

# MERIA

## **THE DIFFUSION OF INTRA-ISLAMIC VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM: THE IMPACT OF THE PROLIFERATION OF SALAFI/WAHHABI IDEOLOGIES**

By Hayat Alvi\*

*The diffusion of intra-Islamic violence and terrorism is increasing because of the empowerment of extremists based on the proliferation of Salafi/Wahhabi ideologies. The concept of “takfir,” which militants use to judge a Muslim as a “non-believer,” hence exacting the punishment of death for apostasy, serves as the justification for killing civilians. This study analyzes the Salafi/Wahhabi source of inspiration for the diffusion of intra-Islamic terrorism, and the implications for security in the Middle East and South Asia. This study posits that the primary source of the export of Salafi/Wahhabi ideology is Saudi Arabia, in the context of competing against Iran’s Shi’a ideology. The 2011 Arab Awakening in the Middle East and North Africa has also empowered some Salafists, who are asserting themselves in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and elsewhere. Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as well as affiliated groups throughout the region adhere to the “takfiri” ideology that targets fellow Muslims. Therefore, this study exposes the dangers of the global export of Salafi/Wahhabi ideology.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates have done what Pakistan has done to itself: shoot themselves in the proverbial foot by creating militant jihadist “Frankenstein’s monsters” who are now running amok. Pakistan’s intelligence agency, the ISI, was responsible for creating the Afghan Taliban. Now, the Taliban have metamorphosed into the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is carrying out terrorist attacks in Pakistan and challenging the government with gusto.

Some describe it as the Saudi Salafi/Wahhabi progeny “coming home to roost.” The Salafi/Wahhabi ideology has long enjoyed support in many forms from Saudi Arabia, especially in the case of the mujahidin fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Today, we see other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, like Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), also joining the game. However, unlike in previous incarnations, the primary targets of today’s Salafi jihadists have become fellow Muslims, especially Shi’a, but even fellow Sunnis are not spared. Anyone can be a victim at the hands of Salafi jihadists. This study examines the links between the rise of intra-Islamic violence and terrorism based on the new wave of support for Salafi/Wahhabi ideologies embodied in jihadist militias especially arising from the 2011 Arab Awakening and the Syrian civil war.

This study claims that the diffusion of intra-Islamic violence and terrorism is increasing because of the empowerment of extremist ideologies based on the proliferation of Salafi/Wahhabi beliefs. Furthermore, this analysis distinguishes between material support and ideological inspiration that Salafi/Wahhabi organizations and institutions are provided globally. This material support, mainly in the form of funding charities and religious institutions that include Islamic seminaries, or madrassas, as well as money exchanges in the form of pseudo-businesses, banking, and informal transport of cash through the *hawala* system, often lands in the hands of sophisticated networks of jihadist groups.

Ideological support and programming are commonly interconnected with material support processes, as in the case of some madrassas. For example, radical clerics and charismatic individuals

preach online through various websites and via YouTube sermons, Facebook and Twitter messaging, and also by means of satellite TV channels with full blessings from local governments. These high-tech tactics are in addition to street-corner clerics preaching Salafism, as well as from mosques known for their ultra-orthodox leanings. The good news is that moderate voices are using the same means to counter Salafism, but it has been an uphill battle.

## IDEOLOGIES AND CONCEPTS PROMOTING INTRA-ISLAMIC VIOLENCE

Salafism is an ideology and reform movement calling for a return to traditional Islam as it was practiced and observed in the days of the Prophet Muhammad and his circle of Companions. In Arabic "*salaf*" means "predecessors; forebears, ancestors, forefathers."<sup>1</sup> According to Kamran Bokhari, "From the Salafist perspective, non-Islamic thought has contaminated the message of 'true' Islam for centuries, and this excess must be jettisoned from the Islamic way of life."<sup>2</sup> The Egyptian scholar and Islamist Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) spearheaded the Salafist reform movement, which continues to inspire present-day Salafist movements. Salafists constitute both violent and nonviolent minorities (in terms of ideology) within Muslim populations worldwide. As Bokhari explains,

Unlike members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Salafists do not belong to a single, unified organization. Instead, the movement comprises a diffuse agglomeration of neighborhood preachers, societal groups and--only very recently--political parties, none of which are necessarily united in ideology.

In many ways, Salafism can be seen as a rejection of the political ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood. For most of the movement's existence, it shunned politics--and thus Islamism--in favor of a focus on personal morality and individual piety, arguing that an Islamic state could not exist unless Muslims first return to the tenets of "true" Islam. This means Salafism also was at odds with the concept of jihadism--itself a violent offshoot of Salafism--as practiced by groups such as al Qaeda that sought to use force to manifest their Islamist ideology.

