successful terrorist attacks of the mujahideen on foreigners living in Saudi Arabia (Yanbu al-Bahr attack in February 2004, storming the American consulate in Jeddah in December 2004 and many other attacks on foreign workers and reporters during 2003-2005). The Voice of Jihad already showed similar characteristics as current propaganda magazines. As mentioned in Burton (2007): *"When it was published regularly, the group was very active operationally; shortly after regular publishing ceased, the activity level dramatically declined."* The magazine, except for the spreading of propaganda was mainly used to gain Arabian fighters against Western crusaders. One of the main activities of AQAP was an analyses of the statements of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri and their influence on radical militants. Dominant was the support for the Holy War against unbelievers (*kuffar*). The continual thread of the magazine was hatred against the Saudi regime, especially the Saudi Royal family and their potential collaboration with Western countries (i.e. support

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<sup>9</sup> Not to confuse with Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (Taliban) website and Indonesian Jihadist media group Sawt al-Jihad in Nusantara.

of American forces against Al Qaeda). An accompanied part of the magazine was also short informational newsletters. Supporting AQAP activity like this was issuing the Maaskar al-Battar (al-Battar Training Camp), which provided technical construction of weapons and advised through a military training manual for Jihadi fighters instructions on weapon use. Focus was mainly put on the raising and training the mujahideens in local areas with concrete physical training, using automatic guns, suicide attacks and other acts of terror. To raise the attraction of Al-Qaeda a new Jihadi magazine *Dhurwat al-Sanam* was published. The elementary problem of recruiting new Jihadi warriors centered around which language was used by terrorist factions of Al-Qaeda for propaganda. The Arabic language fulfilled the communication function for Muslim countries, but second generation migrants which came to Europe had already lost most of the connection to their original language. For a new communication strategy it was important to attract European Muslims by using the English as the main language for communication. So these magazines changed their focus to a tool for propaganda and public relations. The aim of the new strategy was mainly to gain new young fighters to radical Jihadi groups.

The introduction of new English issued Jihadi magazines hit Western audiences during the spring and summer 2009. In addition to translation of extremist statements, essays and military guides the new target audience (European and American Jihadi) were hit also by two new extremist magazines. An English-language Jihadi media group al-Fursan Media issued four (3 standard issues with a special 9/11 issue) issues of their propaganda magazine "*Jihad Recollections*" from April to September 2009. The media wing of Al Mosul Islamic Network released five issues of "*Defenders of the Truth*" from July 2009 to January 2010. Both magazines were clearly containing the topic of the destruction of western world, where was the main enemy clearly named and also the way and forms of its

liquidation. In addition to the main enemies of the Islam...Jews, Christians and atheists, included also were the leaders of treacherous government of so-called Muslim countries serving to the Jewish and Christians. *“The English-language content was most frequently used by Iraqi insurgent organizations during Iraqi war as they tried to tap into American dissatisfaction with the Bush administration, targeting American Muslims, many of whom do not speak Arabic...”* (Seib and Janbek 2010: 35). The closer analysis of the magazine content showed the effort to spread the fight for freedom to a global level. Global Jihad through the English language magazines obtained real capacity. Criticism of the western world was based on decadency and moral failure of secular western civilization, there were regular information about persecutions of Muslims in different countries of the world. The quality of photography, graphic collages, but also the changing typologies of fonts and the ways of wrapping the pages indicated the knowledge of new technologies.

Quality of the graphic content of Jihad Recollections showed significant progress. Jihad Recollections significantly propagated advertisements of as-Sabah Media group, with the links to their video-messages. In its third issue, there was also the propaganda advertising quality of as-Sabah Media presented as the most successful Jihadi Media outlet in the world. Functioning of as-Sabah media according the author of the article Ibn al-Mubarak was based on three main principles: command, themes and quality. As-Sabah became the voice of the *“High Command”* with the automatic support of all other major Mujahideen groups. Second, most important was covering big topics and spreading them to the public. As-Shabab was also first in using technologies, because the significant connection between the magazine and the group was also based on rewriting the video-interviews with leading representatives of Jihadi movements. In a higher amount, there started to cover also the propaganda interviews with people who converted to Islam about

how they found their true path and about bad decisions which made them fight against Islamic fighters. The criticism of western countries (including Turkey) was a focus especially in the areas of social and health policies. Al-Mosul Jihad magazine Defenders of the Truth was presented as a mixture of articles and essays. The magazine fulfilled mainly the explanatory function, so in every issue there was an analysis of different part of the Quran. Topics were connected to each other in this order: priority and duty to carry on a global Jihad, domination of Islam above everything existing, martyrdom in Islam, function of Sharia, prayer and knowledge of Islam. The global spreading of Jihad was introduced by Defenders of the Truth pointing to small militant organizations. It did not focus on Al-Qaeda, but presented the fights of the Mujahideen in the Caucasus caliphate, Central Asia warriors, Jihad in Somalia and e. g. Thailand.

**Table 1: Actual magazines of militant movements<sup>10</sup>**

Media center	Name	Type	Language	Organization	Quantity
Al Hayat	Dabiq	magazine	English	ISIS	15
Al Hayat	Dar al-Islam	magazine	French	ISIS	9
Al Hayat	Konstantiniyye	magazine	Turkish	ISIS	6
Al Hayat	Al-Nabaa	newsletter	Arabic	ISIS	40
Al Malahem	Inspire	magazine	English	AQAP	15
Al Malahem	Al-Nafeer	bulletin	Arabic	AQAP	6
As Sahab	Resurgence	magazine	English	AQ (IS)	2
AQ (IS)	Nawai Afghan Jihad	magazine	Urdu	AQ (IS)	57

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<sup>10</sup> Actual status until 31. 7. 2016.

Al Risalah	Al-Risalah	magazine	English	Syrian fighters	3
Ansar al-Sharia	Al-Masra	newspaper	Arabic	Ansar al-Sharia	17
Taliban	Al-Samood	magazine	Arabic	Taliban	124
Taliban	Sharia't	magazine	Urdu	Taliban	53
Ihiyya al-Khilafat	Ihiyya al-Khilafat	magazine	Urdu	Tehreek-e-Taliban	12
	Al-Ghurabaa	bulletin	Swahili	Al-Muhajirun E.Africa	4

Source: Clarion Project 2016 and Jihadology 2016.

Before the analysis of the content and development of the two most important magazines of Jihadi militant groups- Inspire and Dabiq it is necessary to quantify the amount and the form of issued magazines currently.

In the following analysis, the sources written in English language which has been used to target audiences in Europe and North America are investigated. These magazines without any personal contact or with terrorist help can spread global Jihad beyond the borders of the Muslim world and attract so called “lone wolves” extremists to make some attacks in the West, respectively coming to fight in IS territory.

The first issue of the magazine Inspire in June 2010 created a media sensation. Information about the magazine started media hysteria in big American and British media companies, exactly what Al-Qaeda wished to accomplish. Regularly making fun of the content helped to increase the web searching of the magazine. Inspire also functioned as the connecting force for more branches and franchises of terrorist organization Al-Qaeda. In its content Inspire joined the tradition of jihad from Sawt, al-Jihad with the initiation to individual terrorist acts and to produce weapons from Maaskar al-Battar. The common mark with the magazine Jihad Recollections is its graphic quality which was even increased to the level of western lifestyle magazines.

The article “*Make a bomb in your Mother’s kitchen*” took the guide how to construct an explosive and then used so-called “*open source jihad*” strategy of Al Qaeda. Open Source Jihad regularly offered strategies of guerrilla warfare. Recruiting of individuals by magazines and video-messages to carry out individual jihad changed the entire Al Qaeda strategy. It also opened them up to cyberattack from the West.

After the publication of the magazines the British security service MI6 changed the guide for constructing a homemade bomb with garbled code from a page of recipes from the Ellen Degeneres Show’s Best Cupcakes in America. MI6 dubbed the cyberattack “*Operation Cupcake*” (Flock 2011; Inspire). MI6 deleted almost completely the whole content and Al-Qaeda was able to replace the false magazine code in 14 days. The people who owned the digital copy of Inspire could also be anytime taken into custody in the UK and USA and be accused of terrorism. In the process of self-radicalization were people arrested and accused of preparing terrorist acts. However, there was a coordinated effort to eliminate the magazine after the first issue “inspired” the Tsarnaev brothers to create pressure cooker bombs and to carry out the Boston Marathon Bombing in April 2013. The magazine Inspire however may help Al-Qaeda avoid fragmentation and “refocus an increasingly fragmented message and motivate those interested in its ideology and mission” (Sivek 2013: 3); in comparison to previous magazines which brought lighter items and radicalization through the fame of hate of the Western towards Muslim (not Muslims towards West). It simplified the status of Islam as the victim. Even after the murder of the editor Samir Khan in September 2011 the position of the magazine was not weakened, however, the language quality significantly went down.

The aim in this chapter is not to spread the methods of self-radicalization process brought by magazines Sivek (2013), it is more important to focus on the different content with other magazines.

That is where the significant difference of content between Al-Qaeda and its Iraqi child ISIS can be seen. The competition for the leader position and for the subordination between Al-Qaeda and ISIS is not the only power struggle. Both organizations have differences mainly in pointing out the primary enemy, fighting strategy and the focus of social issues.

ISIS sees as its enemy almost everyone in the Shia minority, Asad's regime in Syria, Abadi's regime in Iraq, Al-Qaeda, Kurds, Yezidis, Syrian opposition, Jabhat an-Nusra, apostates, so everyone who is not subordinate and abiding to caliph Abū *Bakr al-Baghdadi*. The differences can be also found in the process of governance. Since Al-Qaeda is focusing on the fight with an outside enemy and primarily does not care about the inside functioning of the state (leaves it on the local leaders). ISIS is trying to gain and develop total power; from judicial power to local security. As it was said by Byman and Williams in their article, Al Qaeda is using more "older" Internet Platforms (websites, forums), ISIS is using social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, smart phones, viral videos). This directly influences the establishment of organizations and their hierarchy, and that is why AQAP tries to act more modern by using the modern communication strategies not like the old Al-Qaeda core, so it can be in concurrence to ISIS.

**Table 2: Used strategy**

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Enemy</i>	<i>Main aim</i>
Al Qaeda	United States (far enemy)	adopting Jihad (guerilla)
ISIS	apostate regimes, "the others" (near enemy)	gain territory (regular army)

Source: Byman and Williams 2015.



Messaging on new constructed communication was firstly done through 4 issues of the newsletter Islamic State Report, which was during Ramadan (July 5, 2014) a shift with concurrence of Inspire-magazine Dabiq, informing exclusively about ideology and activities of caliphate. As it was written in Harleen Gambhir (2014) an analysis of first two issues of Dabiq- the primary aims are to synchronize the religious authority and political control over conquered areas. In the magazine issues noted above it was less religion and more attention was paid to consolidation of power and gaining the administrative control over a conquered area. So, the explanations why the caliphate right for propriety of the area and existence. Another issue was dealing more with the context of the fight against a near enemy, as an ideological explanation against the Shia's education, Iranian regime, destruction influence of the Saudi royal family for spreading of jihad, or the non-ideological influence of Jabhat an-Nusra and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. All these messages should bring to the European and American Jihadists only one true way of Islam – to join the caliphate Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham.

The comparison of the most significant differences between two most influential magazines was summarized by Charles Vallee in the article Digital Jihad (2015). He focused mainly on five areas: ideology, call to action, methods of motivation, outlook of the Arab Spring and views of each other. Ideology of the magazines is same as the ideology of terrorist groups which we already mentioned above. His results is that most of the victims of the Islamic state are Muslims and religious minorities inside Iraq and Syria and not the far enemy as it is in Al-Qaeda ideology. In practice, Al-Qaeda uses the defensive Jihad and ISIS uses offensive Jihad (Valle, 2015). ISIS puts much importance to the local area mainly because without this area its authority and legitimacy is lost. Al-Qaeda is able to survive also like an underground organization. In a call to action strategy the organizations are even more different. Al Qaeda sees as illogical for

a American or European Muslim to travel abroad and join the mujahideen. The best Jihad is to work inside the West as a lone wolf. That's why it is more often celebrated as European martyrdoms in their magazine, Inspire, which also discusses the detailed plan and schedule of the actions in a specific newsletter Inspire Guide. The other alternatives are boycott of American goods and corporations. On the other hand, ISIS's Dabiq calls upon every Muslim to fight for the caliphate.

Comparison of methods of motivation of new potential recruiters can be summarized in one word: Caliphate. ISIS shows progress and tradition in the classical Muslim way of life, on the contrary, Al Qaeda and Inspire shows the weakness of the United States, instability, danger and a disgraceful life. As Vallee (2015: 23) pointed out, Dabiq is anonymous, with non-authorship articles, Inspire speaks with the voices of the biggest Islamic leaders – Bin Laden, al-Zawahiri or al-Awlaki. AQAP interpreted the Arab Spring as a liberation of the nations from authoritarian leaders, with the possibility to freely submit to global Jihad. The ideologies of the Arab Spring, whether democratic or not, are an infection in the side of Ummah, because they do not coincide with the governance and repressive view of Islam by the Islamic State (Vallee 2015: 29). Dabiq requests from the 'right' Muslims the liquidation of the leaders of Arab Spring. Different views from the interpretation of the Quran to the relationship to the Shia community define ISIS and Al-Qaeda. These who do not support crusaders against Islam are excluded from the slaughtering. Dabiq outlines that Zawahiri as the leader of Al-Qaeda does not't have the full support of the subordinate sections, since in the area of Yemen, the group fights against the Houthis. ISIS in the consequence of its ex-partnership with Al-Qaeda, sees anything what is close to this organisation as a hostile element and deals with it the same as with the apostates. In comparison to Dabiq Al-Qaeda does not mention its competition in

any of their issues. The reason could be also the worry from weakening their hegemony position and competition is not mentioned, so their followers will not join the ISIS (Dabiq, Vallee 2015).

Also important to mention are the content differences in the magazines *Resurgence al-Risalah* against the “mainstream magazines” *Inspire* and *Dabiq*. *Resurgence* is connected to Al Qaeda, respectively its faction Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent. Its oriented similarly as *Inspire*, however it puts more effort to regional Jihad in Pakistan and Bangladesh. In context of the common relationship between the organizations is an interesting article in the summer issue 2015 criticising ISIS, because of it disrespect to sanctity of Muslim life, which was one the first open criticisms from Al-Qaeda factions. *Al-Risalah* uses more the tactic of attracting the mujahideen to Syria and using them for the fight against hostile organizations (among others ISIS). The magazine also manipulates the recipients in favour of suicide attacks and advocates offensive Jihad, but more or less in national, freedom fight form. All four professionally issued magazines are technically at the same level, but content differences and editorials underline the two different ways of presenting and dealing with the world of Jihad.

## **2.3 Conclusion**

While this study does not offer a conclusive answer to the question of how to successfully deal and fight against the terrorist group using and abusing the media it does offer an analysis of this relationship, which is various and has changed in time. The terrorist groups have undoubtedly lots of influence on public opinion. The influence is mostly negative but as authors Paul S. Nelson, and John L. Scott (1992) state in their research *Terrorism and the Media* there

are always some positive attributes of terrorism, streamed through the media on the public which cannot be underestimated. For example, very dangerous is rationalisation of terrorism, as the case when media explains why was the terrorist group acting in such a way and these explanations or reasoning what can be very attractive for the public in specific situations. Connected with this phenomenon is also labelling: terrorists may be given the label of “good guys” who fight for their generally accepted purpose which might create sympathies amongst the public. These media mistakes or sometimes even these media aims can completely change the mood of the public about terrorism and by doing this dangerously spread positive statements towards terrorist groups.

The chapter raises important questions about, how media can influence the spread of messages by terrorist groups. In the chapter, the most popular media used by the terrorist groups from the old-style media to the media of the new age especially the internet and lifestyle magazines. New age media mediums, as already mentioned, the internet and online magazines have the highest influence on the public since they are very easy to access, they are available for a wide public and they are hard to stop. These media platforms have introduced completely new communication strategies from the terrorist groups, which are due to the lack of successful attempts to stop them since they are considered a very low risk activity. This gives space to act not only to the groups but also to individuals who act on behalf of terrorists but have never come into contact with them. The highest risk which comes with the use of media is that today everyone can use them, which leaves open an unlimited space to the terrorist groups to achieve their aims much easier.

### **3. Legal issues of Terrorism**

As terrorism developed over time, there were codification attempts of several issues related to terrorism. However, terrorism is in its nature a very controversial issue touching political interests of countries. For this reason, the perception of terrorism differs among them. What acts shall be considered as terrorism and actually, who are terrorists? There is not a single answer for this question and the definition of terrorism and terrorist is rather shallow and influenced by political perception. While some countries consider certain movements or groups as friendly, other states may on contrary consider them as terrorists. There is no general consensus which groups are terrorists and which are not despite in some cases the consensus is much broader. Similarly, there is no single definition of terrorism. This chapter explores terrorism from the point of international law. The main focus is put on the first attempts of codification and sources of public international law, especially international conventions related to terrorism. A specific sub-chapter is dedicated to the issue of extradition among states and international criminal law. The view on international law would be not complex without a presentation of key institutions which help to enforce the rule of law.

#### **3.1 First attempts of codification of terrorism**

The first modern legal norms begin to appear in 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Russia, Europe and the United states where acts of violence were on the rise. Acts of terrorism were mainly motivated by anarchist ideology. Since the 1840s the thinking of Pierre Joseph Proudhon,

Mikhail Bakunin and Sergey Nachaev penetrated the thinking of radicals. In Russia, radicals established in 1879 an organization called People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) that was connected to the assassination of Tsar Alexander II. Its tactics and successful attacks inspired many left-wing and nationalist organization in Europe and the USA (Enders and Sandler 2011: 18). Terror and violence in Europe was not a domain only of left-wing terrorists. The so called Irish Republican Brotherhood used dynamite attacks against British soldiers and civilians. The main aim of this revolutionary organization was to establish republican rule in Ireland. Between 1881 and 1885 the organization was able to fight a “dynamite war” with the UK. Several train and metro stations were bombed and municipalities in London, Manchester or Liverpool followed with similar attacks. Famous places such as Victoria Railway Station, the House of Commons, the Tower of London and Westminster Hall were not excluded (Whelehan 2012: xiv, 163; Janes and Houen 2014: 212). Dynamite was also used in the United States. Probably the most famous, the Haymarket Square explosion which was perpetrated in May 1886 in Chicago as revenge for the death of two workers killed during demonstrations for an eight hour working day (McCann 2006: 19). An unknown anarchist threw dynamite into the crowd, killing seven people (Roth 2011: 126). Those terrorist acts greatly contributed to an increase in anti-terrorist laws and the development of early specialized security institutions. Due to the international nature of anarchism, states began to cooperate on bilateral basis, especially in the field of extradition.

### **3.2 Extradition**

Counter-terrorist law touches on the issue of extraction. Extradition can be simply defined as the process in which suspected

or convicted criminal (terrorist) is transferred between countries. This process is regulated by treaties, which specifies the conditions of extradition. There are both bilateral and multilateral treaties regulating this process. Most of the treaties are bilateral. However, the absence of treaty does not mean that a state may not request the extradition of an alleged criminal. The number of extradition treaties by states varies and strongly depends on legal culture, diplomatic relations and state capacities. Moreover, extradition in some cases might be a sensitive process due to conflicting interests.

There are several possible obstacles to extradition. For example, most of the European states do not allow extradition of suspects who may face the death penalty in the requesting country or may face torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Some countries also refuse extradition regarding political crimes. Another obstacle might be the failure to fulfill dual criminality when a suspected crime is legal on the territory of requested country. It is usually the treaty in which enlists crimes where extradition applies including minimum penalty. Some states prohibit extradition of their own nationals, but on the other side they have laws that give them power to prosecute crimes committed by their nationals abroad. The principle *aut dedere aut judicare* (either extradite or prosecute) is applied.

This principle has developed over time. For example, in 1833 Belgium was the first country to enact a law on non-extradition of political offenders which soon became standard among European nations. Great change occurred in 1856 when the so called “Belgian Clause” stated, that: *“there shall not be considered as a political crime or as an act connected with such a crime an attack upon the person of the head of a foreign government or of the member of his family when this attack takes the form of either murder, assassination or poisoning”* (Belgian Clause cited in: Przetacznik 1983: 109) was agreed upon. In other words, a majority of terrorist

acts were removed from the category of political crimes to the category of criminal crimes which enabled extradition among state parties.

There were many contemporary examples of jihadist extradition. For example, Salah Abdeslam, who took part in the Paris massacre in November 2015 was arrested in Belgium. Shortly after his arrest France requested the suspected terrorist and the Belgian Foreign Minister gave assurances that Belgium would make sure to respond as favourably as possible (Williams 2016). Extradition of certain individuals has a high symbolic value and as such may contribute to the improvement or worsening of bilateral relations.

There is general consensus among states, that certain types of acts shall be subject of extradition. Those includes all acts of terrorism, financing terrorism, taking of civilian hostages, hijacking of civilian aircraft, torture or crimes against diplomats and state representatives. However, because there is no single shared definition of terrorism and terrorism itself it is a very controversial activity, and application of extradition may be problematic. An illustrative example of complication has been set in the case *Libyan Arab Jamahiriya v. United States of America* which took place in front of International Court of Justice.

In December 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 exploded in midair over the town Lockerbie in Scotland. Next to the 243 passengers and 16 crew members there were also 11 townspeople killed in their Lockerbie homes where plane remnants had fallen. Investigation of the terrorist attack found links to two Libyan intelligence officers. After three years of collecting evidence a process in front of federal grand jury started and the court accused both officers with planning and carrying out the Lockerbie bombing (Plachta 2001: 93). Thus, a terrorist attack that destroyed a US airplane in the UK airspace had the involvement of Libyan citizens. Because of the absence of extradition treaty between USA and Libya or between UK and



Libya, an informal UK request was forwarded through the Belgian Embassy to Tripoli (Plachta 2001: 93).

However, Libya refused the allegations about involvement in the attack. According to legal status (Libya was at least part of Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation from 1971) Libya had an obligation to start prosecution of alleged citizens. The passivity and unwillingness from the Libyan side later lead to a resolution passed by the UN Security Council which introduced sanctions on Libya. After years of delays Libya agreed in 1999 to extradite suspects to Camp Zeist in the Netherlands where a tribunal composed of Scottish judges took place. The trial was held according to Scottish law and finished in March 2002. In 2008 the USA and Libya signed a compensation agreement: Libya would pay compensation to victims relatives of four committed terrorist attacks and the USA granted to Libyan government the immunity from terror-related lawsuits (BBC 2008).

This case clearly demonstrates the limits of extradition. Even when the USA and UK used all possible tools including sanctions it took a decade until Libya agreed to extradite its two citizens. Despite the unwillingness of a government, is the rather rare attitude among contemporary states, many of whom lacks the capacities of law enforcement. Thus, it is not surprising that contemporary jihadists operate from failed states like Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or badly accessible parts of Pakistan, where the rule of central government is undermined, corrupted or non-existent.

The case of Lockerbie was unique in many aspects. Several states were interested in applying its criminal law and titles of the states were clashing: Libyan citizens were involved; a US airplane was attacked and many US citizens died. Also, Scotland respectively the UK tried to apply its jurisdiction. Despite the Montreal convention mentioning titles of jurisdiction, it did not set their order. In the end a compromise was reached and the case has been solved

on the former US military base in the Netherlands with the participation of Scottish judges. Lockerbie thus represented a rather rare episode in the fight against terrorism.

There are more principles regarding extradition than *aut dedere aut judicare*, including reciprocity, speciality or dual criminality. At the international level, there was disagreement about those principles and its application due to political dimensions of the acts leading to double standard in extradition: for one state it is terrorist, for the other freedom fighter. For this reason, there is no universal convention covering terrorism but rather sectoral conventions covering clearly defined types of behaviour. Fortunately, political aspects of Islamist terrorism are limited and thus pose no objection for extradition.

### **3.3 Sources of international law**

From the historical perspective, the attempts to fight terrorism might be observed mainly on a bilateral basis. The development of multilateral and universal instruments started to occur in the 1960s when the international community was confronted with an increase of terrorist attacks. This development is closely linked to the spread of communist ideology, the finishing of decolonization and fight of nations for self determination. In other words, the spirit of the age had strong influence on terrorist motivations and activities. Also, technological development contributed to new methods of terrorism. Transport vehicles and especially airplanes became new potential target. Due to international nature of transport it is not surprising that the first antiterrorist universal conventions appeared. Today, there are several conventions at the international level, which were negotiated under the United Nations platforms and which are open to all states. Conventions covering unlawful acts in the relevant areas of terrorism include:

- 1963 Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed On Board Aircraft (Tokyo Convention)
- 1970 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (Hague Convention)
- 1971 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation (Sabotage Convention or Montreal Convention)
- 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (Diplomatic Agents Convention)
- 1979 International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (Hostages Convention)
- 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (Nuclear Materials Convention)
- 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts of Violence at Airports Serving International Civil Aviation (Airport Protocol)
- 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (Maritime Convention)
- 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (Fixed Platform Protocol)
- 1991 Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection (Plastic Explosives Convention)
- 1997 International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings (Terrorist Bombing Convention)
- 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (Terrorist Financing Convention)
- 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (Nuclear Terrorism Convention)

- 2010 Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation (Beijing Convention)
- 2010 Protocol Supplementary to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (Beijing Protocol)

The above mentioned conventions clarify between party's rights and obligations and may also constitute rights to certain group of citizens. For example, Tokyo Convention established the right of an aircraft commander to restrain any person he has reasonable cause to believe is committing or is about to commit an offence regarding the safety of the person's, property, good order or discipline (Article 6). The convention also requires contracting states to take into custody all offenders and return control of the aircraft to the lawful commander (Article 13). Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft makes it an offence for any person on board who makes an aircraft flight unlawfully by force or threat. It also requires states to introduce severe penalties for hijackings and extradite or prosecute offenders in custody (Hague Convention, 1970). Similarly, the Montreal Convention makes offence to perform an act of violence against person on board during the flight if that act is likely to endanger the safety of the aircraft. The convention similarly requires a State to introduce penalties for such offenses and establishes obligation to extradite or prosecute the attacker (Montreal Convention, 1971). Various protocols extended the scope of these conventions as terrorist tactics and tools developed. For example, the 2010 Convention on Suppression of Unlawful Acts Relating to International Civil Aviation criminalizes a cyber attack on air navigation facilities or using civil aircraft as a weapon to cause death, injury or damage (Convention on the Suppression..., 2010).

International conventions represent important aspects of the international effort to fight against terrorism. All conventions shall have its criminal dimension and states shall prohibit and prosecute

certain type of behaviour related to terrorism. It means that all conventions require adopting national measures which are implementing obligations undertaken. For example, a Convention on the marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection requires a State to prohibit the manufacture, storage, transport, or entry of unmarked plastic explosives in its territory. If produced, States are required to mark explosives with a chemical taggant (detection agent) which will help with future identification (Article I). However, as international treaties are not directly part of national law in some countries it is necessary to adopt implementing act on a national level. This might be problematic due to lack of capacities resulting in none or wrong transposition or simply unwillingness of the state to implement required provisions.

Next to the universal Conventions there are regional alternatives, such as the 1977 European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism or 2005 Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. In Africa a key legal tool, the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism of the Organization of African Union exists. Also highlighted is the ASEAN Convention On Counter Terrorism, Arab Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism from 1998 or Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism from 1999.

Among international organizations is remarkable cooperation on the European Union platform. The European Union developed a comprehensive counter-terrorism policy which is based on several strategies and related documents. Despite mainly political nature of the documents, States are urged to implement measures aimed at suppressing acts of terrorism in its various aspects including financing and recruitment. EU member states agreed on common definition of terrorism and created single list of terrorist organizations (OJ 2002).

