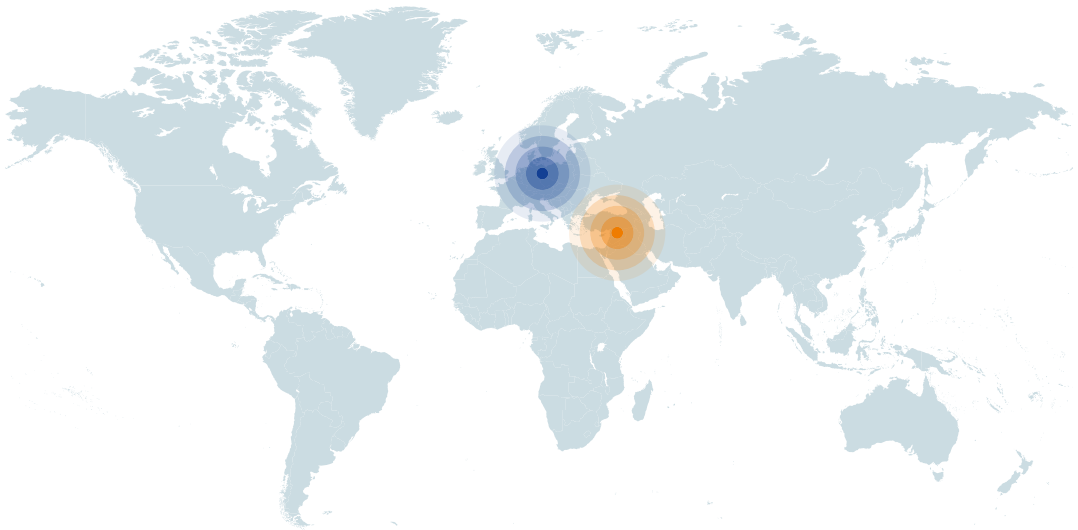


The Return of the Terror Tourists

Foreign Terrorist Fighters as a
Challenge for Germany and Europe

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The Paris and Brussels terror attacks proved the reality of a threat that the security authorities warned of long ago: European citizens who travel to conflict regions, for example, to fight in Syria for the so-called Islamic State return to Europe as perpetrators of terror attacks here. This article examines the causes of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), and evaluates the best strategy for Germany and Europe to address the challenge.

On 22 March 2016, 32 people were killed in two separate terrorist attacks at Brussels airport and Maelbeek metro station. More than 300 people were injured, some of them are still in critical condition. Initial inquiries revealed that assailants were part of the same network that plotted the Paris attacks last November. On 13 November 2015, three groups of gunmen struck at different locations in Parisian cafés and restaurants. In a concert hall they killed at least 90 young people. On that night, 132 people lost their lives and more than 350 others were injured. The assailants also included so-called foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs)¹ who had acquired combat experience in the Syrian Civil War. In this instance – yet again and on an unprecedented scale – a threat, which the security authorities warned of long ago, had become a reality: European citizens who had joined Islamic State (IS, also known as Daesh or ISIL) in Syria, returned to their country of origin to fight “infidels” in Europe as well.

A Global Phenomenon on an Unprecedented Scale

The Paris and Brussels attackers are merely a fraction of an estimated 30,000 foreign fighters worldwide who have travelled to the conflict zone since the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2011. Although the phenomenon is not new and could already be observed at the end of the 1970s in Afghanistan, in the space of just five years the numbers have now clearly surpassed those during the entire decade of the Soviet-Afghan War.² The new element is not merely

the high and particularly rapid rise in numbers of those travelling to Syria, but also the global nature of the phenomenon. While the Afghanistan war still mainly attracted foreign fighters from the region – in particular, from Arab states – they arrive from over 100 countries of origin today. This is clearly a phenomenon on a global scale.³