The Salafist movement could also afford to stay away from political activism in large part because it had a political backer in the government of Saudi Arabia. While many Salafists didn't agree with some of Riyadh's policies, its historical role as the birthplace of Salafism and its financial role as the patron underwriting the global spread of Salafist thought kept the movement within the Saudi orbit.<sup>3</sup>

Following the 9/11 attacks, Salafism rapidly spread throughout the MENA region, and Salafists organized more effectively and began to run charitable organizations and social relief groups. Tunisia and Egypt in particular saw a rise in Salafist groups, and by the time of the 2011 Arab Awakening revolutions and uprisings, Salafists shifted their apolitical policy and began forming political groups.<sup>4</sup> Stratfor Global Intelligence describes the recent political evolution of Salafist groups as follows:

Several Egyptian Salafist groups applied for licenses to form political parties. Two prominent parties--al-Nour and al-Asala--emerged along with a host of individuals, such as Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, who ran as an independent candidate for president. The two Salafist parties banded together with the newly formed political wing of the former jihadist group Gamaa al-Islamiya--the Building and Development Party--to form the Islamist Bloc. The alliance was able to garner more than a quarter of ballots cast in the parliamentary polls (in late 2011), coming in second place behind the Brotherhood.

... The Salafist embrace of electoral politics is likely to delay and perhaps even disrupt the democratization process and destabilize Egypt and by extension the region.

Much of this chaos will stem from the fact that the move to accept democratic politics has led to further fragmentation of the Salafist landscape. Many Salafists still are not comfortable with democracy, and those who have cautiously adopted it are divided into many factions. The result is that no one Salafist entity can speak for the bulk of the sect.<sup>5</sup>

Wahhabism originated in Saudi Arabia, where it is still the national ideology of the theocracy: according to a recent PBS analysis, “for more than two centuries, Wahhabism has been Saudi Arabia’s dominant faith.”<sup>6</sup> Wahhabism, named after its founder Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, “is an austere form of Islam that insists on a literal interpretation of the Quran. Strict Wahhabis believe that all those who don’t practice their form of Islam are heathens and enemies ... Wahhabism’s explosive growth began in the 1970s when Saudi charities started funding Wahhabi schools (madrassas) and mosques from Islamabad to Culver City, California.”<sup>7</sup> Wahhabi ideology has inspired Islamic extremism and militancy worldwide, including the likes of Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

Salafism and Wahhabism are often viewed as synonymous ideologies, although the Saudis prefer “Salafi,” since they view “Wahhabi” as a derogatory term even though Abd al-Wahhab helped establish the kingdom’s theocratic base. Both Salafism and Wahhabism are anti-Shi’a, anti-Sufism (Islamic mysticism), and also grossly misogynistic. Moreover, both reject their perceived “adulteration” of Islam by Western lifestyles and values. These ideologies are equally puritanical and literalist in their interpretation of Islamic laws and principles in the Classical context. They do not believe in adjustments or reinterpretations to account for changes in modern life. In sum, they fiercely reject any notion of flexibility in Islam. Also, they embrace the concept of jihad as defined in the orthodox Classical context, distinguishing between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-harb*, the “abode of Islam” and the “abode of war,” respectively. The diehard Salafi/Wahhabi jihadists view the world through this lens.

*Jihad* is a loaded term, well-known to the modern global public since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in 2001. Jihad is an Arabic word meaning “struggle; strife,” in the context of struggling against oneself in order to improve one’s behavior, piety, and moral character. The root of the word is the verb *jahada*: “To endeavor, strive, labor; take pains.”<sup>8</sup> It can also mean waging a “holy war,” as these definitions explain: *jaa hada*, “To endeavor, strive, to fight (for something); to wage holy war against the infidels” and *jihad*, “Fight, battle; jihad (holy war against the infidels, as a religious duty).”<sup>9</sup>

There are two forms of jihad described in Islam, one is called the “Greater Jihad,” and the other is the “Lesser Jihad.” In the context of Classical Arabic and early Islamic history, Greater Jihad was considered the priority for Muslims, as it promotes self-improvement in one’s behavior and righteousness. The Lesser Jihad in this context was secondary, and it was viewed as warfare, and many interpreted it as a form of “self-defense,” although we know from history that it was also used as a tool of expansion for the early Islamic Empire. Throughout Islamic history, there have been cases of more justified uses of both types of jihad, as well as some blatantly distorted applications.

A *mujahid* is someone who conducts jihad, specifically ‘Fighter, freedom fighter; warrior.’<sup>10</sup> The plural of *mujahid* is *mujahidin* (with variations in the spelling). Since the birth of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, many militant Islamic groups have declared *jihad* in various contexts. All of them have traceable political objectives and motives. Therefore, the utility of Lesser Jihad, that is, the militant, violent form of jihad, is more complex than it appears. It is, however, grossly exploitative and manipulative, to the extent that this form of jihad in the modern world has eclipsed the actual Greater (intellectual and spiritual) Jihad. In other words, the Greater and Lesser Jihads have been reversed in the modern context, in terms of how Islamic militants and ultra-orthodox ideologies have proposed and made use of them.

Increasingly, Al Qaeda and similar terrorist groups have relied on an additional concept called *takfir* to render a “believer” a “non-believer,” thus rendering him/her fair game as a target. This concept of *takfir*, defined as ‘charge of unbelief,’<sup>11</sup> has historical origins in early Islam.