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, the UN Security Council is the only legitimate body to enforce resolutions. There are several important resolutions adopted by Security Council. Next to the famous UN Security Council Resolution 173 of 21 January 1992, Resolution 748 of 31 March 1992 and UN Security Council Resolution 883 of 11 November 1993 there is Resolution 1373 which established United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee of 15 UN members to oversee compliance with the provisions aimed at counter-terrorism (later it was modified by the resolution 1390, 1456, 1535, 1566 or 1624). The resolutions constitute an important source of international norms which are being spread as universal standards in the international community. However, the implementation and enforcement of the norms is a matter of the contracting parties which often fails to implement related measures. Theoretically, there is enough tools and sources of law on the international level, but in reality papers alone cannot prevent terrorism. International norms require enforcement which is problematic due to lack of international authority. However, there are several organizations where enforcement and application of international norms in the field of counter-terrorism is better. For example, next to the European Union, European states also pursue cooperation on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe level and NATO has its own counter-terrorism dimension.

### **3.4 Counter-terrorism and human rights**

The fight against terrorism touches many controversies related to human rights, such as the particular example of extradition or detention of suspected terrorists. As noted earlier, in some cases extradition requests fail and the requesting country may use different methods. In history, there are many examples when an individual

was abducted after failed request for extradition or without attempting to is this tool. This is for example, the issue of Abu Omar, the Egyptian cleric who was living in Italy. Abu Omar was kidnapped by CIA agents to Egypt where he was later tortured. In 2004 his sentence was downgraded to house arrest. However, in December 2013 Abu Omar was in absentia convicted of terrorism and Italy requested his extradition back to Italy. So far the request is without answer from Egypt and Abu Omar continues to live there (Bassiouni 2014: 291). Another story is the abduction of Gaza Strip Electrical Plant Engineer Dirar Abu Sisi who was suspected by Israel as a weapons engineer for Hamas. Abu Sisi was kidnapped from Poltava in Ukraine and transported to Israel, where he faced trial and was sentenced to 21 years in prison (Ynet 2015). Although there are more examples of abducted people, the procedure is the same. The alleged person is deliberately taken from the territory of one state to the territory of another state, often limited by freedoms and faces trial according to law of the respective country.

Another controversial issue related to counter-terrorism is the detention of terrorists. After the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq the world was shocked by images of detainees at US prisons in Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay and others. The image of Ali Shallal al-Qaisi became symbol of human rights abuse at Abu Ghraib. However, there were more disturbing images and testimonies of prisoners who experienced inhumane and degrading treatment. If we skip physical, psychological and sexual assaults on prisoners including torture and rape, the general situation was even more controversial due to two other factors. First, prisoners went for months, even years of imprisonment and torture without charge. From the total number of 779 detainees at the Guantanamo Bay, roughly 674 were released without charge, many of them after several years of imprisonment (Human Rights Watch 2016). Second, instead of a prisoners of war status recognized by the Geneva

Convention, the US referred to detainees as “Unlawful Enemy Combatants”, trying to avoid the Geneva Convention application. This fact contributed to subjective legitimization of prohibited treatment including torture. Nevertheless, in the end the US Supreme Court refused that argument that Article 3 of Geneva Convention does not apply on detainees at US prisons (see *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld* case).

Of course, there are more related issues of counter-terrorism related to power of public institutions including repressive units and intelligence agencies and the right balance of personal freedoms. Fight against terrorism must respect principles on which western civilization grew and be based on historic experience. This experience differs among nations and thus the split between USA and Europe regarding human rights is acceptable. However, in order to fight terrorism successfully, it is necessary to avoid the double standard in human rights protection as it is evident, that Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo scandal contributed to fuelling hate against the USA by the Muslim population all around the world.

Human rights in the fight against terrorism play an important role also in the case of refugees and asylum seekers. If somebody committed crime of terrorism, then protection against unlawful extradition does not apply. On the other hand, if there is a doubt and the concerned person may suffer human rights abuse including torture or death penalty, these persons cannot be extradited and has the right to be protected. In other words, the obligation *aut dedere* is weaker than protection of human rights. So, called *non-refoulement principle* is based on Article 33 of Geneva Convention. It stresses that human rights are nonnegotiable and that the state has obligation to give priority to human rights protection before other obligations. In other words, human rights belong to all human beings including terrorists.



### **3.5 Child Terrorists**

A specific topic under international law related to terrorism are child terrorists. Unlike the child soldiers, the phenomenon of using children as terrorists has increased in importance since the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the small guns are smaller and lighter. There are many obstacles in measuring the number of child soldiers or child terrorists as there are no verifiable data, however it may be expected that there are around 300,000 child soldiers fighting in wars around the world, many of them could be labelled as terrorists (Wessells 2006: 6). The misuse of children for combat activities is the domain of many terrorist organizations, among them Al-Shabaab, Hezbollah, Hamas, Tamil Tigers or Boko Haram. The emergence and spread of the Islamic State overshadowed the issue of child soldiers misuse in other regions by level of systematization.

As published by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (2015) between January and October 2015 more than 1,100 children under the age of 16 joined ranks of the Islamic State and underwent training (indoctrination) in Sharia camps where they were taught how to behead blonde dolls with blue eyes (SOHR 2015). Children are often used in IS propaganda videos where footage from their trainings are presented. Children also appear on executions videos or are used in combat including suicide bombing operations. Using children in suicide bombing operations is nothing new and becomes a tragic pattern of psychological war of jihadist organizations. This trend has only increased. Between January 2015 and January 2016 there were three times more suicide operations conducted by IS with the involvement of children (Bloom, Horgan and Winter 2016). Moreover, it can be expected that the number of children suicide bombing operations will increase with increased military pressure on the IS.

From the international law point of view the issue of child soldiers and terrorists is controversial mainly due to a victim-perpetrator dilemma. In general terms, child soldiers are victims of abuses of their human rights and thus states shall prioritize prosecution of persons who recruit and use them. The UN Charter (respectively 1977 Additional Protocols) does not prohibit prosecution of child soldiers but only limits maximal penalties which can not involve life imprisonment without the possibility of release or death penalty. There is also the issue of responsibility and the age limit. The Geneva Convention sets the age limit at 18 years for being of age but, for example, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998 applies protection based on the offense up to the 15 years of age. According to Geneva Conventions the recruitment and the use of children under the age of 15 is prohibited and is considered as a war crime. The prohibition of using children in conflict is reaffirmed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989. However, there are other treaties focusing on children protection. For example, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) from 2000 prohibits conscription of children under age of 18 and prohibits voluntary recruitment of children by non-state armed groups (UN HROHC 2016).

An age limit is controversial due to cultural conditionality. In some cultures, children turn into adults at an earlier age than in western countries. Except the individual characteristic the responsibility consideration shall take into the count specific nature of the conflict as for example, the Special Court did for Sierra Leone. As a result, the age for legal responsibility of the acts were set to 15 years (Article 7, Statute). Prosecuting child soldiers and terrorists is touching the dilemma of victim-perpetrator. If the age of children is the key for considering legal liability and responsibility, then where is the border between victim and perpetrator?

In this sense, there is the very interesting case of Dominic Ongwen, former commander of the Sinia Brigade of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) operating in Uganda. His story starts similarly like stories of many other child soldiers.<sup>11</sup> On his way to the school Ongwen was abducted, tortured and indoctrinated by LRA fighters. Subsequently Ongwen rose within the ranks of the terrorist group and soon become commander of LRA brigade (BBC 2015). Currently, Ongwen waiting for trial in The Hague. It is expected that this case will again open the issue of victim-perpetrator.

If we set aside the legal status of child terrorists, then there is also the question of re-integration into the society and mental health recovery. Many children are forced to cruel and violent activities including killing, torturing and crippling of other people. This happens at the age when children build their value system, sense of ethics and adopt moral standards. With the progressing time it is increasingly impossible to draw a clear line between previous life of bloody warrior and the life in peace.

### **3.6 Actual Issues of International Law**

The content of public international law has been in many aspects formulated after Second World War. The tragic and brutal experience strengthened especially two principles which penetrated thinking by lawmakers in that period. First, the principle focused on state sovereignty and second on the protection of human rights. Both principles played a very important role in preventing repeat of another inhumane conflict and both principles were essential at the

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<sup>11</sup> It is estimated that only in Uganda LRA in the last 30 years kidnapped more than 60 thousand children and turned them into soldiers (BBC 2015).

time and still plays an irreplaceable role in international law. However, international reality has changed and new actors challenge principles established for decades.

First, after the end of the Cold war we can observe increasing number of failed states which exists only in a formal way. In reality, state government lost the control over its territory and the real power is executed by other actors. The absence of government presence leads to strengthening of local rules and open space for conflict in divided societies.

A second problem is related to the fate of failed states. A number of terrorist organizations found its operation base in these states and entered the international arena. Moreover, terrorist organizations and other groups are strengthened vis-a-vis post-modern state by the effects of globalization. Transnational networks such as Al-Qaeda or the affiliates of the Islamic State operate on a transnational level in dozens of countries all around the World. This has its implications for international law.

In line with this development the doctrine of state sovereignty is eroding as new questions arise. It is possible to violate state sovereignty in defence against groups attacking territory of another state? Is it legal and legitimate to attack them on the territory of the different state? This question has been asked in relation to FARC which operated from Ecuador against Colombia, Hizbollah from Lebanon attacked Israel, or KKP from Iraq conducted attacks on Turkish territories. In the beginning a debate over sovereignty principles occurred and international community only unwillingly accepted violations. This situation changed in 2015. After the emergence and rise of the Islamic State who succeeded to conquer territories in Iraq and Syria roughly the size of France, local powers were criticized by the public over their inactive approach. When Islamic State fighters massacred the population of Kobane, Turkish soldiers observed from behind a one kilometer away border. In late

2016 during the Mosul offensive there were around 60 countries involved indirectly and 10 countries had military units on the ground. From this point of view, it seems that sovereignty is becoming an increasingly political and opportunist principle.

Also, the human rights principle erodes under political pressures. Massive immigration waves lead to rise of nationalist, far right-wing and populist parties all over the Europe. The intolerance of immigrants among population is on the rise. Once opened, Europe has become a closed fortress and the level of understanding among countries has decreased. Disagreement is followed by the preference of national solutions which might in the future lead some countries to create a double standard in human rights protection.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

Law itself cannot prevent terrorism however it contains norms and principles how to fight it. This fight is sometimes controversial as the borders between terrorism and other forms of violence are very thin and sometimes overlapping. Moreover, terrorism is predominantly political phenomenon. The role of law in the fight against terrorism has increasingly become important. The new wave of terrorism related to the existence of the Islamic state again questioned the issue of right balance between civil liberties and freedom on one side and security on the other.

With the increasing effectiveness of the tools to fight against terrorism, democracy may suffer. This is most evident in the countries such as Poland or Hungary where governments passed “anti-terrorism packages”. Legislative changes, however, endanger not only terrorists but also civil society. Once hardly gained liberties may quickly disappear in the name of fight against terrorism. In this sense terrorism is much more dangerous than its actual impact

caused by terrorist attack. For this reason it is necessary not to compromise key democratic principles (including human rights) or the natural way of living because it may strike back like a thrown boomerang.

## *Part II*

### **4. Al Qaeda**

Sometime during August 1988 and late 1989 an organization with a global militant Sunni Islamist worldview comprised of Arab volunteers who had fought the Soviet army in Afghanistan during the 1980s (Cooley 2003) was founded.

The group calling itself al-Qaeda which can be translated as “The Base”, “The Foundation” or “The Fundament” began to create a network consisting of multinationals, and Islamist extremists. The ideology of the group while not the first to envision a break from foreign influence and the creation of a new caliphate ruling over the whole Muslim world *is* the first modern extremist group to attempt such an endeavour.

Throughout the first decade of the 2000s with the loss of key leaders including the death of Osama bin Laden the operations of the group have devolved from a top down approach to more control being in the hands of association groups and lone-wolf operators. Recent events for the group over the past decade does not diminish the significance of the group, its message (doctrinal), or its continued influence over terrorism.

Al-Qaeda’s targets are those that fit under the doctrinal description of unbeliever or kafir. Within such understanding fitted to its Wahhabi revival movement in Islam, the group has conducted attacks against both West and Muslim sites in their campaign of jihad to establish a global caliphate under Sharia law. And while al-Qaeda’s worldview and methods of terrorism have been rejected by the majority of the world’s Muslims and the group itself has been designated a terrorist organization by the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, the United States and many other nations, the

popularity of the group has remained. Indeed, arguably it is this popularity and various methods of recruitment and messaging that brought new volunteers into its membership and spawned the growth of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) otherwise known as the Islamic State or Daesh.

Perhaps it is crude to think of Al-Qaeda as realist. Still, the unified belief that world politics is and remains a field of conflict among actors pursuing power does fit the model of actions by the group, especially when one accounts for its doctrinal worldview. Moreover, whereas realists are understood to fit into three kinds: classical, neorealist, and neoclassical, the spectrum of ideas that comprise realism as a theory and of the four central propositions, al-Qaeda arguably finds a place in one of them.

In the following sections of this chapter al-Qaeda will be explained first in a historical context to the groups theological and doctrinal origins. The group's conflict with the West and fellow Muslims, collectively known as kafir will be explored. Then an explanation of realism and where al-Qaeda has the requisite qualities to be considered as both neoclassical and within the third central proposition of realism; actors in the international political system are rational as their actions maximize their own self-interest.

## **4.1 Righteous Warriors**

Prior to the establishment of al-Qaeda, as a network, however was the Soviet War in Afghanistan from December 1979 to February 1989 (Cooley 2003) that pitted the Soviet Union with its Afghan Marxists against native Afghan mujahideen, Islamic militants and the United States through a CIA program. These mujahideen, or mujahid in the plural form, as one engaged in Jihad and mostly refers to the guerrilla type military units of the Muslim Afghan warriors in the Afghan-Soviet war. To aid in the recruitment and financing of



foreign fighters for this jihad, in 1984 the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) also known as the 'Services Office' was established in Pakistan. Osama bin-Laden and a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Palestinian Islamic scholar Abdullah Yusuf Azzam were the creators. By 1986 recruitment offices were operating in Western Europe and North America. Training camps were established in 1987 in Afghanistan. And while the MAK with its foreign volunteers so-named "Afghan Arabs" had not held a major role in the war, by the end of the war and early 1990s, bin-Laden had had enough experience in recruitment, close contact with Afghan Islamist leaders such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, founder and leader of Hezb-e Islami (Bergen 2001: 70–71) as well as networking with major Arab financiers to make the change from behind the scenes organizer to leader of a new organization. MAK had evolved into al-Qaeda.

The founding men of Al-Qaeda began as Arab volunteers fighting an anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan under the banner of Islam against Soviet Communism. Because of Cold War politics, many groups that were fighting the Soviet Army in Afghanistan received both American and Saudi funding. Initial meetings held in August of 1988 saw al-Qaeda as a formal group with a list of requirements for membership, such as making a pledge to follow one's superior, an organized Islamic faction, and goal (Wright 2006: 133–134). After the war ended, the group known as al-Qaeda moved to Sudan and began its operations in the early 1990s though by 1996 its headquarters and training camps had moved back to Afghanistan. While it was easy to label the group for terrorism after the 1998 embassy bombings and the attack upon the *U.S.S. Cole*, the enigma of the group has been its autonomy. While in previous decades' analysts saw and defined terror groups by their tightly-knit organization such as the Red Brigades in Italy, the interlocking network of cells as is the case for al-Qaeda, operating across

continents often making contact with other groups only when necessary, defies conventional definition. Moreover, with terror attacks in Mombasa in 2002, Riyadh in May 2003, Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005 the planning and financing of each by al-Qaeda has been called into question and in the last case discredited. The new conventional explanation is that of terror cells operating autonomously but ideologically linked to al-Qaeda often conducting acts of terror. More to the point, the theological platform of al-Qaeda, Salafi<sup>12</sup>, is broad enough to encompass various schools of thought and political leanings.

## **4.2 The ideology and activities**

Salafism is a movement within Sunni Islam that doctrinally takes a fundamentalist approach to Islam. Following the pious forefathers, those early followers of the Prophet Muhammad, rejected religious innovation instead supporting Islamic law or the implementation of Sharia. Salafism may be divided into three groups: those that avoid politics, those that are active, and those infamous minority that seek jihad. The Salafi movement is often referred to as Wahhabi or described as a hybrid of it and other post-1960s movements (Lacroix 2008). Moreover, because of its literalist or puritanical approach to Islam, the minority of Salafi who support offensive jihad in the West as a legitimate expression against those kafir who are enemies of Islam (Baker 2011). Such an espousal of practice around the world by al-Qaeda is a disservice to those Sunni Muslims who proclaim to follow the Salafi movement but are within

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<sup>12</sup> While the Salafi movement is synonymous with Wahhabism, the latter is considered derogatory and for the purpose of this chapter the former is used when speaking about theological origins.

the first two groups. Still, for those seeking offensive jihad, otherwise known as Salafi jihadism there is a realist legitimacy to their cause.

Etymologically, Salafism, from *salaf*, informally refers to ‘ancestors’. The earliest Muslims provided both the epitome of Islamic practice but also according to a hadith or quote from the Prophet Muhammad are the pious Predecessors; the first three generations collectively known as the *salaf* from which, "the people of my own generation are the best, then those who come after them, and then those of the next generation" (Lacey 2009: 9). Revered by Sunni theologians and Islamic orthodoxy, Salafism is used to understand both texts and tenets of Islam along with Islam’s subsequent variations in creed and methodology. Salafism has been used also to defend particular views and practices because as one scholar has stated, "temporal proximity to the Prophet Muhammad is associated with the truest form of Islam" (Haykel 2009: 34).

For al-Qaeda, funding and promoting Salafism around the world through jihad is in practice an interpretation of their faith, and while the West typically connects Salafism with Wahhabism, the more strict Saudi form of Salafism, there is a view that Wahhabism should be considered a subset of Salafism. Ahmad Moussalli states, “As a rule, all Wahhabis are salafists, but not all salafists are Wahhabis” (Mousalli 2009: 3). Because Osama bin-Laden was a founder of al-Qaeda and its spokesperson the strict Saudi interpretation of Salafism should be understood briefly to better understand the link between theology and offensive jihad otherwise known as Salafi jihadism. While there are many critics of both Wahhabism and Salafism, three elements are shared between them:

1. above all disdain for all developments subsequent to al-Salaf al-Salih (the first two or three generations of Islam),
2. the rejection of Sufism and,

3. the abandonment of consistent adherence to one of the four or five Sunni Madhhabs (schools).

There are two important and interrelated features that distinguish Salafis from Wahhabism however:

1. a reliance on attempts at persuasion rather than coercion in order to rally other Muslims to their cause; and
2. an informed awareness of the political and socio-economic crisis confronting the Muslim world (Hamed 2002: 47).

These two distinguishing features are what separates Wahhabi and Salafi followers particularly those who practice Salafi jihadism, especially al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

The mission of Wahhabi as a revivalist movement began in the remote region of Naid, Saudi Arabia after the end of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. With the rise of the Al Saud dynasty, Wahhabism spread to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. With the export revenues of petroleum billions of dollars were spent on influence, a “preeminent position of strength” (Gilles 2003: 61–62) forged through education (schools, books, universities, mosques, scholarships) and lucrative jobs.

The erosion of Wahhabism occurred slowly though certain events and are attributed to Wahhabism’s struggles. The first was the 1979 Grand Mosque seizure which “shocked the Muslim world” (Benjamin 2002: 90) and saw the Saudi king placed in an unfavourable position since it did nothing to enhance the prestige of Al Saud as “custodians” of the mosque. The second and most influential was the 1990 Gulf War. The stationing of Western soldiers, American troops, kafir, in particular upon what was viewed as holy ground embodied opponents to the Saudi monarch to seek his

overthrow and barring that success then to focus on jihad against the United States of America and other enemies of Islam (Kepel 2002: 220). Such a jihad would be to coerce Muslims to join Salafism and to kill kafir or infidels.

While the term Salafist jihadist is relatively recent, hybrid Islamist ideology arguably is not when one considers the various interpretations within Islam. Still, the term also at times referred to as Jihadist-Salafism<sup>13</sup> began with those Islamist volunteers who took part in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and continue to be comprised of men isolated from their social and national class origins (Kepel 2002: 219–22). By the 1990s, attacks by Jihadist-Salafists were occurring in Egypt and Algeria, though admittedly the most famous attack was on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon outside of Washington D.C. Moreover, though Europe had had experience with terrorism from extremists during the 1970s and 1980s, terrorism by Salafist jihadists by the mid-2000s had taken place. Note, the placement change of the two words and use of salafist first. According to a report aired on PBS in the United States by the television program *Frontline*, there has been more than 30 attempted terrorist attacks among E.U. countries since 2001. Furthermore, after the Arab Spring and breakdown of state control in both Libya and Syria the movement gained significant strength.

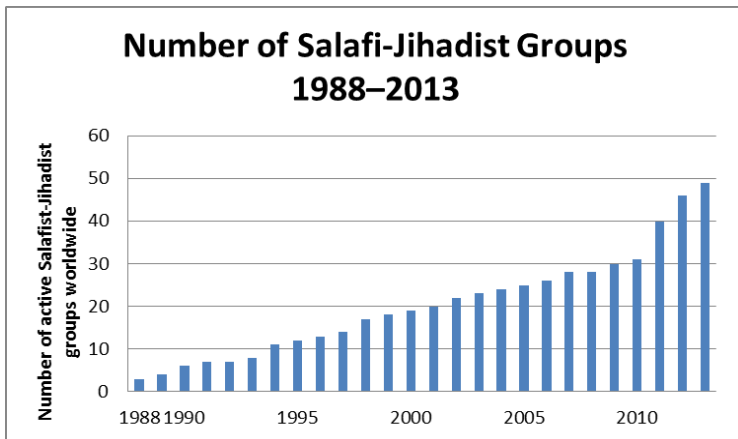
Where al-Qaeda operates within the confines of Salfist-jihadism, links to realism is in its five-feature characterization, doctrinal content and organizational models. As to the five features, they are:

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<sup>13</sup> For more detail on terminology and ideology see Guilain Deneoux, “The Forgotten Swamp: Navigating Political Islam,” *Middle East Policy*, June 2002, pp. 69–71” and Martin Kramer, “Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003, pp. 65–77).

1. unity of God,
2. God's sovereignty,
3. the rejection of all innovation to Islam,
4. the necessity to declare a Muslim outside the creed, so that they may face execution and;
5. the centrality of jihad against infidel regimes (Hafez 2007).

**Graph 1: Number of Salafi-Jihadist Groups 1988-2013**



Source: Seth G. Jones 2014, Figure 3.1

Using these five features, Salafi jihad ideology form the Islamic doctrinal content of the network of groups affiliated with al-Qaeda. Moreover, the organization itself has set about on a course of violent confrontation in response to what it has identified as the alleged source of the Muslim conundrum, *“the persistent attacks and humiliation of Muslims on the part of an anti-Islamic alliance”* of Crusaders, Zionists, and apostates (Horowitz 2008). Confined no

longer to Afghanistan Salafi jihad has been waged in other parts of the world such as Africa, in Bosnia and most recently in Iraq.

In Iraq since the mid-2000s Salafi jihad has pursued a strategy at the micro-level that its affiliates have begun to prepare at the global level. It is a system-collapse strategy that fitting within its goals of Sunni dominance wishes to install an Islamic emirate. Targeting military personnel, in Iraq, its security forces, Shia civilians, but also “foreign journalists, translators and transport drivers and the economic and physical infrastructure of Iraq” (Hafez 2008). Aiding the Taliban in Afghanistan, an example being the July 2008 Battle of Wanat, near Quam in the Nuristan Province, Afghanistan and sectarian violence in Iraq as part of the Iraqi insurgency 2003-2007 has not been the only activity al-Qaeda has been a part of.

Attacks have taken place in Bali 2002, Yemen from 2006–2014, in Mauritania 2007, and 2009; several in Mali in 2011 and 2015, hostage taking in Algeria in 2013; March, 2015 in Tunis and most spectacularly the 7 January, 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attack in Paris, France by an al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen.

This strategy is supported by ‘theoreticians’ of Salafist jihadism such as Afghan jihad veterans, Palestinian Abu Qatada, Syrian Mustafa Setmariam Nasar, Egyptian Abu Hamza al-Masri and the most well known leader Osama bin Laden. A staggering number of Salafist jihadist groups exist, 50 as of 2014 (Jones 2014). Though the majority are small and either region or nation specific. Al-Qaeda remains the most well-known before the rise of the Islamic State in 2014 and will remain the focus of this chapter. Indeed, since leaving Afghanistan for Pakistan’s tribal areas, al-Qaeda has founded a regional branch in the Arabian Peninsula and acquired franchises in Iraq and the Maghreb (North Africa). Today, it has more members, greater geographic reach, and a level of ideological sophistication and influence it lacked in 2001. However, during the decade and a

half of open conflict with al-Qaeda most accounts contend that the organization is on the decline. It has been repeatedly stated by Western politicians, specifically President Barack Obama as late as 2012. But this sentiment largely informed by the belief that al-Qaeda's degraded capacity to carry out terrorist operations and depleted senior leadership as evidence to the claim. This is inaccurate when the central al-Qaeda organization is not separated from its subsidiaries. Al-Qaeda continues to expand its power and influence. And it is a much more cohesive international organization than is often assumed. As an organization, it contains both the organizational context and ideological significance for actions that arguably are realist in nature.

### **4.3 Al Qaeda and Realism**

The theory of Realism, often explained simply as the pursuit, possession, and application of power is more likely than not connected to Realpolitik. Critics of this association point out that while Realpolitik is an out-dated prescriptive guideline tailored more towards policy-making whereas Realism is a paradigm which describes, explains and predicts events within the international relations (IR) domain. The wide theoretical and methodological framework is not at odds with Realpolitik, at least, in the connection to al-Qaeda. The IR theory of Realism holds four propositions:

1. international anarchy,
2. states are the most important actors,
3. states are unitary, rational actors. This refers to a state pursuing self-interest and striving to attain as many resources as possible,
4. primary concern is survival.



Al-Qaeda certainly operates in a world accepted as anarchic. Such a system is to the benefit of the organization and its aim of acquiring global domination (proposition 3) and survive (proposition 4). Criticism may offer the denial that al-Qaeda is a State and therefore the use of Realism to explain al-Qaeda's actions are invalid. While it is obviously true that al-Qaeda is not a state in the conventional sense, an argument can be made for al-Qaeda being a non-state actor. Since, it is accepted that al-Qaeda is a terrorist organization and non-state actors often are organizations then such a claim may be made. Moreover, from the point of view of Realism being meta-theoretical, most scholars within Realism do not discuss non-state actors in their theoretical propositions. So, while in the traditional propositional understanding explained above, al-Qaeda does not fit the criteria. But, Realism does not simply dismiss non-state actors. Indeed, a nuanced interpretation of Realism suggests that Realism is generally more concerned with issues and interactions between major powers and inter-state relations and not in explaining all the topics and issues of international politics, which includes non-state actors.<sup>14</sup> Also, of the several strands of Realism, the Neoclassical variant is willing to give analytical and theoretical opportunity for non state actors as a variable in state behavior in foreign policy.

International organizations matter for Realism since the basic belief is that they are "a means available to states for achieving their goals" (Glaser 2003: 409). While debate amongst IR scholars on this point center around NGOs and MNCs, new 'gray zones' of understanding, especially within Neoclassical Realism. It is from within this gray zone that terrorist organizations of the size, scope of

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<sup>14</sup> Waltz (1986: 329) once argued, "*structure never tells us all that we want to know. Instead they tell us a small number of big and important things.*"

influence, and territory. As an organization, operating as a non-state actor, al-Qaeda then arguably fulfills the missing proposition of Realism, that of states being the most important actors (proposition 2). Regarding the role of non-state actors and Realism it ultimately is a question over power and interest.