Tunisia is among the Arab states that are most severely affected: it sends the largest contingent of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq. Yet Europe also faces the problem of a significant and ever-growing number of individuals travelling to Syria. In late September 2015, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) – the German domestic security apparatus – estimated that up to then some 4,000 European citizens had travelled to the region to join Islamic State or other terrorist groups. This number includes more than 740 German Islamists or Islamists travelling from Germany, with about one third (240 persons) already having returned to Germany. It is assumed in more than 70 cases that the returnees gained combat experience in the conflict zones. Meanwhile, at least 23 of those returnees are in custody. An estimated 120 German Islamists lost their lives in battles or suicide attacks.⁴

The Search for New Answers

Initially, the German authorities and experts – and equally the German public – seemed staggered by the impact of the phenomenon. There were many open questions that were difficult to



Solidarité: After the terrorist attacks in Brussels in late March, the Eiffel Tower, landmark of the city, which itself had become victim of similar attacks only a few months earlier, is shining in the national colors of Belgium.

Source: © Philippe Wojazer Reuters.

answer at first: what sort of individuals voluntarily travel to a war zone and while there – or back in their home countries – not only risk their lives, but willingly jeopardise their existence? What drives them to this? And how can Germany address this phenomenon that is so utterly at odds with the self-image of an enlightened, secular and post-heroic nation?

Male, Young and Muslim: a Typical Foreign Fighter Profile?

After numerous investigations and case studies, the initial sense of helplessness has now given way to a fairly clear picture as to the identity of the foreign fighters. A recent comprehensive analysis conducted by the Federal Criminal

Police Office (BKA), the BfV and the Hessian Information and Competence Centre (Hessian Prevention Network against Salafism, HKE) scrutinised 677 cases of German Islamists who travelled abroad.⁵ The results clearly show that the foreign fighter recruit is frequently male (about 80 per cent), young (on average aged 26, women are about three years younger), Muslim by birth (about 17 per cent are converts) and born in Germany (about 60 per cent). In almost 50 per cent of cases the person is already a criminal offender and often unemployed as well (about 20 per cent). Some recruits also have a good level of education: about ten per cent fall into each category of still attending school, having completed the German Abitur or attending a university.⁶



The available data clearly reveals some undeniably important information, but it suggests no conclusive results for the profile of the typical German foreign fighter. Statistically, because of the low number, the “average profile” seems too diverse and multi-layered. One-off aberrations can sometimes also distort the overall statistical picture. This becomes further complicated when casting the net wider beyond Germany and, for example, considering UK or U.S. recruits, where it emerges that many more of those travelling to Syria come from middle-class backgrounds than is the case in Germany. In these countries, there is little evidence to support the narrative of the socio-economically deprived and socially excluded migrant. This makes it even more difficult to define a typical Western fighter profile.⁷ At best, we can hazard a tentative definition of a typical foreign fighter recruit as male, young and Muslim by religion. However, since the overwhelming majority of young, male Muslims in Germany have absolutely no intention of devoting their lives to Islamic State and sacrificing themselves as jihadists, ultimately these facts add very limited value for any deeper understanding in general, and for the specific preventative and investigative work in this field.

Religion, Politics, Heroism – what Motivates them?

In the absence of a genuine typical foreign fighter profile, there is no straightforward answer to the question of motivation. To venture forth an explanation based on a single causal argument is inadequate. The motives are multifaceted and complex. Individual motives often seem inter-related and also appear to have changed over time. Usually, the reasons are highly subjective and often intimately associated with each individual’s own background. But a broad distinction can be made between content or ideological motives and emotional factors that seem to be determined in the widest sense by psychological issues.

There are a host of ideological reasons that range from religious to political motives, including the expectation that it might be possible to

achieve a socially elevated status in the Caliphate that seems unattainable in the country of origin. The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) at King’s College London sought to establish which of these motivating factors takes precedence. In recent years, the ICSR researchers made direct contact with over 150 foreign fighters via social media networks (primarily on Facebook). Based on interviews via such media, they concluded that the motives were manifested in two separate waves of travel that occurred at two distinct times.⁸

The military successes of IS led to a powerful glorification of the terror organisation – especially among young people.