The roots of puritanical fanaticism that date back to the early Caliphate began to form immediately after the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE. Thereafter, the lesser form of jihad was employed throughout the expansion of the Islamic empire, which included the exploits of the Seljuk Turks who overthrew the Byzantine Empire in Constantinople (Istanbul) and established the Ottoman Empire (1299 CE). In these cases, jihad was usually waged against non-Muslims, but with some internal conflicts during the Caliphate, jihad against fellow Muslims also took place. The pretext of Muslim-against-Muslim jihad usually involved one party's subjective judgment, or *takfir*, of the other's status as "non-believer." According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the concept of *takfir* is defined as "the ability for one Muslim to define another as an apostate, a concept from which al Qaeda legitimizes much of its violence."<sup>12</sup>

During the Cold War period, the most pivotal example of the use of the lesser form of jihad in modern history came with the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This triggered the anti-Soviet Reagan administration to launch a proxy war against the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. The Reagan administration achieved this by intensifying the call to arms of "jihadists," or mujahidin, and providing them with weapons, funding, and intelligence. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia assisted the United States in this cause. Thus, the Cold War-motivated jihad against the Soviets spread Islamic militant fundamentalism at a fever pitch, especially at the Pakistan-Afghan border region, where ubiquitous madrassas training young boys and men in jihad and the Quran served as mujahidin "factories." Moreover, the Reagan administration explicitly sought out the most militant and fundamentalist mujahidin factions to support, with the supposed logic that their religious fervor would be the most effective for recruiting fighters and maintaining their morale and steadfastness in fighting against the Soviets.

Many of yesterday's "freedom fighters" are today's militants and terrorists with greater ambitions, and they are using *takfir* and unabashed, ruthless violence as their weapons.

One of the global Sunni jihadists' primary targets are the Shi'a, often labeled openly as "infidels."

Professor Vali Nasr has described the sectarian schism between Shi'a and Sunnis as "the most important in Islam."<sup>13</sup> Aside from the dispute over succession following the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE, Sunnis and Shias disagree over political authority and legitimacy, and the nature of leadership of the masses. While Sunnism emphasizes social order, and hence more tolerance of even a tyrannical leader, Shi'a (the global minority) look to the martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the Prophet's grandson in Karbala, as the model to follow; that is, to fight against tyranny and oppression. Professor Nasr says: "Shias have often invoked the Husayn story to define their conflicts in modern times: against the Shah's forces in Iran in 1979, against Israeli troops in southern Lebanon in the 1980s, and against Saddam Hussein's death squads in Iraq during the anti-Baathist *intifida* (uprising) that followed the first Gulf War in March 1991."<sup>14</sup>

Today we see the same concept applied against the monarchy in Bahrain, inspired by the 2011 Arab Awakening in the MENA region. In addition, Sunni militias have been targeting Shi'i civilians, even inside mosques and during religious pilgrimages, in Iraq and Pakistan. In the latter, the term "Shi'a Genocide" is popularized among activists seeking protection for the country's minority Shi'i population. Shi'a in Lebanon are also locked in battles against Sunnis these days over the civil war in Syria, targeting pro- and anti-Bashar al-Asad communities.

Professor Nasr reminds us that "Pakistan has the second largest population of Shias, about 30 million, after Iran."<sup>15</sup> Following Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization policies in Pakistan during the era of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Sunni groups hardened against Shi'a. Plus, Saudi Wahhabi funding and support for madrassas (Islamic schools) combined with hard-line Deobandi<sup>16</sup> ideology that proliferated throughout the country. According to Professor Nasr, extremist Deobandi madrassas

...trained Taliban and other violent recruits for action in Afghanistan, Kashmir, and elsewhere. Militantly anti-Shia militias such as Sipah-I Sahaba (Army of the Prophet's Companions) and Lashkar-I Jhangvi (Jhangvi's Army) hailed from the same madrassas and maintained close ties

with Taliban and terrorist organizations such as Jaish-I Muhammad (Army of Muhammad), which was active in Kashmir and is responsible for acts of terror such as the kidnapping and savage videotaped murder of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl in January 2002. Sipah and Lashkar have cadres who trained in the Afghan camps maintained by al-Qaeda before the U.S.-led destruction of the Taliban regime following 9/11. Ahmad Ramzi Yusuf, who built the vehicle bomb that damaged the World Trade Center and killed six New Yorkers on February 26, 1991, is also alleged to have instigated a bomb attack the following year on the Shia shrine of Imam Reza in Mashad, Iran.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1990s, Saudi Arabia's chief cleric, Abdul Aziz ibn Baz, issued a fatwa against the Shi'a, "reaffirming that they were infidels and prohibiting Muslims from dealing with them."<sup>18</sup>

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria / Levant (ISIS or ISIL) has a Taliban-like hatred of Shi'a, as they have emerged as the most effective jihadist fighters in Syria and now Iraq, specifically targeting Shi'i. ISIS proudly boasts about its claim of killing 1,700 Shi'a Iraqi soldiers upon their June 2014 incursion into Mosul.<sup>19</sup> Professor Nasr states that, "Sectarian violence became a part of life, and has in fact become more prevalent in response to the growing Shi'a-Sunni rivalry in Iraq."<sup>20</sup> With the current Nouri al-Maliki government blatantly favoring the country's majority Shi'i population, tensions have come to a head; now Iraq is at the brink of all-out civil war as city after city falls to ISIS.

