



**RUSSIAN
INTERNATIONAL
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WORKING PAPER

**RECRUITING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS
AND DEALING WITH RETURNEES:
EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE
AND THE PROSPECTS FOR RUSSIA**

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The Working Paper highlights and compares the most credible estimates of the number of militants arriving from different countries according to data published by the security services of various nations, as well as by leading research centres across the globe. Particular attention is paid to assessments of the situation regarding terrorists leaving, and then coming back to Europe, Russia and Central Asian countries; the link between migration and the recruitment of terrorists; and an analysis of the most common factors driving recruitment. This paper also includes a review of methods used by other countries to combat the recruitment of terrorists, as well as measures taken to reintegrate returning militants into society.

The views and opinions of author expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of RIAC.

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Returning Terrorist Fighters: General Structure of the New Security Threat

One of the main security challenges for Russia and a number of other countries around the world today is the return of militants who have fought for Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. This ever-present threat highlights the need to study the key global trends with regard to sending foreign militants to conflict zones, as well as international experience of working with Jihadists who have returned to their home countries.

These fighters re-enter their countries of residence with newfound terrorist technologies developed by Al-Qaeda and then “perfected” by IS. For example, as many as 72 cases involving terrorism in France, where the terror threat is particularly high, were linked to the conflict in Syria.

Statistics show that, over the course of one year (2014/2015), the number of international crimes committed by former militants rose by 200 percent.¹ Among the terrorist attacks carried out by people who were trained in Syria were the events in Brussels and Jakarta (Indonesia). A number of terrorist attacks were carried out all over the globe in early 2016, the most notable being: Libya (January 7), Turkey (January 12), Indonesia (January 14), and Pakistan (January 20). This shows that no country – either developed or developing, Islamic or non-Islamic – is immune to the threat. In addition to carrying out terrorist attacks, returning Jihadists may conduct extremist propaganda campaigns, engage in religious radicalism or recruit new members to IS. They have various financial instruments at their disposal to carry out such tasks (for example, they can simply hire extremists).² Finally, it is not only returning terrorist fighters that can carry out attacks and other activities related to the spread of terrorism and extremism, but also those who have been influenced by them or by the propaganda spread by fighters abroad in social networks.

Statistics show that, over the course of one year (2014/2015), the number of international crimes committed by former militants rose by 200 percent.

In autumn 2015, the threat of terrorist attacks taking place on the territory of the Russian Federation rose sharply as a result of the Russian military operation in Syria. On October 12, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) reported that it had prevented an IS-led terrorist attack from being carried out on public transport. According to the FSB, the suspects were Russian citizens who had been trained at Islamist training camps in Syria.³ On October 15, the

¹ Letter Dated 13 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Established Pursuant to Resolution 1373 (2001) Concerning Counter-Terrorism Addressed to the President of the Security Council // United Nations [official website], May 14, 2015, p.11.
URL: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/338.

² Ibid., p. 4.

³ Bomb on a Train: What we Learned in Court about the Failed “Syrian” Terrorist Attack // RBC. October 13, 2015. URL: <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/13/10/2015/561d05589a794738fba68fb5> (in Russian).

Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation reported that two men in Pyt-Yakh (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region) had been apprehended on suspicion of planning, at the behest of an IS supporter, a terrorist attack at one of the city's mosques.⁴ The attack was prevented. On October 19, the FSB reported that it had prevented a bomb from exploding on a suburban train in the Krasnodar Region. When questioned, the suspect revealed that he had been planning on fleeing to Syria after the attack to join the ranks of IS.⁵ On October 20, ten natives of Central Asia connected to Hizb ut-Tahrir (which is also included in Russia's list of terrorist organizations) were detained in Moscow, with two of them being taken into custody by court order.⁶ The explosion on a Russian airplane above Egypt's Sinai Peninsula on October 31, 2015 was one of the most audacious acts of international terrorism. The first terrorist attack on Russian soil for which IS claimed responsibility took place on December 29, 2015, when visitors to the Naryn-Kala fortress in Derbent, Dagestan, came under fire from small arms. Eleven people were injured as a result of the attack, with one dying later in hospital.⁷

We can assume that Russia's continued participation in the fight against IS and Al-Qaeda in Syria will mean that the number of attempted terrorist attacks will only grow.

Almost 80 percent of respondents believe that the country's leadership can protect the population from the terrorist threat.

The current threat is understood not only by the government, but also by Russian society as a whole.⁸ According to a survey conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) on October 22, 2015, as high as 65 percent of respondents fear becoming the victim of a terrorist attack.⁹ This compared to 7 percent in 2014. The number of respondents who see no threat to the Russian Federation fell from 21 percent in 2014 to 5 percent one year later. The most frequently given answer to the question "Who, in your opinion, poses the greatest threat to Russian citizens" was "Islamic State" (23 percent of respondents). Not a single person felt a threat from that organization just two years ago. However, almost 80 percent of respondents believe that the Russian leadership can protect the population from the terrorist threat. Of course, Russian government agencies need to justify the trust that has been placed in them, and studying the experience of other countries with regard to terrorists being recruited and then returning to their home countries may prove to be very useful.

⁴ Planned Islamic State Terrorist Attack Prevented in Ugra // RBC. October 15, 2015.
URL: <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/15/10/2015/561f4ae09a794798626b6156> (in Russian).

⁵ FSB Reports Foiled Terrorist Attack on Commuter Train // RBC. October 19, 2015.
URL: <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/19/10/2015/5624d9ee9a794739e4bae1ea> (in Russian).

⁶ Two Suspected Terrorists Arrested in Moscow // RBC. October 20, 2015.
URL: <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/20/10/2015/562614ed9a7947c845470d7a> (in Russian).

⁷ URL: http://www.aif.ru/incidents/figil_vzyala_na_sebya_otvetstvennost_za_obstrel_turistov_v_dagestane (in Russian).

⁸ Officers' Briefing: Vladimir Putin Calls for the Anti-Terror Operation to be Stepped Up // Rossiyskaya Gazeta. October 20, 2015. URL: <http://www.rg.ru/2015/10/20/putin-site.html> (in Russian).

⁹ Territorial Threat: Monitoring Survey. Press Release No. 2959 // VCIOM. October 23, 2015.
URL: <http://www.wciom.ru/index.php?id=236&uid=115439> (in Russian).

The UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014) defines foreign terrorist fighters as “individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict”.¹⁰

In order to deal with foreign terrorist fighters, it is extremely important to understand exactly how many there are. Lack of knowledge makes it impossible to analyse trends or develop strategies and tactics for fighting terrorism. At the same time, the experience of other countries has shown that the process of quantifying foreign terrorist fighters from a given country is extremely difficult.

We are dealing exclusively with estimates, which are necessarily subjective and can be distorted easily.

In UN Security Council documents, as well as most studies, foreign terrorist fighters are counted in terms of membership in such structures as IS and Al-Qaeda, including its numerous subdivisions. There is, nevertheless, a certain blurring of boundaries in terms of these fighters’ membership network structures (that is, structures where there is no fixed membership by definition). There are four key problems associated with attempts to quantify foreign terrorist fighters:

1. *We are dealing exclusively with estimates, which are necessarily subjective and can easily be distorted.* As the UN Security Council methodological documents mention, “Accurate and reliable data on the number of foreign terrorist fighters is impossible to obtain.”¹¹ This is because the terrorist structures themselves do not keep accurate records in terms of the number of fighters in their ranks (because they are network structures that often do not have properly defined membership), and the records they do have are not made public. Accordingly, researchers deal with estimates of the number of fighters, rather than with concrete statistics. The most reliable estimates are probably those given by the government agencies of “countries of origin” of terrorist fighters, as well as those provided by international expert research centres. These are the reports that we will refer to in this paper. But we must keep in mind that the numbers given could be distorted deliberately for political or private interests. Most often, government agencies in developing countries that supply the majority of foreign terrorist fighters have a vested interest in hiding the scope of the problem, for political reasons (for example, to increase their prestige or as part of a propaganda campaign). In some cases, on the contrary, it is advantageous to exaggerate the problem – in order to obtain assistance from abroad, for example, or as a way to justify their actions (whatever they may be) in the fight against the terrorist threat.

It is difficult to tell the number of fighters from a given country in Syria and Iraq (even more so if we take the fact that they move frequently between the two into account) apart from the total number of foreigners fighting in all the hotspots in the Middle East and North Africa.

¹⁰ Resolution 2178 (2014) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7272nd meeting, on 24 September 2014. United Nations [official website]. September 24, 2014, p. 2.
URL: http://www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf

¹¹ Letter Dated 13 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee, p. 9.

2. *The conditionality of the borders in the Syria–Iraq conflict zone.* It is difficult to tell the number of fighters from a given country in Syria and Iraq (even more so if we take the fact that they move frequently between the two into account) apart from the total number of foreigners fighting in all the hotspots in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as those undergoing training at terrorist camps in these countries. It is for these reasons that the UN documents count the number of foreign terrorist fighters in global terms – that is, in all structures around the world associated with IS and Al–Qaeda. Certain estimates are possible, however, such as the number of IS fighters, the number of Al–Qaeda fighters, the number of fighters in Syria, the number of fighters in Iraq, etc.

3. *The difficulty in determining precisely which groups identify themselves as belonging to IS.* It is difficult to tell those fighting in the name of IS in Syria and Iraq apart from those fighting in the name of groups with similar ideologies, especially those associated with Al–Qaeda. This is because groups with similar ideologies often fight together, and because the very structure of Al–Qaeda, a network association in the classical sense of the term, is highly dispersed.

It is difficult to tell those fighting in the name of IS in Syria and Iraq apart from those fighting in the name of groups with similar ideologies.

4. *Estimates for different countries are given for different periods.* The number of foreign terrorist fighters changes constantly, although it primarily trends upwards, and sharply at that. Attempts to summarize the information are problematic because the source data refer to different periods of time.