In summer 2011, they monitored a first wave of travellers to Syria. These recruits became radicalised at the start of the civil war. Their decision to travel was justified mainly by the strong urge and intent to defend their fellow Sunnis against the atrocities of the Bashar al-Assad regime. The images of bomb attacks on Homs and other bastions of the Syrian opposition, as well as reports about the political tactics of “abduction” and torture were an important trigger for the start of the radicalisation process. The ideological drive was fused with religious motivation in that, among those who travelled abroad – mostly Sunnis –, a strong sense of identification could be observed with the mainly Sunni victims of the Assad regime.

At the latest since Islamic State pronounced the Caliphate in June 2014, it became obvious that the motivational basis had profoundly changed. The major military successes and breathtaking pace with which Islamic State took vast parts of Syria and Iraq, and literally overran the Iraqi-Syrian border, led to a powerful glorification of the terror organisation. In Europe, this particularly affected teenagers and young adults for whom Islamic State suddenly became the latest

craze, such that occasionally there was even publicity for a Salafist youth culture and the phenomenon of “pop jihad”.⁹ For those individuals now travelling abroad, the point was hardly to prolong the fight against the Assad regime and to support the Syrian revolution. Rather, it was to become complicit in establishing the proclaimed Caliphate. The overriding hope was now to participate in the new state as part of a “state-forming” elite – a social and political avant-garde – that would be involved in exercising power. In terms of the jihadist ideology of Islamic State, which revolves around the apocalyptic uto-

pia of the final battle of good against evil, participants would be included in an apocalyptic millennium project. This supposedly religious, yet affirmed Islamist dimension was interlinked with the avant-gardist motivational basis. Hence, the radicalisation process was further intensified and accelerated.

In addition to such intellectual motivations, however, emotional aspects also seem to play a pivotal role. Those travelling from Europe therefore often spoke of the great need to find orientation or meaning in their lives. A strong



Young men at a rally held by the Salafist preacher Pierre Vogel in Frankfurt: Salafism is designated as an extremist Islamist ideology by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Germany's domestic security apparatus). Salafist groups have been kept under surveillance for some time now.

Source: © Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters.



Islamic State fighter in Raqqa: The motives of those joining IS are manifold, varying from religious fervor to prospects of climbing the social ladder, a goal which did not seem attainable in their home countries.

Source: © Stringer, Reuters.

desire to feel a sense of belonging and to be able to identify with a group was associated in this instance with the search for respect and recognition.¹⁰ In particular, those who perceive themselves as society's underdog – without this necessarily being borne out by their socio-demographic key data – appear to be particularly receptive to the proclamations of Islamic State. IS propaganda often casts it in the role of David in the fight against the Western Goliath. This makes it potentially even easier to identify with the terror organisation. At the same time, Islamic State promises those individuals to whom it appeals that they can leave behind their former existence – including all their personal problems – and discover a new emotional and social home in the emergent “state”. Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that through the emergence of Islamic State,

which is by far the “most attractive” group for Germans travelling to Syria, the foreign fighter phenomenon also acquired previously unprecedented dimensions.¹¹

How Should This Phenomenon Be Addressed?

The foreign fighter phenomenon represents a challenge in a number of respects that call for an urgent response. For Syria and Iraq, the foreign fighters have become a major part of the spiral of violence of their internal conflicts. Often, they fight on the most exposed front, and European citizens in particular have in many cases acted as suicide bombers in Islamic State military offensives. Therefore, they are a military threat and not to be underestimated, and most notably they give the Iraqi Government a justi-

fiable reason for complaints about the European security authorities' apparent lack of success in stemming the flow of travellers.

Security experts regard those who return as a particular threat, and with good reason, as the Paris and Brussels attacks have shown. Returnees often possess military training and have become more brutal as a result of their experiences in the Syrian civil war; moreover, usually they have access to jihadist networks in Europe and can carry out potentially complex plans of attack. Recent cases also show that even if they are not themselves the perpetrators of attacks, they can function as facilitators who disseminate Islamic State jihadist ideology more widely across Europe and provide information as well as logistical support for future fighters to travel to other countries.