According to Steve Clemons, "two of the most successful factions fighting Asad's forces are Islamic extremist groups: Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, the latter of which is now amassing territory in Iraq and threatening to further destabilize the entire region. And that success is in part due to the support they have received from two Persian Gulf countries: Qatar and Saudi Arabia."<sup>21</sup> He goes on to point out that

...As one senior Qatari official stated, 'ISIS has been a Saudi project.'

ISIS, in fact, may have been a major part of Prince Bandar's [former head of Saudi intelligence services and former ambassador to the U.S., recently replaced by Interior Minister Mohammed bin Nayef] covert-ops strategy in Syria. The Saudi government, for its part, has denied allegations, including claims made by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, that it has directly supported ISIS. But there are also signs that the kingdom recently shifted its assistance--whether direct or indirect--away from extremist factions in Syria and toward more moderate opposition groups.<sup>22</sup>

The militant Sunni juggernaut sweeping across these regions unchallenged, and now their proxy supporters, are starting to worry about their own national security threats emanating from their own creations. Steve Clemons cautions that

...Like elements of the *mujahidin*, which benefited from U.S. financial and military support during the Soviet war in Afghanistan and then later turned on the West in the form of al-Qaeda, ISIS achieved scale and consequence through Saudi support, only to now pose a grave threat to the kingdom and the region. It's this concern about blowback that has motivated Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Martin Dempsey and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to encourage restraint in arming Syrian rebels.<sup>23</sup>

Recalling that most of the 9/11 attackers were Saudi nationals, Saudi support for terrorist organizations has been increasingly publicized in the West. According to the *New York Times* – Internal Treasury Department documents obtained by the lawyers under the Freedom of Information Act, for instance, said that a prominent Saudi charity, the International Islamic Relief Organization, heavily supported by members of the Saudi royal family, showed 'support for terrorist organizations' at least through 2006.

A self-described Qaeda operative in Bosnia said in an interview with lawyers in the lawsuit that another charity largely controlled by members of the royal family, the Saudi High Commission for Aid to Bosnia, provided money and supplies to the terrorist group in the 1990s and hired militant operatives like himself.

Another witness in Afghanistan said in a sworn statement that in 1998 he had witnessed an emissary for a leading Saudi prince, Turki al-Faisal, hand a check for one billion Saudi riyals (now worth about \$267 million) to a top Taliban leader.<sup>24</sup>

Even former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has fingered the Saudis for supporting terrorist organizations, acutely proven by Wikileaks cables that were disclosed in the website's publications, in which she is quoted. Saudi Arabia is, writes Declan Walsh,

...The world's largest source of funds for Islamist militant groups such as the Afghan Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba--but the Saudi government is reluctant to stem the flow of money, according to Hillary Clinton.

"More needs to be done since Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaida, the Taliban, LeT and other terrorist groups," says a secret December 2009 paper signed by the US secretary of state. Her memo urged US diplomats to redouble their efforts to stop Gulf money reaching extremists in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide," she said.

Three other Arab countries are listed as sources of militant money: Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

The [Wikileaks] cables highlight an often-ignored factor in the Pakistani and Afghan conflicts: that the violence is partly bankrolled by rich, conservative donors across the Arabian Sea whose governments do little to stop them.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, a September 2007 Congressional Research Service (CRS) report for Congress on Saudi terrorist financing issues states that, "Saudi Arabia was a place where Al Qaeda raised money directly from individuals and through 'charities' and [the report indicates that] 'charities with significant Saudi government sponsorship' may have diverted funding to Al Qaeda. U.S. officials remain concerned that Saudis continue to fund Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations."<sup>26</sup> The report identifies the names of several Saudi charity organizations of which the U.S. has been suspicious and has asked the Saudi government to investigate and regulate, but with insufficient results. This important CRS report highlights the problems within Saudi Arabia involving individuals and organizations funding terrorist groups, while the Saudi government remains either unable or unwilling to stop these activities. The report also mentions government efforts to reform the banking system and regulate charity organizations, but these efforts are generally ineffective, and official results are not made public. Lack of transparency is a crucial problem, as is the alleged involvement of a number of royal family members in these activities. The underlying crisis lies not only with the funding issues, but also with official Saudi policy of spreading Wahhabism globally. Thus, cutting the funding sources to terrorist groups does not translate into the simultaneous end of ideology proliferation.