An analysis of the most reliable estimates of the number of people leaving their home country and – where the relevant information is available – returning after spending time “becoming” a terrorist allows us to assess global trends and the place of Russia and the post–Soviet countries within them.

Recruitment of Fighters: Motives for Joining Terrorists

There is a number of reasons why young people end up joining international terrorist organizations. In general, the fact that these organizations are successful in their recruiting is rooted in the spiritual and social troubles that the countries where recruitment takes place are experiencing.

The first reason is the spiritual crisis of secular culture in the post-industrial era. A study conducted by the French Center for the Prevention of Islamic Related Sects (Centre de prevention contre les dérives sectaires liées à l'Islam, CPDSI) revealed that it is cultural and psychological considerations, rather than social problems, that play a key role in the recruitment of terrorists. According to the study, it is mostly young people from middle class (67 percent), atheist families (80 percent) that become involved into the activities of radical Islamic organizations.¹²

Young radicals discover in the idea of Jihad “a coherent system of values that they could not find in their home country.”

In the modern post-industrial world, religious fundamentalists offer very simple answers to spiritual questions and matters of life and death. Secular culture today concentrated on the individual's unique search for meaning and his or her path in life. Most young people are not ready to make such a decision; they are not prepared psychologically to do so. Fundamentalist ideologies strictly define one's purpose in life, they create a sense of belonging to something bigger than the individual. As Sweden's National Coordinator of the Struggle against Violent Extremism Mona Sahlin admitted, she cannot properly define Swedish culture: “You [immigrants] have a culture, an identity, a history, something that binds you together. And what do we [the Swedish people] have? We have Midsummer's Eve and ‘corny’ things like that.”¹³ Islamists share a sense of belonging to a “group that has a distinct identity that puts them in opposition to the rest of the world.”¹⁴ A report prepared by a special commission of the French Senate concluded that young radicals discover in the idea of Jihad “a coherent system of values that they could not find in their home country.”¹⁵

The second reason are social problems. An important factor driving the recruitment of terrorists in Western countries is the low level of integration of the Muslim youth, especially migrants, into society. Disadvantaged young people

¹² Rapport: pourquoi ces jeunes sont attirés par le Jihad // Le Parisien. 17 Nov. 2014. URL: <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/rapport-pourquoi-ces-jeunes-sont-attires-par-le-jihad-17-11-2014-4299381.php>

¹³ Cited in: Carlqvist I. Swedish Jihadi: “Go There with a Bomb”. One Month of Islam in Sweden: June 2015 // Gatestone Institute. July 14, 2015. URL: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6144/swedish-jihadi>

¹⁴ Sœur J.-P. Filières ‘djihadistes’: pour une réponse global et sans faiblesse. Rapport fait au nom de la Commission d'enquête sur l'organisation et les moyens de la lutte contre les réseaux djihadistes en France et en Europe // Sénat [official website]. 1 April 2015. URL: <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r14-388/r14-3883.html>

¹⁵ Rapport: pourquoi ces jeunes sont attirés par le Jihad.

from poor neighbourhoods remain the key target audience for recruiters. These people are easily influenced by IS, galvanized by romantic notions of Islamic brotherhood, a sense of being part of a bigger idea, etc.¹⁶ However, the further away from the Western world the recruitment is carried out, the greater the role played by the desire of the fighters to simply make good money and carve out a place for themselves in life. In this sense, becoming a “Jihadist” is just an extreme form of finding. A large role in the recruitment of terrorist fighters in third world countries is played by the desire to protest against corruption in society.

The third reason why young people end up joining international terrorist organizations is the fact that Islamic propaganda is extremely effective, especially in the case of IS. Such propaganda is used to appeal to just about any reason that young people might have for turning to extremism. The IS has developed specific recruitment methods for all kinds of groups of potential recruits.

An important factor driving the recruitment of terrorists in Western countries is the low level of integration of the Muslim youth, especially migrants, into society. This requires corresponding counter-propaganda measures aimed at the same social and psychological groups to be developed.

The majority of people who get drawn in by the propaganda are young adolescent men with a little to no education and no desire to improve themselves through formal study.¹⁷ Campaign materials published by IS appeal to the desire of these young people to lead a carefree life among friends – promising food, sunshine, etc.¹⁸ In these materials, IS is presented as a kind of utopia, an alternative to the world that the target audience has grown up in, a world where they can never realise their full potential.¹⁹ Separate approaches have been developed for recruiting young fighters: here it is common to play on the dissatisfaction of potential recruits with their bosses at work.²⁰ There are also methods in place for recruiting women, particularly young girls.²¹ All this requires corresponding counter-propaganda measures aimed at the same social and psychological groups to be developed.

¹⁶ Topping A., Halliday J., Ismail N. Who is Mohammed Emwazi? From Shy, Football-Loving Boy to Isis Killer // The Guardian. March 2, 2015. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/mar/02/who-is-mohammed-emwazi-from-lovely-boy-to-islamic-state-executioner>

¹⁷ La Défense préoccupée par les menaces de radicalisation dans les armées // Le Figaro. July 16, 2015.

¹⁸ ISIS Propaganda Leaflet by Brit Terrorist Promises Wannabe Jihadis Sunshine, Kit Kats and Even Travel by Zeppelin // Mirror Online. May 20, 2015. URL: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-propaganda-leaflet-brit-terrorist-5729591>

¹⁹ Engel P. ISIS is Winning Hearts and Minds in a Deceptively Simple Way // The Business Insider. 15 July 2015.

URL: <http://www.businessinsider.com/isis-is-winning-hearts-and-minds-in-a-deceptively-simple-way-2015-7>

²⁰ La Défense préoccupée par les menaces de radicalisation dans les armées.

²¹ Vanished Swedish Teen Calls Mum from Syria // The Local. June 30, 2015.

URL: <http://www.thelocal.se/20150630/missing-swedish-teen-calls-mum-from-syria>; Hembrey J. ISIS Recruits: Radicalized Young Women Motivated by Ideology, Sense of Adventure // CBC News. February 27, 2015. URL: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/isis-recruits-radicalized-young-women-motivated-by-ideology-sense-of-adventure-1.2973691>

Foreign Fighters from Countries around the World in Islamic State and Al-Qaeda Structures: Global Trends and the Role of the Post-Soviet Countries within Them

The rapid growth in the number of foreign Jihadists fighting in Syria and Iraq has forced the international community to pay greater attention to assessing their numbers. In November 2014, a special UN Security Council committee estimated the number of foreign terrorist fighters to be between 15,000 and 20,000 (with most joining IS), but the total could be as high as 30,000.²²

One of the first attempts to analyse the data on foreign terrorist fighters was the report published by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) on the number of foreign nationals involved in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq.²³ ICSR is a joint project developed by five universities from the United Kingdom, the United States, Israel and Jordan. The sample used in the study consisted of 50 countries that were able to provide the necessary statistical data. The figures given are correct as of the middle of 2014.

According to the report, there are 20,730 foreign nationals fighting in Iraq and Syria on the side of terrorist organizations. Most come from the Middle East (11,000 fighters), with some 3,000 coming from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Rough estimates suggest that 5–10 percent of foreign fighters are killed during military operations; 10–15 percent have already fled the conflict zones, returning to their homelands or stuck in transit countries.

Looking at the data in terms of groups of countries, naturally, most foreign terrorist fighters come from Muslim countries (Table 1).

More than half of the countries in the world are currently the sources of foreign terrorist fighters. Among the various Al-Qaeda associates around the world, including the splinter group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), there are more than 25,000 foreign terrorist fighters involved, travelling from more than 100 UN Member States.

There are substantially fewer foreign terrorist fighters from non-Muslim countries in Syria and Iraq – with the exception of the EU countries, which will be discussed separately. The majority of these fighters come either from Muslim minority groups living in the non-Muslim countries listed in Table 2, or from among the relatively recent migrant arrivals from Islamic countries. Accordingly, the list mostly includes those countries that have a Muslim minority or otherwise a large number of foreign migrants living on their territory.

²² Letter dated 13 November 2014 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) Concerning Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities Addressed to the President of the Security Council. URL: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/338

²³ Neumann P. Foreign Fighter Total in Syria/Iraq Now Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s // ICSR, January 26, 2015. URL: <http://www.icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s>

Table 1. ICSR estimates of fighters from muslim countries as of the end of 2014.

Country	Total number of fighters
Afghanistan	50
Albania	90
Algeria	200
Bahrain	12
Bosnia	330
Egypt	360
Jordan	1500
Kazakhstan	250
Kingdom of North Sudan	100
Kosovo	100–150
Kuwait	70
Kyrgyzstan	100
Lebanon	900
Libya	600
Morocco	1500
Pakistan	500
Palestine	120
Qatar	15
Saudi Arabia	1500–2500
Somalia	70
Tajikistan	190
Tunisia	1500–3000
Turkey	600
Turkmenistan	360
United Arab Emirates	15
Uzbekistan	500
Yemen	110

The report published by the Security Council Committee Concerning Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities in May 2015 is of particular interest. “More than half of the countries in the world are currently generating foreign terrorist fighters. Among the various Al-Qaida associates around the world, including the splinter group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), there are more than 25,000 foreign terrorist fighters involved, travelling from more than 100 Member States.”²⁴ From 2014 to 2015 “[t]here has also been a sharp increase (from 70 to 733 percent) in fighters from a number of European and Asian Member States.”²⁵ According to the report, the biggest non-Muslim feeder countries are France and the Russian Federation.

²⁴ Letter dated 19 May 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) Concerning Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals and Entities Addressed to the President of the Security Council // United Nations [official website]. May 19, 2015, p. 3.
URL: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/358&referer=/english/&Lang=E

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Table 2. ICSR estimates of fighters from non-muslim countries (excluding the EU) as of the end of 2014.