Global Answers to Curb the Phenomenon

This assessment of the threat leads to a strong interest among all participants to stem the travel flow of all foreign fighters. Numerous initiatives of this type have been set up on a domestic German and European level, and also internationally due to the global dimension of the phenomenon. The main development here is the UN Security Council's Resolution 2178 of September 2014, which defines a series of anti-terror measures for Member States to adopt to counter foreign fighters and specifically to stem their flow of travel. The resolution describes terrorism as one of the most serious threats to international peace and security – making it possible to adopt this resolution under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The agreed measures therefore became legally binding provisions that Member States are obliged to comply with. To enable Member States to put the measures into action, a number of sub-committees and organisations offer technical support, training and consultancy.¹²

Germany adopted Resolution 2178 into domestic law in June 2015. Apart from strengthening its criminal law to address the financing of terrorism, the revised laws concentrate on preventing

the travel activities of foreign fighters. Thus, the new rules regulate criminal offences for travel abroad “for the purpose of committing a serious act of violence that endangers the state”¹³ (or for preparation, support or training for such offences). In suspicious cases, it is now also possible to confiscate the personal ID papers or passports of the individuals concerned.¹⁴

Resolution 2178 is merely one more measure within the United Nations' extensive counter-terrorism system.¹⁵ Yet, it is the first resolution specifically devoted to the issue of foreign fighters. Nonetheless, the initiative has attracted controversy. In addition to certain legal objections, the strong emphasis on criminal measures has attracted particular criticism. Has this focus led to Resolution 2178 neglecting prevention and post-rehabilitation support, and so merely treating the “symptom” yet not tackling the “disease”? The adopted legislation refers to the obligation to prevent radicalisation, develop counter-narratives, integrate civil society, promote political and religious tolerance, and facilitate rehabilitation. However, the specific legally binding provisions to be enforced in domestic law refer in great detail only to criminal procedures for the prevention of immigration, migration and travel of foreign fighters. The provisions concerning prevention or post-rehabilitation support are cursory and vague, thus they provide Member States with no pragmatic and binding enforcement measures.

In Search of a Multidimensional Approach

The emphasis on purely criminal procedures is seen as one-dimensional, but a phenomenon as complex as foreign fighters seems to call for multidimensional responses. On the German and European level, almost as much attention has been devoted to prevention and rehabilitation support as to criminal detective and prosecution work. This applies for at least two reasons:

Firstly, Europe's experience was that the returnees from Syria were not the perpetrators of all terrorist attacks that were committed in recent



Salafists in Berlin: With their campaign “Read!”, in which free copies of the Quran are distributed, Salafists have been trying to gain followers in Germany since 2011. Meanwhile, the campaign has been extended to other countries. [Source: © Tobias Schwarz, Reuters.](#)

months and years. Instead, it has emerged that perpetrators can become heavily radicalised even without the experience of the Syrian Civil War, so much so that they are prepared to commit acts of violence in their countries of origin.¹⁶ As such, prohibiting travel activities alone offers no protection from attacks.

Secondly, the prevention strategy also seems so important because in Germany there is immense potential for radicalisation that cannot be dealt with by criminal procedures. Considering that almost all German travellers to Syria were drawn from Salafist sympathisers, and given that Salafism is regarded as the breeding ground for radicalising young Muslims, the trend towards extremism must offer serious cause for concern. The number of Salafists has risen from 3,800 to 7,900 within just a few years.

Presumably, this is also owed to their aggressive recruitment activities, for example, which became clear during the “Lies!” (“Read!”) campaign.¹⁷ It is not surprising that the President of the BfV, Hans-Georg Maaßen, has appealed for further efforts to address this challenge, to rectify an existing shortfall in social integration and – particularly considering the present influx of refugees – to further intensify endeavours in this area.

