

Understanding Jihadist Radicalisation *The case of Italy*

28 November 2019

INTRODUCTION



With the study "*Understanding jihadist radicalisation – The case of Italy*", the European Foundation for Democracy contributed to fill a significant research gap in understanding the phenomenon of radicalisation in Italy.

A first of its kind in the Italian landscape, the study provides a detailed analysis of the profiles of 54 individuals against whom the Italian judiciary launched criminal proceedings for crimes related to jihadist terrorism in Italy between 2004 and 2018. It was conducted by the experts of the European Foundation for Democracy: **Francesco Farinelli**, **Francesco Bergoglio Errico**, **Anna Maria Cossiga** and **Enrico Colarossi**.

The report was officially presented to the public on 28th November 2019, in cooperation with NOMOS Centro Studi Parlamentari, at a high-level event held in the Library of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament. It was attended by a large number of experts, policy makers, law enforcement and media representatives.

In addition to the four experts of the European Foundation for Democracy, speakers included Italy's four highest officials from the judiciary and law enforcement authorities in the field of counterterrorism: **Maurizio Romanelli**, Magistrate, Former deputy Public



Prosecutor, National Anti-Mafia and Counter-Terrorism Prosecuting Authority; **Augusto Zaccariello**, Commander, Central Investigative Unit, Italian Penitentiary Police, **Gen. Pasquale Angelosanto**, Commander, Special Operations Group, Arma dei Carabinieri, **Claudio Galzerano**, Senior Director, Italian State Police, and **Yahya Pallavicini**, President of the Islamic Religious Community of Italy (COREIS).

The completion of the research project also marks the deepening and expansion of cooperation between the European Foundation for Democracy and Italian authorities in activities related to the understanding and prevention of radicalisation and the ideologies that drive such processes.

CONSIDERATIONS AND KEY FINDINGS

- Contrary to other European countries, Italy has not had any major Jihadist terrorist attacks that have shaken the security and political establishments.
- While security and repressive measures have been effective and have built on Italy's experience of Communism-inspired terrorism in the 1970s-80s, policymakers have largely underestimated the new phenomenon of Jihadist radicalisation thus failing to focus on targeted prevention measures.
- The analysis shows links between organised crime and Jihadist terrorism particularly as concerns drug trafficking, documents forgery and falsification, smuggling of migrants, human trafficking and theft.
- Individuals linked to or inspired by Al Qaeda appear to have greater interest in the theological dimension compared to those connected to Daesh, who appeared primarily focused on the establishment of the "Caliphate".
- However, in both cases, the ideological indoctrination happened through Jihadist propaganda materials available online and radical sermons delivered by so-called "hate preachers".
- All individuals studied, showed a form of depersonalisation of the victim: the enemy (infidels, nonbelievers, apostates...) lose their human dignity and become mere targets to be destroyed.
- The legal proceedings of one particular individual showed how the term "Islamophobia" is sometimes used as a way to limit freedom of speech. In the specific case examined, public criticism against suicide attacks is labelled as "Islamophobia" and part of "Zionist propaganda".
- Family connections and marriage were the basis of the establishment of new groups affiliated to or inspired by Daesh.
- The ideological dimension of the radicalisation process examined, appears as the fundamental driver. Other contributing factors were the issues of identity, real or perceived grievances and family conflicts. Additionally, these two aspects appeared particularly linked to each other.
- The role of women in this study appears significant both in terms of numbers – 24.1% of the individuals analysed – but also as concerns their leadership roles in the structure of their respective groups.
- The recruitment strategy of Daesh in targeting women enhanced a very specific role for women which, as of 2017, also included combat operations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers offered a series of recommendations addressed to policymakers, law enforcements authorities and practitioners.

- Providing adequate training for teachers and educators to support them in the understanding of prevention of radicalisation as well as recognising possible signs of radicalisation.
- Bringing closer together civil society and law enforcement practitioners to facilitate mutual understanding of cooperation in their respective roles as part of effective prevention efforts.
- Empower and support individuals and groups from within relevant communities as with a view to challenging and deconstructing extremist narratives.
- Expand cooperation and exchange of good practices with other EU member states in the fields of prevention of radicalisation, intelligence and law enforcement efforts.



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Comprendere la radicalizzazione JIHADISTA

Il caso Italia

Uno studio sui procedimenti
penali avviati in Italia per reati legati al terrorismo
di matrice jihadista

Giovedì
28 novembre
14:00-18:00
2019

Biblioteca della Camera
Sala del Refettorio
Via del Seminario, 76
00186 Roma

Introduce

Licia Soncini

Fondatrice e Presidente, NOMOS Centro Studi Parlamentari

Presentazione degli autori ed esperti della

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Francesco Bergoglio Errico, Antropologo e Ricercatore

Anna Maria Cossiga, Antropologa e Docente

Enrico Colarossi, Analista Senior

Interventi di

Maurizio Romanelli, Magistrato,

già Procuratore Nazionale Aggiunto presso la Procura Nazionale
Antimafia e Antiterrorismo

Augusto Zaccariello, Comandante Nucleo Investigativo Centrale,
Polizia Penitenziaria

Pasquale Angelosanto, Comandante Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale,
Arma dei Carabinieri

Claudio Galzerano, Dirigente Superiore, Polizia di Stato

Concludono

Roberta Bonazzi, Presidente, European Foundation for Democracy

Yahya Pallavicini, Presidente, Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana

Moderatori

Anna Zizola, Analista, Parlamento europeo

Paolo Inghilleri, Professore Ordinario di Psicologia Sociale,
Università degli Studi di Milano

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