Country	Total number of fighters
Russia	800–1500
China	300
Australia	100–250
United States	100
Canada	100
Serbia	50–70
Ukraine	50
New Zealand	6

Around 20,000 foreign terrorist fighters are based in Syria and Iraq, as members of IS and Al-Qaeda structures. “Afghan security forces estimated in March 2015 that some 6,500 foreign terrorist fighters were active in Afghanistan. Most are associated with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, 300 with the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, 200 with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, 160 with Lashkar-e-Taiba and 150 with the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement.”²⁶ A key UN expert, Alexander Evans, noted in this respect that there is a risk that the international community could focus too intensely on Syria, Iraq and Libya (where most fighters from Syria and Iraq are now relocating) and thus forget about Afghanistan, where the threat is just as serious.

Let us look at other estimates of the number of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq that have appeared in open Western sources. According to some estimates, there are up to 4000 Western foreign fighters in the ranks of IS in Syria and Iraq, including 550 women.²⁷ Statistics published in April 2015 suggest that 75 Canadian citizens had left the country to fight in Iraq and Syria, with a total of 150 being members of terrorist groups abroad.²⁸ As of January 2015, there were 100 U.S. citizens in the ranks of IS.²⁹ FBI data suggests that over 200 U.S. citizens had “tried to fight” for IS.³⁰ The American press quoted similar figures in August 2015.³¹

Consolidated data allowing us to track global tendencies can be found in a paper published by the Brookings Institution in August 2015.³² Table 3 lists 20 countries

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷ Saltman E.M., Smith M. ‘Till Martyrdom Do Us Part’: Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon // Insiteute for Strategic Dialogue. 2015. URL: http://www.strategicdialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf; Bora K. ISIS Recruiting ‘Increasingly Young’ Europeans: About 4,000 Joined Islamic State In Syria: EU // International Business Times. June 18, 2015. URL: <http://www.ibtimes.com/isis-recruiting-increasingly-young-europeans-about-4000-joined-islamic-state-syria-eu-1972462>

²⁸ CSIS Sees Sharp Increase in Canadians Joining Islamic State // Toronto Sun. April 21, 2015. URL: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/04/21/csis-sees-sharp-increase-in-canadians-joining-islamic-state>

²⁹ Callimachi R. ISIS and the Lonely Young American // The New York Times, June 26, 2015. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/world/americas/isis-online-recruiting-american.html>

³⁰ FBI: More Than 200 Americans Have Tried to Fight for ISIS // The Hill, July 8, 2015. URL: <http://www.thehill.com/policy/national-security/247256-more-than-200-americans-tried-to-fight-for-isis-fbi-says>

³¹ Rawnsley A. Meet the Americans Flocking to Iraq and Syria to Fight the Islamic State // Foreign Policy. August 26, 2015. URL: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/26/meet-the-americans-flocking-to-iraq-and-syria-to-fight-the-islamic-state>

³² Lister C. Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Integration? // Brookings Institution. August 13, 2015. URL: <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/08/13-foreign-fighters-lister/en-fighters-web.pdf>

that have become the main feeders of foreign terrorist fighters to IS. It should be noted that, in addition to Russia, the list also includes other former Soviet countries: Uzbekistan (500 people), Turkmenistan (350) and Kyrgyzstan (300). In terms of the proportion of the population leaving to fight for IS, the leading country is Turkmenistan, followed by Kyrgyzstan. Despite the high numbers of Russian and Uzbek nationals travelling to Syria and Iraq to join the ranks of IS in absolute terms, the percentage per capita is actually quite low.

Afghan security forces estimated in March 2015 that some 6,500 foreign terrorist fighters were active in Afghanistan.

The information on Russia and the former Soviet states in the paper published by the Brookings Institution is somewhat outdated, as it was based on the same data used by ICSR. More recent data was provided by Russian government agencies in September/October 2015. According to the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), there were 2,400 Russian fighters in the ranks of IS as of the middle of September 2015.³³ This makes Russia the number-three feeder country for IS in absolute terms, behind only Tunisia and Saudi Arabia. It should be pointed out here, however, that while the number of foreign terrorist fighters from Russia per capita is high compared to European countries, it is nevertheless modest in comparison with Muslim countries, including those that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

New information was also made available recently on the number of foreign fighters from the former Soviet countries. On October 16, 2015, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin announced during a meeting of the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS: “According to various estimates, there are already between 5,000 and 7,000 people from Russia and other CIS countries fighting for IS. And we, of course, cannot allow them to use the experience they are acquiring in Syria now against us at home in the future.”³⁴ This more recent estimate forces us to re-examine the figures given for other former Soviet states, as it would mean that, in addition to the 2,000–2,500 Russian IS fighters in Syria and Iraq, there must be another 2500–4500 from other CIS countries, primarily those in Central Asia. It is worth pointing out here that only foreign terrorist fighters from the former Soviet Union fighting for IS in Syria and Iraq were included in these estimates. We should also add Russian and CIS citizens who have gone to Afghanistan, as well as those in Al-Qaeda terrorist training camps throughout the Middle East, to these figures. Such data is not available, however.

The most recent report on the number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling to fight in Syria and Iraq, which was published by the U.S.-based Soufan Group in December 2015, essentially repeats the figures quoted above:³⁵ Russia is in third place in terms of the number of fighters (2,400), behind Tunisia (6,000) and Saudi

³³ FSB: Over 5,000 Citizens of Russia and Central Asia Fighting for IS // TASS. September 18, 2015. URL: <http://www.tass.ru/politika/2272750> (in Russian).

³⁴ Meeting of the Council of the Heads of State // President of the Russian Federation [official website]. October 16, 2015. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50515> (in Russian).

³⁵ The Soufan Group. Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq. December 2015. URL: http://www.soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TSG_ForeignFightersUpdate_FINAL.pdf

Table 3. The Top 20 source–countries for Islamic State, according to Brookings Institution data.

Country	Number of IS fighters
Tunisia	3000
Saudi Arabia	2500
Jordan	2200
Morocco	2000
Russia	1500
France	1500
Turkey	1300
Lebanon	900
United Kingdom	700
Germany	700
Libya	600
Uzbekistan	500
Pakistan	500
Belgium	440
Turkmenistan	360
Egypt	360
Kyrgyzstan	350
Bosnia	340
China	300
Sweden	300

Arabia (2,500), with Turkey (2,100) and Jordan (2,000) rounding out the Top 5. In many ways, the Soufan Group’s publication differs very little from the reports cited above in terms of the figures presented. We should note, however, that the numbers given for former Soviet countries in Central Asia are significantly higher: 500 for Kyrgyzstan (the previous report estimated 360); 386 for Tajikistan (up from 190); 300 for Kazakhstan (up from 250). The figures for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (500 and 360, respectively) are exactly the same as in the previous report.

There is a risk that the international community could focus too intensely on Syria, Iraq and Libya (where most fighters from Syria and Iraq are now relocating) and thus forget about Afghanistan, where the threat is just as serious.

The total number of foreign fighters from Central Asian countries in Syria and Iraq is thus 2,046, which is comparable to the number of fighters from Russia (although the number of militants per one million people is around three times higher). To be sure, the figures quoted by President Putin at the meeting of the Council of the Heads of State of the CIS would force us to conclude that the data presented by the Soufan Group are understated with regard to CIS countries (specifically Central European states).³⁶

³⁶ Meeting of the Council of the Heads of State // President of the Russian Federation [official website]. October 16, 2015. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50515> (in Russian).

On December 25, 2015, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation clarified data regarding Russian foreign terrorist fighters (although only in Syria and Iraq). According to the data, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB are tracking the movements of 2,800 Russian nationals who have travelled to these countries in order to join terrorist groups such as IS, Jabhat al-Nusra (the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda) and Jaish al-Muhajireen wal-Ansar (a group of Islamists made up almost entirely of Russian and CIS nationals).³⁷ This information would suggest that Russia has surpassed Syria in terms of the number of citizens now fighting for international terrorist organizations, and became second in the world only to Tunisia.

Russia has surpassed Syria in terms of the number of citizens now fighting for international terrorist organizations, and became second in the world only to Tunisia.

FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov had even more disturbing information for those in attendance at a meeting of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee on January 29, 2016: “At present, more than 2,900 Russian nationals are suspected of involvement in the activities of international terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq.”³⁸

³⁷ Russian Security Services Say Hundreds of Terrorist Fighters are Returning from Syria and Iraq.
URL: <http://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/12/2015/567bdfd9a7947a3b3bc7387> (in Russian).

³⁸ URL: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2877907> (in Russian).

The Number of Foreign Fighters from the EU fighting in Syria and Iraq: The Terrorist Problem in Europe

The European Union countries are keeping a close eye on the issue of the EU nationals leaving their home countries to go and fight in Syria and Iraq, seeing it as a serious challenge to their national security. The problem is closely linked to the extremely difficult issue of Muslim migrants adapting to life in Europe. As a result, we have some fairly reliable figures with regard to this group of foreign terrorist fighters.

The problem is closely linked to the extremely sensitive issue of Muslim migrants adapting to life in Europe.

According to figures quoted by EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove and based on official data from the EU member states, in October 2014, there were more than 3,000 European nationals fighting on the side of the terrorists.³⁹ The U.S. Congressional Research Service reported in April 2015 that there are between 4,000 and 5,000 European IS fighters in Syria and Iraq.⁴⁰ European Union Commissioner for Justice Vera Jourova quoted a higher figure for the same period – between 5,000 and 6,000.⁴¹ According to Europol, around 5000 European nationals were fighting on the side of the extremists as of June 26, 2015.⁴² A similar estimate was made by ICSR Director Peter Neumann towards the end of September.⁴³

A report presented to the Council of Europe on June 27, 2015 by Fatih University (Istanbul) professor Tahir Abbas suggested that there are 6,000 EU citizens currently fighting for IS.⁴⁴ The Prime Minister of France Manuel Valls has estimated that the number of European Jihadists will reach 10,000 before the end of 2015.⁴⁵ On the whole, the information presented shows that the number of foreign terrorist fighters from Europe is growing rapidly.