The CRS report mentions a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) task force study that unequivocally found that, "for years, Saudi officials have turned a blind eye to this problem," grouping "Saudi Arabia with Pakistan, Egypt, and other Gulf states and regional financial centers as 'source and transit countries.'"<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the report singles out the Saudi government for its "failure to punish, in a demonstrable manner, specific and identified leaders of charities found to be funneling money to militant Islamist organizations."<sup>28</sup> A number of lawsuits, including the one called "the 9/11 Lawsuit," have targeted Saudi Arabia for its role and responsibilities pertaining to terrorist funding and support. These legal battles are a clear indication that empirical evidence has been investigated and collected

which explicitly identifies the Saudi role in supporting terrorist organizations. In fact, the CRS report also cites the Iraq Study Group report, which states that, “funding for the Sunni insurgency [in Iraq] comes from private individuals within Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.”<sup>29</sup> Insurgents and terrorist groups seek out Saudis specifically, says a report to the U.S. Congress, since “Saudi young men are particularly valuable to insurgent groups because Saudis provide for their own expenses and often personally finance insurgent operations.”<sup>30</sup> The Salafist/Wahhabi jihadist organizations are a double-edged sword: not only do they harbor deep-seated hatred of the West and its values, but they also reject and detest the regional political leaders in the MENA and South Asia. Essentially, they wish to bite the hands that feed them, and they do not hesitate to target and kill fellow Muslims. The governments and their populations that have long supported Salafi jihadists have come full circle. Now, they are beginning to worry about their own security and survival, despite playing a definitive role in the diffusion of intra-Islamic violence. The casualties have been catastrophic, and are likely to worsen in the months and years to come.

### DEATH STATISTICS FROM TERRORIST ATTACKS

The year 2013 saw numerous terrorist attacks throughout the MENA and South Asian regions. Table 1 provides a snapshot (selected list) of some of these attacks from January to June 25, 2013.<sup>31</sup> The list illustrates the destructive agendas and impacts of various terrorist groups, and while it lists the number of casualties, thousands more collectively have suffered life-altering injuries. The socio-economic and security impact of these nearly daily attacks on civilians and non-civilians alike is immeasurable. Most of the perpetrators have ideological linkages to Salafism / Wahhabism.

*Table 1: Terrorist Attacks, January-June 2013*

Date	Country	Type of Attack	# Dead/Target(s)	Perpetrator
Jan. 1	Pakistan	Motorcycle Bomb	4 / MQM HQ	?
Jan. 1	Pakistan	Shooting	7 / NGO Medical Workers	Islamist Militants
Jan. 3	Iraq	Car Bombing, IED	32 / Shia Pilgrims	Islamic State of Iraq
Jan. 3	Syria	Car Bombing	11 / petrol station	?
Jan. 10	Pakistan	Suicide bombings, bombings	126 / Multiple	Lashkar-e Jhangvi
Jan. 13	Pakistan	Rocket Attacks	14/ Pakistani Soldiers	?
Jan. 15	Syria	Rocket Attacks	82 / Aleppo University	?
Jan. 15	Iraq	Suicide Bombing	7 / Sunni MP	Islamic State of Iraq
Jan. 16	Iraq	Suicide bombings, shootings	55 / Kurdistan Democratic Party	Islamic State of Iraq
Jan. 16	Kenya	Shooting	5 / Restaurant	Al-Shabaab
Jan. 16-19	Algeria	Shooting, Hostage Crisis	69 / Gas Facility	Al-Qaeda-linked AQIM Group
Jan. 20	Nigeria	Shootings	6 / Troops heading to Mali	Boko Haram
Jan. 21-23	Nigeria	Shootings	31 / Civilians	Boko Haram
Jan. 21	Syria	Suicide Truck	42 / Pro-Govt Mili-	Al-Nusra Front

The Diffusion of Intra-Islamic Violence and Terrorism

Date	Country	Type of Attack	# Dead / Target(s)	Perpetrator
Jan. 22	Iraq	Bombing Suicide bombings, shootings	26 / Multiple	Islamic State of Iraq
Jan. 23	Iraq	Suicide bombing	49 / Politician's Funeral	Islamic State of Iraq
Jan. 26	Afghanistan	Suicide bombing, IED	20 / Counter-terrorism Officials, Police	?
Jan. 28	Yemen	Suicide bombing	11 / Yemeni Army Checkpoint	?
Jan. 29	Somalia	Suicide bombing	2 / Somali Presidential Villa	Al-Shabaab
Feb. 2	Turkey	Suicide bombing	1 / US Embassy, Ankara	RPLP-F (Leftist Org)
Feb. 21	India	Bombings	17 / Civilians in Hyderabad	Indian Mujahidin (suspected)
Feb. 25	Mali	Suicide bombing	7 / MNLA Tuareg Liberation Group	MUJWA (AQIM splinter group)
Feb. 26	Afghanistan	Shooting	17 / Afghan Local Police	Afghan Taliban
Feb. 28	Iraq	Bombings, shootings	33 / Multiple, near Baghdad Stadium	Islamic State of Iraq
March 3	Pakistan	Car bombings	48 / Shia Worshipers	Lashkar-e Jhangvi (suspected)
March 4	Iraq	Ambush	64 / Syrian Army Convoy + Iraqi Soldiers (51 Syrians, 13 Iraqis killed)	Islamic State of Iraq
March 13	India (Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir)	Bombings, shootings	5 / Military Camp	Lashkar-e Taiba / Hizbul-Mujahidin (suspected)
March 14	Iraq	Car bombings, shootings	33 / Justice Ministry	Islamic State of Iraq (suspected)
March 18	Nigeria	Suicide bombing	41 / Bus Station in Christian Area	Boko Haram
March 19	Iraq	Bombings, shootings	98 / Multiple (10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of start of Iraq War)	Islamic State of Iraq (suspected)
March 21	Pakistan	Car bombing	15 / Refugee Camp	Lashkar-e Islam (suspected)
March 21	Syria	Suicide bombing	42 / Mosque in Damascus (prominent pro-govt Sunni cleric killed)	?
March 22	Nigeria	Shootings, bomb-	25 / Multiple, in-	Boko Haram (sus-