Prevention and Anti-Radicalisation on the Internet

To augment basic integration policy initiatives, further measures have now been put in place that focus specifically on anti-radicalisation and prevention strategies. Since the online activities of jihadist groups, particularly of the Islamic

State group, were identified as a key influencing factor, a raft of measures has been adopted on this level. For example, the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) was tasked with launching a virtual media campaign to introduce a counter-narrative to jihadist propaganda and juxtapose Western values and the meaning of democratic freedom. A variety of projects are under preparation or have already been launched in this field. Their objective is to develop online services that disseminate a counter-narrative and prevent radicalisation.¹⁸

Similar initiatives are being set up on a European level where the consensus is to counter violent extremism in future with strategic communications. The European Union (EU) has therefore set up the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT). In future, this team should help ensure that counter-narratives to Islamist extremism are publicised on

the Internet as well as on television in order to counteract the further radicalisation of young people. The aim is to reach out to and engage teenagers and young adults – in part by gaining the cooperation of popular young YouTube personalities and bloggers. This is just one of many such projects on a German and European level.

While these measures are highly relevant, it still seems inadequate to focus exclusively on virtual media. Numerous studies refer to the fact that, although the Internet is an important medium of radicalisation, it is not the only decisive factor. The report compiled by the German authorities (BKA, BfV and HKE) concluded that online propaganda indeed plays a key role in the early days of radicalisation and seems to have been relevant in 30 per cent of cases analysed in the study. However, the report still assigns far greater importance to the influence of friends (37 per cent) and contacts in



War 2.0: On 9 April 2015, Islamic State hackers attacked the Facebook page of the French TV channel TV5 Monde. The online activities of jihadist groups – especially those of IS – are regarded as a key factor, thereby inducing the introduction of countermeasures on the part of security agencies worldwide.

Source: © Christian Hartmann, Reuters.

mosques (33 per cent) – particularly at the point when those involved take the step from purely verbal/theoretical radicalisation to active foreign travel. Hence in the vast majority of cases it appears that those who travel abroad depart in groups. This usually involves close circles of friends or individuals who rally around a main, charismatic figure.¹⁹

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This underscores the continued importance of geographical contacts and networks. It indicates that solutions must also be found in the real world. The perpetrators' multifaceted motivations must be taken into account once again. If those recruits claim to discover a home in Islamic State, if they believe that a feeling of group belonging is conveyed here that they perceive as lacking in Germany, then it is doubtful whether a counter-narrative with a purely intellectual basis is adequate to deter them from their plans. Research analysis instead highlights that the task of convincing hearts and minds for jihadist ideology is essentially reinforced by the emotive force and appeal of the extremist community and its rituals as recruitment mechanisms.²⁰ In this context, intellectually influenced counter-narratives that appear to suggest a balanced interpretation of Islam are likely to be less relevant for emotionally driven individuals. The allure of emotively crafted messages can in such instances be considerably more important.

On the basis of such assumptions, the BKA commissioned a media psychology study with the aim of examining the impact and effectiveness

of counter-narratives in preventing radicalisation. Although the results of this study are not anticipated until autumn 2016, it seems appropriate to re-examine the portfolio of traditional social work approaches and to offer “alternative activities” within this context. Such activities certainly have high aims; they are designed to create emotionally engaged situations for young people that match up to the sense of belonging to jihadist underground cells. These leisure activities designed for youngsters must convey a group dynamic that also appeals to those considering joining the Islamic State group. These strategy measures are incidentally nothing new: a basic aim of every leisure activity in the context of social work with teenagers and young adults – in particular, those from migrant backgrounds – has always been to facilitate integration and prevention. In this case, it seems crucial that leisure activities are not withdrawn. Instead, they should be vigorously expanded with the deliberate aim of providing a structural context for counter- and de-radicalisation.