³⁹ Dihadistes européens: "le danger est assez important pour empêcher les services de renseignements de dormir" // *Libération*. October 23, 2014. URL: <http://www.bruxelles.blogs.liberation.fr/2014/11/23/dihadistes-europeens-le-danger-est-assez-important-pour-empêcher-les-services-de-renseignements-de->

⁴⁰ European Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Assessments, Responses, and Issues for the United States // Congressional Research Service / Federation of American Scientists. April 27, 2015. URL: <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R44003.pdf>

⁴¹ Vera Jourova: "Près de 6000 Européens sont partis faire le djihad" // *Le Figaro*. April 12, 2015. URL: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2015/04/12/01003-20150412ARTFIG00128-vera-jourova-pres-de-6000-europeens-sont-partis-faire-le-djihad.php>

⁴² 5000 Europeans joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria, says Europol // *Iraqi News*. June 23, 2015. URL: <http://www.iraqinews.com/arab-world-news/5000-europeans-joined-isis-iraq-syria-says-europol>

⁴³ Freytas-Tamura K. ISIS Defectors Reveal Disillusionment // *The New York Times*. September 20, 2015. URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/europe/isis-defectors-reveal-disillusionment.html>

⁴⁴ Abbas T. Preventing Islamophobia and Radicalisation // Professor Tahir Abbas [his personal website]. June 23, 2015. URL: <http://www.tahirabbas.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/preventing-islamophobia-and-radicalisation.pdf>

⁴⁵ Manuel Valls: 10.000 Européens jihadistes fin 2015 // *RTL*. March 8, 2015. URL: <http://www.rtl.fr/actu/societe-faits-divers/manuel-valls-10-000-europeens-jihadistes-fin-2015-777693000>

Table 4. ICSR estimates of the distribution of foreign terrorist fighters by European country as of the end of 2014.

Europe	Total number of fighters	Per capita
Austria	100–150	17
Belgium	440	40
Denmark	100–150	27
Finland	50–70	13
France	1,200	18
Germany	500–600	7.5
Ireland	30	7
Italy	80	1.5
Netherlands	200–250	14.5
Norway	60	12
Spain	50–100	2
Sweden	150–180	19
Switzerland	40	5
United Kingdom	500–600	9.5

The distribution of foreign terrorist fighters by European country is dealt with in the ICSR report, with estimates of the number of foreign nationals involved in the conflicts in Syria and Iraq (Table 4). The data is for the second half of 2014, but the approximate number of foreign fighters per capita is still relevant.

It is clear from this report that, in absolute terms, most foreign fighters come from such major European countries as France (1st place), the United Kingdom and Germany (tied for 2nd place). However, the number of fighters as a proportion of the population is highest in smaller countries that had previously been considered relatively trouble-free: Belgium (1st place), Denmark (2nd) and Sweden (3rd). A particularly difficult situation can be observed with regard to France: according to the estimates above, it has the highest total number of foreign fighters, and the fourth highest number per capita.

Now let us look at the situation in those EU countries that are most interesting in terms of the subject of this paper.

On the whole, the information presented shows that the number of foreign terrorist fighters from Europe is growing rapidly. In absolute terms, most foreign fighters come from such major European countries as France, the United Kingdom and Germany.

FRANCE. In terms of the number of fighters fighting on the side of IS in Syria and Iraq, France remains the most problematic country in the European Union. At least one quarter of all European jihadists come from France (some estimates have this figure as high as one half). What is more, the number of fighters from France is trending upwards, and the threat posed by returnees is also very serious.

Official estimates put the number of French IS fighters in 2012 at 860.⁴⁶ A report delivered by the French Senate Commission on April 1, 2015, however, stated that there were 1432 French nationals fighting in Syria, or 47 percent of all Europeans involved in military operations in that country. This represents a rapid growth. According to a UN report published on April 7, 2015,⁴⁷ France is one of the top four feeder countries for IS, and the major Western supplier of foreign fighters.⁴⁸

A particularly difficult situation can be observed with regard to France: according to the estimates above, it has the highest total number of foreign fighters, and the fourth highest number per capita.

On May 19, 2015, the French Ministry of the Interior reported that 1,600 French citizens were involved in terrorist activities for the IS terrorist network, with 457 of them operating out of Syria and Iraq.⁴⁹ According to Prime Minister of France Manuel Valls, there were 471 French nationals fighting for IS as of June 2, 2015.⁵⁰ On July 16, French Minister of the Interior Bernard Cazeneuve announced that around 1,850 French citizens were members of international terrorist networks, and around 500 of them were in Syria and Iraq.⁵¹ French intelligence, however, suggests that the number of French nationals directly involved in the fighting in Syria and Iraq is actually 906, and not 500.⁵²

In his speech before the Senate of September 15, 2015, French Minister of Foreign Affairs Laurent Fabius said that the total number of French citizens that were part of terrorist groups was as many as 1,800; 491 of whom were located in conflict zones, while 133 had been killed.⁵³

The Iraqi analyst and expert on IS Hisham Al-Hashimi said in an interview with *Le Monde* that between five and ten foreigners join the ranks of IS every day, many of whom are French nationals and are based in Syria.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ Grumberg J.-P. En 2014, 15% des Français soutenaient l'Etat islamique. En 2015, Ils sont combien? // Dreuz. Info. June 29, 2015. URL: <http://www.dreuz.info/2015/06/29/en-2014-15-des-francais-soutenaient-letat-islamique-en-2015-ils-sont-combien>

⁴⁷ Celtour-Rose D. Syrie, Irak, Libye: l'ONU chiffre à 25.000 les djihadistes étrangers // FranceTV. April 7, 2015 2015. URL: <http://geopolis.francetvinfo.fr/syrie-irak-libye-lonu-chiffre-a-25000-les-djihadistes-etrangers-57805>

⁴⁸ Seelow S. Sept Français sont tués chaque mois en Syrie // Le Monde. August 10, 2015. URL: http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2015/08/10/un-djihadiste-francais-sur-sept-est-mort-en-syrie_4718948_3224.html

⁴⁹ 59 jihadistes français sont morts en Irak et en Syrie depuis janvier // Valeurs Actuelles. July 31, 2015. URL: <http://www.valeursactuelles.com/monde/59-jihadistes-francais-sont-morts-en-irak-et-en-syrie-depuis-janvier-54738>

⁵⁰ Grumberg J.-P. En 2014, 15% des Français soutenaient l'Etat islamique. En 2015, Ils sont combien? // Dreuz. – Publié le 29.06.2015. URL: <http://www.dreuz.info/2015/06/29/en-2014-15-des-francais-soutenaient-letat-islamique-en-2015-ils-sont-combien/#sthash.iFCXMJEI.dpbs>

⁵¹ Terrorisme: Les chiffres de la lutte contre le djihadisme en France // 20 Minutes. July 16, 2015. URL: <http://www.20minutes.fr/societe/1652363-20150716-terrorisme-chiffres-lutte-contre-djihadisme-france>

⁵² De plus en plus de jihadistes français tués en Syrie et en Irak // Le Parisien. July 31, 2015. URL: <http://www.leparisien.fr/international/de-plus-en-plus-de-jihadistes-francais-tues-en-syrie-et-en-irak-31-07-2015-4981763.php>

⁵³ Déclaration du gouvernement sur l'engagement des forces aériennes: Intervention de Laurent Fabius au Sénat // France Diplomatie. September 19, 2015. URL: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/le-ministre-les-secretaires-d-etat/laurent-fabius/discours/article/declaration-du-gouvernement-sur-l-engagement-des-forces-aeriennees-intervention>

⁵⁴ Salton H. Sur la piste du fi ef de l'Etat islamique // Le Monde. September 15, 2015. URL: http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2015/09/15/sur-la-piste-de-l-emirautoproclame-de-l-etat-islamique_4758179_3218.html

There are also various figures on how many French foreign fighters have died fighting for IS and other terrorist organizations. According to Prime Minister Valls, that number was 110 as of June 2, 2015.⁵⁵ French intelligence counted a total of 126 deaths up to and including July 31, 2015, including three in 2012 and 59 in 2015. Five of those who had died were underage.⁵⁶

As of the beginning of 2015, the number of French returnees was 180, according to official data published by the magazine *Jeune Afrique*.⁵⁷

THE UNITED KINGDOM. The problem of British citizens leaving to join Islamic State has been felt quite strongly in the United Kingdom. The expert community, as well as the media, often view this in the context of a crisis of the British model of a multicultural society.

Around 500 British nationals are estimated to have left the United Kingdom between 2012 and autumn 2014.⁵⁸ That number had risen to 600 by early 2015.⁵⁹ A report published by ICSR put these figures at between 500 and 600 as of January 2015.⁶⁰ According to Metropolitan police assistant commissioner Mark Rowley (quoting statistics published by the country's intelligence services and the Metropolitan Police), around 700 Britons had left the United Kingdom to fight in the ranks of IS as of July 2015.⁶¹ Europol published the very same figure on July 26, 2015.⁶² And it was this number that was bandied around by the press in September 2015.⁶³

The total number of returning militants as of the beginning of 2015 was around 300 people, which creates a serious socio-political problem.

According to the ICSR report, the United Kingdom is not one of the largest feeder countries for IS in terms of the number of fighters per capita (9.5 per million residents).⁶⁴ However, taking into account the country's large population, the total number of returning militants as of the beginning of 2015 was around 300 people, which creates a serious socio-political problem.⁶⁵

⁵⁵ Grumberg J.-P. En 2014, 15% des Français soutenaient l'Etat islamique. En 2015, Ils sont combien?