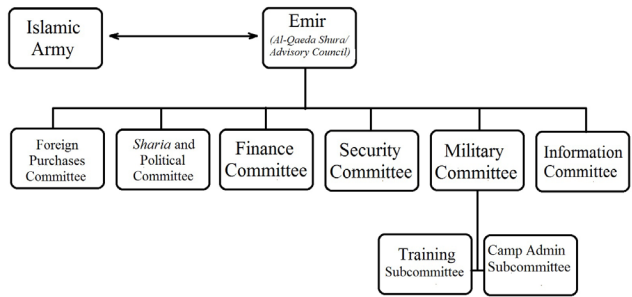
Structural realisms (Neo-Realism, Offensive, and Defensive) and Rise and Fall Realism however do not consider international organization as having an independent causal effect on state behaviour at best, they reflect state's interests and the constraints they face (Glaser 2003; Mearsheimer 1994; Gilpin 1981; Copeland 2000). The difference lies in the how structural realists see state power and interests as determined by the structure of the international system (anarchy, security dilemma, and distribution of capabilities). How the West and in particular, America conducts its foreign policy over the issue of terrorism is very much influenced by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda.

Looking at al-Qaeda as an organization it does not fit the typical definition though as a model of hierarchy it does. For nearly twenty years, analysts and officials speak of al-Qaeda having a 'core' and then a network. This is helpful in explaining to a war-weary public and Western media talking point such as specific individuals say bin-Laden or Ayman al Zawahiri or his lieutenants. This is not accurate. There really is no 'core' since al-Qaeda operates on a general command model consisting of senior leaders, lieutenants, committees, an advisory council (Shura) comprised of the group's most trusted advisers and supporting staff such as couriers. Within this general command model are administrative functions that assist in the organization's international operations such as its internal security and counterintelligence apparatus.

There are formal branches of al-Qaeda with a designated region: Al-Qaeda in North Africa also known as Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Al Nusrah Front in Syria, and Al Shabaab. Additionally, there are

facilitation networks in countries such as Iran. The general command of al-Qaeda designated several regions for waging jihad with an emir to see the organization's efforts. There is a lot of latitude in decisions but each swears allegiance to the overall emir (currently Zawahiri). These emirs report to al-Qaeda's senior leadership, specifically the general manager, currently Nasir al Wuhayshi who is in charge of the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). What has been referred to as formal affiliates are in fact branches of al-Qaeda assigned to fight in those regions. Moreover, there are other groups that are part of al-Qaeda's international network though they have not publicly sworn allegiance (bayat) to the senior leadership. This brief picture painted shows a cohesive organization.

**Picture 2: Al-Qaeda Organizational Structure**



Source: Globalsecurity.org, edited by authors.

If one accepts al-Qaeda's organizational model as evidence to claim non-state status which in turn can apply to the understanding of actions and behavior within Realism, the logical next step is to observe where such behavior falls within the paradigm. As put forth in the introduction to this chapter, al-Qaeda on the basis of maximizing their own interests in rational fashion, as perceived by

them, places the organization acting within the third central proposition of Realism.

After classical authors, such as Machiavelli and Hobbes that comprise what is accepted as the first wave of realism and authors from the second wave of realism, neorealists such as Kenneth Waltz comes the third wave. What has been coined by Gideon Rose (Rose 1998) as the neoclassicists. Offering a renaissance to classical thought and a synthesis of neorealist and classical approaches, the theoretical architecture is explained as an independent variable, intervening variable and a dependent variable. This follows a line of thought investing the distribution of power, domestic perception of the system or incentives and foreign policy decision(s). Incorporating content rich analysis with process tracing case studies neoclassical realism has been useful in explaining foreign policy but also political outcomes.<sup>15</sup> To this end, al-Qaeda follows neoclassical and within the third central proposition of realism; actors in the international political system are rational as their actions maximize their own self-interest.

It is difficult for Western contemporary rational thought to see terrorism by al-Qaeda as being one of self-interest. Since, terror is abhorrent, the act and those that sponsor and facilitate can certainly not be rational. More to the point, how can such actions advance the self-interest of the organization? A valid question, but missing the links to both doctrine and ideology. When the Salafi worldview is considered and Salafi jihadism actions are accounted for; including attacks against other Muslims al-Qaeda's self-interest is seen.

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<sup>15</sup> For deeper understanding see Randall L. Schweller, "The Progressiveness of Neoclassical Realism", pp. 311–347 in Colin Elman and Miriam Fends Elman eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory*, 2003. MIT Press.

Another misunderstanding by the West and in particular the United States in its military campaigns against al-Qaeda fail to see the long game the organization is apparently undertaking. First, al-Qaeda is adaptive, complex, and resilient. Second, a common mistake is, as explained above, to view al-Qaeda within the context of its core leaders such as Osama bin-Laden or Zawahiri while discounting other names or growth in affiliates through decentralization. In fact, such decentralization has not weakened the al-Qaeda network but created an increase in affiliate-to-affiliate cooperation.

It is ironic indeed that the year that bin-Laden died was the very year that al-Qaeda in fact became stronger. The spread of Salafi jihadism through the organization has been easier with the breakdown of governments across the Middle East and North Africa. The territory that al-Qaeda influences is a testimony to both truths. Another truth shared is that American strategy is focused on degrading the capabilities of al-Qaeda in Pakistan as an example, the organization expanded. Affiliates such as AQAP, AQI and AQIM all grew in their area of operations and exploited the unrest as a result of the Arab Spring. Therefore, the self-interest of survival while paramount also is observed in the form of new affiliates brought into the organization after the bayat as is the case of al Shabaab and Jabhat al Nusra, fighting other Salafi-jihadist groups in Syria and Iraq.

Additionally, while it is common to think and find scholarship on Western global influence whether during the age of Empires or through the current soft and hard power domination of *pax Americana* there exists the intent that arguably should be considered the self-interest of al-Qaeda ideologues: envisioning a break from foreign influence and creation of a caliphate ruling the Muslim

world.<sup>16</sup> It is important to point out that in this understanding of self-interest for al-Qaeda also encapsulates open conflict with Muslims not in agreement with their Salafist ideology. Therefore, one can clarify why in the on-going Syrian civil war, al-Qaeda factions have fought the Kurds, Syrian government troops as well as other jihadists. Furthermore, this self-interest holds the conviction of a conspiracy by Christians and Jews thus the necessity to bring jihad to the West and kill those unwilling to submit. This latter point is of both secular and scholarly debate since Salafist jihadism believes in the religious sanctioning of non-combatants (Moghadam 2008: 48) a reason al-Qaeda has instigated sectarian violence among Muslims and attacked the mosques and gatherings of liberal Muslims, Sufis and Shias such as the examples of the Sadr City bombings, the Ashore massacre, the Yazidi community bombings and the April 2007 Baghdad bombings. So, while al-Qaeda may not discriminate in its selfish pursuits there has is a strategy to this self-interest.

As referenced in the above paragraphs the supra-national community of Islamic peoples (ummah) that al-Qaeda serves in its self-interest is one where al-Qaeda's ideology is being converted and its operating principles as an organization is franchised in other nations with the intent on creating a caliphate. On this point it is necessary to point to the strategy of al-Qaeda containing five specific stages (Atwan 2006) or seven phases according to Jordanian journalist Fouad Hussein who spent considerable time with Al-

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<sup>16</sup> To read on what al-Qaeda really wants see the original piece by Yassin Masharbash, "The Future of Terrorism: What al-Qaida Really Wants" in *Der Spiegel*; for detail on a caliphate specifically see "Dreaming of a caliphate". *The Economist*. August 6, 2011.

Zarqawi and describes Al-Qaeda's strategy to the year 2020<sup>17</sup> containing global political instability and global jihad.

## 4.4 Conclusion

Al Qaeda has always been more than Osama bin Laden. The al Qaeda network has changed over the years, and so have the various frameworks used to explain it. The body of research on al Qaeda is extensive and portrays varying ideas of how the network itself functions, ranging from a core group of senior leaders directing a global network to an amorphous group of individuals driving toward a shared objective. The adaptive nature of the network and the complexity of the ways in which members and groups interact within the network exacerbate the challenge of understanding the organization.

Al-Qaeda serves in its self-interest where its ideology is being converted and its operating principles followed. As such, al-Qaeda follows neoclassical Realism and within the third central proposition of realism; actors in the international political system are rational as their actions maximize their own self-interest. The self-interest of advancing the Salafi movement through Salafi jihadism.

Today, al-Qaeda has more members, greater geographic reach, and a level of ideological sophistication and influence it lacked in 2001. And it is a much more cohesive international organization than is often assumed.

The aim of the following chapter was to explain the historical context to al-Qaeda's' theological and doctrinal origins, the group's

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<sup>17</sup> On March 11, 2005, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* published extracts from Saif al-Adel's document "Al Qaeda's Strategy to the Year 2020"; see *Der Spiegel* article.

conflict with the West and fellow Muslims; an explanation of realism and where al-Qaeda has the requisite qualities to be considered neoclassical. To the stated objectives in the abstract, clarified in the introduction, and expanded in the following sections al-Qaeda is worthy of continued scholarship and vigilance.



## 5. The Islamic State (Daesh)

Probably the most known terrorist organization after Al-Qaeda is the Islamic State or more accurately known as Daesh<sup>18</sup>, which has dominated western media for the last several years. The organization is infamous for its brutal executions of captured enemies and barbaric demolitions of cultural heritage sites. Moreover, it is the first terrorist organization in history which controls huge areas in modern Iraq and Syria and spread the idea that they created a real Islamic state. The initial success of the organization in the context of the Syrian civil war attracted jihadists and donors from the entire world. As a result the Islamic State is the most powerful terrorist organization and a great danger for international security.

### 5.2 Historical Background

The origins of the Islamic State can be traced back to the 1990s and are closely related to the Jordanian terrorist Ahmad Fadeel al-Nazal al-Khalayleh (1966–2006), better known as Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Criminal records of Zarqawi started already during his adolescence when Zarqawi was punished several times for alcohol and expelled from high school. Zarqawi's path to terrorism started in

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<sup>18</sup> Daesh is the acronym derived from its Arabic name *ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi l-Iraq wa-sha-Sham* (Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham or ISIS). Because the Islamic State invokes the meaning that, the organization is the real state, which is obviously not, it will be preferably used in this chapter Daesh to refer to this organization. Moreover, Daesh in Arabic is similar to Daes, literally translated as “one who crushes something underfoot” or Dahes “one who sows discord” or simply “cruel”.

the late 1980s when he attended courses at a madrasa in Jordan and later went to Afghanistan to become Mujahid and joined others in fighting Soviet troops. Zarqawi returned to Jordan in 1992 and continued in his radicalization under the spiritual leadership of Islamist cleric Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi (Brisard 2005). In 1994 both radicals were arrested and Zarqawi spend five years in the prison which became a decisive part of his life. As noted by Zarqawi himself, the prison was his university (Weiss, Hassan 2015). After Zarqawi was released he travelled to Afghanistan where he supervised one of training camps operated by Al-Qaeda in Herat, with front capital of 5,000 USD (Alexander and Alexander 2015: 3).

In 1999 Zarqawi while in Jordan established the Organization of Monotheism and Jihad (*Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad*) which operated mainly in Iraq and played important role during the Iraq insurgency. After the US invasion of Iraq Zarqawi conducted several terrorist attacks including bombing of Jordanian Embassy, UN Assistance Mission Headquarters suicide car bombing and Shi'ite Imam Ali Mosque in Najaf (Kaválek 2015: 9) which resulted in high casualties and attracted attention of Allied forces, media and Al-Qaeda.

The organization changed its name on 17 October 2004 after al-Zarwawi pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden. Since then Tawhid wal-Jihad was known as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (*Tanzim Qaidat al-jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn*) or more precisely the Organization of Jihad's Base in Mesopotamia. Allegiance to al-Qaeda marks the switch from small scale insurgency to large insurgency with its peak in 2006 when Zarqawi succeeded in attracting support of radical jihadists and efficiently used the official al-Qaeda label (Kaválek 2015: 21).

In October 2006 the organization entered the Mujahideen Shura Council in Iraq (*Majlis Shura al-Mujahideen fi al-Iraq*), which was an umbrella organization consisting of several Sunni Islamist groups including Brigades al-Ghuraba and al-Ahwal, Saray al-Jihad Group,

Katbiyan Ansar al-Tawhid wal Sunnah and Jaish al-Ta'ifa al-Mansurah. The group was run by al-Zarqawi until his death in June 2006 and later by Abu Ayyub Al-Masri and Abu Omar al-Baghdadi. The Shura Council was aimed at nationalization of the Iraqi insurgency and other Islamists groups served as the cover for Tawhid wal-Jihad which was considered as a group with roots outside Iraq (Weiss and Hassan 2015). Under Abu Omar al Baghdadi the group was renamed in October 2006 to the Islamic State of Iraq (*Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyyah*). However, during the Sahwa campaign the activities of the Islamic State of Iraq were limited and group members partly went into hiding and focused on criminal activities (Kaválek 2015: 21). In 2010 Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi became leader of the organization. Under Baghdadi's leadership the group successfully exploited mistakes of the Maliki government and fully extended its activities after US withdrawal from Iraq in 2011. However, it is believed that behind the success story of Abu Bakr stood former Ba'athist colonel Haji Bakr (Samir Abd Muhammad al-Khlifawi), the mastermind of IS and author of IS structure (Hasan 2015: 30) who coordinated the group's spill over to civil war torn Syria. Daesh in Syria opened *Dawah* offices<sup>19</sup> to recruit potential radicals who later worked for the organization as spies and prepared the ground for takeover in selected cities. Thanks to intelligence information, blackmailing and mafia practices Daesh was able to seize control in regions out of control of central government (Reuter 2015).

At the same time IS expanded its activities in Iraq and large scale insurgency resulted in conventional warfare after counter-insurgents (Kaválek 2015: 21). This stage was marked by the 8 April

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<sup>19</sup> *Dawah* means "Invitation to Islam" and is considered as part of missionary work when people are invited to understand Islam through dialogue. *Dawah* offices were unnoticeably opened in the northern Syria in spring 2013 (Reuter 2015).

2013 announcement that the Caliphate was established. The Caliphate also resulted in the last change of organization name to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (*Ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fi I-Iraq wa-sh-Sham*) or ISIL which is still active today.

## 5.2 Leadership and structure

Currently a well-known face of Daesh is Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim al-Badri better known as Abu bakr Al-Baghdadi.<sup>20</sup> There is not much known about his life. He was born in Samarra in 1971 in a middle-income class family. He was a quiet and shy boy who enjoyed reciting the Quran and in his adolescence, became a member of the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood (Hosken 2015). Due to its activities in radical movements he was arrested in 2006 when he spends several months in the camp Bucca where he prepared the network composed of former Baathists and Islamists. For example, the future leader of Jabhat al-Nusra, Abu Mohammad al-Golani<sup>21</sup> (Moubayed 2015: 108). After release from prison Al-Baghdadi joined al-Qaeda and his Ph.D. from Islamic studies helped him to advance through the ranks of Islamists (Hosken 2015: 132), later giving the leadership a religious face. Due to his religious qualifications in May 2010 Baghdadi became emir and succeeded in transforming IS from a regular local terrorist organization to a trans-national network (Calabresi 2015: 103) with its core in a state-like structure.

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<sup>20</sup> The name Abu Bakr refers to Abu Bakr, the father in law of the prophet Muhammad and first Caliph of Rashidun Caliphate.

<sup>21</sup> Al Golani played an important role during Daesh's expansion to Syria after the outbreak of civil war until the bitter divorce with Daesh in January 2012. Since then Daesh and Jabhat Al-Nusra are in a state of hostility.

As noted earlier, the key role in drafting the blueprint for the future Islamist State was Haji Bakr (Rasheed 2015: 14). In this state the Caliph shall play a central role which is similar to dictatorships. The Caliph is almost unlimited in exercising his powers and supervises or directly controls other institutions<sup>22</sup> in the system.

The Caliph partially shares its competences with two deputies which are directly subordinated to the Caliph. It seems that deputies have divided powers on the territorial basis and one is responsible for Syria (Abu Ali al-Anbari and later Abu Ala al-Afri) and the second is responsible for Iraq (Abu Ali Qurdashal-Turkmani, known also as Fadhil Ahmad al-Hayali alias Hajji Mutazz). The Cabinet, his deputies and most probably also close advisers represent the executive branch which is called “Al Imara” (Thompson and Shubert 2015). Members of “Al Imara” and the Caliph himself is in the interaction with other bodies. For example, both deputies are part of the Shura Council which could be considered as the main advisory body. The Shura council is presided by Abu Arkan al-Ameri and other members. Membership ranges from 9 to 11 people and all of them are chosen by Baghdadi himself (Barret 2014). This council theoretically also approves the Caliph's appointments and the choice of a new Caliph. In a hypothetical situation in the case that the Caliph fails to fulfill its obligations under Sharia law, the Shura council has the power to dismiss him (March and Revkin 2015). However, this situation is not probable as the Caliph will not allow his adversaries to enter the Shura Council. In other words, even when the Caliph consults the Shura about his decisions, the final decision is solely on the Caliph (Baghdadi) himself (Anjarini 2014).

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<sup>22</sup> It is not appropriate to talk about institutions in the western sense in connection with Daesh but rather partly institutionalized forms of organizations based on exclusive leadership.

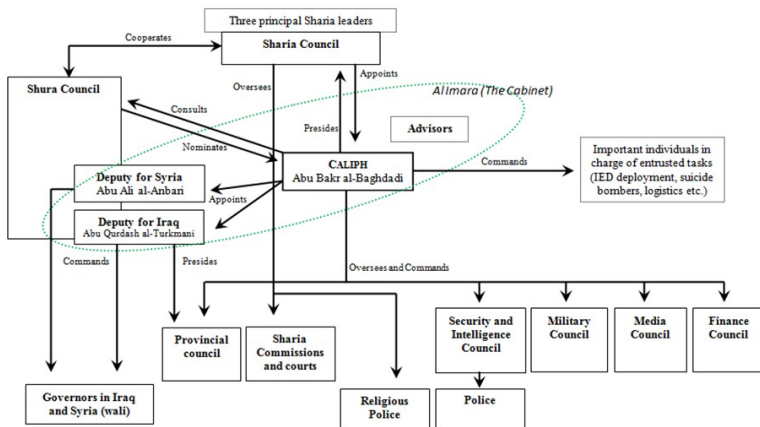
The Shura Council in some issues cooperates with another body – the Sharia Council, which has its role in the appointment of a Caliph, who after the appointment presides over Sharia Council meetings. It is believed, that in the Sharia Council dominates three principal Sharia leaders. In this sense the Sharia Council gives religious authority to the system and it could be expected, that it supervises Sharia commissions and courts at the regional and local level as well as the religious police. The Sharia Council monitors the adherence of other councils to Sharia law and due to its direct control it serves as the caliphate's religious monitor and ensures that all actors in the system comply with the Sharia law according to Daesh interpretation. Due to its authority and direct membership of the Caliph Sharia Council is the most powerful council. On the local level the Sharia council is represented by the Sharia commissions, which arbitrate disputes and carry out punishments, offers guidance on religious (daily life) issues, recruitment, preaching and dealing with media affairs (March and Revkin 2015). The Sharia council also oversees the outreach (*dawa*) of the Islamist ideology and interferes to all situations which may have an important impact on society, including e.g. the executions of hostages (compare Barret 2014; Thompson and Shubert 2015).

Despite the originality of Daesh's structure, the role of the Sharia Council seems to be similar to another institution. In the Islamic Republic of Iran one can find the Guardian Council which approves all candidates for presidential or parliamentary elections and also serves as the judicial authority (Kamrava, Hassan-Yari 2004). In this sense the Guardian Council has a similar "gate-keeping" role and possess similar religious authority as the Sharia Council. The entire system is shown at the following picture.

Next to the Shura Council and Sharia Council, there are a number of specialized bodies under the direct control of the Caliph. It could be expected that the Caliph participates in the meetings of the

Military Council, Media Council, Finance Council, Security and Intelligence Council and other Councils. Despite Islamists intention to create an original structure which will be very different to the structure common in Western societies and other states, it seems that a specialization in the organization is necessary and that despite attempts bodies are still slightly similar to Western ministries. Another aspect is the personal overlap between individual bodies when one person holds several positions within the system, which makes the system flexible and internally organic.

**Picture 3: The Structure of the Islamic State**



Source: Filipec, Brtincký 2017: 335, based on Barret 2015; Thompson and Schubert 2015, March and Revkin 2015; Anjarini 2014 and others.

The structure is mirrored also on the local level. There are twelve governors<sup>23</sup> (wali) from Iraq and twelve from Syria under the supervision of Caliph's deputies, who give orders how to implement decrees (or directives) in their territories (Thompson and Schubert 2015). Governors are assisted by military commanders and Sharia commanders who run the Sharia Commission and Security Council (Anjarini 2014). However, in the case of some councils (Shura, Military and Interior) there are independent offices with extended powers directly supervised by their central organizations (Barret 2014). This structure represents a rather vertical dimension of the IS institutions, from the Caliph through deputies to governors and councils.

Among many councils a very important role is played by the Security and Intelligence Council, which has been led by Abu ali al-Anbari and two other members. The council developed from the leadership of the Caliph's personal security guard to the body monitoring the work of security commanders at local levels. All important actions with security dimension are discussed on this platform, including enemy infiltration, formation of guerrilla suicide fighters (*inghimassi*) or coordination of terrorist attacks. The council also ensures that no other group may endanger the dominant role of the IS. Compared to Western institutions the Security and Intelligence Council is similar to intelligence services or the ministry of interior. It could be expected that Security and Intelligence Council cooperates with police units. Next to the normal police which is enforcing ordinary law and safety there is the Sharia police, which is in general called al-Hisbah (al-Hisbah is the name for the religious police for man, for woman it is called al-Khansa). Its aim is

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<sup>23</sup> The number may vary as some provinces have a slightly different administrative structure. As pointed out by Barret, IS has captured in total 18 provinces.



to protect religious morals. This may cover a range of activities interfering in daily life such as proper clothing, control of Western symbols to controlling non-Islamic behaviour. According to IS its duty is to *“promote virtue and prevent vice to dry up sources of evil, prevent the manifestation of disobedience, and urge Muslims toward well-being.”*(Masi 2015). In other words, this is both the regimes preventive and repressive tool to control people.

The security of Daesh is not related only to internal affairs but many activities have a direct military dimension. For this reason, the Security and Intelligence Council cooperates with the Military Council, which is responsible for all military tasks, including strategic planning, raids, armaments and spoils (Mach and Revkin 2014). Therefore, the Military council may serve as the Caliphate Ministry of Defence.

There are several other councils. Among the most important, there is Daesh Financial Council, previously headed by Abu Jaafar al-Sabawi who later fled with 14 million USD (Brisard, Martinez 2014: 4), the Media Council related to Chief spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani or Provincial council which oversees the civilian administration of the IS.

What the structures of Daesh tell us about the nature of the regime? First, it is clearly visible that the role of the Caliph is central and that the caliph controls and commands all institutions. In this sense the system is similar to a personal dictatorship where the dictator has no constitutional limits. However, as noted by Richard Barret, it is unlikely that Abu Bakr will intervene in military affairs as he lacks military experience (Barret 2014).

Second, it could be expected that the importance of collective leadership will rise as Daesh consolidates and penetrates in new areas. In other words, the daily running of a state requires competence and it is possible that the Councils will have different discretionary powers. As it is impossible for one person to run the

state on a daily basis, directives, rather than detailed orders may prevail.

Third, effective control and governance will require cooperation of local entities which will require administration with all its pros and cons. Despite Daesh's determination to oppose everything Western, it will be impossible to create an effective original "Salafi-Islamic" governance without relying on the methods of organization which found its way in the Western public administration.

Fourth, the current body structure with overlapping membership and the absence of binding constitutional rules is more similar to the structure of the mafia, rather than a state. The organic nature of the organization on one side helps the greater flexibility of the system where one person can be replaced by another on the basis of competence or loyalty, but on the other side centralization of the leadership may result in the organizational chaos and internal pressures. For example, it is visible that there are two kinds of people in the leadership: the former Baathist who found a second chance under the cover of Islamism and the Islamists who started their careers mainly as criminals or terrorists loyal to other terrorist organizations.

### **5.3 Aims and activities**

The aims of Daesh clearly corresponds with its ideology, which bears all aspects of Salafist-jihadist (*al-salafiyya al-jihadiyya*), a sort of Wahhabi Sunni radical Islamism. Daesh ideology is both sentimentally conservative and utopian revolutionary. Similarly, to different revolutionary movements Islamists try to create a new state and a new society based on different principles. As pointed out by Stephen M. Walt, there are three similarities with communist

revolutionaries. First, opponents are considered as evil, hostile and incapable of reform and therefore compromise is impossible. The old order must be destroyed and replaced by a better order. In the eyes of Daesh the West is evil, which is hostile towards Arabs and the Muslim world. Second, revolutionaries preach that victory is inevitable. Similarly, IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi claims, that the Islamic State is well and its advance will not cease. Third, similarly to left-wing revolutionaries, Islamists sees their model as being universally applicable (Walt 2015: 43). This revolutionary element within is well connected with Daesh activities and in some aspects, goes hand in hand with conservative elements depending on the point of view.

However, in other aspects Daesh ideology is conservative due to an emphasis on pure ancestral practices which shall be spread across the whole Islamic community (*Umma*). In other words, Islamists tries to live daily life as much as possible according to original version of Islam from the times of Prophet Mohammed. This way of life makes distinction between “true believers” and “unbelievers” which are considered to be “apostates” or “infidels” and makes content of Takfir doctrine (Tomé 2015: 119).

The establishment of the Caliphate on 29 June 2014 with the Caliph Ibrahim as the supreme leader may be seen as the beginning of the new World where all Muslims will be united under the rules of Good and Evil will be destroyed. In this sense the caliphate represents necessary element in creation of new society based on Sharia. Despite the idea of Caliphate, it is not new, and bears many sentiments in it,<sup>24</sup> The Islamic state goes beyond the idea of

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<sup>24</sup> Throughout history there were several caliphates, sometimes existing in parallel. Well known for example are the Rashidun Caliphate, Umayyad Caliphate, Abbasid Caliphate and Ottoman Caliphate which ceased to exist in 1924.

Caliphate restoration. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared “A worldwide Caliphate” referring to the concept of a single theocratic government. In line with creation of the world, caliphate is the worldwide spread of Sharia law and the destruction of democratic structures.

Daesh activities reflect both the ideological line and the pragmatism related to the life of terrorist organization. Daesh may be divided into the internal and external. Internal activities are focused on the “state building process” which is one of the main aims of Daesh in the direction towards a Caliphate. Despite many scholars claims that the Islamic State is not a state in a proper sense because of a lack of international recognition, Daesh activities are beyond activities of a jihadist organization (*tanzim*) but are rather similar to those of states (*dawla*) with the majority of the necessary attributes, such as territory, population, military, legal system, government, currency or symbols.

Daesh has its own territory equal to the size of the United Kingdom, covering several former Syrian provinces Aleppo, Deir es-Zor and Raqqah and Iraqi provinces Salahuddin, Nineveh, Al-Anbar and Diyala. Daesh also controls territory on the Sinai Peninsula and in Libya. In June 2014 Daesh successfully captured the second largest city in Iraq, Mosul, population – 3 million without considerable resistance as Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) military officers evacuated the city and left units without leadership. Five ISF divisions of panicked soldiers left the city leaving military equipment to Daesh and its allies from Jama‘at Ansar al-Islam and the Ba‘athist front, Jaish al-Rijal al-Tarika al-Naqshabandiyya (Stansfield 2014: 1334).

