Forum: General Assembly 1

Issue: Developing Strategies to Curb Incitement and Recruitment of Young People to Extremist Cause

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Introduction

Terrorism harms all of us regardless of culture and nation and it poses a greater threat as the population of terrorist groups is rapidly increasing. The size increased by 10 times since 2010. Although many have tried to eradicate terrorism, they faced challenges that were challenging to solve such as recruitment of young people by the terrorist groups. Since 2014, there was 71% increase in foreign recruits and the number is expected to rise. Adolescents, who are easily controlled and manipulated by the terrorist groups can be indoctrinated both mentally and physically. Furthermore, youths are often forced to do inappropriate things such as espionage, prostitution, and even suicide attacks. Once the young people join the terrorist groups, they experience great suffrage such as savagery, physical attacks, rape, and other traumatic occasions. Recently, youths became more vulnerable to such dangers as terrorist groups focused on recruiting through online media that are more exposed to adolescents such as Twitter and Facebook.

Although the recruitment mostly occurs around the Arabian Peninsula, it is slowly spreading to other regions as well. For example in Central Asia, such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, it is reported that terrorism activities have decreased. However, fear still exists and they have strengthened their border to prevent terrorism. Furthermore, because these regions face economic challenges, young adults and teenagers who are uneducated are common and susceptible targets for terrorist groups looking to recruit.

Definition of Key Terms

Terrorism

Terrorism is an unlawful and criminal use of force and violence by the state or sub-state agencies against a person or a property. Terrorists use psychological and physical threats to create fear

among the government, civilian population, and certain ethnic or religious groups for political, and ideological cause.

Recruitment

Recruitment means gathering or discovering new individuals to join an association such as the armed forces.

Incitement

Incitement is provoking unlawful behaviors or encouraging someone to act unlawfully. Even worse, it also includes urging someone to commit a crime.

Radicalization

Radicalization is a process of adopting extremist belief system. An individual is introduced to ideological belief system which encourages them to move from a moderate beliefs towards extreme views. It is important to remember that radicalization becomes problematic only when it leads to a violent action, such as terrorism.

Extremist

Extremist is a number of individuals supporting a extreme practices or doctrines. They advocate illegal, violent, and extreme actions that are far beyond the norm and have opposition to the fundamental values. Moreover, extremists believe in a belief that most people would think are unreasonable and unacceptable.

Counterterrorism

Counterterrorism is an activity that is intended to prevent terrorist acts and eradicate terrorist groups. It incorporates military tactics, techniques and strategies that the government, military, or law enforcements use to combat terrorism. The two main purposes of counterterrorism are: protecting citizens from terrorist actions by enhancing security, and neutralization of terrorists through arrests, prosecutions, and military actions.

Propaganda

Propaganda is misleading and biased information towards a certain idea. It is used to promote or broadcast a political view or opinion that are highly subjective and influence people to make a certain opinion.

Background Information

Incitement and recruitment of youth became a worldwide problem including various western countries and conflicted zones. The international communities need to understand how, which means and tactics, youths are engaged which cause them to join the terrorist groups. In the 21st century, the role of internet and social media in recruitment needs to be assessed.

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2250 which discusses the issue of Youth, Peace, and Security. It addresses recruitment and radicalization of youth aged between 18 and 29 and how it is important for them to equally contribute to peacebuilding. It created a basis for nations to "engage and empower youth as workers of peace through five pillars: participation, protection, partnerships, disengagement and reintegration It address recruitment and radicalization of youth aged between 18 and 29 and how it is important for them to equally contribute to peacebuilding. The resolution expressed its concern over how members of terrorist groups use technology and online media platform to spread propaganda to encourage incitement and recruitment of youth and their contribution to terrorist actions. It further encouraged nations and organizations to develop methods to counter recruitment to violent extremism.

Role of Youth in Extremist Groups

The task of youth in extremist groups usually includes operational and supportive tasks. Young individuals, mostly children, are used as messengers and couriers such as surveillance, carrying weapons like suicide bombs, conveying messages, and infiltrating communities. This is because they are less likely to be detected by security, oppose to directives, and more likely to obey out of fear and desperation. By carrying out these tasks, they feel that they are thoroughly involved and important being in the group, although this may not be true. In addition, the terrorist groups provide what governments are not capable to offer and satisfy needs such as stability and security.

Many youths are not recruited just because of excitement, but out of desperation and need. In conflict zones, the terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab, Taliban, and ISIS have more power than the government and have more to offer to the young individuals. These terrorist groups attract young people who live in poverty, have lack of food and access to education, and unstable shelter. Because they lack such basic necessities, they take the opportunity to join the terrorist groups who provide with welfare, security, food, shelter, authority, and financial assistance. These terrorist groups also help to provide a sense of community, family, and friendships.

Situation in Sub-Saharan Africa

According to Center on Religion and Geopolitics' Global Extremism Monitor, Africa experienced about 1420 actions of terrorism in the year 2016. Various terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, and Al-

Qaeda, became active in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda. There are about 41 million youth under the age of 25 in countries Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger that are living in poverty and have high potential of radicalization.