⁵⁶ De plus en plus de jihadistes français tués en Syrie et en Irak.

⁵⁷ Le nombre de jihadistes européens dans les rangs de l'EI est-il en baisse? // *Jeune Afrique*. February 23, 2015. URL: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/225755/politique/le-nombre-de-jihadistes-europ-ens-dans-les-rangs-de-lei-est-il-en-baisse>

⁵⁸ Foreign Jihadists Flocking to Iraq and Syria on 'Unprecedented Scale' – UN // *The Guardian*. October 30, 2015. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/30/foreign-jihadist-iraq-syria-unprecedented-un-isis>

⁵⁹ Le nombre de jihadistes européens dans les rangs de l'EI est-il en baisse? // *Jeune Afrique*. - Publié le 23.02.2015. URL: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/225755/politique/le-nombre-de-jihadistes-europ-ens-dans-les-rangs-de-l-ei-est-il-en-baisse>

⁶⁰ Neumann P. Foreign Fighter Total in Syria/Iraq Now Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s.

⁶¹ Wintour P. UK Parents to Get Power to Cancel Children's Passports over Isis Fears // *The Guardian*. July 20, 2015. URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/jul/20/uk-parents-power-cancel-childrens-passports-isis-fears>

⁶² 5000 Europeans joined ISIS in Iraq and Syria, says Europol.

⁶³ Who are Britain's Jihadists? // *BBC News*. September 18, 2015. URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-32026985>

⁶⁴ Neumann P. Foreign Fighter Total in Syria/Iraq Now Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s.

⁶⁵ Le nombre de jihadistes européens dans les rangs de l'EI est-il en baisse? // *Jeune Afrique*. - Publié le 23.02.2015. URL: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/225755/politique/le-nombre-de-jihadistes-europ-ens-dans-les-rangs-de-l-ei-est-il-en-baisse>

GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES (GERMANY AND AUSTRIA). ICSR experts estimated the total number of German nationals fighting for IS to be between 500 and 600 as of the end of 2014, which works out as 7.5 people per capita (not the highest rate in Europe, but not the lowest either).⁶⁶ Figures from early 2015 suggest that this figure was 550,⁶⁷ before rising to more than 700 by August of that year.⁶⁸

The majority of Austrian terrorists (with Austrian citizenship) actually come from the Chechen and Bosnian ethnic communities.

The number of German jihadists killed in Syria and Iraq is estimated at more than 90 people.⁶⁹ As of early 2015, around 180 fighters had returned to Germany.⁷⁰ However, that figure had risen to 200 by the autumn of 2015.⁷¹

As for Austria, ICSR figures suggest that between 100 and 150 of the country's nationals had left to join IS as of the end of 2014. This translates to 17 jihadists per one million residents, meaning that Austria is one of the leading European feeder countries in terms of foreign fighters per capita.⁷² By spring 2015, however, the estimated number of Austrian jihadists had risen to 200, 70 of whom are assumed to have returned to Austria, with another 30 having been killed.⁷³ It should be noticed that the majority of Austrian terrorists (with Austrian citizenship) actually come from the Chechen and Bosnian ethnic communities. This precisely (the connection with Chechnya) makes the situation relevant for Russia.

⁶⁶ Anzahl ausländischer Kämpfer in Syrien und Irak auf Rekordhoch // Der Standard. January 30, 2015. URL: <http://www.derstandard.at/2000011059941/Anzahl-der-auslaendischen-Kaempfer-in-Syrien-und-im-Irak-auf>; Neumann P. Foreign Fighter Total in Syria/Iraq Now Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s. URL: <http://www.icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s>

⁶⁷ Le nombre de jihadistes européens dans les rangs de l'EI est-il en baisse? // Jeune Afrique. - Publié le 23.02.2015. URL: <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/225755/politique/le-nombre-de-jihadistes-europ-ens-dansles-rangs-de-l-ei-est-il-en-baisse>

⁶⁸ D'anciens djihadistes parlent // Deutsche Welle. August 3, 2015. URL: <http://www.dw.com/p/1G95E>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Le nombre de jihadistes européens dans les rangs de l'EI est-il en baisse?

⁷¹ Zahl deutscher IS-Kämpfer steigt // Zeit. March 6, 2015. URL: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2015-03/deutsche-islamisten-ausreisen-irak-syrien>

⁷² Anzahl ausländischer Kämpfer in Syrien und Irak auf Rekordhoch; Neumann P. Foreign Fighter Total in Syria/Iraq Now Exceeds 20,000; Surpasses Afghanistan Conflict in the 1980s.

⁷³ Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counterterrorism data taken from: Über 200 ISIS-Kämpfer aus Österreich // OE24. April 16, 2015. URL: <http://www.oe24.at/oesterreich/politik/daniel/Ueber-200-ISIS-Kaempfer-aus-Oesterreich/184889795>

Preventing Recruitment and Reintegrating Returning Fighters

A very relevant question for European countries is what to do with returning fighters: subject them to criminal prosecution and have the security services monitor their activities, or reintegrate and rehabilitate them.⁷⁴ These two approaches can conditionally be called “hard” and “soft”, respectively. In general, the best method would be to divide the fighters into two groups: one for those who are prepared to give up their life of crime, and one for those who are unwilling to adapt to civilian life. The soft approach is needed for the first group, while the hard approach is necessary for the second. A key challenge is to develop methods for separating returning fighters into these two groups, and existing international experience in this regard thus far falls short.

The most interesting method for rehabilitating former fighters is the so-called Aarhus Model of de-radicalization, which was developed in January 2015 in Denmark's second-largest city.⁷⁵ A special rehabilitation centre for was created for fighters returning from Syria and Iraq, and a hotline set up that people could call if they had any questions or problems relating to returnees. The key principle of the model is to get the victims of radicalization involved in society as much as possible. The process is controlled by the police, the social services, teachers and parents, who also act as mentors. A famous case study is that of Ahmed, a Danish citizen who was born in Somalia, which was published by the BBC.⁷⁶

The most interesting method for rehabilitating former fighters is the so-called Aarhus Model of de-radicalization.

However, this model has been subject to criticism from a number of experts (mainly Swedish experts) for overly soft approach to terrorists who have already committed serious crimes.⁷⁷ Swedish experts believe that a more reliable strategy would be to criminalize the actions of former foreign fighters and have their movements monitored by the security services.

Similar programmes to de-radicalize jihadists exist in other EU countries, including Austria.⁷⁸

On the whole, we can say that there is still no failsafe model for reintegrating former foreign fighters into society, and a model that would offer an effective alternative to purely punitive measures is difficult to come up with. Therefore,

⁷⁴ Lister Ch. Returning Foreign Fighters: Criminalization or Integration?

⁷⁵ Denmark Passes New Anti-Radicalisation Plan // The Local. January 27, 2015.
URL: <http://www.thelocal.dk/20150127/denmark-passes-new-anti-radicalisation-plan>

⁷⁶ Mansel T. How I Was De-Radicalised // BBC World Service. July 2, 2015.
URL: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-33344898>

⁷⁷ Carlqvist I. Sweden: “A Place to Islamize”. One Month of Islam in Sweden: May 2015 // Gatestone Institute. June 25, 2015. URL: <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/6044/sweden-islamization>

⁷⁸ Schulen sagen Extremismus den Kampf an // Kurier. January 24, 2015.
URL: <http://www.kurier.at/politik/inland/schulen-sagen-extremismus-den-kampf-an/109.902.248>

most experts agree that the most promising area for work would be to develop methods for *preventing people from joining* terrorist organizations in the first place.

There is still no failsafe model for reintegrating former foreign fighters into society, and a model that would offer an effective alternative to purely punitive measures is difficult to come up with.

Such methods are mostly being developed in Europe. This is because, as we have already seen, of all developed countries, it is primarily European Union that is faced with this problem on a large scale.

1. *Developing a campaign for the formation of a national identity aimed at integrating Muslim migrants.* Earlier, we pointed out that the risk of people being recruited into terrorist organizations in the European Union is linked to the problem of migrants failing to adapt to life in their home country. There are certain parallels with Russia here (particularly with regard to migrants from Central Asia), which makes this issue relevant in this country as well.

For example, the “Together: Austria” programme has been running in Austria since 2011, combining an internet info-campaign with elements from the national school curriculum.⁷⁹ An important mechanism of the migrant integration programme in Austria is to get successful representatives of the migrant diaspora to deliver lectures in schools. More than 300 “ambassadors” visit educational institutions to talk about their positive experience of living in Austria. The programme is intended to reach more than 20,000 people.⁸⁰ This experience is of great interest to Russian regions with large numbers of migrants (especially Moscow).

In 2014, the programme was extended to include the “Proud Of” (Stolzdrauf) initiative, which has become one of the most successful informational campaigns introduced by the Austrian government on Facebook. Users were invited to shoot a short video on the topic of what makes them proud of their country and then upload it onto the website. Particular attention was paid during the campaign to the migrant audience.⁸¹ Around 50,000 users uploaded videos to Facebook in the first two weeks of the campaign, with 2,500 people using the Twitter service. National and religious minorities became actively involved in the campaign. These activities received high praise for their scope. And the number of people from national and religious minorities – those usually targeted for recruitment by the terrorists – was very impressive.⁸² A study was carried out in December 2014 to assess the results of the programme: 62 percent of Austrians who took part in the campaign said that it had had a positive influence on them (only 1,000 people were questioned as part of the study).⁸³

⁷⁹ Integration: #stolzdrauf-Kampagne kostete 326.000 Euro // Die Presse. January 28, 2015. URL: http://www.diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4649258/Integration_stolzdraufKampagne-kostete-326000-Euro

⁸⁰ URL: <http://www.zusammen-oesterreich.at/index.php?id=5> (in German).