On the territory controlled by the Daesh are living between seven to ten million people. In this connection, it is important to note the brutality of Daesh towards minorities which has resulted in massacres and ethnic cleansing in captured territories. Groups who refuse to convert to Islam or pledge allegiance to Daesh are killed,

sometimes by arbitrary means. This applies to religious and ethnic groups such as Shia Muslims, Alawites, Christians, Yazidis, Druze, Mandeans or Shabaks and also to sexual minorities. For example, in 2014 the UN confirmed that more than five thousand Yazidis had been killed by Daesh and more than seven thousand Yazidis women were abducted in Mount Sinjar (Hopkins 2014). In Mosul, Daesh ordered between 1000 and 1500 prisoners from a jail into four rows to line up. Sunnis were asked to step aside and the rest has been killed, resulting in 670 killed people (Sharma 2014). Infamous is also the Camp Speicher massacre which took place during the Northern Iraq offensive in June 2014. Around 1500 unarmed Iraqi Air force cadets were killed near Tikrit (Aljazeera 2015). The above mentioned mass executions are only the most grave examples of Daesh brutality and the total extent may be never uncovered as victims may be never found and Daesh related human rights crimes involves also sexual violence, slavery, the use of child soldiers and the use of chemical weapons. The long list of human rights crimes can be extended by crimes against the cultural heritage.

The territory and its citizens are ruled by the central government which has violence monopoly. Daesh is running its own police and army, has its own legal system and courts. There are taxes being collected on Daesh territory. Daesh has its own flag and also introduced its own currency. The currency is composed of precious metal coins (gold, silver and bronze) that bears symbolism from the Qur'an and Sunnah and remembers the old system of medieval kings (Lutai 2015: 151). As any other organization or state Daesh also has a budget. In comparison to other famous terrorist organizations the capture of Mosul and robbery of its central bank made a profit for Daesh worth 800 million USD. Compared to the annual budget of other organizations such as Al-Qaeda (60 to 300 million USD), Hezbollah (200 to 400 million USD) or FARC (around 300 million

USD), Daesh is the richest terrorist organization in the world (Dancu 2014: 28).

The state-like structure of Daesh also challenges the issue of state sponsored terrorism as the Islamic State is run by terrorists itself. In this sense the Islamic State does not only export terrorism through financial networks and support befriended organizations such as Boko Haram, but also directly terrorizes its citizens and minorities.

An important aspect of the Islamic State is the economy. In late 2014 conservative estimates expected that Daesh controls assets excising 2 trillion USD with a current annual income amounting to 2,9 billion USD (Brisard and Martinez 2014: 3). According to the Financial Action Task Force the Daesh has five resources. First, illicit proceeds from occupation (bank looting, extortion, control of oilfields and refineries, robberies and illicit taxations; Second, kidnapping for ransom; Third, donations including by or through non-profit organisations; Fourth, material support associated with Foreign terrorist fighters and Fifth, fundraising through modern communication (FATF 2015: 12)

Daesh established taxes on captured territories on all goods, telecommunication companies, withdrawals from bank accounts, 5 % tax on all salaries for social welfare, road tax, customs tax per truck entering Iraq or Syria, looting archaeological sites<sup>25</sup> or protection tax for non-Muslim communities known as jizya (Brisard and Martinez 2014: 5). As estimated around 38 % of the income comes from oil sales, which makes the highest share. Oil sales are followed by natural gas export (17 %), extortion (12 %), Phosphate export (10

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<sup>25</sup> Daesh occupies around 4,500 sites in Syria and Iraq which enables them large scale looting of cultural artifacts. It is estimated that looting in Syria itself earned tens of millions USD (FATF 2015: 17).

%), cement (10 %), agricultural products (7 %) and donations (2 %) (Brisard and Martinez 2014: 9).

External activities of Daesh can be further divided into local and global. On the local level Daesh activities are related to state aspects such as defence of taken territories, expansion, securing resources, plundering. The activities vary from running training camps for its soldiers, collecting taxes to beheadings, public executions and destroying cultural heritage. On the global level activities are aimed at support of terrorists operating outside Syria and Iraq.

Important elements of Daesh are activities related to its supporters outside the controlled territory. This includes recruitment activities of potential fighters and Daesh supporters. Those who can not travel to Syria and Iraq are instructed to pledge public allegiance (*bay'ah*) to the Caliph. Next to the individuals are also organizations and groups who pledge allegiance to the Islamic State. As Luís Tomé (2015) points out that according to the Intel Center Database 36 organizations and groups pledged the allegiance to the Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Mujahideen Timor* in Indonesia; *Caliphate and Jihad Movement, Jundullah, Tehrik-e-Khalifat* and *Tehrik-e-Taliban* dissidents in Pakistan; *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* in Pakistan and Uzbekistan; *Ansar al-Khalifah, Bangsmoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, Bangsmoro Justice Movement, Abu Sayyaf* and *Jemaah Islamiyah* in the Philippines; *Jund al-Khalifah, al-Huda Battalion in Maghreb of Islam and Soldiers of the Caliphate* in Algeria; *Al Tawhid Battalion* in Afghanistan and Pakistan; *Khorasan Pledge, Heroes of Islam Brigade in Khorasan* and *Leaders of the Mujahid in Khorasan*, from Afghanistan; *Ansar al-Tahweed fi Bilad al-Hind* in India; *al-Itisam of the Quran and Sunnah* in Sudan; *Uqba bin Nafi battalion* and *Jund al-Khilafah* in Tunisia; *Jund al-Khilafah* in Egypt; *Mujahideen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem*, in

Daesh also has penetrated cyberspace and mastered the use of new media in the unprecedented way. It is believed that a media presence is organized by Abu Amr al-Shami who is in charge of high-level media council (Barrett 2014: 53). Daesh's media strategy is well organized and outputs are provided in multiple languages and distributed with carefully selected timings to attract most of the media coverage (Layton 2015: 194). The Islamic State is active on social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Diaspora, Tumblr and operates various YouTube accounts where fully professional videos are uploaded. As noted in the article by Peter Layton, Daesh's posts on social media are attractive, includes hastags, hyperlinks, images, videos and are able to reach high number of audience as there were almost 40,000 tweets posted each day supporting Daesh advance on Mosul (Hannigan, 2014 cited in: Layton 2015: 194). Fast advancement and permanent mobilization was used well on social media to attract foreign fighters and supporters of the Islamic state.

It is estimated, that the number of foreign fighters is rising. It was estimated, that foreign fighters in Syria tripled between 2014 and 2015 from 7 000 to 20 000 (Alexander and Alexander 2015: 170). However, some estimates are larger. For example, the Institute for Economics and Peace estimated that there are 30 thousand fighters from as many as 100 countries fighting in Syria and Iraq

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the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula; *Jund at-Tawheed Wal Khalifah* in Bangladesh; *Ansar Bait al-Maqdis* in Egypt; *Islamic Youth Shura Council*, *Islamic State Libya (Darnah)*, *Lions of Libya*, *Shura Council of Shabab al-Islam Darnah* and *IS's "Tripoli Province"* in Libya; *Liwa Ahrar al-Sunna in Baalbek*, Lebanon; *Mujahideen of Yemen* and *Supporters for the Islamic State in Yemen*, in Yemen; *Supporters of the Islamic State in the Land of the Two Holy Mosques* in Saudi Arabia; and *Boko Haram* in Nigeria (Tomé 2015: 131).



with a total economic cost amounts to an all-time high of almost 53 billion USD (The Guardian 2015). For the above reasons the fight against Daesh has taken place also in cyberspace in order to disrupt Daesh communication and recruitment channels (McCabe 2015: 151).

One of Daesh's trademarks became short videos uploaded on YouTube which capture beheadings of hostages in orange jumpsuits by a black masked man with knife. Similar attention caught videos with barbaric demolitions of cultural heritage including mosques, churches or temples in ancient archaeological sites. Despite beheadings, nothing is new among jihadist practices its presence on social media and high media coverage highlights the psychological effect of such acts. Documented acts of brutality and barbaric demolitions fits well with the psychological warfare on social media and fully match the aims of Daesh as terrorist organization.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In many aspects Daesh has proven to be the most successful terrorist organization of all times. From a second tier terrorist group Daesh has developed into a state-like organization with an economy funding its activities. The unprecedented development of Daesh and its expansion of activities are a great danger for global security. An ongoing effort of an international coalition seems to be of little success and it appears that Daesh will remain an important actor on the global scene in the next decade. Moreover, the potential defeat of Daesh on the ground can be considered only as partial victory, since as its *modus operandi* it may switch from a state-like organization to terrorist organization in a more classical sense.

The existence of Daesh is an unwelcome development which increases the security and economic costs over time. The

development of Daesh is unpredictable and the breakdown or transformation of the organization as well as internal pressures between former Ba'athists and radical Islamists may result in more predatory, nasty and brutal approach and spread of hostility to local citizens and international community. The doctrine of Takfirism behind the veil of radical Islamism may well serve as the necessary precondition for genocide and mass human rights abuse, making Daesh one of the gravest challenges of the twenty-first century.

## 6. Al Nusra Front

The Islamic state of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) has been confronted with a rising prominence of its rival, Al-Nusra Front. This organisation has grown to be a similar threat for global security as its above-mentioned counterpart. The Al-Nusra Front is formally known as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) <sup>27</sup> and can be considered the official al-Qaeda (AQ) affiliate in Syria able to operate with strategic, intelligent planning and follow-up in sophisticated actions. ISIS and JN are rivals, although their strategic goals overlap<sup>28</sup>. The most dangerous feature about JN is also the main difference to ISIS. ISIS is a creation of its own self-announced state through power projection i.e. by conquering of land. JN prefers to select a different method and operates by provoking social and religious transformations, unrests and infiltrating into local revolutions with patience and planning. The current situation in Syria has created almost ideal conditions to execute the strategy of JN, steered indirectly by Al-Qaeda.

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<sup>27</sup>The full name of the organization is *Jabhat al-Nusra li-Ahl al-Sham* which can be translated as the front for the assistance of the residents of Greater Syria. The term *al-Sham* may be translated as both Syria and “Greater Syria”. The term Nusra is taken from the Quran and means ‘to rush to somebody’s aid’, ‘to provide assistance’, ‘to support’, ‘to defend’, ‘and to give cover or protection’, term *jabha* (front) stands for a group, party, or company of fighters.

<sup>28</sup>A creation of a Islamic Caliphate which will be ruled by religious Islamic law - the Shari’ah

## 6.1 Historical background

The first demonstrations in Syria started in March 2011 in the Daraa region in the south of the country, resulting in a series of unrests. The riots spread gradually into all parts of Syria, developing into a civil war. The inspiration for the protests can be found in the events of Arab spring in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. The Syrian conflict is not isolated and its root causes should be analysed in a much broader perspective. Initially the rebels requested to repeal the restrictive Emergency law<sup>29</sup>, which allowed for the arrest and imprisonment of a person without official charge and the legalization of multi-party political system, as well as removal of corrupt local officials. (CIA). The regime of President Assad reacted in an inconsistent way. On one side the emergency law was repealed, further preparations for a multi-party system were made, on the other side Assad rejected all requests for his abdication and increased repressive measures. (Holliday 2011).

As the conflict developed the environment in Syria has become highly fragmented amongst opposition and rebel groups. According to the estimations there are more than 1,000 (BBC, 2013) militant groups operating in Syria. These groups are created either based on religious or ethnic grounds, and are very fragmented. Those created based on religious background – identify themselves with Salafist-jihadi ideology, which is the case for JN.

JN started to operate officially in January 2012. Al-Qaeda operative Abu Muhammad al-Julani arrived went to Syria with the clear target of organising and activating the Jihadist movement in this area. The existence of Al-Nusra Front was first announced 10 months after the uprising in Syria region began - on January 24th 2012.

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<sup>29</sup>Emergency law was valid already for 48 years at that point

The announcement was done by its leader Muhammad al-Julani in a video posted on social media (Jihadology 2012). In the beginnings, the organisation was presenting itself mainly as nationalistic group. Initially JN operated as a branch of the Islamic State of Iraq affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Iraq. The leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq – Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the official union of the two organisations in April 2012, however the union was not confirmed by Al-Nusra Front and denied completely by Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in 2013.

The situation further escalated when Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi publicly refused to obey Al-Zawahiri's command. Baghdadi questioned Al-Zawahiri's ruling, and authenticity. Ideological differences can explain the rejection of Al-Zawahiri's instructions. The belief that Islam does not recognize the artificial borders laid down by Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916). Dividing the Islamic State in Iraq and in greater Syria contradicts their faith. The split of the two organisations resulted in the consequence that two branches of Al-Qaeda are nowadays in a hostile relationship. (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

In terms of organizational structure, JN is subordinated to Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria is subordinated to Al-Qaeda in Iraq. JN is the official Al-Qaeda affiliate, aiming to reach its strategic global goals. From this perspective the Syrian conflict is the extension of global jihad against the Western world. This idea is pushed also by the JN leader Abu Mohammed al-Joulani, referring to it in his public statements and social media propaganda.<sup>30</sup>

The main goals of the JN are: overthrowing the regime of President Assad and to establish a regional Islamic Emirate in

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<sup>30</sup> Video on Twitter, al-Manara al-Bayda Media Foundation, September 12.

Syria<sup>31</sup>, which would be later included in much larger Caliphate - as part of the global AQ goal. The modus operandi of JN is mainly based on the ideology of Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's successor. This paradigm claims that the support of the local population is more important in comparison to direct control of ground by power/violent methods. This methodology is believed to help to avoid backlashes from civil unrests<sup>32</sup> and would help to prepare solid ground for the creation of an Islamic state in long term view. Social outreach and proselytization are the keywords for JN regarding state building methodology (Cafarella 2014).

Quickly after its start, the organisation becomes known for having the most experienced and best trained fighters. The bases for this was laid in the year 2000, when Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of Al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq, dispatched a number of operatives, who had worked with him in Afghanistan to Syria and Lebanon. Those operatives established so called "guest houses" in Syria to train operatives for Iraq. During the invasion to Iraq - Syria was a transit station for Arab and Muslim jihadists - making their way to the Iraqi battleground (Quilliam 2012).

In late 2013 units of JN had serious clashes with ISIS. All efforts to settle the disputes between the two organisations failed by February 2014, where Al-Qaeda formally dissociated itself from its affiliate ISIS and left JN as the only representative of al-Qaida in Syria (Washington post 2014).

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<sup>31</sup>In the area of the so called "Greater Syria": including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestinian Authority

<sup>32</sup>Characteristic for awakening movements that undermined the Islamic State of Iraq in 2006–2007.

## 6.2 Leadership and structure

The organisation strictly sticks to the policy of silence, therefore it does not allow much insights into the leadership style of the organisation. The fact is that JN is Al-Qaeda's branch in Syria region and therefore - in the structure subordinated to leadership of Al-Qaida and Ayman al-Zawahiri. The structure of the organisation is both hierarchical and regional. JN is headed by a leader referred as Amir, which is a commonly used title in Islamic-jihadi organizations.<sup>33</sup> Amir refers to a leader in both political and religious sense. The local commanders in various governorates (*u'maraa*), are subordinated to the lead Amir and pledged by an oath – bay'ah<sup>34</sup>.

From the beginning the organisation is headed by Abu Muhammad al Julani. There is no confirmed information about his real name or identity is available, so his name Al-Juliani is a "*nom de guerre*"<sup>35</sup>. Estimates says that he might be of Syrian descent, coming from the Golan Heights<sup>36</sup>. A study carried out by the UK-based Quilliam Foundation states, that Al-Julani was one of Al-Zarqawis supporters, coming to Iraq during the U.S. invasion in March 2003. The leadership of Al Julani's is accepted and well respected within the organisation due to his considerable experience, which he gained during the invasion of Iraq. Al-Julani closely guards his privacy and

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<sup>33</sup> Amiris also referred to as the "general supervisor" (*al-mas'oul al-'aam*).

<sup>34</sup> Bay'ah – Islamic terminology explains as oath of allegiance to a leader

<sup>35</sup> Abu Muhammad al-Julani is also referred to as al-mas'oul (the person in charge), al-mas'oul al-'aam (the chief person in charge), and al-sheikh al-fateh (the conquering sheikh).

<sup>36</sup> 'Julani' means 'from Golan – operatives belonging to global jihad organizations often name themselves after their places of origin.

surrounds himself only with handful of close allies. He attends internal meetings with a covered face and his voice is always distorted in videos, never exposing anything of personal details. (Quilliam, 2012). Further identified senior operatives/local commanders are: Mustafa Abd al-Latif Salih (Abu Anas al-Sahhaba), Maysar Ali Musa Abdallah al-Juburi, Anas Hassan Khattab, Abu Hassan. All of them have fighting/military experience from AQ Iraq or ISIS.

The highest governmental body of the organisation is the Majlis Shura al-Mujahadeen, the term can be translated as Consulting Council of the Jihad Fighters (also known as: Shura Council of Jihad Warriors, or Majlis Shura). All military structures operating in Syria are subordinated to the Shura Council. The organisation owns also hierarchical religious body –represented by al-qadi al-a'am (Grand Mufti) in the person of Abu Musab al-Qahtani (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

True to a regional structure, each region has a commander and a sheikh. The supervision of the commanders is executed by the sheikh from the religious point of view. The sheikh is also known as dabet al-shar'i.<sup>37</sup> The main goal of commissioners is to monitor guidance of the commanding operatives and steer them in religious matters. The structure of JN is further designed into operatives dealing with military operations, fund raising, acquiring of weapons. Other operatives are dealing with communication and public relations (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

Areas, which under exclusive control of the Front, have a unique system of justice and law enforcement. It's crucial to underline that the organisation is filling here the power vacuum created by a missing state authority. According to Al-Hay'ah al-

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<sup>37</sup> also known as: religious commissioner, Shari'ah supervisors – al-mas'oul al-shar'i.



Shar'iyyah, the Shari'a courts created by JN are called, Shari'ah Authority" and are fully supported by their own police force called the Shari'ah Authority Police while the Shari'a courts enjoy significant local acceptance, mainly due to lower corruption levels as the previous state's authority.

The organisation is known for strict security policies -violation of which can be punished by death. The legitimacy of this act is taken out of religious doctrine, which says that betrayal of the organisation is the same as betraying Islam and all Muslims. JN avoids any open discussions about structure, commands and daily operations. Information given to the operatives are always very fragmented. The culture created within the organisation is based on the fact that every operative is obliged to protect the organisation. Majority of the operatives are using multiple codenames in order to prevent of exposing about information from the past and private life.

The Meir Amit Intelligence study is providing information about the volumes of operatives per region, which is estimated in following way:

1. Aleppo region: approx. 2,000 operatives, most of them in Al-Bab, to the northeast of Aleppo.
2. Idlib region: approx. 2,500 – 3,000 operatives.
3. Deirez-Zor region: approx. 2,000 operatives.
4. Damascus region: approx. 750 –1,000 operatives.
5. Homs, Daraa, and Latakia regions: approx. 1,000 operatives. (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013)

JN operates through military units in various areas called "battalions" or "companies", or "brigades". The structure of these units cannot be compared with structures of a regular army. The structure of each unit is dependent on geographical determinants in Syria. In Damascus and urban areas, the organisation operates as a

net of individual units, in opposite to rural areas such as Aleppo and Idlib where the structure is very close to a military hierarchy. The operations are directed from local command rooms (ops rooms), located in civilian facilities, converted into military bases. Some of the command rooms are shared with the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The country of origin of the operatives is mostly Syria or other Arabic/Muslim countries. Among the followers are also those from Western Countries. It is estimated that volunteers from Western Europe number between 500–600 operatives (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013). Most operatives from Europe are Muslims, but there is also significant volume of converts to Islam.

The organisation is maintaining its own recruitment rules. Unlike almost everybody is free to join the Free Syrian Army, the selection procedure for JN is highly restrictive. There is a detailed examination of candidate's previous performance. A check of motivation and strength of faith is also undertaken. Once the checks are processed—the recruitments go through religious and military training. Every new recruit needs to swear an oath of allegiance (Bay'ah) to the organization.

### **6.3 Aims of the group**

JN is a salafi-jihadist based organisation with its ideology oriented towards radical Sunni Islam. The goal of the organisation is to overthrow the regime of President Assad in the first place, and in the second place to create an Islamic Caliphate<sup>38</sup> in the area of

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<sup>38</sup> Bilad al-Sham – in Arab-Muslim historic geography, today's Syria is part of a region known as Bilad al-Sham = Land of the North, referring to its location relative to the Arabian Peninsula. Politically, the region (referred to as Greater Syria) includes Syria, Lebanon,

“Greater Syria” under Sharia law. JN ideologically identifies itself with Al-Qaeda. One of the main ideological features of JN is a strong antagonistic relationship towards the U.S. and other western countries. The values of the West such as democracy, pluralism, individual freedom, freedom of choice of religion, general equality of are not respected.

Moreover, the organisation is against of any kind of involvement of Western countries in the Syrian conflict, this is valid also for pro-western Arab countries. The ideology of the organisation is very antagonistic to everything which deviates from orthodox Sunni Islam. According to the opinion of the organisation, Islamic religious law (Shari’ah) is not compatible with democracy. The argument used – is that democracy is ruled and judged by the people, not by Allah and Prophet Muhammad. This paradigm means glorification of people with power over glorification of Allah. Democracy - as an ideology means secularism a separation of state and religion - which is not acceptable for organisations of this type.

Further objectives are predominantly the following: (1) to establish a group including many existing jihadists, linking them together into one coherent entity, (2) to reinforce and strengthen the consciousness of the Islamist nature of the conflict, (3) to build military capacity for the group, seizing opportunities to collect weapons and train recruits, and to create safe havens by controlling physical places upon which to exercise their power (Quilliam 2012). Tactics and strategy are also adjusted according to the development of the current situation, which led al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri to instruct JN about adjusted goals in early 2015: (1) Better integrate its movement within the Syrian revolution and its people, (2) Coordinate more closely with all Islamic groups on the ground,

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Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian territories (Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip).

(3) Contribute towards the establishment of a Syria-wide sharia judicial court system, (4) Use strategic areas of the country to build a sustainable al-Qaeda power base, (5) Cease any activity linked to attacking the West (*Huffington Post*, 2015).

Considerable experiences in military actions have helped to constitute fundamental principles of the activities performed by the Front. In the first place it would be the prioritisation of military targets over civilian, no attacks upon holy places, use self-suicide attacks in a way to minimise civilian losses (Quilliam 2012), the second principle is to downplay the rhetoric concerning sectarianism and kuffar<sup>39</sup> labelling Alawites, Shiites and Sufis as non-Muslims (*Huffington Post* 2015), where the last principle would be the decision to not use in the naming of the group words as jihad or mujahidin, in order to avoid negative reactions in the population of Syria<sup>40</sup> (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

It is important to stress that the fundamental principles and operating strategy of JN were planned before they started to operate within the Syrian conflict. This is different in comparison to the strategy of the Free Syrian Army. The structure of FSA consisted of mixture of civilians and ex-military operatives, which has led to a mixed set of tactics. The JN governance board consists of highly experienced and skilled operatives. The majority of them have experience as jihadist movements in other countries and these experiences are used to plan the tactics effectively.

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<sup>39</sup> “Kuffar” – highly derogatory Arabic term used to refer to non-Muslims, though it is usually directed less against Christians and Jews and more against others (Hindus, Buddhists, Shintoists).

<sup>40</sup> JN takes inspiration from al-Qaeda’s ideology and influential Jihadi theorist Abu Musab al-Suri. Al-Suri laid the basis for campaign that prioritizes popular support above all other objectives.

The fighting tactics of JN are influenced by guerrilla warfare, asymmetric warfare and exhausting of the enemy through long-term conflict. The influence for the setting of the tactics can be divided into religious prophecy interpretations, experience from Iraq invasion, and ideas of the Arab spring. The Al-Nusra Front officially has taken responsibility for hundreds of attacks, mainly targeted on governmental facilities. The attacks in the bigger cities are intended to create chaos and fear among the regime and its supporters, attacks in rural regions are have goal to cut of administrative units of the state from one another, decrease ability of the state to govern.

Early actions of JN in the Syrian war were mainly executed by suicide bombings, car bombs, targeted to governmental forces. Many of the attacks killed in the beginnings also civilians. With the time the attacks grown more into military style operations, focusing predominantly on military targets - as airports, regime bases. Further operations included also combat tactics: car/truck/motorcycle bombs detonated by suicide bombers or remote control; suicide bombing attacks using explosive belts. Regime facilities are usually attacked with small arms, RPGs, mortars, and rockets. Detonating IEDs along main roads to hit the regime's vehicles; attacking remote military bases and airfields with IEDs and mortars; attacking roadblocks erected by the regime's security forces are examples of further operations (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

A study conducted by the Quilliam Foundation (2012), explains that, there are some unusual aspects of the military operations provided by JN. First, the targeting of media personalities, and assassinating known TV personalities such as TV presenter Mohammed Said, filming his beheading is an example. Although assassinations are considered as standard activity of Jihadist groups, it is unusual to target TV personalities. A second characteristic feature is the low penetration of attacks on governmental airplanes and helicopters. Several rebel groups were able to shoot down

government aircraft, but only one attack of this kind is considered to be done by JN. This fact can be referred to lack of man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADs). Last unusual feature is that the organisation do not attempt to rescue captured jihadist fighters<sup>41</sup>.

Currently the organisation is involved in two non-military activities. The civilian programs are managed in the areas under control of the organisation.<sup>42</sup> One of them is a religious missionary teaching and preaching (al-Da'wa). The second activity is more of a humanitarian nature, operated through their social wing Qism al-Ighatha (The Relief Department). The department is taking care of distribution of bread, gas and blankets, and regulates grocery prices.

Public relations and communication are covered mainly by the Al-Manara al-Baydhaa' lil- Intaj al-I'lami (The White Minaret for PR Productions), which refers to the White Minaret in Damascus<sup>43</sup>. The channel is the official platform to provide information to the outside world. Content of the communications are usually propaganda videos in the documentary style, or interviews with suicide bombers. The videos are also reposted on such websites as YouTube or other social media as Facebook and Twitter. Furthermore, the organisation is using own website for message board purposes.<sup>44</sup>The web page contains videos and announcements.

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<sup>41</sup> This is unusual mainly based on the fact, that this was the normal procedure back during the time period of the Iraqi occupation.

<sup>42</sup> So, called "liberated areas" – where the Front has filled the power vacuum of states authority – along with other jihadist organizations

<sup>43</sup> Muslim tradition says that, in the end of time, Jesus, (believed to be one of the Muslim prophets- rather than the founder of Christianity), will descend from heaven on the White Minaret and announce the implementation of the Islamic religious law (Shari'ah), paralleling the appearance of the Mahdi, the Muslim messiah.

<sup>44</sup> can be accessed via [www.jalnosra.com](http://www.jalnosra.com)

Where other jihadist organisations are very often streaming current real life videos, JN is in this regard much slower. The only exceptions are individual acts - where the front takes responsibility within 24 hours. Another important feature is - that the organisation is trying to avoid to publish those ideological statements, which might negatively influence the support of the Syrian public. The last method used to spread its ideology is its distribution of CDs. The content is mainly religious propaganda (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013).

The financing of the organisation was ensured in the beginning by Al-Qaeda from which the organisation has branched out. Additionally, some funds were provided by Islamic state of Iraq and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. JN is supported by a variety of Salafist-jihadi charitable societies, Salafist clerics, and wealthy Al-Qaeda supporters in Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia or receiving cash also from donations from sympathetic Syrians. Other possibilities of financial income for the organisation is the usage of natural sources from the areas controlled in the North of the country, especially sources of gas and petroleum. (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013). The New York Times (2014) and The Telegraph (2014) have claimed that the organisation is selling gas and petroleum to the Syrian government or is exchanging them for electricity or for less air attacks. According to The Guardian (2013) the Syrian regime is paying JN more than 1.4 million British pounds monthly for sustainable flow of oil from pipelines in Baniyas and Latakia. This would mean that the organisation is financed by the regime - which it is trying to overthrow. A further method of how to ensure financial income into the organisation are kidnappings in order to receive money through ransom.