In 2015, the United Nations officials announced and warned the Security Council that the region in sub-Saharan Africa called Sahel can potentially become a "fertile ground for recruiting terrorists", especially from underprivileged population. High percentage of Sahel consists of youth and women, who are the targets of incitement and recruitment to the terrorist groups. Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Sahel stated that, "If nothing is done to improve access to education, increase employment and integration opportunities for the youth, the Sahel will become a hub of mass migration, and of recruitment and training of terrorist groups and individuals, which will ultimately have grave consequences." Due to lack of education and low literacy rate of 34% in Sahel, she noted that "vicious cycle" can only get worse.

Social Incentive

In 2015, the organization Mercy Corps figured out that youth unemployment rate have no impact on whether a youth makes the decision to join a terrorist group. When they were interviewing an individual who was part of jihadist groups, they found out that many leave their prosperous life in Saudi Arabia, and Western Europe to join the terrorist groups. In addition, countries such as Greece and Spain have youth unemployment rate of 50% and they are not the leading country for youth radicalization.

Education

One issue regarding the recruitment techniques of extremist groups is the depth of infiltration of the education system. The terrorist groups use schools, training centers in refugee camps, youth groups, and summer camps to indoctrinate their ideologies to the young individuals. Furthermore, in order to prepare the youths to be voluntarily part of the group, the terrorist groups train them mentally and physically. One cause of this is the lack of education facilities and system by the government, and allows the terrorist groups to offer their own education system. This is also applicable for immigrants and refugee population who have an insecure lifestyle.

Role of Social Media

Social Media plays an important role in recruitment of young people to terrorist groups. In the digital age, terrorist groups have started to use the internet, which is easily accessible, cheap, and anonymous, to publicize messages and communicate. The terrorist groups also create online websites to conduct recruitment and spread propaganda through videos, magazines, articles that are visually appealing. Furthermore, they post videos and images which become viral before they become interfered. This method is used to target young population who spend a lot of time

online. Recruitment through social media is a concern also in Western countries. Each year, more youths leave homes and jobs to join the terrorist groups.

One of the most influential networking site for recruitment is Twitter. This is because it encourages freedom of speech, meaning that many controversial topics including terrorism are brought up easily. As a result of the religious information displayed within such propaganda, automatic scans are unable to detect the danger within the text or image. For these reasons, it is highly advantageous for terrorist groups to attract, communicate, and expose their ideas to the individual and the public.

Major Countries and Organizations Involved

Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF)

Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force was established in 2005 by the Secretary-General. It is supported by the General Assembly through the United NAtions Global Counter Terrorism Strategy in 2006. Their aim is to improve the coordination and the works of counter-terrorism. The Task Force consists of 38 international entities such as The United Nations Secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes, and affiliated organizations. Their four pillars are:

1. Measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism
2. Measures to prevent and combat terrorism
3. Measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism and to strengthen the role of the United Nations system in that regard
4. Measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism

National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)

National Counterterrorism Center is United States governmental organization that is responsible for both national and international counterterrorism. NCTC shares and provide informations on terrorism with other agencies worldwide. Their task is to analyze datas regarding terrorism gained by the U.S government and write assessments and briefings for policymakers.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS or ISIL)

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also called as ISIS or ISIL, is an Islamist militant group that have threatened the security of countries around the globe. It is mostly based in Iraq and Syria, where numerous schools and camps are already built in to educate future generations of the organization.

Although the number of members recruited has increased, ISIS is still searching for terrorist to conquer more land, focusing on young person and teenagers. Unfortunately, thousands of people in the Western countries have already been recruited by ISIS through ways such as propaganda, re-education, sending them to schools or camps, and desensitizing them to violence by showing videos of executions and terrorist attacks. Their current target for recruiting members is Central Asia where the economy is unstable.

Al Shabaab

Al Shabaab, which means The Youth in Arabic, is a Somalia jihadist group based in East Africa and operates in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The United States designated it as a foreign terrorist group in March 2008 and there are estimated to be 7,000 to 9,000 fighters. Although it retreated from most towns and cities in Somalia, such as the capital Mogadishu, it still has control over many rural areas. Multiple military operations that led to the death of the group's leader and his successor have diminished its power, but it still has an ability to conduct suicide attacks.

There have been reports that jihadists from neighboring countries and western countries such as Australia and the United States are going to Somalia to join Al-Shabaab. According to a spokesperson from the Somali Australian Council of Victoria, young people who are not successful with employment feel "discriminated in the job market". Therefore, they don't feel included in the society and decides to join Al-Shabaab. It began focusing on online recruitment through social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube. Through these methods of contacting youths, the group successfully convinced them to travel to its base in Somalia.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram, "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad" in Arabic, is an Islamic terrorist group. Founded in 2002, its base is located in Nigeria and have been active in countries such as Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. Starting in 2009, it conducted terrorist activities in densely populated African countries through bombing, assassinations, and abduction. This resulted in death of 17,000 people and displaced and destroyed 2.2 million communities. One incident that caught attention of the international community include abduction of 276 girls from school in Nigeria in 2014. According to the report "Motivations and Empty Promises," dissatisfaction from the government caused the youths living in Nigeria to join Boko Haram. Other leading factors also include pressures from other young population and "lure of business support". For young women, Boko Haram offers education, which is a rare opportunity for them, and a chance to learn Quran.