⁸¹ “Stolzdrauf” – Minister Kurz über seine neue Kampagne // ORF. November 11, 2014. URL: <http://www.orf.at/stories/2253368>

⁸² Kurz zieht positive Zwischenbilanz der “#stolzdrauf“-Kampagne // Der Standard. November 23, 2014. URL: <http://www.derstandard.at/2000008513002/Kurz-zieht-positive-Zwischenbilanz-der-stolzdrauf-Kampagne>.

⁸³ Integration: #stolzdrauf-Kampagne kostete 326.000 Euro. URL: http://www.diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4649258/Integration_stolzdraufKampagne-kostete-326000-Euro

Carrying out a similar programme in Russia (for example, “Why I am Proud of Russia”) that encourages migrants from and representatives of the country’s Muslim republics to take part could work very well.

2. *Developing and implementing comprehensive programmes for fighting extremism in the education system.* Given the number of terrorist recruits that France produces (see the figures presented earlier in this paper), it is unsurprising that the country is a pioneer in this area. The French Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research has adopted a programme entitled “Grand Mobilization of Schools for the Values of the Republic” (Grande mobilisation de l’École pour les valeurs de la République), published on February 9, 2015.⁸⁴ Among other things, the programme includes: training 300,000 teachers and curriculum developers in this field; developing a system of school media related to the subject; working with national media outlets and internet portals; making December 9 (the date on which the Law on the Separation of the Churches and State was adopted in France) the Day of the Secular State in educational institutions; holding various kinds of patriotic commemorative events; introducing a National Defence and Citizenship Day; introducing a National Week Against Racism and Anti-Semitism as Forms of Radical Behaviour; developing research into radicalization; distributing manuals explaining the signs to look for that fellow students may be involved in radical religious organizations.⁸⁵ Initiatives such as these could serve as a model for Russia, especially in Muslim regions in the North Caucasus and the Volga Region.

It is still too early to judge the effectiveness of these programmes, as they are only being rolled out in 2015/2016. However, French legislators already see the measures that are being taken as falling somewhat short. The report published by the Senate Commission on Fighting Radicalization on April 1, 2015 included the following proposals for the further development of these measures:⁸⁶

1. Improving the training of professionals who work with children and adolescents in terms of methods for identifying radical behaviour;
2. Setting up a 24-hour hotline for people who are concerned about the problems of radicalization and effective ways to combat it;
3. Informing the general public about how to spot the signs of radicalization, having experts develop a set of criteria that indicate whether or not people are involved in extremist organizations and, if so, the degree to which they are involved;
4. Introducing a course into the school curriculum that would help develop the ability of young people to critically assess information and identify extremist materials on the internet.

⁸⁴ Grande mobilisation de l’École pour les valeurs de la République: lancement des Assises // Ministère de l’Éducation nationale, de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche. February 9, 2015. URL: <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid86129/grande-mobilisation-ecole-pour-les-valeursrepublique-lancement-des-assises.html>

⁸⁵ Prévenir la radicalisation des jeunes // Ministère de l’Éducation nationale, de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche. February 2, 2015. URL: http://www.cache.media.education.gouv.fr/le/02_fevrier/76/8/Prevenirla-radicalisation-des-jeunes_390768.pdf

⁸⁶ Sueur J-P. Filières ‘djihadistes’: pour une réponse global et sans faiblesse. Pt. 2.

5. Actively using the internet to counter extremist propaganda, particularly on social networks, by spreading the words of former radicals who have embarked on the road to reform;
6. Helping to develop “French Islam” that will act as a guarantee against extremism and make higher education more accessible for French Muslim religious figures (the number of universities where they can receive an education is to be doubled in this case);
7. Introducing religious education courses at schools that are taught by secular teachers in secular schools, where pupils would read religious texts without having to take on the beliefs of that particular faith, thus helping to deprive radicals of their monopoly on disseminating information about their religion;
8. Developing a programme for re-integrating former members of extremist groups into society, which would require a network of individual mentors to be set up.

In July 2015, French legislators returned to this problem once again. The National Senate Commission formed after the terrorist attacks of January 7–9, 2015 approved a list of measures for intensifying the work of educational institutions to promote secular values. Among the proposals put forward were the introduction of a “Teacher’s Oath” that educators would have to recite when taking up a teaching position. The oath would oblige teachers promote among pupils the finest moments in French history in order to strengthen social cohesion.

All of these additional proposals to French legislation are still at the discussion stages. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the seriousness of the problem and the fact that the measures already adopted to reform education in schools to teach young people about anti-extremism, which themselves are fairly extensive, are clearly insufficient.

In has become common in France for comprehensive seminars to be held for teachers, medical professionals and social workers on issues related to combatting extremism.

It has also become common in France for comprehensive seminars to be held for teachers, medical professionals and social workers on issues related to combatting extremism.⁸⁷ The aim of the seminars is to develop skills that would allow people working in these professions to identify the early signs of radicalization among adolescents (signs that may appear during the religious extremist recruitment phase). Such signs may include social isolation among teens, a break from their usual circle of friends and a rejection of their previous way of life. This practice of conducting seminars has been greeted with praise from the expert community.⁸⁸ In the case of Moscow State University student Varvara Karaulova, who was recruited by IS, practically no one paid attention to the signs that she was being radicalized.⁸⁹ If the signs had been noticed and

⁸⁷ Un colloque pour prévenir la «radicalisation»// La Dépêche. June 23, 2015.
URL: <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2015/06/23/2130233-un-colloque-pour-prevenir-la-radicalisation.html>

⁸⁸ Un colloque pour prévenir la «radicalisation»// La Dépêche. June 23, 2015.
URL: <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2015/06/23/2130233-un-colloque-pour-prevenir-la-radicalisation.html>

⁸⁹ MSU Student Barbara Karaulova: Profile.
URL: http://www.aif.ru/dontknows/file/studentka_mgu_varvara_karaulova_dose (in Russian).

preventative measures taken, then it is entirely possible that the girl might never have fallen into the terrorist network.

It should be noted here that France is not the only country that is trying to refocus its education system towards the war against terrorism. Similar, albeit more modest, measures are already being taken (or are being discussed) at German and Austrian schools.

Following the January 2015 terrorist attacks in France, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sebastian Kurz (whose job description also includes issues relating to the integration of migrants) called for schools to respond to the danger of “political Islam”.⁹⁰ The Ministry of Education’s answer was to develop a plan for combatting extremism in schools, which involves holding workshops for high schoolers, training teachers in what to do if they suspect a pupil is being radicalized, and introducing special programmes in teaching universities for working with the Ministry of the Interior. These programmes are designed to train future educators in how to prevent religious conflicts at school and in the classroom, help them develop cross-cultural communication skills, and teach them how to build personal relationships with people from other cultures and religions. It is clear that such measures could be of interest to Russia, particularly those regions where there are large numbers of migrants and underlying ethnic tensions.

In Germany, the Federal Agencies for Civic Education under the Ministries for Family Affairs and Youth Policy in each state hold annual seminars on extremism for high school students.

In Germany, the Federal Agencies for Civic Education under the Ministry for Family Affairs and Youth Policy in each state hold annual seminars on extremism for high school students.⁹¹ It should be noted that these measures were initially aimed at combatting ultra-right, neo-Nazi extremism.

In the United Kingdom, the fight against religious extremism in the education system has primarily affected universities. The PREVENT programme was launched on July 1, 2015. According to the programme, a number of measures have to be adopted. Specifically, the entire faculty of universities will have to go through a detailed briefing on problems related to the spread of religious extremism. Particular attention will be paid, de facto, to Muslim students, although this fact is veiled in official materials in order to avoid accusations of racism and fear of migrants.

In the United Kingdom, the fight against religious extremism in the education system has primarily affected universities.

3. *Setting up special programmes for interaction between schools and the police.*
For example, in the middle of 1997, the Norwegian police, together with the

⁹⁰ Politische Bildung gegen Extremismus // Die Presse. January 13, 2015.
URL: <http://www.diepresse.com/home/bildung/schule/4637701/Politische-Bildung-gegen-Extremismus>;
Kurz will in Schulen Grundwerte betonen // Die Presse. January 13, 2015.
URL: <http://www.diepresse.com/home/bildung/schule/4637111/Kurz-will-in-Schulen-Grundwerte-betonen>

⁹¹ URL: <https://www.land.nrw.de/pressemitteilung/praeventionstage-2015-landeszentrale-fuer-politische-bildung-bietet> (in German).

parents of children who had been involved with radical groups, launched the “Exit” programme.⁹² The programme’s goals included: aiding and supporting young people who want to disengage from racist or other violent groups; supporting parents with children in racist or violent groups, establishing local networks for parents; and developing and disseminating knowledge and methods to professions working with youths associated with violent groups. Initially, the programme was aimed at fighting ultra-right racist extremism. However, the principles of “Exit” subsequently spread to the daily work of the police and services dealing with the problems of radicalizing the youth and recruiting religious terrorists.

A key element of the Norwegian de-radicalization strategy is “Empowerment Conversations” (conversations with expert psychologists working for the police), aimed at keeping people within socially acceptable boundaries, as an alternative to being prosecuted. A large circle of people are responsible for identifying young people who may become a problem: the police, teachers, religious leaders, youth groups and clubs, neighbours, etc. The strategy proved effective in preventing the negative effects of demonstrations held in protest of Israel’s attack on the Gaza Strip in 2008–2009.⁹³ Given its effectiveness, certain elements of the Norwegian programme could definitely be implemented in Russia.

In general, the main features of the Norwegian de-radicalization strategy involve the following principles: emphasizing rehabilitation, rather than punishment; fighting radicalism on the basis of secular organizations (police, school, social organizations, etc.); encouraging migrants to adopt Norwegian values; establishing cooperative ties and contacts with Norwegian Muslim organizations; and stressing the key role of the police in all of these processes. Similar principles can be integrated into the strategies of Russian anti-extremist structures within the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, the counter-terrorist structures within the FSB, the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF) and the National Anti-Terrorism Committee of Russia. The latter needs to work actively with educational and civil organizations.