Possibilities how to acquire weapons for the organisation are various. One are attacks on military bases, for example, done in Darat Izza in Aleppo, where the organisation gained significant

volume of weapons (Time, 2012). Another possibility includes outside help, where the former Turkish deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener criticized the Turkish government for providing of non-specified volume of heavy weapons to JN (Fars News 2013).

The relationship of JN to other non-state actors in the Syrian conflict is dependent on the fact whether it is Islamic or a secular group. The cooperation with Islamic militant groups is naturally preferred

The relationship with the Free Syrian Army is very complex. The goal to overthrow the regime of President Assad is the same. Both organisations have created a rather ad-hoc variant of military cooperation, based on the rule “enemy of my enemy is my friend” (The Meir Amit Intelligence 2013). One of the examples which can be used was the cooperation in the city Aleppo where attacks were processed together and the loot was split according to the Sharia law and tradition of Ghanima<sup>45</sup>.

On the other side both organisations are very well aware of their different visions of the post-Assad world. FSA would like to create a pluralistic democratic state, which would be fully compatible with the requirements of Syrian people. FSA has several times confirmed that the aim to block any agenda points from extremist or terrorist organisations in a post-Assad Syria. The FSA is very well aware of the international community opinions to Al-Qaeda and all organisation in their structure, and therefore is careful in its cooperation with JN. The FSA fears that this kind of cooperation would eventually lead to loosening of support and weapon supply.

JN often is cooperating with other actors of Syrian opposition, inter-connecting with other jihadist coalitions in the controlled areas. It is important to stress that even after reaching military goals in the targeted areas - the groups have ongoing issues to cooperate on due

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<sup>45</sup>Ghanima is an Arabic word meaning “spoils of war”



to different ideological backgrounds and competition from the spoils of war.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

JN represents a threat for global security and it is likely that this threat will increase with time, especially, if JN reconciles the current differences with ISIS and unites military powers.

The possible future for the organisation is dependent on the goals which are set. The overthrow of the Assad regime is an achievable goal. The second goal according to the Quilliam foundation is not achievable. The creation of its own Islamic caliphate is not realistic and the organisation has not enough capacity to run such an establishment with the current capacity. The rigid salafi-jihadist ideology will lead in the Syrian region to further clashes with the civilian population. In the case of a real overthrow of the Assad regime, the organisations lack of international acceptance means they would face isolation. The organisation is classified according to the US States Department as a terrorist organization and there is no foreign support currently available, except from Al-Qaeda and other jihadi organisations. The lack of strategical political plans for a post-Assad era and international isolation will make it almost impossible to run a country on their own in long-term view. The organisation is seeking in the Syrian region support in the Sunni population and views itself as representatives of this part of the population. A problematic point is - that even among this population – only a part shares JN ideology and goals and there still is a massive voice for a democratic system.

The open question for the future is: will the organisation ever reach the critical mass of support among the Syrian population - in order to have sustainable results? This seems not realistic, as it is

starting to be obvious, that JN has overestimated the religious loyalty (wala')<sup>46</sup> of the Syrian people. Having Syrian origins and historical culture is not the sole leading reason to embrace a strict Islamic governance model. The crucial aspect of future success is how JN will handle a post-Assad era and efficiently how it would cope with internal fragmentation.

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<sup>46</sup>Al-wala' wa-l-bara'is an Arabic term meaning “loyalty and disavowal”, referred to by holding fast to all that is pleasing to God, and withdrawing from all that is displeasing to God.

## **7. Al-Shabaab**

The terrorist organization Al-Shabaab (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen) which can be translated as „Mujahideen Youth Movement“ is a dominant force in Somalia since 2006. The group has been formed as a hard-line militant wing of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which tried to create a rival administration to the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. However, the war with Ethiopia led to increasing tensions within the ICU and secession of the Al-Shabaab movement after the ICU disintegrated after suffering several defeats. Al-Shabaab continues to fight against the government and to fight against the forces from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The main aim of the group is the creation of a Somali caliphate in “greater” Somalia, however the organization is active also in Yemen and other areas in the “Horn of Africa”.

### **7.1 Origins of the group**

Origins of Al-Shabaab can be traced back to the 1990s. The fall of the Soviet Union led to changes in the political environment and to certain degree contributed to the fall of general Mohamed Said Barre, a brutal dictator who ran Somalia since 1969. Increasing repressions and resistance movements supported from Ethiopia led to the outbreak of civil war in 1991 with several militia, who sought to take over the capital. Barre was unsuccessful in restoring order and after his attempts to retake Mogadishu failed, he was forced to exile (and personally accompanied to the borders of Kenya) by the general Mohamed Farrah Aidid (Njoku 2013: 135; Durant 2003: 186).

However, Aidid also failed in restoring order and his powers were just enough to control Mogadishu and local areas. Interventions of international community, particularly the United States, to remove Aidid turned in disaster and USA left the country after unsuccessful Battle of Mogadishu (1993) which became famous after its reproduction in the movie “Black Hawk Down”. The United Nations left Somalia in 1995 which led to chaos in Somalia and absence of central government.

The first impetus to restore central government come from the Somalia National Peace Conference which took place in Djibuti in 2000. The conference led to the establishment of The Transitional National Government (TNG) which was internationally recognized. However, the government played more or less a symbolic role due to lack of territorial control and insufficient funds (United Nations 2002: 215). In 2004 TNG tenure ended and TNG was transformed into Transitional Federal Government of the Republic of Somalia (TFGR) which was backed by the UN, African Union, USA and other Countries. Due to international support and mainly thanks to the African Union Mission in Somalia, TFGR succeeded in 2011 to retake control over Mogadishu in August 2011 and in 2012 the Federal Government of Somalia has been established.

TFGR task was to implement Transitional Federal Charter which had been approved in 2002 by the 825 members of national constituent assembly. The charter can be considered as the principal document on basic organization of Somalia after the Federal Government retook control. Although the Charter states the primacy of Sharia law, in practice it was applied mainly in matters such as family law and incorporates some democratic and liberal values into the political system, including the protection of human rights and independent three-level judicial system. However, the Federal government policies were not accepted by all parts of the divided society.

One of the key opposing groups was the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) formed in 2006 as a rival administration to the Transitional Federal Government. The ICU controlled much of the south territories and Mogadishu, however after several defeats by central government forces and Ethiopian troops it lost ground. Hard-line Islamists formed two other groups – Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam (Islamic Party) to continue the fight against TFGR. The moderate members found exile in Djibouti and Eritrea where they formed an Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia in late 2007 which succeeded in reconciliation with the TFGR and former leader of the ICU. Sheik Sharif Ahmed became President of the Transitional Federal Government. This reconciliation however, led to departure of some members who later joined Hizbul Islam.

Hizbul Islam balanced between affiliation to Al-Shabaab and independence: from January 2009 to December 2010 it was an independent organization but later was forced to become part of Al-Shabaab. The main reason of this balancing were ideological differences: contrary to Al-Shabaab, Hizbul Islam opposed the use of foreign fighters<sup>47</sup> and welcomed the changes in presidential office. In this sense Hizbul Islam was closer to the former ICU than Al-Shabab. Moreover, Hizbul Islam was internally heterogeneous which caused tensions between Hizbul and Al-Shabab. It's composed of four Islamist groups including Hassan Aweys' ARS-A (Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia), Jabhatul Islamiya (Islamic Front), Hassan Abdullah Hersi al-Turki's Mu'askar Ras Kamboni (Ras Kamboni Brigade) a Muaskar Anole militia who united to fight president Aheikh Sharif Ahmed (Burton 2010: 36). As pointed out by David H. Shinn the merger of the two groups was a “shotgun

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<sup>47</sup> Al-Shabaab is receiving high support from foreign fighters and is able to exploit problems of Somali diaspora in Western countries for radicalization and return of fighters (Hansen 2013: 11).

marriage” that helped Al-Shabaab improve its image and gain formal ties with Al-Qaeda which due to fragmentation has been reluctant to offer Al-Shabaab formal association similar to Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (Shin 2011: 79). The merger did not last long (until September 2012) when Hizbul Islam separated again due to Al-Shabaab affiliation to Al-Qaeda and aimless killing of innocent Somali citizens (Kelley 2014: 36). In 2014 Hizbul Islam leaders announced transformation of the movement to political party called “Istiqlaal”(All Africa 2014).

Currently, the ideology of Al-Shabaab is seeking to overthrow the government and create the Islamic state and spread its borders to all parts of the Horn of Africa. Another aspect in line with this goal is interpretation of Sharia law in the Salafi way. The third important aspect of the ideology is in line with Salafism and the teaching of Wahab is to get rid of Western influence and fight the jihad against USA and the West (Shuriye 2014).

## **7.2 Activities**

Global Terrorism Database lists 1,739 terrorist incidents related to this group between 2007 and 2013. However, almost 800 incidents occurred in 2013 alone (GTD 2016). Due to high number of attacks it is necessary to pick only the most noticeable. Al-Shabaab is not operating only in Somalia, but also in the neighbouring countries. Thus, we can divide attacks according to origin to domestic acts conducted in Somalia and acts conducted in other countries.

The first major attack in Somalia, al-Shabaab conducted was in May 2009 in the city of Wabxo. Several attackers opened fire at a pro-government Sufi Group called Ahla Sunna Waljamaca and captured four armed trucks. During the assault, at least 123 people were killed (Reuters 2009). This attack for the first time revealed the

strength of Al-Shabaab and its ability to conduct guerrilla based operation and assault pro-government forces using hit-and-run tactics. Among Al-Shabaab terrorism, suicide tactics is widely used in targeting civilians, military and government officials. Probably the most successful attack against government representatives occurred in late 2009 when an Al-Shabaab male suicide bomber dressed in women's clothing killed 19 people at graduation ceremony at the medical school in Mogadishu. Except killing students and doctors the attacker succeeds in killing the minister of education and minister of health. Several other officials were hospitalized (CNN 2009). Another deadly attack occurred against government ministries in April 2011. Al-Shabaab member Bahsar Abdulahi Nur used a suicide vehicle borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) which has been detonated near the complex of government ministries, killing 70 people (Atlantic Council 2011). However, another attacks show that other state institutions also are targets. In April 2013, several gunmen detonated bombs inside the vehicle in front of the courthouse in Mogadishu. After the explosion assailants proceeded into the court building opening fire and exploding suicide vests. At least 38 people were killed during the attack. Al-Shabaab claimed the responsibility and stated that the attack was against the judicial system sponsored by people whose policies are not compatible with the religion (The Times of India 2013). It seems that Al-Shabaab targets government forces and institutions with the aim to weaken and overthrow the government.

Terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab occur also in neighbouring countries. Probably the first attack in a foreign territory was in November 2007 in Dolo, Ethiopia. Chain explosions destroyed a hotel complex and killed more than 100 Ethiopian soldiers. The attack is considered to be part of insurgency campaign which took place in Mogadishu (GTD 2016).

Several attacks have been conducted in Kenya. Western media covered the attack which occurred in September 2013. There, terrorists armed with automatic weapons and grenades massacred at least 72 people at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi (CNN 2013). Other attack occurred in June 2014 when around 50 assailants attacked the town Mpeketoni and killed at least 48 residents as the revenge for Kenyan intervention in Somalia (Al Jazeera 2014b). During such large-scale attacks upon foreign territory Al-Shabaab members are selective. For example, in December 2014 several assailants attacked quarry workers near Mandera town in Kenya. Workers were divided in two groups of Muslims and non-Muslims. The non-Muslims were executed in retaliation for Kenya's atrocities in and occupation of Muslim lands. The attack resulted in 36 killed workers (Al Jazeera 2014a). During a similar attack nearby 28 people were killed when Al-Shabaab stopped a bus and killed all non-Muslims (Reuters 2014). The deadliest attack by Al-Shabaab was perpetrated at Garissa University College in Nairobi. Al-Shabbaab terrorists killed 147 people and took hostages. The siege lasted 15 hours and in the end four gunmen were killed (The Washington Post 2015).

Al-Shabbaab terror hit also Uganda in 2010 where a terrorist detonated two explosive devices at the Kyaddondo rugby grounds. Several people watching a World Cup soccer game were killed, including American nationals, and several others nationalities from India, Ireland, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Congo (Reuters 2010). During another attack in 2015 Uganda lost at least 50 soldiers based at the AMISOM mission base in Somalia (Mail & Guardian Africa 2015). The above-mentioned examples show that the operation radius of Al-Shabaab includes neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. Noticeable is also Al-Shabaab's influence in Yemen in the context of that country's ongoing civil war.

The attacks serve in a different way the promotion and fulfilment of Al-Shabaab's ideological goals. While some attacks



(especially on the Military) could be considered as part of the military campaign, another are used to decrease legitimacy of the ruling government and some are conducted to attract foreign attention and promote the image of the group as the leading Islamist jihadist organization.

Due to territory control Al-Shabaab can generate revenues from controlling the ports and markets, which may dramatically increase capacities of the organization. For example, it is estimated that the Kismayo Port can generate from 35 to 50 million USD per year or the market at Suud Baad in the Mogadishu generates 30 to 60 million USD per year (Keatinge 2014: 18). It is estimated, that according to the United Nations, Al-Shabaab revenues in 2011 were between 70 to 100 million USD, which is 10 times more than annual funding of the Red Brigades in the 1970s or two times more than Al-Qaeda had before 9/11 (Keatinge 2014: 1). Similarly, to the Islamic State, economy from conquered territories is primarily used for funding of war. One of the largest revenues in areas controlled in South Somalia comes from charcoal. It is estimated that in 2011 charcoal tax entries rose to 25 million USD and areas suffers intensive deforestation counting 7,2 % in five years (Rembold et al. 2013: 513). Another important source of income are taxes collected at checkpoints. For example, trucks leaving Balade at the Buula Xaaji Checkpoint in 2013 had to pay 250 USD and larger trucks 500 USD. This checkpoint alone collected around 650,000 USD per month (Anderson, McKnight 2014: 10). There are other sources of income. For example, it is estimated that some part of 1,5 billion USD of Somali diaspora remittances goes to al-Shabaab (Menkhaus 2014: 311).

Despite primary structures that are military and civilian control, al-Shabaab plays an increasing role in both education sectors and social services (justice through the Islamic courts, food and alms distribution, local administration and public works). Due to lack of

state education children are in Madrasas (Islamic Schools) run by the al-Shabaab indoctrinated by the radical Islam and encouraged to join the ranks of the movement (Mwangi 2012: 525). Al-Shabaab operates its radio stations and prohibits video except its own propaganda movies (Mwangi 2012: 527).

Al-Shabaab media control is executed through Al-Kitab (The Brigades) Media Foundation which produces propaganda video in English, Swahili and Arabic (Gatsiounis 2012: 80). The organization ran until 2009 its official website and mastered the use of social media, including posting videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter (Menkhaus 2014: 316). However, the overall impact of social media is a double-edged sword: on one hand, social media helped with the recruitment and fundraising, but on the other hand it exposed the group to military strikes and endangered the image of the group. For this reason, Al-Shabaab is using social media in its propaganda but prohibiting them in Somalia (Menkhaus 2014: 324).

### **7.3 Leadership, membership and structure**

Al-Shabaab succeeded in creating very dense structures which appears flexible as the organization is composed of multiple cells, units, and divisions. Al-Shabaab is led by a supreme central commander known as an Emir, who is assisted by a council composed of ten members. The Council serves as an advisory body with consultative powers (Shuriye 2012). The structure is in some aspects similar to the Islamic state: there are political and military representatives appointed for each region under Al-Shabaab control, Islamic Police Force (*aysh al-Hisbah*) has been established and *hisbah* runs religious councils and manages the Sharia courts (Shuriye 2012). Military operations and police supervision on controlled territories are two characteristic branches of Al-Shabaab.

Despite the stability of controlled areas is based on fear it is welcomed development after years of fight. For this reason, Al-Shabaab gains local support in the south areas.

The first leader of Al-Shabaab Ahmed Godane (Abu Zubeyr), who started his terrorist career soon after the Said Barre regime collapsed in the early 1990s. At that time Godane started to work for Al-Barakat a Somali banking company with ties to al-Itihaad al-Islamiya. Al-Itihaad was established in 1992 with the help of Osama bin Laden to exploit the political vacuum in Somalia in order to promote (and possibly create) the Islamic state in the Somalia. Godane became secretary general of the Executive Council of the Islamic Courts Union in 2006 and tied to the ICU radical group of younger islamists who were later known as Al-Shabab. His position was endangered between 2010 and 2011 due to a failed Ramadan offensive. At that time Godane clashed with Sheikh Mukhtar Robow whose soldiers from the Rahanweyn clan died in combat. Godane lost the support from the Robow and Rahanweyn clans and during the drought and famine which struck large parts of Somalia Robow turned out to be better leader. While Robow followed the advices from the clan elders and facilitated humanitarian aid, Godane banned operations of western NGOs due to suspicion that they provide intelligence for western military strikes. As a consequences 260,000 Somali died, which caused popular resentment against Al-Shabaab (Williams 2014: 912). Due to loosing internal and popular support Godane succeed in being Al-Shabaab leader until his death by a US airstrike in September 2014 to be replaced by Ahmad Umar.

There is little known about Ahmat Umar. He served as the deputy governor of the Lower Juba region in 2008 and later as the governor of Bay and Bakool regions. In 2013 Umar became one of the main advisors of Ahmed Abdi Godane with the special responsibility to oversee Al-Shabaab domestic activity (US Department of State 2015). Another prominent leader is Mahad

Karate (Abdirahim Mohamed Warsame) who has the key role in the Amniyat, the intelligence wing of Al-Shabaab and planned the Garissa University College attack in Kenya, which resulted in more than 150 deaths (US Department of State 2015).

It is believed that there are 5 to 7 thousand Al-Shabaab fighters (BBC 2015) and between 200 and 2000 foreign fighters coming from Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and the Muslim Swahili coast (Fergusson 2013: 104), who joined the group for diverse reasons. A very interesting study has been presented by Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile who provide sociologic insight into radicalization and recruitment of Al-Shabaab. Most of the interviewed people joined group for economic reasons (27%) and in 25% of cases economic reasons were accompanied by religious motives. Religious reasons played a role in only 15% of cases (Bohta and Abdile 2014: 5). However, 98% of interviewees believed that Islam is under threat and as shown later in their analysis, 40% of the fighters had no education, while the majority of 43% had religious education (Botha and Abdile 2014: 8). Next to economic motives, the study of Botha and Abdile highlights the factor of friends influence. Around 64% of the fighters joined the group with friends and many stayed just because the sense of belonging (21%) or belonging and money (13%) or just because of money (12%). The ideas of Shabab were not the key factor behind perception, but in 99% rather fear and respect (Botha and Abdile 2014: 11). Above all statistics simply highlights the process behind the popularity of Al-Shabaab among Somali youth. Young people are frustrated by their situation and are losing their sense of belonging. Al-Shabaab offers them the way how to improve their economic position (active members are paid from 150 to 500 USD per month) and content for their empty lives. Youth is confronted with “clash of civilizations” and the threat for Islam which is due to lack of education or religious education is easy to misuse for manipulation and persuading them that they fight for good

cause. The appeal on giving new content to the life is well working in diaspora as well. Young Somali's living abroad are excluded from the society and facing discrimination which leads to frustration which might be exploited by recruiters. This process has been well document in the movie Warriors from the North (2014) about a young Dansih-Somalian boy in Copenhagen who fell victim to al-Shabaab recruiters (Al-Jazeera 2016).

## **7.4 International efforts**

In 2007 the African Union with the approval of United Nations launched a peacekeeping mission in Somalia to support the transitional government and enhance security. The mandate for the mission has been set relatively broad and fighting Al-Shabaab is one of the primary goals. The Mandate of AMISOM includes (AMISOM 2016a):

1. Take all necessary measures, as appropriate, and in coordination with the Somalia National Defence and Public Safety Institutions, to reduce the threat posed by Al Shabaab and other armed opposition groups,
1. Assist in consolidating and expanding the control of the FGS over its national territory,
2. Assist the FGS in establishing conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia, through support, as appropriate, in the areas of security, including the protection of Somali institutions and key infrastructure, governance, rule of law and delivery of basic services,
3. Provide, within its capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support for the enhancement of the capacity of the Somalia

State institutions, particularly the National Defence, Public Safety and Public Service Institutions,

4. Support the FGS in establishing the required institutions and conducive conditions for the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections by 2016, in accordance with the Provisional Constitution,
5. Liaise with humanitarian actors and facilitate, as may be required and within its capabilities, humanitarian assistance in Somalia, as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons and the return of refugees,
6. Facilitate coordinated support by relevant AU institutions and structures towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia, and
7. Provide protection to AU and UN personnel, installations and equipment, including the right of self-defence;

The above-mentioned activities require extensive personal capacities. For this reason, the deployment gradually increased between 2010 and 2014 from 9,000 to almost 22,000 deployed soldiers. However, the number of casualties are also very high, with as of 2014 1,108 killed soldiers (Williams 2015). Next to the military component there is also the Police component under AMISOM composed of 386 police officers and 103 Individual Police Officers from Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Niger. The AMISOM Police help with basic police duties which vary from crime prevention to criminal investigation, human rights observation, community policing etc. Huge part of their task is to provide training in above mentioned activities to Somali Police officers. So far they trained over 4,000 personal (AMISOM 2016b). Very important also is AMISOM's Civilian Component which helps the Somali Federal Government reestablish a functioning state, its institutions and provide public services. The civilian component has important

humanitarian, political, gender, civil affairs as well as development dimension and helps to implement rule of law and international resolutions in selected areas (AMISOM 2016c).

However, despite peacekeeping and state building processes, there are still military interventions required to stop Al-Shabaab. In March 2016 USA conducted an attack on an Al-Shabaab training camp called “Cam Raso” at the time of “camp graduation ceremony” killing 150 assembled terrorists who just finished training. USA probably avoided imminent large scale attack by conducted action (The New York Times 2016). This strike has been rather extraordinary solution as more common are preventive patrol missions, similar to those running under Operation Atalanta.

Operation Atalanta (EUNAVFOR Somalia) was launched in 2008 and since then EU member states and some other states including for example Ukraine, Norway and Serbia are protecting ships cruising nearby the Horn of Africa, in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Around 1,200 personnel are protecting the World Food Programme and AMISOM vessels which deters piracy and robbery at the sea, which is one of the sources of Al-Shabaab (EUNAVFOR 2016).

## **7.5 Conclusion**

Al-Shabaab is an imminent threat to peace and security in Somalia. Despite having no alternative except establishment of the Islamic state and Jihad against the West, radical Islamists are attacking Federal Government structures and institutions and AMISOM soldiers. The AMISOM mission seems to be very vital for the functioning of the Somali state and the scope of deployment shows the significance of the mission. Without AMISOM support the capacities of the Somali government would be limited to secure peace-keeping and state building process. Terrorist attacks on Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda shows that Al-Shabaab poses a security threat to whole region whose destabilization might have influence on migration.



## 8. Boko Haram

Boko Haram is generally considered to be one of the most extreme terrorist organizations in Africa. Boko Haram is characterized as a terrorist organization with both political and regional goals, with their main aim to adopt Sharia law based on the practice of orthodox Islam. In politics, there is not so much attention given to the topic of terrorism on the African continent. To assist in the understanding of this extreme terror organisation, the articles by Roland Marchal, Barkindo Atta, Jacob Zenn and the book *Understanding Jihad* written by David Cook are used. The main aim of the analysis of Boko Haram in this chapter is to outline both the way in which this organization functions and also the formation of this group from a historical and political perspective, its activity and hierarchical structure and also the effort to describe its financial sources and background.

Boko Haram itself was established under very difficult conditions in Nigeria which has a long history of riots and ethno-religious conflicts. Most of the conflicts were based on the long-running hostile conflicts between two religious blocks in particular, Muslim and Christian. There were also conflicts which did not originate from religion, in these cases the conflicts were caused mainly due to the crisis of governments and the political instability in the country. Members of Boko Haram strongly believe that northern politicians were established by a group of corrupted and fake Muslims. That's why this group claims to fight against them and also against the entire Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Although the media often refer to this group as Boko Haram its official name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (which translates to "*People committed to the propagation of the Prophet's*

*teachings and Jihad*”). This is significantly different from the translation of the term Boko Haram, which in the Hausa language (one of the most used languages in Nigeria) could be translated as Boko – the direct Western equivalent to the word “Book” and “Haram”, described or compared to Western words such as “sinner”, “forbidden” or “denied”. When merged these two words together directly reference or simply said mean “forbidden book”. However, to the argument that the group was established on the basis of religion, then the name points to how Western civilization and its educational foundation is basis and are full of sins, and does not relate to the true God and it should be forbidden. The way in which this group try to spread their vision of the Islamic religion is dangerous mainly because they have no reservations and do not hesitate to resort to the use of aggression which often results in human victims as well as casualties due to their somewhat vicious and aggressive tactics (Ajayi 2012).

The differences between Boko Haram and other extremist groups or organizations in these areas are not so dissimilar. Which brings up the relevant question of what makes Boko Haram so superior when compared to other Islamic terrorist groups? According to the GTI (Global Terrorism Index) Boko Haram is not only considered as one of the most dangerous terrorist groups, but is widely considered to be one of the deadliest. This is because of their terrorist techniques, the way in which they operate when compared to other terrorist organizations, the methods which they use are not ones which are commonly adopted or so universally performed by other terrorist groups throughout the world, so this is what makes Boko Haram an even more dangerous threat when we consider the extreme use of methods and lengths that they will go to in order to achieve their goals in relation to their extremist practices. Terrorism experts have stated that Boko Haram has adopted much of ISIL and Al-Qaeda tactics, placing Boko Haram in an exceptional position

amongst terrorist groups (GTI 2015). In the following chapter the establishment of Boko Haram and its history, fighting techniques, hierarchy and leadership, target selection, most known attacks and its relations to other terrorist groups operating in similar regions will be explored. Such information should provide the reader with a coherent picture of what Boko Haram really is.

## **8.1 Origins**

Before we describe the circumstances under which Boko Haram was founded it is necessary to point out the historical events which lead to the spread of conflicts across Nigeria. The conflicts which have been rife and on-going in Nigeria are not only due to historical and geographical origin but are also predominantly tied to ethnical origins as well. The background of current ethnic groups in Nigeria could somewhat be due to the fact that Nigeria has always been ethnically diverse which has led to conflict. As well as smaller ethnic groups, there are also a number of dominant ethnic groups such as Hausa/Fulani in the North, Igbo on the East and Yoruba on the West. Igbo, it should be stated, was considered the dominant ethnic group not only in volume and total numbers but above all in the political sphere at the federal level (HRW 2006). These ethnic groups were ruling specific areas at certain times in history. Governance of these various ethnic groups created the scope for conflicts and clashes. There was in the past, and still currently are, significant differences between the North of the country which is composed mostly of Muslims and the South of the country which is mostly made of Christians. Therefore, conflicts in this region, usually referred to as ethno-religious conflicts, are due to the two clashing religions which were mentioned earlier.

Looking at the historical point of view regarding Nigeria, it could already be seen to be divided even when it was under the British protectorate and was heavily split into a north and south. Both of these areas had autonomous existence until 1914 when they were formally merged, however they were still administratively separated, which was the cause of numerous problems. These two regions have traditionally had their own identity which was not in line with the common idea of one Nigerian state. Especially in the North, where Islam was introduced to the Hausa majority even before the British protectorate. The population in the North has never been solid ground for Christian missionaries as it happened in the South. The aversion against Western education and Christianity precipitated into a fast-moving rise of the Islamic fundamentalism in Northern Nigeria. (Osaghae and Suberu 2005)

In 1954 the Federal constitution was created with autonomous regional governments (North, East, West). This constitution failed mainly because of the socio-political problems which the country was facing. Nigeria gained its independence from The United Kingdom in 1960 with President Nnamdi Azikiwe. The first democratic elections were held in 1964 and this Republic collapsed after the coup led by Yakubu Gowon in January 1966. The main reason for this is considered to be the multiethnic and multi-religious basis of the population, the different levels of socio-economical and educational development and also the constitutional structure and absence of national political parties (Sergie and Johnson 2014).