		ings	cluding prison break, 127 inmates freed	pected)
March 22-23	Pakistan	Bombings	26 / Multiple	?
April 1	Iraq	Bombings, Shootings	45 / Multiple	Islamic State of Iraq
April 3	Afghanistan	Assault + Suicide Attacks	55 / Courthouse	Afghan Taliban
April 14	Somalia	Suicide bombings	35 / Supreme Court	Al-Shabaab
April 15	Iraq	Bombings, Shootings	75 / Multiple (waves of attacks in cities)	Islamic State of Iraq
April 15	USA	Bombings	4 / Boston Marathon	Tsarnaev Brothers
April 16	Pakistan	Suicide bombings	22 / Multiple targets in Balochistan & Awami National Party Rally in Peshawar	Tehrik-I Taliban Pakistan (TTP)
April 23-26	Iraq	Bombings, Shootings	331 / Multiple	Islamic State of Iraq, Naqshbandi Army, Sons of Iraq, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police
May 15-21	Iraq	Bombings, Shootings	449 / Multiple	Islamic State of Iraq
May 22	Pakistan	Bombing	13 / Balochistan Constabulary Convoy	TTP
May 25	Philippines	Shootout	12+ / Gun battle between Abu Sayyaf militants & the Army	Abu Sayyaf / Philippine Army
June 3	Afghanistan	Suicide bombing	13 / Military Convoy & Gov Offices	Afghan Taliban
June 7	Nigeria	Shooting	21 / Gov checkpoint	Boko Haram (suspected)
June 10	Iraq	Bombings, Shootings	94 / Multiple across Iraq	Islamic State of Iraq (suspected)
June 11	Afghanistan	Suicide car bombings	17 / Supreme Court	Afghan Taliban
June 15	Pakistan	Bombings, shootings	27 / Quetta's Women's University Bus carrying students; historical Quaid-e Azam Residency	Lashkar-e Janghvi / Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)
June 19	Somalia	Bombing	22 / UNDP base	Al-Shabaab
June 21	Pakistan	Suicide bombing	15 / Shia Mosque	?

			in Peshawar	
June 25	Afghanistan	Suicide car bombing, Shooting	3 / Afghan Presidential Palace & CIA HQ	Afghan Taliban

The year 2014 has been even bloodier and more diverse in the geography and intensity of attacks. The month of January alone saw a total of 531 deaths from terrorist attacks, with horrific massacres in Nigeria, which have become part of a trend there.<sup>32</sup> Somalia, Iraq, Syria, and Nigeria account for some of the most frequent and deadliest attacks, although Afghanistan and Pakistan also have no rest from their regional terrorists.

February 2014 witnessed a total of 588 deaths from various terrorist attacks, including the beginnings of an upward trend of attacks in Cairo and the Sinai. Also over this period, Nigeria experienced two- and three-digit statistics for fatalities, and Iraq saw nearly daily attacks. Lebanon also flared up during this time. March 1, 2014 marked the horrific train station knife attack in Kunming, China, resulting in 28 dead and 113 injured; Uighur militants are suspected of carrying out the attack. The total dead in March 2014 was 507, with 212 killed in Nigeria on March 15 alone when Boko Haram carried out a prison break.

The tally of dead for April 2014 was 208, which does not include the April 14 mass kidnapping of 276 Nigerian schoolgirls in Chibok at the hands of Boko Haram. Since then, the terrorist group has continued to carry out massacres and kidnappings. The kidnapped girls are still missing, and the leader of Boko Haram has threatened to “sell” them.

May 2014 saw 308 killed in terrorist attacks, including more militant violence in China, and the May 24<sup>th</sup> shooting at the Jewish Museum in Brussels which resulted in four deaths. The assailant was a “European jihadist” returning from fighting in the Syrian civil war. Bloodshed also continued in Nigeria with attack after attack by Boko Haram.

As of this publication, in June 2014, the death toll has been about 303. Boko Haram in Nigeria continued to kidnap civilians by the dozens. Terrorist attacks also continued in Somalia, Kenya, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan and Pakistan. For January through June 24, 2014, the death toll was 1,938, which, again, this is not including the kidnapped girls in Nigeria. In the latter case, Boko Haram also kidnapped 31 schoolboys in late June 2014, along with an additional 60 women and girls.<sup>33</sup> They all remain captive to date.