Targeted work with religious leaders is needed in Russia as well, where the practice of imams coming to the country to work, particularly from Central Asia, exists.

In the middle of 2010, Norwegian schools launched a new programme (that was nevertheless substantively related to the old one) based on interaction between school management and parents to deal with radical behaviour from both pupils and teachers. This is an all-out war with all kinds of extremism – both religious extremism among Muslims, as well as racism and xenophobia directed towards Muslims.⁹⁴ On the whole, experts have lauded the results of the programme.⁹⁵

Taking both the successes and the failures of the previous programmes into account (specifically, the need to intensify work with migrants), the Norwegian

⁹² Engbrethsen Smith T. J. Islamic Radicalization in Norway: Preventative Actions // International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, Spring 2015. URL: <http://www.ict.org.il/Article/1339/Islamic-Radicalization-in-Norway>

⁹³ Collective Security: A Shared Responsibility // Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security. URL: https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/JD/Vedlegg/Handlingsplaner/Radikalisering_engelsk.pdf

⁹⁴ Collective Security: A Shared Responsibility, pp. 21–22.

⁹⁵ Collective Security: A Shared Responsibility, p. 22.

government recently drafted a “Plan of Action”, which has tasked the the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion with introducing courses that explain the foundations of life in a democratic society for immigrants. At the same time, religious leaders entering the country for permanent residence (primarily Muslim imams) are taught about Norway’s social policy (including accepted standards of tolerance).⁹⁶ This kind of targeted work with religious leaders is needed in Russia as well, where the practice of imams coming to the country to work, particularly from Central Asia, exists.

4. *Creating special software for monitoring internet activity.* In the United Kingdom, new counter-terrorism legislation came into effect on July 1, 2015 requiring schools to use special software to monitor the internet activity of pupils, including their correspondence on social networks. The software flags words and phrases that terrorists often use to recruit new members.⁹⁷ Several companies (Impero, FutureDigital and Securus) have already tested prototypes of such software in a number schools, with positive results.⁹⁸ An analysis of extremist video and printed propaganda materials helped the developers compile a glossary of extremist terms that the software would then look for. It is still too early to comment on the results of this initiative on a large scale. However, considering the central role that the internet plays in the recruitment of religious terrorists, it is extremely important to monitor its effectiveness.

An even more important issue with regard to the task of preventing recruitment from ever taking place is to *destroy the preconditions for recruitment, primarily through education*. Two basic approaches have been identified in Europe. One is based on developing education that is aimed at introducing the values of European culture. The other is to encourage Muslims to study the elements of Islam that oppose terrorism.

The first approach is more typical for France. To this end, all schools in France study the Secularism Charter (Charte de la Laïcité à l’Ecole), the aim of which is to teach pupils that France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. Its citizens, therefore, have both rights and duties. The Charter was drawn up by the Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research in 2013 on the basis of the Constitution of France and the Law on Education. It contains 15 articles that set out the basic principles of behaviour among pupils and educators, including, in particular, a ban on displaying religious symbols and wearing clothes that are of a religious nature.⁹⁹

The second model consists of involving representatives of traditional Islam in the war against religious extremism. In the United Kingdom, religious organizations develop and conduct training courses during which Muslim scholars (from Minhaj-ul Quran International, for example) dismantle extremist ideology using

⁹⁶ Vidino L., Brandon J. Countering Radicalization in Europe // International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence. 2012, pp. 61-62.
URL: <http://www.icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/ICSR-Report-Countering-Radicalization-in-Europe.pdf>

⁹⁷ Schools Monitoring Pupils’ Web Use with ‘Anti-Radicalisation Software’ // The Guardian. June 10, 2015.
URL: <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jun/10/schools-trial-anti-radicalisation-software-pupils-internet>

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Charte de la laïcité à l’Ecole: Valeurs et symboles de la République // Ministère de l’Education nationale, de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche. September 6, 2013.
URL: http://www.education.gouv.fr/pid25535/bulletin_offi_ciel.html?cid_bo=73659

Islamic religious sources.¹⁰⁰ This model is organically linked to the principles of multiculturalism.

The differences that exist among Russia's many regions means that we have to approach these models on a case-by-case basis. The first model is clearly necessary for regions in Central Russia where the predominantly Russian population nevertheless has its own problems in terms of integrating migrants into society. Elements of the second model should be used in Russia's Muslim regions.

The differences that exist among Russia's many regions means that we have to approach these models on a case-by-case basis. The first model is clearly necessary for regions in Central Russia where the predominantly Russian population nevertheless has its own problems in terms of integrating migrants into society. Particular attention needs to be paid to large urban agglomerations (above all Moscow and Moscow Region). Elements of the second model should be used in Russia's Muslim regions, where Islam has traditionally been of great importance in the life of the people. What is more, introducing elements of the second model is inevitable due to the fact that Islam is one of Russia's four official religions, alongside Orthodox Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism.

¹⁰⁰ Minhaj-ul Quran to Launch 'First Islamic Counter-Terrorism Curriculum' //Asian Image. June 16, 2015.
URL: http://www.asianimage.co.uk/news/13335326.Minhaj_ul_Quran_to_launch__fi rst_islamic_counter_terrorism_curriculum

How Relevant is Foreign Experience in Preventing Recruitment and Dealing with Returning Fighters?

One of the key threats to Russian security right now is the return of IS fighters to the country. There are many reasons why young people end up in terrorist organizations: the spiritual crisis of modern society; socioeconomic problems; problems integrating migrants into the society of the host country (or host region); the subtlety and effectiveness of Islamist propaganda, especially IS propaganda. The Security Council of the Russian Federation, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee and the counter-terrorist structures within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB need to collaborate with the expert community in order to develop a comprehensive model for combatting recruitment. It is imperative that extensive study manuals be produced for the police and the security services – study manuals that analyse the methods used to recruit new terrorists and look at ways to combat them. We also need to produce special brochures and other materials that expose the typical psychological tricks used by recruiters and disseminate these materials to the widest possible audience (particularly among young people), including via the internet and on social networks. Such tricks include distorted representations of the end of days and other traditional religious ideas, pointing to the problems of justice and the fight against corruption, invoking the idea of fighting the moral degradation of contemporary society, trying to find the meaning of life, etc. Work in this area could be one of the most important elements of countering terrorist propaganda.

In the European Union, one of the main problems in terms of the risk of being recruited by terrorist organizations is the fact that migrants and their descendants have not integrated well into society. With regard to Russia, we have already mentioned that there is a high level of labour migration to this country from Central Asia. Given this, certain methods developed in European countries could be of great interest here. EU countries have also studied problems related to the recruitment (and return) of foreign terrorist fighters that are not directly related to migration, and have developed a number of measures that could be relevant to Russia.

International (and, above all, European) experience has shown that every situation requires an individual approach with regard to returning foreign fighters, taking the circumstances of the specific country in account. Jihadists who are unwilling to reform must be prosecuted, or have their actions monitored by the security services. Those who repent should be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. The most interesting example of working with this second group of people is still the Aarhus Model developed in Denmark.

International experience has shown that rehabilitating former foreign terrorist fighters is a very difficult and contradictory process. Admittedly, the most effective area of work has to be the measures taken to prevent people from risk

groups from being recruited, particularly high school and university students. Such measures include the following:

International (and, above all, European) experience has shown that every situation requires an individual approach with regard to returning foreign fighters, taking the circumstances of the specific country in account.

1. *Developing a campaign for the formation of a single national identity aimed at integrating Muslim migrants.* The example set by Austria is particularly relevant in this regard. The experience of getting successful representatives of the Muslim diaspora involved by giving lectures in schools and universities and appearing on television and internet broadcasts is particularly interesting for Russian regions that have a large number of migrants (especially Moscow). Another thing that Russia could take from the Austrian programme would be to introduce a “Why I am Proud of Russia” TV and internet campaign, with particular emphasis being placed on encouraging migrants and people from the predominantly Muslim constituent entities of the Russian Federation to take part. This experience may be of interest to the Presidential Administration of Russia, the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee of Russia, the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation and other structures that are involved in helping migrants adapt to life in Russia.

The most effective area of work has to be the measures taken to prevent people from risk groups from being recruited, particularly high school and university students.

2. *Developing and implementing comprehensive programmes for fighting extremism in the education system.* The example set by France (and, to a lesser extent, Germany and Austria) could be useful here. The “Grand Mobilization of Schools for the Values of the Republic” programme currently being implemented in France, as well as the additions to the programme that are being discussed in the French Senate and in civic circles, could be of great interest to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation and other government agencies. Among the measures that are either being debated or have already been adopted and which could be useful (with the appropriate creative borrowing) for Russia are:

- a) Large-scale training of teachers and curriculum developers in counter-propaganda; introducing special programmes in teaching universities for working with the anti-terrorist structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and/or the FSB;
- b) Developing a system of school media dedicated to the fight against terrorism (especially in the North Caucasus) and having them interact with national media outlets and internet portals;
- c) Developing research into radicalization and the war on terrorism, increasing funding in these areas (in Russia, this can be done through the system of science and research foundations: Russian Science Foundation, Russian Foundation for Humanities, Russian Foundation for Basic Research, the Academy of Sciences, scientific institutions within government and law enforcement agencies, NGOs);

- d) Distributing manuals explaining the signs to look for that fellow students may be involved in radical religious organizations; holding seminars on these topics with the participation of representatives from the scientific and academic community and law enforcement agencies;
- e) Setting up a 24-hour hotline that provides information about issues related to radicalization, gives advice to people about where to go if they see these problems affecting members of their family, etc.;
- f) Introducing a course at schools that develops pupils' ability to critically assess information on the internet and recognize extremist content;
- g) Supporting non-governmental organizations involved in disseminating information on the internet, particularly on social networks, about former religious radicals that have renounced their former ways;
- h) Helping to develop "Russian Islam", making higher education more accessible for Muslim religious figures in Russia;
- i) Introducing counter-terrorist issues in courses that teach the basics of religious culture in schools, which can be done in cooperation with religious figures in the Muslim community, thus helping to deprive radicals of their monopoly on disseminating information about their religion;
- j) Developing a programme for re-integrating former members of extremist groups into society, which would require a network of individual mentors and psychologists to be set up.