Work in Progress: Anti-Salafism Prevention Networks

This means that as well as traditional measures the services should also be made available to the concerned parents or family members who observe signs of radicalised behaviour in their children or other relatives. In the early days of the radicalisation wave, these advisory sessions were considerably underdeveloped and mainly supervised by the BfV and various groups within the Christian church. Since the end of 2011, however, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has been involved in setting up an advisory network. A telephone hotline refers cases to regional partners who manage counselling interviews with individuals. Although it has had limited effectiveness to date, this is no easy task and depends on the skills of trained experts who ideally also have a migrant background, or at least are fluent in the relevant language and familiar with the Islamic faith, as well as with Muslim family structures, customs and so forth. It is essential that they

are able to establish trusting relationships with family members. Faced with such challenges, the experts incessantly highlight the continued lack of trained staff in their field. In summary, despite numerous vital initiatives, it should be noted that there is still no adequate nationwide prevention network against extremism in Germany.²¹

Breaking the Cycle

Nevertheless, social work will hardly be enough to reach out to those recruits who have already been radicalised. The same applies for those returnees who travelled back to their countries of origin with the intent of carrying out attacks in Germany or Europe. In this case, traditional criminal detective work and, in particular, efforts to protect domestic security are also vitally important. Incidentally, this also applies for the close collaborative work with foreign security services such as America's National Security Agency (NSA). Almost all the attacks on German targets which have so far been averted were exposed with the help of tip-offs and information that the German authorities received from the NSA. This collaborative work seems indispensable if there is to be a further guarantee of the highest level of security in Germany. The same goes for data retention: while this gives no guarantee of preventing attacks, it facilitates fast-track and comprehensive investigations in the event of a terrorist incident. Generally, the enquiries quickly lead to successful manhunts and in case of doubt also to the prevention of further attacks.

The security authorities still need an effective response to a new challenge in this field. Since the revelations by Edward Snowden, it has become evident that terrorist networks increasingly use encryption software to send messages. Apps for smartphones like Wickr or Telegram Messenger are easy to operate and make it possible to send encoded text messages ("end-to-end encryption") with an expiry deadline (for instance, within one minute of receiving and reading the message, if required also on both chat partners' devices). They neither require

any login or contact details nor the provision of geographic locations; they also have a shredder function that totally wipes clean the devices and deletes all the data history. The security services have so far been unable to decode messages sent via these apps. The same holds true for direct access to smartphones. This became clear when the FBI tried to unlock the iPhone used by one of the assailants of last December's terrorist attack in San Bernadino. Only after several months did the investigators manage to success-





German Chancellor Merkel visiting a youth sports center in Frankfurt: Sport programs can also be part of a comprehensive strategy to prevent radicalisation. Source: © Kai Pfaffenbach, Reuters.

fully access the data stored on the iphone. This clearly demonstrates that security authorities are only at the early stages of searching for an answer to these technical innovations, and thus face a massive obstacle to their investigative work.

Conclusion

In general, given the sheer number of challenges which the foreign fighter phenomenon

represents for Germany and Europe, it is vital to deal with the task of breaking a full cycle – from radicalisation to the potential return of those who travelled to Syria. One positive factor is worthy of mention: namely, the overall number of foreign travellers has fallen, yet at the same time the number of returnees has increased. The report by the BKA, BfV and HKE therefore concludes that “the zenith of jihadist travel flow to Syria / Iraq [seems to have been] surpassed according to current assessments”.²² In further

support of this trend and in order to adequately address the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, a multidimensional approach should be adopted. This should involve reliance on the integrated tools of prevention, criminal prosecution and post-rehabilitation support that places each element on an equal footing.

During recent years, Germany and Europe have learned a great deal through painful experiences. The process of adjusting to the new challenges is in full swing and has already led to a number of successes. At the same time though, the Brussels attacks made clear that there is still a huge need for enhanced cooperation and exchange of information among EU member states. Irrespective of the numerous endeavours and terror plots that were foiled in Germany, however, there will not be any absolute guarantee of public security in Germany and Europe. The recent attacks have shown that it only takes a comparatively small group of perpetrators to cause maximum devastation. The same applies as it did 30 years ago with regard to the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and their terrorist campaign against British democracy: “You have to be lucky all the time. We only have to be lucky once.” This perverted logic of violence still applies today. European societies will have to learn to live with this and to face with fortitude the attacks on their liberal system of free and democratic government. Those who want to defy terrorism ought to avoid allowing themselves to be terrorised. However, this simultaneously means that by adhering to the principles of a liberal society there is a continual search for answers to these challenges and to guarantee the highest level of protection possible for citizens. This report about the potential learning processes suggested one ray of hope for Western free societies and democracies: their capacity for learning. If they reflect on their values and never lose sight of them, they can master this challenge.