The civil war that followed lasted until 1970. The continuous riots, overthrows and various political leadership exchanges continued until the coup in 1993 under the military leadership of General Sani Abacha, when he took power and became a dictator. He remained in the position until his death in 1998. After he died Nigeria proclaimed a Fourth Republic. At first glance it looks like present day Nigeria is a stable democratic country with proper

democratic institutions. In contrast since the 1998 general election the country recognizes the government formed solely by the leading political party PDP (People's Democratic Party), which also won all of the elections that were to come (Genocide Watch 2015).

Boko Haram often uses and manipulates the history of Northern Nigeria when it claims that the acceptance of Western religion was the key to the colonial concept of the state that destroyed the Islamic order which already previously existed, which caused the poverty and struggle in Nigeria up till now. For example, before Boko Haram became a militant group in 2009 Abubakar Shekau said: *"Western education is meant to pull a wool across your eyes ... In the modern world, if you cannot speak English anything you say is considered stupid and unintelligent ... It is those who have obtained western education that are seen as educated, civilized and polished! The rest are illiterates. This in essence is what the beneficiaries of western education believe and they use such thinking to treat us disdainfully."* (Hentz and Solomon 2017). This statement shows how smartly Boko Haram used the history of Nigerian region and the people's distrust towards western education. The statement finishes with the direct mentioning of Jihad. *"This is why education is a source of destruction for our children, our friends, our daughters and our brothers These European educated Muslims returned home only to confuse other Muslims, claiming that democracy is compatible with Islam, while Jihad should only be for self-control ... We are for jihad, and our jihad is to put an end to democracy, to western education and western civilization. The Jihad is intended to make us [Muslims] return to the original state of Islam."* (Hentz and Solomon 2017).

Researchers explain the creation of this group in various ways. International NGO's usually refer to poverty, unemployment, weak government and corruption. Governor of Kano State Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso also stated, that the security threat in Northern Nigeria

was the result of the poverty and the failure of the societal and family values. Boko Haram is strongly reliant on these circumstances and conditions since it empowers them in their ability to recruit future rebels much easier with promises of a better, wealthier and safer future. Another way of explaining why this group was created is in its direct influence from the Taliban. For people outside Nigeria, Boko Haram holds many similarities to the original Taliban, even having as a name, the Nigerian Taliban from 2003 until 2009. This comparison is also supported by Yusuf's various statements which were made in the years leading up to or before 2009, for example, that: *"We are yet to establish a pure Sunni Islamic sect that will be ready to take on ignorance and secularism. The few we have that are functioning are the al-Qaeda and the Taliban, whose ideology and theological foundations are purely Sunni in nature"* (Zenn 2014).

Boko Haram was officially founded in 2002 in the capital of the Nigerian North-East Borno State Maiduguri by the Islamic cleric Mohammed Yusuf. He was appointed as the leader of the group by a committee of Shaykhs, whose members he later banished for corruption and their inability to achieve pure Islam. His main aim was to oppose Western education, expand the movement and create an Islamic state across the whole of Nigeria. He claimed that he does not believe in western education and the western way of life (for example he did not believe that the world is round), yet did not refuse western indulgences such as luxurious cars and international food (Onouha 2012).

Early on the movement did not have such an aggressive character, but this definitely changed in 2009 with Yusuf's death. Until 2009 Boko Haram's aim was not to overthrow or change the Federal Government. Yusuf's activities were mostly based on

criticism of northern Muslims<sup>48</sup> for being part of the “illegitimate Islamic state”. The armed fighting between the Muslims and Christians and also the harsh treatment from the Government side including police brutality however, shortly led to the radicalization of Boko Haram.

The circumstances that completely changed the shape of Boko Haram started with the refusal to adhere to the Motorbike Helmet Law in July 2009<sup>49</sup> which led to open clashes with armed police forces, which resulted in casualties and fatalities on both sides and also resulted in the deaths of civilians who were caught up in these clashes. This was quickly followed by riots in the northern State of Bauchi and later also in States Borno, Yobe and Kano, where the army got involved as well. The riot had stopped for a while when Yusuf himself was captured and his execution was streamed live on television. “*According to Marchal, ‘this major blow (the killing of their founder) pushed the movement to transform itself into a network of underground cells with hidden leadership – a situation that today makes any military solution illusory’*” (Marchal 2012). His execution took place without proper legal proceedings or a trial and it influenced subsequent group activities. Actions followed afterwards and the numbers of attacks by Boko Haram with their new unstable and fragmented leadership increased (Genocide watch 2015).

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<sup>48</sup> Northern Muslims are Muslims living in the 13 northern provinces of Nigeria. Most of these provinces are dominated by Hausa, Fulani and Gbagyi people.

<sup>49</sup> In 2009, the Nigerian government instituted a law that required all motorcycle riders need to wear helmets. The law was put in place because of the lack of safety on Nigerian roads.

## 8.2 Hierarchy and structure

Similar to other militant groups Boko Haram will not voluntarily publish a complete hierarchy or group structure of their organization, so the reflections of the statements in this article could be considered only as an outline, which is not based on exact information. The accurate number of members is unknown, so we can only presume to know how many members Boko Haram actually does have. A well-known fact is that the group members are represented in all the 19 federal states of Nigeria, as well as in the Republic of Niger, Chad and Sudan. Boko Haram members are mostly young and unemployed former students and the former “Almajiris” (Islam searchers)<sup>50</sup>. Boko Haram operations are also highly influenced by politicians, professors, teachers, businessmen and financially secure people which are offering financial support.

In the early years of Yusuf’s leadership, the group decided to leave the cities and towns and move to Nigerian rural areas. The reason was the effort to intellectualize the group, but it only led to the radicalization and idealization of its members. Before his death Yusuf held the position of Commander in Chief (Amir ul-Aam), thus leader of the whole group. He had two deputies (Na’ib Amir ul-Aam I and II) and each federal state had its own Amir (Commander), with a link to every Local Administrative Area (LGA) government. Under LGA’s Amir organized other followers according to their role as soldiers or police among other members (Onuoha 2012) Boko Haram

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<sup>50</sup> Almajiris are usually from poor families. Their parents can't afford to pay school tuitions, so they send them to study in a specialized religious school which are free of cost and usually are led by famous religion preachers and teachers. However, the students need to take care for their own daily needs it often makes them beg for the food and money, which makes them vulnerable for Boko Haram recruitments.



is not a monolithic organization and has a strongly decentralized structure as it is shown in the table below, which of course refers only to the most basic structure during Yusuf’s leadership.

**Table 3: The potential hierarchy and the structure of the Boko Haram group**

Amir ul-Aam (Commander-in Chief)		
Na'ib Amir ul-Aam 1 (Deputy)		Na'ib Amir ul-Aam 2 (Deputy)
Followers inc. soldiers / police	Followers inc. soldiers / police	Followers inc. soldiers / police

Source: Okoro 2014.

After Yusuf’s death the active leader of the group became Mallam Sani Umaru and since then there have been lots of self-proclaimed leaders which claim themselves as the only and true leaders of the group. With the changes in the leadership the group started to use a more sophisticated and structured hierarchy.

The new spiritual leader of the group currently is Imam Abu Muhammed Abubakar ash Shekawi aka Abubakar Shekau, who has two deputies Kabiru Sokoto and Mallam Abu Qada (Okoro 2014). Since the group changed its leadership the ideology of the group spread in two ways. First was the revenge against the Nigerian government and Islamic leaders in Northern Nigeria which were supporting the President Yar’Adua’s actions against Boko Haram which lead to the murder of Yusuf in 2009. This orientation was adopted by all the factions in the group especially by Yusuf’s original followers including the Yusufia Islamic Movement (YIM) which later split from Shekaus Boko Haram because of his “false holy war” and bombarding civilian targets. The second was based on the regional and international jihadi aims. Members were recruited not

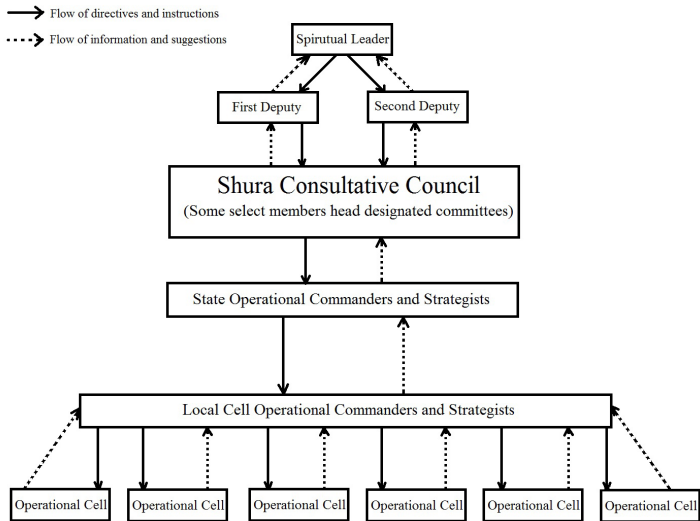
only from Yusuf's followers but also from the splinter group Ansaru whose leaders were trained by Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb. Ansaru translated the fight against the western civilization its own way and its main activities now included the kidnapping of foreigners. These attacks were explained as their reactions to the intervention from the Europe in their homeland (Cook, 2015).

The third most important section of Boko Haram has become the decision-making body called Shura Council with 30 members. The only positions that are above the Shura Council is the leader and his two deputies, all the other subordinate sections are directly responsible to Shura. The sections are stringently organized and responsible for specific tasks. Some sections are for example responsible for taking care of the suicide bombers families, some for healthcare, publicity, financing etc. These sections are completely independent from each other and the whole structure is organized in such a way which does not allow one to be directly influenced by the other. That means that there is a lack of contact between the groups and the meetings are organized very sporadically. Finally, the most important role, which is often not considered in the structure, and that is the role of the messengers, those who are delivering the messages between the groups and who make sure that information does not leak outside of it (Counter Extremism Project 2016).

The fighters of Boko Haram are very diverse and even the Nigerian media also refer to them as the citizens from Niger, Chad or Cameroon the truth is that most of them are originally from Nigeria. Their reasons to join and fight for this group are diverse just as the fighters themselves. The reasons could be revenge for the repressions in 2009, creation of a pure Islamic state, gaining of economic stability by bank robberies or obtaining high provisions for killing a member of government. Even when there is a big campaign against the government, good relations with some governmental factions are crucial for Boko Haram (for example immigration officers) so they

try to establish cooperation by means of bribing them or threatening them.

**Picture 4: The Boko Haram current structure**



Source: Rampages, 2015

An interesting fact is also that members pay a daily 100 levy to their leaders which creates the financial basis for the group functioning. Apart from these taxes the group gains money through bank robberies, kidnappings and donations from different political sponsors and organizations inside and/or outside Nigeria. For example, in 2007 a trial was held for Mohammed Yusuf and Mohammed Bello Damagun by the Federal High Court and the Federal Capital Territory Abuja for receiving money from Al-Qaeda. This money was meant to be used for recruiting and training of Nigerian terrorists. (Okoro 2014)

### 8.3 Leadership

Mohammed Yusuf was born on the 29th of January 1970 in a village called Girgir in the State of Yobe and by all appearances he was the most popular leader of Boko Haram. “His” Boko Haram was established with the simple aim of stabilizing a Sharia government in the Borno state under the then-senator Ali Modu Sheriff. He was a student of Sheik Gumi so he gained the instructions in salafist radicalism. His teaching was popular mainly in Northern Nigeria especially because of their vision towards Western education as an attempt to destroy the Islamic religion. Yusuf established the community in his own birth place including a mosque and a school where parents fighting poverty often sent their kids. This was the easiest way of recruiting new followers. Yusuf admired the Taliban and Al-Qaeda (especially AQIM), which highly influenced how the group functioned under his leadership (Zenn, 2014). Boko Haram was led by Yusuf until his death in 2009, except him there was also around 700 other victims. His murder was followed by many actions by Boko Haram seeking revenge for his death and he became a successful symbol as the martyrdom for future Boko haram fighters as evident in an official statement which was announced by Boko Haram after his death: *“We want to reiterate that we are warriors who are carrying out Jihad (religious war) in Nigeria and our struggle is based on the traditions of the holy prophet. We will never accept any system of government apart from the one stipulated by Islam because that is the only way that the Muslims can be liberated. We do not believe in any system of government, be it traditional or orthodox, except the Islamic system which is why we will keep on fighting against democracy, capitalism, socialism and whatever. We will not allow the Nigerian Constitution to replace the laws that have*

*been enshrined in the Holy Qur'an, we will not allow adulterated conventional education (Boko) to replace Islamic teachings. We will not respect the Nigerian government because it is illegal. We will continue to fight its military and the police because they are not protecting Islam. We do not believe in the Nigerian judicial system and we will fight anyone who assists the government in perpetrating illegalities."*(Agbiboa 2013).

Even when Yusuf's teaching was not very logical it was very useful because it was touching a very sensitive part of history. The fact that he was so successful could be seen by the amount of followers that he had, in fact he had gained 280,000 followers from northern Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad before his death in 2009. Although Yusuf's recruitment was more based on religion and unemployment, Shekau started to focus more on jihad itself. As the group needed to move underground after the circumstances in 2009, Shekau could not reveal these statements in public. Shekau's first announcement after 2009 was a video which was filmed by the journalist kidnapped by Boko Haram in Maiduguri in Borno state. This streaming not only weakened the rumors about Shekau's death but it was also addressed to the leaders of Al-Qaeda and similar groups in Algeria, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen. Shekau also accused the Nigerian government of cooperating with Christian migrants and other Muslim which were opposing Boko Haram by creating a coalition which attempts to destroy the true Islamic religion. He openly made comparisons of Boko Haram's fight to the fight in Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan and Mali, directly referencing the places which should belong to Muslims but are occupied by non-Muslims. Ideologically Shekau's Boko Haram reflects on the situation differently as the Boko Haram under Yusuf's leadership as he saw all people not belonging to his group (Muslims or Non-muslims) as potential enemies and targets (Barkindo 2013).

## **8.4 Aims and activities**

Under Yusuf's leadership Boko Haram chose for the first time armed attacks. In December 2003, when they started to attack police stations, public areas and buildings in the towns of Geidam and Kanamma in Yobe State. In 2004 there was established the first Boko Haram base called "Afghanistan" in Kanamma. The group started to be more recognized and more feared, especially since 2004 when the students from schools in the States of Borne and Yobe ripped up their diplomas and joined the group. Since then the group has been famous mainly for their "hit and run" attacks (focus was mainly on weapons theft) until the incident in July 2009 mentioned above (Motorcycle Helmet Law incident). The killing of Yusuf and the related fall of other leaders, led the group into short-term hiding. But it was also a step towards radicalization of its members. Since 2009 Boko Haram changed from a group with weak tactics and no-planning in their actions to a group which often used explosives, guerrilla attacks, suicide bombers and targeted murders (Blanquart 2012).

Same as the other salafist jihadi terrorist groups, Boko Haram demonstrated its ability to adapt and rapidly change various tactics. To make the issue easier, Boko Haram has two main methods of attack: individualized terror and massive scale terror attacks. Both are effective in the intimidation of the population. Individualized terror is largely based on murders, drive by shootings, local terror and suicide bombers which are accomplished mainly by individual members of small groups. Massive scale attacks are usually aimed towards market places, public areas, where there are large numbers of people gathered and less protected, the group members are usually mobile (with vehicles like motorbikes or trucks) so they can change their targets very quickly if needed. Boko Haram was using the method of individual terror more than massive scale terror until

2014, when it started to favor the massive attacks and use these more widely (Cook 2015).

However, in 2011 Boko Haram started to use massive scale attacks targeting the aims which were not based in their home territory. It is obvious that retrospectively this development was supported by video from 2011 which showed the change of the tactics of Islamic State in Iraq. It is obvious that Boko Haram sees ISIS as its model (when ISIS founded the caliphate in June 2014, Boko Haram's reaction was establishing of the caliphate as well (in August 2014) but there is a big difference between how ISIS introduces its tactic as the whole concept and how Boko Haram understands and realizes it (Creig 2015).

As we can see the targets of Boko Haram have been changing over the years. However, there is a possibility to see a generalization amongst them. During the first two years of its existence the group favored local targets, which were somehow close to their religious beliefs. As an example we can mention educational and health centers, forbidden places like bars, gambling places, markets which sells inappropriate meat and Muslim individuals which oppose the group. The second generalization could be described as revenge for the death of Muhammad Yusuf and include security and military targets. Boko Haram also announced that its goal is to gain justice for their spiritual leaders' death. In 2013 Boko Haram found new target groups. Unless some group members were continuing in their local terror, the majority started to find new targets mainly in cities Jos, Kaduna and in the federal capital Abuja. They were choosing mainly symbolic places such as churches, government buildings and military bases. Churches and other locations where large number of Christian citizens were gathered such as on Sundays or during important Christian holidays are targets to maximize the number of victims and also maximize the symbolism of the terrorist acts. This new tactic was also visible in the number of attacks against villages

with a higher number of victims. Since the spring of 2014 Boko Haram began to kidnap citizens. The most well-known and publicized is the case of the 219 female students from a school in Chiboko. Even when some of these victims escaped their kidnappers their testimonies confirmed that most of them are still under the control of Boko Haram. Most of them are either forced into marriage with Boko Haram fighters or sold into slavery. Since this incident there was a move towards attacking schools and other educational institutions, because they are less protected and there is no proper reaction which could prevent these attacks from the side of the Nigerian government. These areas also help to recruit new fighters for Boko Haram. Another change since the incident in Chiboko was that the group started to use more suicide bomber attacks which were carried out by women. In the Muslim and Nigerian conservative world, it is a big advantage that they can carry the explosives under their clothes without creating or causing any suspicion. There are also cultural barriers to conducting a physical search and in some cases even looking at women. (Hille 2015) It was extremely effective because the Nigerian government cannot focus on only one target. This strategy showed to be very effective because it is not only random attacks anymore. Their improved ploy was visible especially during the suicide bombing on 25 November 2014 at the Maiduguri market place when a female suicide bomber blew herself up, whilst the crowd tried to help the victims another woman blew herself up so the number of victims immediately multiplied. This strategy of using basic human instincts to help others against innocent civilians came from Iraq.



## **8.5 Conclusion**

Currently Boko Haram is not one homogenous group which uses the same strategies but is divided into several sections, which are competing for the favour of their followers. According to a report from the US House of Representatives it is possible that one of Boko Haram factions should deal with domestic problems and other one should deal with international violence. Another report states the group probably split into three factions from whom one of them would wish the end of all the violence, another one seeks the international peace treaty and third one does not wish to stop the violence until the sharia will spread through the whole country.

In July 2011 a group called Yusufiya Islamic Movement spread the word in Maiduguri stating, that this was not what Yusuf was trying to gain and why this group was established. They also stated that they do not wish to have something in common with violence which the group is creating now especially in their attacks against the churches and civilians. As we can see there are deep divisions within belief amongst the group but we cannot predict which group or section will dominate in the future since the functioning of the group is not clear.

As a result of the group violence the Nigerian government was highly criticized for the problems withdrawing of Boko Haram resources. Although, the arrest of Boko Haram officials showed that the group is not functioning from donations of their members, its connection with AQIM allowed them to seek new way of financing from the groups from Saudi Arabia and also from the UK. Other ways of gaining financing were the Al Muntada Trust Fund and Islamic World Society. There was also a statement from the spokesman of Boko Haram which claimed that the governor of the State of Kano Ibrahim Shekarau and the governor of the State of

Bauchi Isa Yuguda put them on the payroll every month. The number of bank robberies also increased, in August 2011 for example there was more than 30 banks robbed by Boko Haram (CFR 2015)

One of Boko Haram's stated ambitions is to become a key player in global Jihad. Boko Haram started its orientation to the international level of attacks in 2010. One of the clues which also confirmed this orientation was a statement to the US that "jihad has begun" and that they claimed responsibility for suicide vehicle bombing in Abuja in August 2011. As it is obvious from Yusuf's admiration for and respect for Al-Qaida, he has seen Boko Haram as only a fraction of Al-Qaida. It is well known that the members of Boko Haram were fighting next to groups which were operating under Al-Qaida in Mali. Some of the members were also trained next to the Somali Al-Shabaab. Civilians in Mali also state that there is around 100 members of Boko Haram with them, which also shows how much this terrorist group has spread in the last couple of years (Counter extremism project, 2015). These facts indicate the importance and how fundamental it will be in the future not only to fight against this group separately but as they are becoming more and more connected there will be also an urgent need for a common strategy to be used against them on a collective level.

It is very possible that Boko Haram will be able to operate also in the future, which is influenced by their ability to create terror from an ideological background, their success in gaining finances, (which makes them economically independent) strong and developed organizational structure, the problems of the government to take action against them and the success in recruiting new fighters and followers. Nigeria still has huge religious and ethnic differences amongst its citizens and it is highly possible that its heterogeneity will not change in any short period of time.

## 9. East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement

Similar to other nations, China contains different ethnic groups within its borders. One of these ethnic groups in the multi-national Chinese state are the Turkic speaking ethnic majority in northwest China's Xinjiang province. These Uyghurs, often romanized to Uighur, follow traditional Central Asian sedentary practices different than the nomadic Turkic populations in that area. Furthermore, the meaning of the term Uyghur is unclear but as a word its translation from old Turkic script, which dates back to the Turkic Khanates in Mongolia, to Chinese set the precedence. Still, the name is controversial since the inhabitants of Xinjiang were not called Uyghur before the mid-twentieth century. Westerners called the Turkic-speaking Muslims of the oases "Turki". These groups of peoples identified themselves by the oases they came from, not by an ethnic group.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, the term "Uyghur" itself was not used to refer to any existing ethnic group, but rather to the ancient people. And these Turkic people also have used "Musulman", which means "Muslim", to describe themselves (Millward 2007; Kim 2004: 68). This is important as it connects to religious identification of Uyghur militants. While the name Uyghur was applied by the Soviet Union as part of their ethnographic classification to all non-nomadic Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang it was the 1921 Tashkent conference that settled the name. There, Turkic Muslims from the Tarim Basin which is in

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<sup>51</sup> see Justin Jon Rudelson's *Oasis identities: Uyghur nationalism along China's Silk Road* (illustrated ed.) for a fascinating exploration of the peoples and identify classification.

Xinjiang, voluntarily applied the name to their own ethnic group<sup>52</sup> noting as well that the modern group was distinct from the old Uyghur Khaganate that historians from the West and Russia had previously connected the ethnic group to come from. Interesting enough “Turkistani” is used as an alternate ethonym for *Uyghur* by some Uyghurs such those living in the diaspora in Saudi Arabia. Another point necessary to mention as it relates to identity is the self-interest component of neoclassical realism.

The East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a militant Muslim separatist group founded by Uyghurs in northwest Xinjiang. As the ethnic majority in the province they seek the independence of East Turkestan from China. But, since the mid-2000s they have expanded the scope of attacks outside of China and affiliated themselves with Al-Qaeda. The issue of terrorism as linked to a group whose original foundation is that of ethnicity. Such a progression addresses the topic of ethnicity and conflict intensification. Indeed, in media and Western policy reports the common contention is that ethnic conflicts observe high levels of violence. Such sentiment is found in academic research also (Carment 1993; Vayrynen 1994), though such contention has not been systematically tested. Moreover, cases of ethnic conflict are offered as evidence (Carment and James 1997) with prominent cases i.e. Bosnia or Rwanda employed to support such assertions. Since, no systematic testing has occurred it is difficult to show how through comparison of ethnic and non-ethnic conflict the level of violence and therefore, the proposition that violence is central component is

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<sup>52</sup> For more on Uyghur identity see Arienne M. Dwyer’s insightful, *The Xinjiang conflict: Uyghur identity, language policy, and political discourse*, p. 75, note 26. Also the comprehensive cultural history by Edward Allworth, *The modern Uzbeks: from the fourteenth century to the present: a cultural history*, p. 206.

offered instead with examples of both Russian and Spanish civil wars (Kalyvas 2001) as well as those in Latin America offered as evidence. Surprising there is little literature on the intensity of violence when placed in contrast to the significant body of literature on the relationship between ethnicity and conflict (Cederman and Girardin 2007; Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderbom 2004; Elbadawi and Sambaing 2000; Fearon 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Reynal-Querol 2002; Sambaing 2001). For the purposes of this paper however, ethnic mobilization through armed conflict along ethnic lines is argued. Such mobilization also provides a logical link to higher levels of violence when that violence are acts of terrorism around the world. This article will focus on ETIM as an affiliate of Al-Qaeda and how ETIM uses its origins of ethnic conflict with China to both destabilize western China but also assist in the goal of al-Qaeda, especially in Syria. The methodology presented is a case study on this group using the theoretical model of Neoclassical Realism.

## **9.1 Ethnic conflict**

The western expansion undertaken by China in the eighteenth century that included the annexation of Xinjiang brought the region and the central government directly into contact and a troubled relationship since then. Unfortunately, no coherent text focusing on ethnic conflict and ethnic participation at the local level exists though Benedict Anderson (1991), Donald Horowitz (1985), Pavel Barša and Maxmilián Strmiska (1999) offer assessments in political science. It is within this field where conflict as a term is given a broader understanding, perceived not only as a violent conflict, but also as a political, institutionalized type of conflict (Barša 1999: 47). Here too one can observe the Chinese government and Uyghur attempts to regulate ethnic strife on their terms.

The Uyghurs have long fought for the preservation of their culture which they view as under threat from the ethnic Chinese (Han) invasion brought by expansion. The year 1989 began a new rise of separatist ideas as it also concluded a decade of resurgent Uyghur expression. From one perspective the year that saw protests at Tiananmen Square reinforced for the central government in Beijing the need for tighter control over the population and better stability. However, for the Xinjiang separatists, they sought hope from the defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and embraced the more radical form of Islam. It is necessary to distinguish the general Uyghur population, those politically active in favour of more autonomy, and those that partake in terrorist activities. The following sections will focus on the latter. While the separatists that are politically motivated seek separation beyond the autonomy already granted. The separatists that seek independence by way of violence prescribe to such an action through ethnic conflict and within the sanction of radicalized religious beliefs of Salafi jihadism.

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in China has seen social unrest and violence amongst the indigenous populations for approximately three decades; the Turkic-speaking Muslim Uyghurs and Chinese Han. Beijing in response has increased security forces that has had the inevitable response of nourishing anti-Han Chinese feelings amongst the Uyghur. These strained relations at times became violent such as the 1990 Baren insurrection, various disturbances during the summer and autumn of 1993 and July 7 1995 riots in Khotan. This violence was noted by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research labelling the situation in Xinjiang a 'limited war' in 2014. Prior to this though was a steady build up of ethnic tension. The turning point had arrived in 1996–1997, following the launch of the national campaign against crime. Repression and restrictions of expressions of identity and religion were the natural by product. Also, these restrictions put relations

between Uyghur society and the Chinese regime under considerable strain giving the impression that the real target of the Chinese government's attacks were not separatism or even Islamism but Uyghur identity itself. Beyond Xinjiang province there have been major terrorist attacks in Beijing 2013 and Kunming (Yunnan) 2014.