The Ministry of Education, the Presidential Administration, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the FSB would do well to look at the experience of the United Kingdom and its implementation of the PREVENT programme at schools and universities (from 2015). Specifically, it would be useful for faculty members to go through regular detailed briefing sessions on problems related to the spread of religious extremism (as part of staff training programmes). This would be extremely useful for Russia's Muslim regions, especially in the North Caucasus.

3. Setting up special programmes for interaction between schools and the police.

The most compelling example of such an initiative is the "Exit" programme developed in Norway in the 1990s that promotes continuous interaction between society and the police. Anti-extremist units within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the anti-terrorist structures within the FSB, the Security Council of the Russian Federation and the National Anti-Terrorism Committee could make the most use of this experience. In particular, given the current conditions in Russia, conducting one-on-one conversations with young people aimed at keeping them on the straight and narrow as a kind of warning instead of immediate prosecution is a more than viable option. The most useful part of the programme appears to be the fact that it identifies potentially problematic young people through the systemic and continuous cooperation between the police, teachers, religious leaders, youth groups and clubs and the local population.

It would be useful to introduce courses in Russia explaining the foundations of life in a democratic society for arriving immigrants, as well as to carry out targeted work with religious leaders based on the Norwegian model, for example.

4. Finally, the Security Council of the Russian Federation, the National Anti-Terrorism Committee, the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs would be advised to study the experience of the United Kingdom (from 2015 onwards) in designing *special software for monitoring the internet activity of young people and flagging words and phrases used by terrorist recruiters*. The preliminary results of using these programs to help prevent recruitment has been promising.

Given the current conditions in Russia, conducting one-on-one conversations with young people aimed at keeping them on the straight and narrow as a kind of warning instead of immediate prosecution is a more than viable option. It is necessary to identify potentially problematic young people through the systemic and continuous cooperation between the police, teachers, religious leaders, youth groups and clubs and the local population.

Because young people belong to the main risk group in terms of terrorist recruitment, the main responsibility for countering terrorist propaganda rests on the shoulders of the education system. At the same time, given Russia's rather unique religious and political situation (Islam is officially recognized as one of the country's traditional religions), in addition to the well-documented problems associated with implementing elements of multiculturalism into the life of European societies, it would be advisable to develop a special counter-terrorist model for the Russian education system. Such a model could combine the two approaches that currently exist in the European Union, both of which have their advantages and disadvantages.

It would be advisable to study the experience of the United Kingdom (from 2015 onwards) in designing special software for monitoring the internet activity of young people and flagging words and phrases used by terrorist recruiters.

The first of these involves developing educational programmes that are aimed at introducing European (or, in this case, Russian) values. This approach is more characteristic of France. Given the specific features of Russian culture, where (unlike in France) traditional religious values play a much greater role, this approach can be applied here – especially in regions that experience difficulties when it comes to integrating migrants (Moscow and Moscow Region in particular). The second approach involves encouraging Muslims to study those areas of Islam that directly oppose and reject terrorism (this is the main approach used in the United Kingdom). This model can be used in Russian regions where Islam has traditionally been of great importance in the life of the people (the North Caucasus, a number of regions near the Volga). Such a variegated approach is keeping with the principles of Federalism.

At the present time, there are around 20,000 to 30,000 foreign terrorist fighters operating within Al-Qaeda and IS. Roughly 20,000 of them are based in Syria and Iraq, with 100 in Libya and around 6,500 in Afghanistan. Experts at the UN have noted that it is this last group that is not receiving enough attention from the international expert community. For this reason, it is imperative that the Russian government institutions work equally hard to deal with the negative effects of fighters returning from Syria and Iraq, as well as from Afghanistan.

Data released in late December 2015 shows a sharp increase in the number of fighters from Central Asian countries. *The problem of jihadists from Central Asian countries becomes even more pronounced when one considers the number of migrants from the region who have arrived in Russia for work.* There is evidence to suggest that a great number of fighters were labour migrants recruited while living in Russia.

Because young people belong to the main risk group in terms of terrorist recruitment, the main responsibility for countering terrorist propaganda rests on the shoulders of the education system.

This makes it important for specialized agencies, as well as the FSB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, to search for new methods for monitoring migrants while they are in Russia. Meanwhile, the Federal Migration Service has to find new ways of integrating migrants into society. And the experience of the European Union could be useful here. In particular, the Federal Migration Service has to devote greater attention to training migrants from Central Asian countries in terms of language, culture and professional development before they enter the Russian Federation. This will help ease their adaptation to life in this country. There is practically no work being done in this area.

Comprehensive research into the issue of labour migration to Russia from Central Asian countries with regard to the possibility of migrants being radicalized and recruited by terrorists needs to be carried out, and relevant theoretical and methodological manuals need to be developed. Right now, the Federal Migration Service is doing nothing in this area. Neither are specialized research bodies. Traditionally, the study of migration issues did not take terrorism or the problem of religious extremism in migrants' countries of origin (primarily Central Asian countries) into account. Similarly, experts in these areas did not study migration.

It is imperative that the Russian government institutions work equally hard to deal with the negative effects of fighters returning from Syria and Iraq, as well as from Afghanistan.

Data on fighters from Russia and the CIS cited by Russian officials differ from those presented by the security services of the states themselves, including those that are members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). This all points to the fact that we need to improve our methods of exchanging information.

What is more, information provided by Russia compels us to re-evaluate estimates with regard to other former Soviet countries, most likely upwards. The risk of terrorists joining forces, of terrorism growing stronger and new security threats appearing in the post-Soviet space, is of great significance. Such new security threats could include uncontrolled or poorly controlled migration in relation to recruiting terrorists, as well as drug trafficking and money laundering with the aim of financing terrorism. The links between terrorism and other security challenges are well known.

Looking at these problems, it is clear that *we need to intensify the exchange of information on foreign terrorist fighters in terms of bilateral cooperation*

between security services, as well as in terms of interaction within the framework of the international organizations mentioned earlier. We also need to develop mechanisms for promoting international dialogue in the war against terrorism in connection with other security threats (drug trafficking, uncontrolled migration, money laundering, etc.) in the post-Soviet space. This dialogue, which should involve the security services, the expert community and representatives of civil society, should help to establish “smart power” in Russia, without which we cannot defeat terrorism. It will also help Russia strengthen its authority in the post-Soviet space. NGOs may be involved in the work alongside government agencies.

The problem of jihadists from Central Asian countries becomes even more pronounced when one considers the number of migrants from the region who have arrived in Russia for work. This makes it important to find new ways of integrating migrants into society. Greater attention has to be paid to training migrants from Central Asian countries in terms of language, culture and professional development before they enter the Russian Federation. This will help ease their adaptation to life in this country. There is practically no work being done in this area.

The widespread introduction of measures to fight extremism and the recruitment of terrorist fighters in Europe (as we have already noted, a major wave of these measures came in 2015) compels the relevant agencies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the expert community to monitor the results of the programmes being implemented in Europe, develop measures to adapt these programmes to Russian conditions, and develop effective international cooperation in the fight against terrorism on this basis.

We need to intensify the exchange of information on foreign terrorist fighters in terms of bilateral cooperation between security services, as well as in terms of interaction within the framework of the international organizations mentioned earlier.

In this regard, it becomes *even more important to establish cooperation with the relevant EU agencies, foster contacts among the expert community, and develop humanitarian cooperation aimed at eradicating terrorism and religious extremism.*

Appropriate measures should be made part of Russian public diplomacy.

Large-scale recruitment by IS and the growing threat of terrorists based in Afghanistan makes the task of strengthening cooperation between Russia and the former Soviet countries (particularly those in Central Asia) even more important.

It is important to establish cooperation with the relevant EU agencies, foster contacts among the expert community, and develop humanitarian cooperation aimed at eradicating terrorism and religious extremism.

Institutional forms of cooperation within the framework of the CSTO, the Eurasian Economic Union, the SCO, the CIS and various bilateral mechanisms also need to be supplemented here with public diplomacy measures and cooperation among the members of the expert community. Such activity will help strengthen integration processes in the post-Soviet space.

Finally, it is imperative that a dialogue is established between the Russian government and society on the one hand, and the Islamic world on the other. Public diplomacy – as well as interaction among the members of the expert community – can and should be an important instrument in the search for common ground between Russia and Muslim countries. The reaction in Muslim countries to Russia's military operation in Syria has been mixed, especially in the predominantly Sunni countries. This means that Russia must strengthen informational activity and step up its efforts in terms of public diplomacy to counter the formation of misconceptions about the purpose of the Russian operation in Syria and the role of Russia in the Middle East.

It is imperative that a dialogue is established between the Russian government and society on the one hand, and the Islamic world on the other.

Historically, Russia has always been both an Orthodox Christian and a Muslim country. There are around 20 million Muslims living in Russia today. Given the specifics of the demographic and migration situation in the country, this number will only continue to grow. This is why the ideological struggle for the loyalty of Russian Muslims is an important aspect in terms of the country's security and its political stability. Many of the practical recommendations set out above could prove to be useful in this sense.

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The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit international relations think-tank on a mission to provide policy recommendations for all of the Russian organizations involved in external affairs.

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