The issue of violence against and harassment of girls and women, as in the case of the young Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousufzai’s shooting by the Taliban, has not even been addressed. That, in and of itself, constitutes yet another dimension of the security threats and challenges to Muslim civilian populations. Again, Salafi/Wahhabi ideology is to blame for this. Taliban misogyny is directly linked to their Wahhabi programming.

Saudi Arabia’s Wahhabism represents some of the severest restrictions on the freedoms of women in the world. Women are not allowed to drive; they cannot obtain a passport or travel without the permission of a male relative; they cannot interact with men because extreme gender segregation is observed in all spheres of life; and women must observe a strict dress code, enforced by the “moral police.” Overall, Saudi women are abominably subjugated by an absolutely male-dominated society that does not hesitate to use violence against women. Thus, the parallels between Wahhabism and the Afghan Taliban’s ideology are evident. In fact, when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan in 1996, Saudi Arabia was among only three countries to recognize the regime’s legitimacy, the other two being the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan.

Salafism in particular poses a threat to women’s rights and freedoms, and Salafists have already violently challenged new governments in Tunisia and Egypt. Although small in number, they often hold protests in front of Western embassies and other government symbols. They have become increasingly vocal about implementing Sharia in Tunisia and Egypt, and also, correspondingly, stricter laws to restrict women’s rights and freedoms, as well as commingling of the sexes. Salafists in Tuni-

sia, Egypt, Libya, and Syria have reportedly already been bullying girls and women about dress codes and other “un-Islamic” behavior, and they continue to pressure respective governments to implement Sharia law, of course along the lines of their own literalist interpretations. ISIS has distributed leaflets in Mosul ordering women to dress Islamically, or face punishment. The 2011 Arab Awakening has not improved women’s security, especially in the streets of Egypt and Libya. Misogynist violence, sexual assaults, and slander targeting women activists and citizens continue unabated. In most cases, perpetrators have not been brought to justice.<sup>34</sup> The spread of Salafism/Wahhabism is detrimental to the well being of girls and women, as case after case has shown.

## CONCLUSION

The diffusion of intra-Islamic violence and terrorism has steadily increased due to the empowerment of Salafi/Wahhabi-affiliated extremists throughout the MENA and South Asian regions, and even elsewhere. Since the 2011 Arab Awakening revolutions and uprisings, report after report indicates Saudi, Qatari, Kuwaiti, and Emirati support for various Islamist groups, including anti-Asad rebel militias in Syria. Lying underneath the surface is the Sunni-Shi’a sectarian rivalry, which is at the heart of the Saudi-Iranian competition for regional power and ideological domination. In addition, Saudi funding and support for Wahhabi institutions and terrorist groups have a long historical trail, which includes the 9/11 attacks.

Shutting off the funding tap will not stop the spread of Wahhabi ideology. Wars and conflicts only generates greater supply and demand for the Salafi/Wahhabi ideology and material support for jihadist organizations. Since the 2011 Arab Awakening, violent attacks targeting Muslim civilians have only increased. The diffusion of intra-Islamic violence is on a steady rising trend.

The common thread in these trends has been the role of Saudi Arabia in providing ideological and other support for terrorist outfits worldwide. Christopher Boucek writes the following for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace:

The real problem is that we are talking about mostly small amounts of money and often cash, so it is incredibly difficult to regulate and prevent. Saudi Arabia is good at cracking down on terrorism (domestically), but the financing is incredibly hard to control. There are people who give money that gets diverted to other purposes and groups that use similar methods to collect cash. And it’s important to remember that terrorist groups do not need large amounts of money to operate. Global terror is a cheap business to be in, so cutting funds to the point that it prevents terrorist acts is an uphill battle.

... Money coming out of Saudi Arabia reportedly goes to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), al-Qaeda central, and its affiliated groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistani militant group. Groups employ a variety of strategies to receive donations and support. Potential funders are often shown videos on mobile phones of direct requests from terrorist leaders operating on the ground in Yemen or other countries, even if they do not personally come to Saudi Arabia. And there have been instances where women have gathered together to raise money--it’s not entirely clear if everyone who donated money knew where the money was actually headed or if they believed it was for humanitarian or charity work.<sup>35</sup>

The most compelling evidence came from Secretary Clinton herself, quoted earlier as saying Saudi Arabia is “the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide.”

Muslims themselves, at great cost, continue to cast a blind eye towards this reality, wherein intra-Islamic violence is diffused from the birthplace of Islam itself. Many blame the West, and the U.S. in particular, for their security problems, such as in Pakistan. The narrative about supposed Western conspiracies is extremely potent in Pakistan, as well as in many other Muslim-majority countries. Many Muslims believe that external forces (i.e., Western powers) wish to wage “a war against Is-

lam” in order to destroy it.<sup>36</sup> But the truth lies within Wahhabism and Salafism. Both ideologies have a long track record of killing fellow Muslims in the name of jihad. ISIS routinely beheads its prisoners. These prized trophies of heads, which ISIS seemingly enjoys displaying in front of the cameras, were once attached to the bodies of fellow Muslims.