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- 1 Resolution 2178 of the UN Security Council 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 ...” See United Nations Security Council: Resolution 2178 (2014), 24 Sep 2014, in: http://un.org/depts/german/sr/sr_14/sr2178.pdf [25 Nov 2015].
- 2 Cf. Neumann, Peter R. 2015: Foreign Fighter total in Syria/Iraq now exceeds 20,000; surpasses Afghanistan conflict in the 1980s, 26 Jan 2015, in: <http://icsr.info/2015/01/foreign-fighter-total-syriairaq-now-exceeds-20000-surpasses-afghanistan-conflict-1980s> [25 Nov 2015].
- 3 Cf. INTERPOL 2015: Statement by Secretary General of INTERPOL Jürgen Stock at the United Nations Security Council Ministerial Briefing on Foreign Terrorist Fighters, 29 May 2015, United Nations, New York.
- 4 Cf. Maaßen, Hans-Georg 2015: Speech by BfV President Dr. Hans-Georg Maaßen on “Brennpunkt Nahost – eine neue Gefahrendimension?” (Flashpoint Middle East – A New Dimension of Risk?), 29 Sep 2015, in: <https://verfassungsschutz.de/de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/vortraege/rede-p-handelsblatt-konferenz-2015> [30 Nov 2015].
- 5 BKA/BfV/HKE: Analyse der Radikalisierungshintergründe und -verläufe der Personen, die aus islamistischer Motivation aus Deutschland in Richtung Syrien oder Irak ausgereist sind. (Analysis of the Context and Cycles of Radicalisation of Individual Travellers from Germany bound for Syria or Iraq because of Islamist Motivation.) Updated 2015, http://innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/2015-12-03_04/anlage_analyse.pdf [21 Dec 2015].
- 6 Cf. Mascolo, Georg 2015: Klug, kriminell, großer Freundeskreis: So ist der deutsche IS-Kämpfer (Smart, Criminal and with a Large Circle of Friends: This is the German IS Fighter), Süddeutsche Zeitung, 23 Sept 2015, in: <http://sueddeutsche.de/politik/-1.2661697> [20 Nov 2015].
- 7 This applies, for example, to probably one of the most infamous Western Islamic State terrorists, Mohammed Emwazi, who gained global notoriety under the nickname of “Jihadi John” and due to the brutal murder of Western hostages. He was a reputed graduate in IT from the University of Westminster. A similar situation applies to the U.S., where on the basis of their most recent studies researchers concluded, “There is no standard recruit profile.” See Vidino, Lorenzo/Hughes, Seamus, *ISIS in America: From Retweets to Raqqa*, The George Washington University, Program on Extremism, Washington D.C., December 2015, p. 33.