Authorities repeatedly linked attacks to the militant outfit East Turkestan Islamic Movement, which is often equated with the Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP), reportedly operating in the tribal areas of Pakistan. For example, in March, 2014 TIP leader Abdullah Mansour announced from his location in Pakistan the intention of the party to take revenge on China. As clear as this is an ethnic conflict the Heidelberg Institute's report does not speak sufficiently enough on the issue of Islam and its influence upon this conflict. While it is true that there are status differences over the resource rich province there are also ideological differences that for many ethnic Uyghurs take precedence. This ideology furthermore goes beyond basic social definitions. For the militant Uyghurs that are part of ETIM it is a worldview. A worldview that includes a Pan-Islamic vision. This vision is one of many admittedly since Uyghur identity is fragmented amongst ETIM and TIP and others. The tie that binds them all however is that they are Sunni Muslims. And from the Sunni branch of Islam comes the ideology of Salafism.

The sparsely populated Xingiang province shares borders with eight countries including Afghanistan and Pakistan. And it is this proximity that allows for the exportation of Salafi jihadist ideology.

## **9.2 Islam and Safafi Jihad**

The ethnic Uyghurs converted to Islam early in the Kara-Khalid Khanate and modern day Uyghurs are the second largest Muslim ethnic group in China. The Uyghurs are Sunnis (Palmer; Shive;

Wickeri 2011: 61–62). The strength of this religious connection arguably was created during the 1980s when restrictions traveling abroad were loosened. This was of immense and immediate effect upon Uyghurs as they now could participate on the Mecca pilgrimage. Those travels allowed Uyghurs traveling abroad to make contact with extremist movements in Pakistan and other Arab countries. On the latter point the catalyst for going abroad to Mecca, while an obligation of religious practice allowed Uyghurs to become part of the Diaspora where exposure to Islamist movements and causes increased. As Chinese repression in the 1990s were perceived to be both unnecessary and excessive new groupings of Uyghurs were formed within Xinjiang itself and in the Diaspora where of radical modes of action took shape and these groups soon were forming contacts with jihadist groups in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Initially, evidence<sup>53</sup> points to numerous guerrilla operations sabotage and attacks upon Chinese government facilities but soon graduated to defined acts of terror such as assassination of Han officials and even Uyghur collaborators. And while it has been stated in the above section that there is not an agreement amongst the entire Uyghur populace to such specific actions, nevertheless these tactics have been used in the on-going Uyghur ethnic conflict with Han Chinese and amongst radical Islam and nonbelievers. More to the point, the radicalization of Uyghurs beginning in the 1980s and intensifying during the 1990s directly resulted in the creation of ETIM.

The socio-political model promoted by radical Islam is the preferable alternative to the Chinese model. Operating within the

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<sup>53</sup> see list and explanation of types of operations in The Diplomat online version.



confines of Salfist-jihadism there are five features of hybrid Islamist ideology:

1. unity of God,
2. God's sovereignty,
3. the rejection of all innovation to Islam,
4. the necessity to declare a Muslim outside the creed, so that they may face execution and;
5. the centrality of jihad against infidel regimes (Hafez 2007).

Using these five features, Salafi jihad ideology from Islamic doctrinal content and the network of groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and the organization itself has set about on a course of violent confrontation with the West. ETIM is one of several Salafist jihadist groups 1 amongst 50 as of 2014 (Jones 2014). The fact that ETIM is small and operating within a relatively small area fits the understanding that the majority are small and either region or nation specific.

With foreign support i.e. al-Qaeda and other jihadi groups, ETIM found solidarity, political support, and on a practical level, training facilities and money. ETIM perceives the struggle in two distinct but interconnected paths. The first is the struggle against Chinese power in Xinjiang and the second is the struggle against the Western powers that have military and political presence in Muslim lands. Indeed, it is arguable the perception of the Chinese model that is both culturally invasive and colonial. Therefore the desire to replace such a political and social order with one where Muslims are at the centre of the system and within China, Uyghurs in particular is attractive. The strict framework of Salafism is the guide with Salafi jihadism the carrier. While Chinese authorities since 2001 have claimed financial and international support for ETIM with the State Council publishing in January 2002 an ambiguous report laying

stress on the supposed links between al-Qaeda and the Uyghur opposition since then Islamist groups in Xinjiang have lost much of their membership and officially have been dismantled as of 2014. Therefore, while considered a marginal threat to Chinese authority ETIM is still important because of its connections and ideology. These factors have allowed ETIM to move beyond Xinjiang and become reinforcements for jihad abroad.

### **9.3 Self-Interest and Neoclassical Realism**

While ethnicity is a key component of ETIM acts of violence their appeal for extremism under Salafi jihadism broadens the context of impact in international conflict. Moreover, while the link between ethnic conflict and international conflict has also settled upon an ordering of anti-colonial, secessionist and irredentist, ETIM's actions do not fit nicely into such an order. It's acts of terrorism against China fit under the secessionist label but its affiliation with Al-Qaeda and declared goal of a global caliphate does not conform to any other label. The pursuit of self-interest offers a different clue. Within the theoretical context of neoclassical realism.

It is difficult for contemporary rational thought to accept terrorism as being one of self-interest. Because, terror is abhorrent, the act and those that sponsor and facilitate can certainly not be rational. More to the point, how can such actions advance the self-interest of a group? A valid question, but missing the links to both doctrine and ideology. When the Salafi worldview is considered and Salafi jihadism actions are accounted for; ETIM's self-interest is clear. While the self-interest of promoting Uyghur interests in China via acts of terror is within the context of promoting the ideology of Salafi jihad, ETIM is directly linked to al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda is more than one man or its core leaders. The decentralization of the group is what has allowed both al-Qaeda and its affiliates to grow. Indeed, decentralization in contrast to Western interpretation over both the group and its worldview has not weakened, rather the al-Qaeda network has increased with ETIM as part of it. ETIM serves al-Qaeda's interests and being a member of the network serves ETIM's interest as a group. They both are one in the same. They each serve the ideology espoused by Salafism by converting and its operating principles; franchising it in other nations with the intent on creating a caliphate.

Today, ETIM as part of the al-Qaeda network has greater geographic reach, and a level of ideological sophistication and influence. And it is also apart of a much more cohesive international organization

## 9.4 Activities in Global Jihad

Since Chinese government aggressive measures to discourage insurgent movements and terrorist attacks within Xinjiang. Despite this, ETIM and numerous extremist groups operating under its umbrella there continue to conduct operations of terrorism throughout the last decade with recent attacks such as the Beijing car bombing and Lukqun police station raid in 2013 and deadly attack at Kunming's train station in 2014. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri supported Jihad in Xinjiang in a statement that also included Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan; endorsing *"jihad to liberate every span of land of the Muslims that has been usurped and violated, from Kashgar to Andalusia, and from the Caucasus to Somalia and Central Africa"* (Al Timini 2015). It is important to note that Kashgar is inhabited by ethnic Uyghurs. Still, ETIM main contribution to global jihad has been its geographical expansion and transnational links. There is active recruitment amongst ethnic Uyghur's in China and elsewhere in Asia from which efforts are made to move those recruits to Syria where after training they can participate in the jihad there.

Much of the activity that ETIM has conducted has been located abroad, fighting with other jihadist affiliated groups with al-Qaeda being the dominate organization ETIM has aligned with. The group acting within the network of al-Qaeda is fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq and in Syria. As recent as 2014, between 300-400 ETIM fighters were operating there (Rehman 2014). ETIM described themselves in 2009 as a group of workers for Islam also calling themselves as mujahideen in the Cause of Allah with the stated aim of establishing an Islamic Caliphate. In their efforts to accomplish this aim, ETIM is actively involved in Syria.

Fighting in Syria consists of several coalitions of militants. Those that follow the Salafī jihadist ideology are numerous. A fighter from the group Jabhat al-Nusra claims that there has been a unification of Uyghur Turkistan (ETIM) Uzbek Abu Salyaha and Al-Bukhari, Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'a, and Jaish al-Muhajireen wal Ansar under the umbrella of Al-Qaeda now fight as one faction known as Al-Muhajireen (Suleman 2015). This is supported by a list of Al-Qaeda linked groups that include the Turkistan Islamic Party and Uzbek militants amongst others (Joscelyn 2015). Moreover, Uyghurs operate two Jihadist training camps in Syria (Roggio, and Weiss 2015). While coordinating operations with another al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat Al-Nusra and participating in the Jihadist offensive in the Al-Ghab plain against the Syrian army, such actions point to the decision that al-Qaeda is playing the long game in Syria (Lister 2015; Weiss 2015). In November of 2015 both al-Qaeda affiliates Nusra Front and ETIM fought the Syrian army and Hezbollah forces around Jabal Nuba. The fight however has not been restricted to Assad's troops and pro-government actions. There have been attacks against the Christian churches Syria. Uyghur fighters take a certain pride in acts of destruction. This view while possibly hard to understand from a Western or even scholarly point of view attuned to diversity and freedom of religious expression; such opinion is not held by Salafi jihadists. Nonbelievers are heretics and their symbols are to be destroyed. A literal and physical manifestation of Salafi jihadism's ideological and doctrinal belief. As such the cross at the top of a church in Jisr al-Shughur had a Turkistan Islamic Party flag placed on top of it and desecration of objects inside the church was filmed and released online.

## **9.5 Conclusion**

Within international politics there is a debate on the link between ethnic conflict and international conflict. And while, prior studies have used casual linkage in their appraisal such as a typology devised deductively and focused on a presumed ordering of ethnic conflict, the following chapter focused on the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and its ethnic conflict in China and jihad activities abroad.

Whether ethnically mobilized conflicts intensified to war is a question for further study, research, and debate. Furthermore, ethnic mobilization of Uyghurs has shown to likely lead to increased violence especially when such mobilization is made on psychological and emotional processes associated with tenets of radical Islam. In China's Xinjiang province ethnic fractionalization is negative but confirms to the fact that the Uyghurs have long fought for the preservation of their culture which they view as under threat from the ethnic Chinese (Han) first by brought by expansion and now through repression by the Chinese government. The radicalization of the Uyghurs that occurred in the 1980s and intensified in the 1990s follow a path to Salafi jihad and affiliation with Al-Qaeda.

Moreover, acts of violence and their appeal for extremism under Salafi jihadism broadens the context of impact in international conflict. Finally, while the link between ethnic conflict and international conflict has also settled upon an ordering of anti-colonial, secessionist and irredentist, ETIM's actions do not fit nicely into such an order. It's acts of terrorism against China fit under the secessionist label but it affiliation with Al-Qaeda and declared goal of a global caliphate does not conform to any other label. Much of the activity ETIM has conducted has been located abroad with the

group acting within the network of al-Qaeda fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq and in Syria.

## 10. Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya

The Arab Mujahideen started to arrive in Chechnya beginning in 1995, in an attempt to spread their ideology into the local community and politics. These fighters are followers of Salafi-jihadism, volunteering during the Russo-Chechen wars. Although the media defined these fighters as believers in Wahhabism, this name is not accurate (Al-Shishani 2006: 2). These Arab fighters while adhering to Salafi ideology do so through jihad, violent methods to achieve their goals which is in opposition to the Wahhabis,<sup>54</sup> – which reject to use violent means. This is an important distinction and in the context of this chapter, the differences between the Chechen independence movement and goals of these Arab fighters are highlighted. The challenge of this case study presented in this chapter is based primarily on the fact that is difficult to differentiate between propaganda and facts in the Russo-Chechen wars. However, the main goal here is to understand the involvement of the Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya.

### 10.1 Historical background

Nowadays it might appear, that the Russo-Chechen conflict, which grew in intensity, from the late 1990s into the first decade of

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<sup>54</sup> *Wahhabi* is a religious movement or branch of Sunni Islam, adhering to an ideology that dates back to the eighteenth century, named after Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab who tried to implement religious reforms in the Arab Peninsula, allying with Al-Saud, the ruling dynasty in Arabia today. For more information see first chapter.



the twenty-first century is a new occurrence, but the reality is different. This conflict was alive for several centuries.

The historical background shows that the Chechen people were fighting against foreign supremacy since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. While in the 1400s it was primarily against Turkey and Islamization, fights against Georgia and the Cossacks, Chechnya's neighbours also occurred. Seeking relief from such adversaries Chechnya signed a treaty with Russia in 1783 that dealt with protection of their territory. Initially, Russian protection proved useful as several wars, for example Russo-Turkey, Russo-Persian, protected the territorial integrity of Chechnya. However, Russian repression of Chechen sovereignty occurred in the subsequent decades since the treaty had been signed. Not surprising then, an uprising against Russia started in 1834 under the leadership of Imam Shamil<sup>55</sup>. Although he was able to gain several partial victories against Russia, eventually he was forced to give up and was allowed to travel to Mecca in 1870 dying in Medina in 1871. Following these events, Chechnya was conquered by the Russian army and became part of the Russian Empire, but provided with special rights. Several uprisings from Chechnya followed, though always when Russia was unstable or weak position as in the following examples, during the Russo-Turkey War 1877 –1878, the Revolution of 1905, and Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

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<sup>55</sup> *Imam Shamil* (26 June 1797 – 4 February 1871) an Avar, political and religious leader of the Muslim tribes of the Northern Caucasus. He was a leader of anti-Russian resistance in the Caucasian War and was the third Imam of the Caucasian Imamate. He was a member of the Naqshbandi Sufi order.

After the creation of the USSR<sup>56</sup> in 1922, Chechnya was considered as autonomous territory, including the area of Groznyj, though only after 1929. On 15 January 1934, the Chechen-Ingush Soviet republic was established. During the Second World War and after occupation by the German army- some Chechen and Ingush groups, in the hope of independence, collaborated with Germany. After the end of the war and in the frame of collective guilt Josef Stalin decided to liquidate the republic in 1944 and as a consequence the Chechen and Ingush people were displaced to Kazakhstan and Siberia. During deportation, approximately a quarter of the people died. The return of Chechen and Ingush people was allowed four years after Stalin's death in 1953 by Nikita Khrushchev, the new Soviet leader. And in 1967 the Chechen-Ingush Soviet Republic was re-established. At this time, there were several violations of minority rights and Russian language was required in many aspects of everyday life.

At the time when the USSR collapsed a national congress in Chechnya was created, with the aim for independence. The independence was declared on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1991. Russia did not want to lose control over this republic and set a dangerous precedence. Therefore, on 11 December 1994 the Russian president signed order No. 2169, which aimed to recreate law, order and security in the area of Chechnya, the same week the Russian army stepped into Chechen territory, beginning the First Russo-Chechen War which lasted from 11<sup>th</sup> December 1994 until 31<sup>st</sup> August 1996.

Even though the war was not a success for Russia from the very beginning, they were able to get control over the city of Groznyj in February 1995. From this point onwards guerrilla war ensued, where the Russian army faced significant losses during battles with

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<sup>56</sup> USSR – as for Union of Soviet Socialist Republics established in 1922.

Chechen fighters, who controlled several cities and operated from the mountains. The prolonged conflict started to cost a considerable amount of the Russian state budget. During 1996 political negotiations started, where an important role was played by General Alexander Lebed. In August, 1996 an armistice was signed, which ended the First Russo-Chechen war. The peace treaty was signed one year later and according, the status of whether Chechnya was a republic was postponed for five years.

During the elections in 1997, which were officially not recognized by Russia, Aslan Maschadov was elected president. He governed until the start of the second war. He was unable to control the entire territory of Chechnya, and massive unrest under the governance of various tribal leaders began. The situation did not improve after the election of new Prime Minister Shamil Basayev<sup>57</sup>, incidentally a man considered to be a terrorist by Russia. In this time kidnappings of foreigners with the aim to get ransom grew significantly, including killings in case of no ransom paid. Anarchy existed in this territory and was an advantage for both sides. It was precisely this state of affairs that proved the starting point for the Second Chechen War<sup>58</sup>. It begun with the invasion of Dagestan by the Islamic international brigade and the apartment bombings in the Russian cities of Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgograd in September 1999 that destroyed blocks of flats. The Russian air strikes started during September 1999 and by the beginning of December of the same year, more than 50% of the Chechen territory was under control of the Russian army. Russia imposed direct government over Chechnya in May 2000 and elected a pro-Russian government.

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<sup>57</sup> Shamil Basayev was a Chechen militant Islamist and a leader of the Chechen movement.

<sup>58</sup> Timeline of second Chechen war: Battle phase: 26 August 1999 – May 2000, Insurgency phase: June 2000 – 15 April 2009.

Chechen fighters were able during the following years to oppose in a limited degree the Russian army via various guerrilla attacks replacing more conventional warfare where the Russian army held the advantage.

Groups of Afghan Arab fighters first entered the Caucasus at the beginning of the 1990's drawn to the conflicts in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh. During 1995 a group of Arab fighters lead by Ibn al-Khattab, a Saudi national, with significant fighting experience from Afghanistan crossed the Chechen border, after fighting in Tajikistan's Civil War. Ibn al-Khattab was a commanding officer of one of the Arab units fighting in the Tajik civil war in 1992. Khattab was able to create a small unit of experienced Afghan-Arabs in the beginning of 1995 and cooperate/coordinate successfully with the Chechen independence movement. With this coordination, the Arab Mujahideen had a foothold in Chechnya with the aim to influence and control both politics and territory.

## **10.2. Leadership and structure**

The Arab Mujahideen movement in Chechnya has been known by various names as used in official media. The names have alternated from the Islamic Regiment, Islamic Battalion, Arabs in Chechnya, Ansaar in Chechnya to Mujahideen in Chechnya. The Arab Fighters in Chechnya can be divided into three main categories:

- 1) Professionals – with significant fighting experience mainly from Afghanistan, Bosnia – those are in majority
- 2) Volunteers – mainly not experienced youths – recruited by Jihadi propaganda. No fighting experience of what sort of ever provided.

- 3) Chechens – mainly younger generation from Turkey or Chechnya, here is important to stress, that this group is mainly driven by independence movement of Chechnya and consequent nationalism, more than any religious ideology (Al-Shishani 2006: 3).

The picture of ethical background of the Arab Fighters in Chechnya mainly consists of: 59% Saudi Arabia, 14 % Yemen, 10% Egypt and 6 % Kuwait and the rest of 11 % from other countries (Al-Shishani 2006: 3). The leadership of this group has two platforms, very similar to other jihadist groups: One platform is military leadership and on the other side is ideological guidance. On the military level the main focus is on Khattab, Abu al-Walid al-Ghamidi, AbuHafs al-Urdini. On the ideological level it is important to mention Abu Omar al-Saif and Abu Zaid al-Kuwaiti.

Ibn al-Khattab is the nom de guerre for Samir Sáleh Abdulláhal-Suwailem. He was born in 1969 in Saudi Arabia and went to Afghanistan before he reached 20 years of age. Consequently he was involved during the conflict in Tajikistan together with Islamic opposition in 1992 and moved to Chechnya in 1995. Khattab was emir of Arab Mujahedeen from 2000–2002. According to the available media information Khattab was assassinated with a poisoned letter in April 2004.

Abu Al-Walid is the nom de guerre for Abd Al-Aziz Bin Ali Bin Said Al Said Al-Ghamdi. He was born in 1970 in Saudi Arabia. He joined Khattab in Tajikistan and Chechnya conflicts. He was emir of the group from 2002 to 2004 and was assassinated in Chechnya in April 2004.

Abu Hafs al-Urdini – there is no exact information about the third Emir of the group. According to Russian newspapers - he was born in Jordan, although he holds Saudi nationality. According to unconfirmed information - he was born in 1973 and participated side

by side with Khattab in early 1990s in Tajikistan conflict. Consequently he moved to Chechnya in 1995, mainly serving his duty as military trainer in Khattab's camps. In 2002 he has taken over the role of al-Qaeda's representative in Georgia. He was emir of Chechen mujahideen from 2004 till 2006 and was killed in Dagestan in November 2006.

That these military leaders of the Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya gained their military experience primarily in Afghanistan during the war with the Soviet Union is important since such men gained their valuable experience at an early age.

The chain of command for the military leadership is clearly hierarchical. The propaganda of the jihadist leaders was quite strong as they promoted themselves as experienced, loyal, selfless and invincible (Al-Shishani 2006:4). This propaganda helped to recruit other fighters later on. The leaders tried to push for the military and ideological integration in Chechnya territory and also by marrying Chechen women for example, Abu Omar al-Saif, al-Azimi and Abu Hafs.

Abu Omar al-Saif is *nom de guerre* for Mohammad Bin Abdullah al-Saif al-Jaber al-Buaynaynal-Tamimi. Originally coming from Saudi Arabia, participating in the Jihad in Afghanistan in 1985, returning to Saudi Arabia after the withdrawal of the Russian army. He completed his university education in college of Sharia at Iman Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University. He went to Chechnya in 1996 as an executive, responsible for Islamic courts and became the guiding ideological leader for Arab fighters.

Another important figure in religious guidance was Abu Zaid al-Kuwaiti, his real name Ahmad Nasser Eid Abdullah Al-Fajri al-Azimi. He worked as Iman in Safwam bin Omayah Mosque in Kuwait, became infamous for having terminated his duties there after collecting donations from the member of the mosque and leaving. From 16 February 2005, Abu Zaid died after having been surrounded

by Russian Special Forces. His experience as Iman made him to important ideological leader of Arab fighters in Chechnya.

### 10.3 Aims and activities

The group's core belief is found in Salafi-jihadism. The aim of the group was the Islamization of local politics, establishment of a Sharia state and Imamate in Chechnya. Another goal of the group was to create safe shelter for Jihadist movements on a global level. The application of Sharia law and consequently establishment of Sharia courts was the main target of the group on the field of local politics.

During 1996 more than 30 religious courts in Chechen territory was created. Under the responsibility of these courts belonged the cases of marriage and divorce, consumption of alcohol and Islamic code of punishment. Verdicts were final, since there was no right to appeal against the decision. The head of the juridical system was Saud Abu Omer al-Saif.

In the beginning of the Chechen fight for independence Arab fighters found a very welcoming environment in local communities, in spite of the fact that Chechens are adherent to Sufi ideology<sup>59</sup> and this is deeply rooted in the national identity of Chechen people. One of the reasons for this might be the fact that the war with Russia destroyed all the main institutions in Chechnya and ruined 80% of the Chechen economy, resulting in high unemployment rates and economic depression. This consequently paved the way for external influences in Chechen politics and gave rise to Arab fighters' Salafi-Jihadi ideology which attracted frustrated young men.

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<sup>59</sup> Speaking about two Sufi orders, the *al-Naqshabandiya* and *al-Qadiriya*,

For the understanding of the full context of the situation during that time (1991–1997) it is important to stress that over 99,7% of Chechens felt that they have to have the right to speak their mother tongue as official language (91,2 % in Dagestan) and that ethnic Russian emigration from Chechnya territory reached 11,8 % of population (11,2 % in Dagestan). Chechens from the rural areas started to move to urban areas consequently, and this led to deep economic issues (Al-Shishani, 2006).

As the events developed it was clear that the main focus of the fighters was not to help Chechnya to get free of Russian influence, but rather a creation of an Islamic state under Sharia law. The main strategic method of the fighters to reach political change was through violence. Khattabhas from the very beginning considered Chechnya as another Muslim nation under attack by foreigners. He saw opportunity not to make the country free of foreign influence, but for massive Islamization. Although it was clear that the Chechen independence movement needed external help, here also lays the most significant problem, as the local movement had different plans for Chechnya, then the Arab fighters. The above-mentioned differences led later to a situation where Arab Fighters started to face low support from the Chechen population, which is a crucial factor for success of any jihadi movement.

The ideological leader of the fighters was Ahmad al-Azmi. It was him, who gave his opinion, why violent means are used claiming that: 1) the mujahideen look weak – when they engage in peaceful resistance, 2) the mujahideen are strong as NATO and USA are joining forces to fight them, 3) avoiding the loss of good and virtuous mujahideen in battle is contradictory with true faith; 4) it is wrong to fear “methodological change” in the battlefield because the right methodology is already with the fighters in the battlefield 5) if monotheism isn’t achieved with Jihad it becomes tradition and not religion (Al-Azimi 2003).



Al-Azmi's other aim was for Chechnya to become a shelter for the Jihadi movement, based on the ideas of Ayman al-Zawahiri. For al-Zawahiri it was important to have shelter and a starting point for their global battle. Al-Zawahiri describes Eurasia as the springboard into the Middle East and *“real battlefield, a theatre of huge operations and Islam’s base of operations”* (Al-Zawahiri, 2001).

A logistical supply chain streaming to Chechnya and supporting Arab fighters led from the Middle East and Afghanistan through Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Although the Arab fighters are considered in many studies on the Russo-Chechen War as marginal players mainly during the First Chechen war, it is important to stress that they gained power in the period between the two wars (Vidino 2006: 2). Arab fighters tried to pursue their ideology and goals via religious courts and special training camps with the goal to attract more fighters from the Middle East and turn Chechnya into a Jihadi center according to the wish of Ayman al-Zawahiri. It is important to understand that the Chechen authorities respected their military experiences and relied on funds provided by Islamic charities and foreign donors. In the beginning the Arab fighters were able to establish strong links with the Chechens commanding operations. According to the information available, they were asked to stay after the first war ended and train the local people (Vidino 2006: 2). According to Vidino’s study Khattab was officially hired by the Chechen government to establish the Chechen Armed Forces - Training center in a former Soviet facility (Murphy 2004). The funds provided from Afghanistan and Middle East ensured that another three camps, which were able to train 400 people at one-two months sessions, were created. Russian authorities claimed that over 2,500 fighters were trained in these camps in the period between wars (Trenin Malashenko 2004).

The trainees of the above-mentioned camps were not only Chechnya locals, but also new arrivals from other Muslim regions

Caucasus, central Asia, etc. The content of the training consisted of the lessons of mine laying and ambushing tactics and also included strong religious indoctrination – supervised by scholars from Saudi Arabia. After the elections in January 1997 conflicts amongst the Chechen leadership started to grow. Some parts of the Chechen commanders began to absorb and approve the radical ideology of Khattab, in opposite, others stayed loyal to new President Aslan Maskhadov (Kramer 2004). Maskhadov, like Dudayev aimed for a secular independent state with an ongoing relationship with Russia. Many groups in Chechnya wanted a clean split from any ideology, whether nationalist or Islamic.

On the economic side, offering a lump sum pay-off, or regular salary/ played a major role in the recruiting of new soldiers. It is not possible to get an accurate amount, but these options were attractive to Chechen locals who became supporters of Khattab as Maskhadov lost control of large parts of the country. The consequent negative developments for Chechnya were caused by inexperienced leadership, corruption, Russian interference, an underperforming economy and conflicting goals.

The second war was influenced by different combat tactics in order to avoid Russian mass bombing. Tactics were developed mainly by Arab foreign fighters. The group was not able to face Russian forces in open territory, therefore they based themselves in the mountains, continuing with ambush tactics. Frequently using forms of attacks included car-bombings, kidnappings and suicide vehicles against military targets. According to Russian authorities the majority of attacks was roadside bombings or attacks on Russian convoys with heavy gunfire (Kramer 2004). Although these tactics seemed to be very successful in the beginning, the mujahideen were not able to gain any territory. This was caused mainly by lack of military strategy or clear set of goals. Arabic fighters provided also

religious guidance with “fatwas” issued by clerics in order to be able to justify terroristic attacks.

Suicide attacks as one of the methods used by the Arab Mujahideen to achieve the goals grew in popularity after 2000. The foreign fighters were infamous for cold blooded executions of Russian soldiers, torturing, and beheadings. During the first war the prisoners were treated in a better way, and many exchanges took place.

The decrease of power of the Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya started in 2001 and continued up to 2006. There is a very good and comprehensive summary provided by M. Al-Shishani of the reasons for the decline of Arab fighters. In his study, he mentions four facts that contributed significantly to the fall of those Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya (Al-Shishani 2006:12).