\* *Hayat Alvi, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor at the US Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. The views expressed are personal.*

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Arabic-English Dictionary), edited by J. Milton Cowan, third edition (Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, Inc., 1976), 423.

<sup>2</sup> Kamran Bokhari, “Salafism and Arab Democratization,” *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, October 2, 2012: <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/salafism-and-arab-democratization>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> “Analysis Wahhabism,” *Frontline PBS*, WGBH, copyright 1995-2013: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/wahhabism.html>.

<sup>7</sup> “Analysis Wahhabism,” *Frontline PBS*, WGBH, copyright 1995-2013: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/saudi/analyses/wahhabism.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Wehr, 142.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Wehr, 143.

<sup>11</sup> Wehr, 833.

<sup>12</sup> “The Kingdom’s Clock,” *Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)*, September/October 2006: <http://www.cfr.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/kingdoms-clock/p11562>.

<sup>13</sup> Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 34.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>16</sup> Deobandism is a puritanical school of Islamic thought originating in northern India, now a popular ideology in Pakistan and parts of India; it is similar to Wahhabism in its puritanical ethos. The “Deobandi interpretation holds that a Muslim's first loyalty is to his religion and only then to the country of which he is a citizen or a resident; secondly, that Muslims recognise only the religious frontiers of their umma and not the national frontiers; thirdly, that they have a sacred right and obligation to go to any country to wage jihad to protect the Muslims of that country ... Propelled by oil-generated wealth, the Wahhabi worldview increasingly co-opted the Deobandi movement in South Asia.” See “Deobandi Islam,” *GlobalSecurity.org*, 2000-2013: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/islam-deobandi.htm>.

<sup>17</sup> Nasr, 166.

<sup>18</sup> Pouya Alimaghani, “The Saudi Roots of Today’s Shi’ite-Sunni War,” *The Huffington Post*, June 24, 2014: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pouya-alimaghani/the-saudi-roots-of-todays\\_b\\_5520110.html?page\\_version=legacy&view=print&comm\\_ref=false](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/pouya-alimaghani/the-saudi-roots-of-todays_b_5520110.html?page_version=legacy&view=print&comm_ref=false).

<sup>19</sup> Simon Tomlinson, and Amy White, “This is our football, it's made of skin #World Cup': After posting sickening beheading video of Iraqi policeman, ISIS boast of slaughtering 1,700 soldiers,” *Daily Mail UK Online*, June 13, 2014: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2656905/ISIS->

jihadists-seize-two-towns-bear-Baghdad-U-S-tanks-helicopters-stolen-fleeing-western-trained-Iraqi-forces.html.

<sup>20</sup> Nasr, 168.

<sup>21</sup> Steve Clemons, "'Thank God for the Saudis': ISIS, Iraq, and the Lessons of Blowback," *The Atlantic*, June 23, 2014: <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/06/isis-saudi-arabia-iraq-syria-bandar/373181/>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Eric Lightblau, "Documents Back Saudi Link to Extremists," *The New York Times*, June 23, 2009: [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/24/world/middleeast/24saudi.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/24/world/middleeast/24saudi.html?_r=0).

<sup>25</sup> Declan Walsh, "Wikileaks Cables Portray Saudi Arabia as a Cash Machine for Terrorists," *The Guardian*, December 5, 2010: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/dec/05/wikileaks-cables-saudi-terrorist-funding>.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher M. Blanchard, and Alfred B. Prados, "Saudi Arabia: Terrorist Financing Issues," Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, RL32499, September 14, 2007, "Summary" page.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "List of Terrorist Incidents, January-June 2013," *Wikipedia*, March 26, 2013: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_terrorist\\_incidents,\\_January-June\\_2013](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents,_January-June_2013).

<sup>32</sup> "List of Terrorist Incidents, 2014," *Wikipedia*, June 24, 2014: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_terrorist\\_incidents,\\_2014](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_terrorist_incidents,_2014).

<sup>33</sup> Robyn Dixon, "Nigeria Kidnapping: 60 Girls and Women, 31 Boys Said to be Abducted," *Los Angeles Times*, June 24, 2014: <http://touch.latimes.com/#section/-1/article/p2p-80600474/>.

<sup>34</sup> It's worth acknowledging here that many sexual assaults have been perpetrated by SCAF-supported security forces (i.e., the notorious "virginity tests") in Egypt, as well as criminal gangs and militias, not necessarily linked to any hard-line religious groups. Hence, Salafist terrorists are not the only ones to blame for violence, rape, and sexual assaults targeting women in the MENA region. Plus, government forces in Syria are also using rape as a war weapon, as did Qaddafi during the Libyan civil war. Reports of rape by rebel forces in both countries have also circulated.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Boucek, "Terrorism Out of Saudi Arabia," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 12, 2011: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/12/terrorism-out-of-saudi-arabia/8kyf>.

<sup>36</sup> See: "The Narrative," *60 Minutes CBS Video*, July 25, 2010: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-narrative/>; also see Maajid Nawaz at: <http://maajidnawaz.com/>.