- 8 Cf. further the lecture given by ICSR Director Prof. Peter Neumann at the conference “Foreign Fighters – Eine neue Herausforderung für Europa” (Foreign Fighters as a New Challenge for Europe), held by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the American Jewish Committee in Berlin on 23 March 2015.
- 9 Cf. Kuhlmann, Jan. 2013: Salafismus als Jugendphänomen. Warum die konservative Glaubensrichtung bei Jugendlichen so beliebt ist (Salafism as a Youth Phenomenon. Why the Conservative Religious Orientation Is So Popular Among Young People), Deutschlandfunk, 1 Feb 2013, in: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/salafismus-als-jugendphaenomen.886.de.html?dram:article_id=236066 [30 Nov 2015].
- 10 Cf. Maher, Shiraz 2015: The roots of radicalisation? It’s identity, stupid, 23 Jun 2015, in: <http://icsr.info/2015/06/icsr-insight-roots-radicalisation-identity-stupid> [30 Nov 2015]. See also Barrett, Richard / Myers, Joanne J. 2014: Foreign Fighters in Syria, 23 Sep 2014, in: <http://carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20140923/index.html> [30 Nov 2015] and Wahl-Immel, Yuriko 2015: Warum Jugendliche in den Krieg ziehen (Why young people are joining the war), Die Welt, 4 Feb 2015, in: <http://welt.de/regionales/nrw/article137091042/Warum-Jugendliche-in-den-Dschihad-ziehen.html> [30 Nov 2015].
- 11 Almost 80 per cent of German Islamists have joined the Islamic State group. See Mascolo, n. 6.
- 12 Cf. United Nations Security Council, n.1.
- 13 Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection 2015: Gesetz zur Änderung der Verfolgung der Vorbereitung von schweren staatsgefährdenden Gewalttaten (Act to Amend the Crime of Preparation of a Serious Violent Offence Endangering the State) (GVVG-Änderungsgesetz – GVVG-ÄndG), Bundesgesetzblatt (Federal Law Gazette), Volume 2015, Part I, No. 23, 12 Jun 2015, pp. 926 ff.
- 14 Cf. Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection 2015: Gesetz zur Änderung des Personalausweisgesetzes zur Einführung eines Ersatz- Personalausweises und zur Änderung des Passgesetzes (Act to Amend the Act on Identity Cards and to Introduce a Substitute Identity Card and to Amend the Passport Act), Bundesgesetzblatt (Federal Law Gazette), Volume 2015, Part I, No. 24, 20 Jun 2015, pp. 970 ff.
- 15 At the heart of this system is the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy dated 2006. For an overview of the 14 (or depending on the interpretation 19) legally binding instruments of counter-terrorism, see also United Nations 2006: United Nations Actions to Counter Terrorism, 2015, in: <http://un.org/en/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml> [30 Nov 2015].
- 16 Examples of attacks that were carried out by perpetrators who had never travelled to Syria were the fatal hostage-taking at the Jewish supermarket in Paris in January 2015, the attack in February 2015 in Copenhagen, and the attempted attack on the Thalys high-speed train to Paris the following August.
- 17 The “Lies!” (Read!) campaign was actively pursued in 2012. It essentially involved individuals handing out copies of the Koran to German passers-by, with a particular focus on reaching young people.
- 18 For instance, the German Government programme “Demokratie leben! Aktiv gegen Rechtsextremismus, Gewalt und Menschenfeindlichkeit” (Live Democracy! Active Against Right-Wing Extremism, Violence and Hate) supports pilot projects for the prevention of radicalisation. This includes the pilot project “Alternativen aufzeigen! Videos zu Islam, Islamfeindlichkeit und Islamismus für Internet und Unterricht” (Publicising Alternatives! Video Shorts on Islam, Islamophobia and Islamism for the Internet and Schools) of the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences as well as the online competition of the Muslim youth initiative I.Slam, which is intended to encourage young people to tackle phenomena such as religiously motivated radicalisation.
- 19 This especially applied to those travelling to Syria who joined forces in the so-called Wolfsburg Cell and travelled together or supported the departure.
- 20 Cf. Hegghammer, Thomas 2015: Why Terrorists Weep: The Socio-Cultural Practices of Jihadi Militants (lecture), 16 Apr 2015.
- 21 Cf., for example, Mansour, Ahmad / Main, Andreas 2015: Ahmad Mansour über die “Generation Allah”. Im Kampf gegen religiösen Extremismus umdenken (Ahmad Mansour on “Generation Allah”. Why we need to rethink our approach to fighting religious extremism), Deutschlandfunk, 5 Nov 2015, in: http://deutschlandfunk.de/ahmad-mansour-ueber-die-generation-allah-im-kampf-gegen.886.de.html?dram:article_id=335910 [30 Nov 2015].
- 22 Cf. BKA / BfV / HKE, n. 5, p. 49.