### **1. Chechen Society**

The Chechen society practiced socially tolerant Sufi Islam. The Salafi-Jihadist movement in Chechnya aimed to impose the ideology through an Islamic court system. Imposing Islamic dress code for women, prohibition of alcohol, Islamic punishments. Sufi Muslims have seen as attempt to impose strict and foreign patterns of Islam. The opposition between Sufis and Salafi-Jihadist increased during armed conflict in 1998. During this time Sufis, specifically followers of the Qadiri way started to support Russia. The biggest difference was caused Mufti Ahmad Kadyrov- starting to support the Russian side. The history showed that the success of jihadist groups depends mainly on acceptance of the locals, as local residents are those which shelter and support the fighters in many ways. The main issue is that Salafi-Jihadist ideology is not rooted in the traditions in Chechnya.

## **2. Missing financial funding**

Lack of funding especially from the Gulf countries, caused major problem in the group. Since September 11, 2011 the international community declared war on the financing of terrorist organizations. The missing finances threatened the ability to continue in fighting and funds were one of the major legitimizing factors behind the presence of Arab fighters in Chechnya.

## **3. Assassinations and Closed Borders**

Russia has closed the Chechnya's borders with the start of second war. The Arab fighters who wanted to go to Chechnya were stopped mainly on Georgian borders. The assassination of leaders of the Chechen independence movement started with Arbi Barayev, Salman Raduyev, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and Shamil Basayev, this made massive gaps in the governance model of the group. The assassinations of Salafi-Jihadist leaders started with Khattab, continued by Abu Al-Walid Al-Ghamidi, Abu Zaid Al-Kuwaiti, and Abu Omar Al-Saif. The major gaps in the chain of command created significant losses in combat of crucial Arab operatives as Abu Bakr Aqida, Ashraf Al-Shantili (an Egyptian), then Hakim Al-Madani, Yaqoub "Jam'an" Al-Ghamidi (who were Saudis), and then Abu Jaffar Al-Yamani. Russia was successful in weakening of the Salafi-Jihadist movement, targeting their leadership structure, as they played major role in the conflict and contributed with significant military experience. The Chechen resistance movement has become heavy gaps with the assassination of Maskhadov and Basayev.

## **4. Differences in the Agenda of Arab Fighters and the Independence Movement**

The Chechen independence movement focused on getting free off Russian supremacy, but the Salafi-Jihadist agenda had different

scope. The Chechen independence movement aimed for secular state, and Salafi-Jihadist called for religious state. There are four major differences between Chechen struggle for independence and international terrorism:

- 1) The struggle in Chechnya has deep historical roots and modern international terrorism not
- 2) Chechens are fighting for an independent state, while international terrorism is a non-state actor;
- 2) Chechen resistance is based on a national struggle while international terrorism is not;
- 4) Chechen resistance is involved in a defensive war unlike terrorism (Al-Shishani, 2006).

## **10.4 Conclusion**

The Arab Mujahideen didn't take into consideration the significance of agenda differences between themselves and that of the Chechen independence movement. Different agenda points in combination with the logistical issues due to closed borders were other reasons why they had only very small chance to succeed. Targeted assassinations of their military leaders also threw the movement into deep crisis, as they were incapable to fill the gap in the chain of command.

These issues in combination with low support of the local population has weakened the role of those Arab fighters in Chechnya significantly. Consequently, the Arab fighters had to search for new place for their battles. According to Abu Omar Al-Saif's writings it can be deducted that the place to be is Iraq. This assumption can be supported by the fact that the names of some fighters from Chechnya showed up in Iraqi battleground reports and various studies lead to

the conclusion that monies streaming to Iraq originated in Chechnya (Al-Shishani 2005). The Chechen independence movement is considered terrorist mainly due to the presence of Arab fighters, in spite of the fact that Arab fighters were only one part of the puzzle with limited influence in the Russo-Chechen conflict. After more than a decade of fighting for independence with little success there exists now an Chechen autonomous region under control of Russian-appointed leader – Ramzan Kadyrov.

Separatist groups have continued with low level guerrilla attacks (BBC 2015) and critics claim that under the governance of Kadyrov, situations leading to large human right violations are present. In spite of the fact that the Chechen resistance movement is currently on a low level with occasional guerrilla attacks, there are several factors which could lead to its resuscitation. One of them is the fact that – there are many corruption scandals linked with the current Chechen government and in combination with a new generation of angry Sufi youths, this represents a potent combination. The historical conflict for independence is still not settled with the current status quo and in combination with vital jihadist activities in the neighboring countries Chechnya could become once more a ‘hotspot’ of conflict.

## 11. Lashkar e Tajiba

In 1987, an organization with a militant Sunni Islamist worldview and a professed goal of challenging India's sovereignty over Kashmir was founded. It quickly grew to one of the largest and most active terrorist organizations in South Asia, operating out of Pakistan (Basset 2012: 12) with its founders, Hafez Saeed, Zafar Iqbal, and Abdullah Azzam, receiving guidance and funding from Osama bin Laden.

For Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) Kashmir is part of a wider global struggle as outlined in a circulated pamphlet, *'why are we waging jihad'* in which the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India, and a union of all Muslim majority regions, thus LeT's active participation not only in Kashmir but also Chechnya, and other parts of Central Asia.

The purpose of this chapter in this volume is to describe not only terror organizations, but add to the literature on global jihad utilizing theoretical constructs to explain motivation and action. In this effort, while Lashkar-e-Taiba has confined their operations to a specific geographic location since 2001, activities and training of LeT members has occurred in conjunction with support of al-Qaeda. However, Lashkar-e-Taiba is not Al-Qaeda. What can explain the similarities and distinctions? In the following chapter complexity theory is offered as the likely explanation for this.

Therefore, the first section of this chapter will explain the history of Lashkar-e-Taiba and the avowed goals of the terror group. The second section of this article provides a brief account of complexity theory and the central concepts that can be fruitfully applied to the study of jihadist networks and LeT in particular.

Finally, how Lashkar-e-Taiba is still relevant in the on-going Global War on Terror, a relevance seen in their very foundation is argued.

## 11.1 Origins of the group

The story of how Lashkar-e-Taiba came about begins not in a terror act or religious declaration, but instead within a small missionary group dedicated to the promotion of Ahl-e-Hadith (People of the traditions (of the Prophet)). The version of Islam that Hafiz Mohammed Saeed and Zafar Iqbal sought in 1985 when they formed the Organization for Preaching which in Arabic is Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD). Saeed and Iqbal were Islamic conservative traditionalists and Ahl-al-Hadith is a branch of Sunni Islam that posits that followers are not bound by taqlid, an obligation to follow the decisions of a religious expert who interprets sharia without demanding an explanation of the processes. Taqlid is strongly tied to jurisprudence, especially in the view of traditionalists, adherence to one of the classical schools of jurisprudence. Those traditionalists that follow Ahle-al-Hadith consider the Qur'an and independently seeking guidance in matters of religious faith the principal guide for Muslims. This distinction and the movement is referenced as synonymous with Salafism (Glasse 2001: 31). In Northern India, and Pakistan followers of Ahl-e-Hadith are also referred to as Wahhabi (Rabasa 2004 275) or at the very least are considered a variation of the Wahhabi movement<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> see the reference in Lieven, Anatol (2011). *Pakistan: A Hard Country*. New York: Public Affairs. p. 128, "Ahl-e-Hadith ... a branch of the international Salafi ... tradition, heavily influenced by Wahabism." Also recommended is Alex Strick Van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, (2012) *An Enemy We Created: The Myth of the Taliban-Al Qaeda Merger in Afghanistan*, New York: Oxford



While the link to the Wahhabi movement brought financial support from Salafī Saudi Arabia, and notably Osama bin Laden, there remains notable distinctions from other Arab Salafis<sup>61</sup> and scholars point out that while the Ahl al-Hadith remain similar to, it is yet distinct from Salafists (Guidère 2012: 177). On a political level there is the addition of India and Hindus to the list of enemies of Pakistan and existential enemies of Islam (Husain 2005) with Israel and the United States being obviously on the list as is the restoration of Islamic rule over India. So, the repeated aim of the Indian republic's destruction and the annihilation of Hinduism and other existential threats by the LeT is both religious and political motivation. Violent jihad is considered a duty, waged until eight objectives (Tankel 2011) are met:

1. the end of Muslim persecution,
2. the establishment of Islam as the dominant way of life in the world,
3. a tax on infidels,
4. fighting for those who are weak and feeble against oppressors,
5. revenge for killed Muslims,
6. the punishment to those enemies who violate oaths,
7. the defence of Muslim states and;
8. the recapture of occupied Muslim territory.

Ahl al-Hadith, similar to other Islamic movements contains certain commonalities in both features and beliefs. From the style of

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University Press and their fascinating study on p. 427 of Wahhabi variations.

<sup>61</sup> On said distinctions, the author highly recommends Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*: Vol. 5 of *Cambridge Middle East Studies*, p. 32.

male beards to the ritual acts of Muslim worship. These practices, in particular, are quite different from the predominate legal school (Hanafi) in South Asia. In relation to LeT, it is interesting to note that while recruits to LeT have come from the Ahl al-Hadith movement, the view of jihad held by Lashker-e-Taiba has alienated the mainstream of Ahl al-Hadith followers<sup>62</sup>. Nevertheless, the foundation of the LeT in the 1980s follows the pattern of many jihadi groups that emerged from the mountain passes of Afghanistan.

When Zaki-ur Rehman Lakvi and his anti-Soviet jihadists merged with JuD to form the Center for Preaching and Guidance (MDI); Abdullah Azzam being one of 17 founders, the LeT gained prominence as the military offshoot of MDI.

Formed in Afghanistan's Kunar province in 1990, the LeT focused on jihad, not distinguishing between the two functions of the two groups since according to Hafiz Saeed, *"since our life revolves around Islam, therefore both dawa and jihad are essential; we cannot prefer one over the other"* (Tankel 2011). Additionally, LeT established training camps in the North-West Frontier Province with other camps moving to Azad Kashmir for the purpose of training for the Kashmire Jihad. Indian-administered Kashmir is considered occupied land and fits the eighth objective for jihad. Moreover, once Kashmir is liberated then it could be utilized as a base of operations to conquer India and restore Muslim rule to the subcontinent, fulfilling objective two under violent jihad.

Militancy surged in Indian Kashmir from 1991 onwards with many LeT volunteers using Azad Kashmir as the point to infiltrate

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<sup>62</sup> see the chapter "Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)" by Geoffrey Kambere, Puay Hock Goh, Pranav Kumar and Fulgence Msafiri, in *Financing Terrorism: Case Studies*. Ed. Michael Freeman. (2013). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Indian Kashmir, arguably with the knowledge and assistance of the Pakistan Army and ISI (Tellis 2010). Training and financial support from Al-Qaeda allowed throughout the early 2000s LeT to continue its stated jihad, despite the relative peace during the first seven years of the new millennium. Militancy-related casualties decreased during the period of 2001 to 2009 from 4,507 to 377 (Ullah 2016). A major factor in this decline was faith in the dialogue process initiated by then-Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee with the historic Lahore Declaration (1999) where both India and Pakistan committed to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. Also, repeated efforts by Vajpayee to have the pro-separatist Hurriyat political party and the Hizbul Mujahideen (a local Indian militant group) included in the talks for the cease-fire. The option of autonomy within the confines of the Indian constitution offered by Vajpayee led to further calm. However, as is often the case with religious and ethnic conflict, even during period of peace, tension is still present, ready to explode into violence. Thus, the calm was shattered with LeT's terror attacks outside of Kashmir. With the 2008 Mumbai bombings and increased military engagement in Afghanistan against Western coalition forces fighting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the peace in Kashmir was short lived.

While in Afghanistan, the Taliban-led insurgency gained strength in 2005–2006, the ability of LeT to wage jihad in Kashmir was constrained. Therefore, the group began facilitating access to the Afghan battlefield for its members. Moreover, LeT increased its presence in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas integrating itself with the militants based within. This migration into Pakistan and into Afghanistan from mid-2005 onwards was a direct result of the Musharraf regime in Pakistan increasing its own efforts to rein in the Kashmir jihad with an outcome of an insurgency explosion in Afghanistan in 2006. Still, LeT's position remains secure. To a relative degree this is fact because Afghanistan was

facing a serious insurgency and LeT has refrained from making attacks inside Pakistan. Also, both the Pakistani army and the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) consider LeT to be a reliable proxy against India. Moreover, the boldness of the Mumbai attacks and target selection indicates that LeT continued to prioritize jihad against India.

The death, last October, of Abu Qasim a top commander in LeT and responsible for several attacks upon the Indian Army, such as the 2013 Hyperpora ambush, has only strengthened the resolve of LeT, and brought the return of violence to Kashmir. In November, 2015 armed conflict between militant and the Indian Army broke out in the Manigah forests of Kupwara, Kashmir. This leads to the conclusion that not only has insurgency related events increased, but support for militancy in Kashmir is also on the rise. A fact that LeT certainly has taken note of. How to explain the return of said military and within the context of jihad, the role of LeT? An elaboration of complexity theory may be useful in such a context and applied to contemporary jihadist networks.

## **11.2 Complexity theory**

The framework of this brief chapter is to explore the terrorist organization Lashker-e-Taiba and explain, what if any links there exist with the theme of global jihad. While, Lashker-e-Taiba as previously mentioned in the introduction received financial backing from Osama bin Laden therefore there exists a link to Al-Qaeda, though LeT is primarily focused in Kashmir; its ability, as part of a jihadi network, is one thread amongst many to inflict violence. Complexity theory provides an answer to understand LeT in the broader scope of jihadi networks because it offers insight as developed through the formation and behaviour of dynamic systems.

More to the point of definition, complexity suggests the “*intricate intertwining or interconnectivity of elements within a system, and between a system and its environment*” (Mitleton-Kelly 2000: 25), and this constitutes as good a starting definition as any.

The theory has been applied through a combination of observation and simulation to the animal kingdom, illuminating the networks of packs, swarms, and flocks. The collective behavior on the basis of individual members’ simple rules of interaction as described by Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2000: 48) in their research as follows.

This theoretical and experimental work usually depicts swarming as a system in which autonomous agents interact and move around according to a set of rules and a schedule, often seeking an optimal outcome vis-à-vis another agent, set of agents, or environmental feature. The modelling allows for continual interactions among the agents, as they form and reform in fluid, shifting networks (and maybe hierarchies as well). These networks may persist for some time, or may break down and recombine into others opportunistically. Information may flow quite freely from one agent to the next about conditions near them in the model, but, in the examples we have seen, there is rarely an identifiable distribution of, or hub for distributing, topsight among all the agents.

Therefore, complexity theory is tentatively a study of nonlinear phenomena and bottom-up processes of emergent self-organization. As the study of terror groups continue in the decades since the September 11, 2001 terror attacks such a study is increasingly becoming the accepted understanding. Nonlinear phenomena when applied to understanding terrorism indicates that the proportionality between input and output is not displayed. Meaning, that small influences can result in large effects. While, this was the intuition behind chaos theory, the precursor to complexity theory, the

concepts of self-organization remain with it becoming the central part of complexity theory itself.

The process in which autonomous interaction of separate entities result in the bottom up emergence of complex systems, which are in reality composed of many parts, yet coupled in a nonlinear way is the very concept of self-organization. The idea of networks is vital to describe the patterns of interaction that are constituted by the interplay of entities in a complex system (Capra 1996: 82). When this is applied to connecting various terrorist groups, the definition and example is arguably very clear indeed.

Al-Qaeda, for example over its decades of existence has never indicated a sustained interest in either directly seizure of state power or state-like hierarchical structures. According to Devji (2005: 3) al-Qaeda is best understood as operating outside the ‘politics of control’ and the actions of jihad, while meant to accomplish certain ends are more ethical than political in nature. However, while any organizational form of al-Qaeda perhaps is imposed by external condition, the command-and-control model is not used. Therefore, with the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), a militant Muslim separatist group founded by Uyghurs in northwest Xinjiang, China, who seek independence of East Turkestan from China and have affiliated themselves with Al-Qaeda to Lashkar-e-Taiba in Kashmir whose stated aims and scope of operations have been described in the first part of this chapter; a decentralized network that is highly resilient is observed, particularly true when discussing the loss of leaders.

Hierarchical structures are much more vulnerable to decapitation and with the loss of a leader the ability to mount substantial operations is affected. Within social science the characteristics and advantages of hierarchical modes of organization have been largely accepted through the formalized form that Max Weber analyzed in his work on bureaucracies where “*precision,*

*speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs*” are vital (Weber 2009: 214). In the West, with its state-governed contemporary industrialized societies it is easy to superimpose the Weber model of graded authority upon not only al-Qaeda but other militant jihadists such as LeT emphasizing pre-determined roles and a *“firmly ordered system of super and subordination in which there is a supervision of the lower offices by the higher ones”* (Weber 2009: 214). Therefore, an alternative form of organization, especially one that stresses decentralization and offers a self-organizing character of the network should offer conceptual clarity. Here is where complexity theory offers an alternative form and empirical plausibility. While, hierarchical structures is seen as the most efficient and natural, terrorist organizations do not necessarily follow the bureaucratic and hierarchical conceptions

Some networks operating within a hierarchical structural understanding is open to permanent disruption and disability. Marxist terrorist groups in the 1960s and 1970s such as the Red Army Faction in Germany is case in point. Jihadist networks have, in several instances demonstrated the ability to regenerate and self-organize after the destruction or disruption of significant nodes.

It is accurate to point out that key members of a network who may possess particular skills or aptitudes and have been eliminated will, depending on the recruitment and immediate surroundings, see in that network perhaps a delay in regeneration. Still, as the study of terror groups, in particular, al-Qaeda has shown, resiliency is a stable determinant. As scientist Stephen Wolfram states, *“whenever you look at very complicated systems in physics or in biology, you generally find that the basic components and the basic laws are quite simple; the complexity arises because you have a great many of these simple components interacting simultaneously y the complexity is*

*actually in the organization — the myriad possible ways that the components of the system can interact”* (Waldrop 1992: 86). Thus, complex adaptive systems constitute a special case of complex systems that are capable of changing and learning from experience and thus appear particularly relevant to the social world. This is arguably the case from al-Qaeda to ISIL. When looking at complexity theory and interaction between jihadi groups, it is when LeT is understood beyond the local context of Kashmir and India.

### **11.3 Networks**

If one thinks of jihadist networks as communities of practice, then knowledge is concentrated upon common problems and interests from which core competencies are then shared and also developed (Vos Fellman and Wright 2003). From the viewpoint of the West, it is certainly easier to discuss jihadist networks as pointed out by Jordan and Horsburgh (2005: 182) if they are linked to concrete individuals. The example of Osama bin Laden being the most prevalent but since 2012 other names have entered into Western media dialogue and reporting such as Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (ISIL), Ayman al-Zawahiri (Al-Qaeda post-2010), and Ahmed Umar (Al-Shabaab) because the abstract idea of an organization transcending loyalty and interpersonal ties is not present.

Yet, it is through the interplay of autonomous entities cooperating and competing that interdependent relationships form and collective behaviour emerges. Thus, al-Qaeda is decentralized, but so is LeT with recursive operational and financial interrelationships that combined with numerous associated terrorist organizations adapt and aggregate in pursuit of common interests (Beech 2004). So, it is within complexity theory that the interplay of autonomous entities is seen. As Marion and Uhl-Bien explain:



*“Complex adaptive agents view organizing as a bottom-up dynamic that is generated through interactive bonding among interdependent, need-seeking individuals, each of whom is driven by local (bounded) assessments of social and organizational events. This interactive dynamic can be described in terms of process theory in that it represents a series of causally linked events. Unlike most views of process theory, however, complex dynamics are recursive; they exhibit interdependent, multiway chains of causality, non-linear behaviours, and multiple, often conflicting, feedback loops. The recursive aggregation process is too complex to be effectively controlled or determined by leaders. It may be influenced, however, by leaders who foster or enable the emergence of complex networks.”* (Uhl-Bien 2003: 56).

A robust theoretical framework accounting for the decentralized character and particular dynamics of the jihadist movement is still absent despite the growing recognition of this. The above section has in a small way explored how complexity theory can contribute to the study of contemporary jihadist networks. It is through complexity theory that one observes the polymorphous phenomenon of adaptive systems that are evolving. Learning from both preparation and execution of violent actions, scholars can connect complexity to terrorist networks and empirical studies from important researchers such as Jason Burke (2004) and Mark Sageman (2004, 2008). In truth, these two researchers engaged in a battle of words in the summer of 2008 in the pages of the journal *Foreign Affairs* (May/June and July/August 2008) after Bruce Hoffman wrote a critical review of Sageman’s book *Leaderless Jihad* (2008). The main argument centered upon to which extent was the threat of terrorism still attributed to a central core of al-Qaeda active in the borderland between Afghanistan and Pakistan or a scattered global network constituted by *“spontaneously self-organizing groups of friends who become terrorists”* (Sageman 2008: 164). The exchange

between the two prominent terrorism scholars encapsulated the bigger debate on the organizational character of jihadist terrorism.

This very debate has been ongoing since the start of the Global War on Terror and while significant to both analytical and policy implementation for Western governments in their efforts in the war, the truthful picture of jihadist militancy is built up through the accumulation of evidence without prejudging findings. The rise of ISIL since 2012 and Al-Shabaab point to Sageman's hypothesis and LeT while operating within the geographical location of al-Qaeda and with obvious financial ties to the group, LeT's area of operations and stated goals would confirm Sageman's hypothesis also, though research in the field of terrorism is a highly fluid area of enquiry.

## **11.4 Activities**

It is without argument that the goal of Lashkar-e-Taiba remains jihad in India for the stated objectives offered in section 1. However, the extent of LeT's threat of terrorism is open to debate. This is partially because of LeT's attributed relationship with al-Qaeda who remain active in the borderland between Afghanistan and Pakistan but also in the larger academic debate on terrorism activity, is LeT in truth only a node in a scattered global network?

In March 2009 LeT launched a major offensive inside Indian-administered Kashmir, its first since the Mumbai attacks, though the insurgency has admittedly remained lethargic. This is in contrast to the robust insurgency in Afghanistan where by late 2009 and early 2010 saw large numbers of LeT fighters in the Kunar and Nuristan provinces in eastern Afghanistan. Moreover, the integration of LeT members with Taliban and the Haqqani Network increased also allowing for the group to expand outside of the provinces, where the focus were Indian targets in Afghanistan. Still, India was the focus,

and in February 2010 the first successful terrorist attack since 2008 occurred.

Indian jihadis used a mobile phone alarm to set off a bomb within the German Bakery in the city of Pune. The diverse city, known for its growing IT sector and the bakery in question a well-known place for foreigners living there. The top LeT operative, Mirza Himayat Baig, was reputed to have been in contact with both handlers in Pakistan and jihadi associated with the Indian Mujahideen who helped carry out the attack (Hafeez and Shaikh 2010). The footprint in Afghanistan and target selection in India point to two trends.

The evolving nature of terrorism in the aftermath of Mumbai indicates that LeT is expanding its operations and integrating its global jihadi targets with Indian ones. Another trend is the interchangeable nature of its networks as well as military capability used in striking Afghan, Indian and Western targets.

## **11.5 Conclusion**

The global jihadist movement continues to be dynamic and potent. That is why world intelligence and security services have kept amongst their priorities these groups. Lashkar-e-Taiba remains one such group because of its activities and connections.

The argument over logistical or organizational connections with al-Qaeda's leadership and the loosely connected radical Islamic movement which has been conceptualized by Sageman as a leaderless jihad continues to reverberate amongst academics and terror analysts.

It is clear with the example of LeT that group formation in a specific environment can occur using a bottom-up mechanism while shaped originally by a top-down terrorist organization. The notions

of networks, and complex adaptive systems provides the plausible account for organizational operations.

Therefore, complexity theory offers the best resources to substantiate theoretical claims. LeT continues to integrate into the Afghan jihad, though LeT primary focus and indeed its primary military utility remains as a terrorist group against India.

## **Conclusions**

Global Jihad is evolving as organizations and networks change over time. The above presented case studies have shown that all organizations are exposed to a certain degree of heterogeneity which has resulted in fragmentation and sometimes to creation of new organizations. Today Al Qaeda represents a “network of networks” rather than an organization with local affiliations. The pressures for decentralization together with ambitions of local leaders with diverging attitudes has resulted in fragmentation and establishment of new organizations including Daesh and the An Nusra Front. Despite ideological differences and local animosities those organizations have successfully penetrated a political vacuum created after the power decline of central governments in Iraq and Syria. The environment of civil war and of permanent conflict has proven to be fertile soil for the development of those organizations and in the case of Daesh resulted in a state building process.

The expansion of Daesh was unprecedented and a qualitatively new shift within international security. Terrorists aspired to have their own state with real territory, people, a legal system, an Army, education, and taxes. Terrorism and guerrilla warfare has been changed to regular conventional war as Daesh expanded territory and used captured arms and vehicles abandoned by Iraqi and Syrian forces. Almost 40 organizations have pledged allegiance to Daesh and Rakka became the unofficial capital of world jihad, attracting attention of thousands foreign fighters who brought from all around the world resources and skills. Thanks to educated jihadists Daesh has mastered the use of IT technology and social media communication.

However, there are other organizations in the shadow of Daesh with aspirations to establish their own Caliphate. An Nusra Front in Syria is fighting against the Assad regime and thus far unsuccessfully has tried to receive popular support. In Somalia Al-Shabaab freely operates in the southern territories and builds its own state-like institutions. Large territories in Nigeria are run by Boko Haram. All of them are exporting violence and instability across borders.

Transboundary violence is also characteristic for the East Turkestan Islamic Movement which is based in North Waziristan (Pakistan) and operates in Xinjiang (China), Afghanistan and Central Asia in general. Similar to Boko Haram, ETIM violence has also important ethical dimension as the organization promotes radical interests mainly of Uyghur population.

Jihadists are active also in other parts of Asia where ethnic conflict has intensified. Arab volunteers, Mujahideen in Chechnya supported Chechen rebels and joined their fight against Russia and played an important role in the Northern Caucasus after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Next to radical Islamism, territorial status is important also for Lashkar-e-Tajiba which is fighting for the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan.

The above jihadist organizations present only the tip of the iceberg of jihadist organizations all around the World but the presented case studies in the chapters above highlight great historical, organizational and functional diversity as well as diversity in interests and motivations of these terror organisations. These are very often based in regional conflict rather than Islam itself. With this point of view then, Jihad is only a tool how to religiously justify ethnic or political violence and mask cruel and in some case, inhumane intentions of jihadist organizations by a legitimate and moral veil.

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## Résumé

*Global Jihad: Introduction & Case Studies* introduces the concept of Jihad from various perspectives. The main aim of the authors is to present deeper insight into jihadist organizations in order to explore their historic background, aims, activities, structure and leadership. A special focus on Islamism and radical interpretation of Salafism is presented in the first half of the book with a special attention to terrorism and the media as well as international law. The second part presents eight case studies dedicated to jihadist organizations which are most relevant in a contemporary medial context, are presented in the second half of the book, highlighting how diverse these organizations are in their nature with some focused on state building and territory control, while others operate in a hub or international network, while yet others have more of a regional focus.

The presented case studies also show that despite sharing similar ideological background based on radical interpretation of Islam they are all unique. Jihadi organizations presented in this book are from the popularized to the lesser known. Al-Qaeda, the militant Sunni Islamic organization which follows the ideology of Salafism. The organization known as the Islamic State (or better Daesh) infamous for its brutal executions and barbaric demolitions of cultural heritage controls large areas in Iraq and Syria. Also presented is Daesh's rival, Al-Nusra Front, formally known as Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) the official al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria, where as in Africa, Al-Shabaab (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen) one of the dominant forces in Somalia since 2006 and Boko Haram, Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad has operated since 2002 in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. Until recently lesser known terror

organizations; the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) founded by the Turkic-speaking militant Uighurs the ethnic majority in northwest China and the small jihadist organization Arab Mujahideen in Chechnya are discussed in detail as is Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the militant Sunni Islamic organization which practices Salafism operates in Kashmir and is responsible for the horrific 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. Therefore, this book is offered as a guide for scholars interested in international security, for students, and for experts working in public administration.

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