The United States of America

Many terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have put in efforts to recruit young Americans and in the past years, hundreds of American have been recruited by ISIS. This has raised a concern with U.S law enforcement. A social media messages from ISIS targets the young population in the U.S and highly encourages young people to engage in jihad, have shown to be highly effective and believed to fighting along with ISIS. Everyday 90,000 posts are updated on online platforms such as Twitter, and YouTube, which gives chance to thousands of American teenagers to communicate with ISIS and an attempt to travel to terrorist regions to join ISIS.

Syria

According to the Syrian Human Rights Committee (SHRC), at least 800 children under the age of 16 had been recruited to ISIS during the past few years. Unfortunately, the number is rapidly increasing as about 300 children are recruited by ISIS every month. They feel that the terrorist groups provide more security and stability than the governments of Iraq. ISIS convince by using techniques such as offering kids and family with economic stability, food, and shelter. Moreover, the terrorist groups offer money to families, in return allowing their children to be raised in the training programs of ISIS.

Iraq

In addition, during the past 2 years, 3.2 million people from Iraq have been recruited by ISIS. Out of these 3.2 million people, over 1 million of them are school-aged girls and boys who were forced to move out of their houses and live in camps that are easy targets for the groups. According to the United Nations, the terrorist groups have demanded and intimidated youths for conducting terrorist actions such as suicide attacks and ambushes. In case of ISIS, they use youth for similar tasks as adult fighters. This creates more problems to the children of Iraq. The war in Iraq have encouraged recruiting for the extremist groups. According to the report by the Defence Academy stated that: "Iraq has served to radicalize an already disillusioned youth and al-Qaida has given them the will, intent, purpose and ideology to act".

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
January 22th, 2012	The Outbreak of Syrian Civil War
August 12th, 2014	Reduced Number of Terrorist Activities in Central Asia
August 19th, 2014	Execution Video of James Foley, American Journalist, Released
October 11th, 2014	ISIS Advances Towards Baghdad

January 23rd, 2015   The Afghanistan Government Confirms the presence of ISIS in Afghanistan

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Resolution 2225 on Children in Armed Conflict, 2015
- Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, 2015 **(SC/12149)**
- Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism, 19 December 2011 **(A/RES/66/171)**
- Measures to eliminate international terrorism, 16 December 2013 **(A/RES/68/119)**
- Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms While Countering Terrorism, 18 December 2013 **(A/RES/66/178)**

Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

The international community have been more opened to sharing knowledge regarding terrorism and several agencies such as NATO and NCTC and the UN task forces have worked together to combat terrorist actions. During the past 5 years, they have focused on researches and data collection regarding the increasing number of recruitment. Despite the work, the resolutions submitted are for youth rehabilitation or counterterrorism, but not specific on recruitment of youth. The official initiatives or organizations are taken to aim for all recruitment activities but not specifically toward youth. However, the UN have started to focus on youth recruitment recently. For example, there have been few programs and conferences such as *World Program of Action for Youth, Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding, and Youth Action Agenda to Prevent Violent Extremism and Promote Peace.* These have allowed youths to learn how they can prevent incitement and recruitment into extremist groups and encourage peace in the conflicted zones.

Possible Solutions

To begin with, raising awareness among young population is crucial. They need to be more aware of this situation, and know they can do to prevent recruitment to the terrorist groups. Most of the time, recruited individuals feel neglected and believed that they will have a better life when they join these terrorist groups. In order to solve this issue, family counselling, conducting influential programs through communities should be familiarized. Education facilities must host workshops and lectures for education in order to broaden their understanding on the issue. In a larger scale, other methods such as peacebuilding activities, providing economic and political stability, and facilitating counter-radicalization

initiatives can be helpful to raise awareness. In case of economic support, organizations and NGOs should assist in improving the financial status of the people in the country, such as unemployment. This will make hard for terrorist groups to use economic incentives as a method of recruitment.

Secondly, it is necessary to solve the problem of online and social media. The main responsibility for this method goes to both the company and the government in order to effectively promote censorship and vigilance on doubtful accounts. The authorities need to conduct a constant surveillance of accounts that might promote terrorist acts such as sharing disturbing images that breach the safety of any age. Furthermore, it is also crucial to increase the security and protect private information of the users. It is recently reported that certain terrorist groups have the access to private data of people. This means that the terrorist groups can track daily lives of people who can potentially join them. Therefore, the companies should encourage the securing of private dates to its users and advocate so that only those who the users trust can see their profile and data. All these solutions required governments to adopt laws and legislations, or enforce currently existing ones.

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