

**Forum:** General Assembly 1 (Disarmament and International Security)

**Issue:** Combating glorification of movements and ideologies that aim to destabilise democratic governments

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## Introduction

The United Nations was established in 1945 with the goal of preserving peace and settling disputes between nations. One major opposition to this goal are the movements and ideologies that are able to destabilise and trouble democratic governments.

In this modern age, democratic governments continue to be threatened by ideas and groups that are arguably stronger than ever. It was only recently that Turkey were forced subject to a coup d'état, an attempted seizure of power by the military. Perhaps the most currently relevant example would be the increasingly powerful Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Islamic State). This is but one example demonstrating the growing prominence of anti-democratic movements and ideologies.

With the aid of leapfrog technology such as the internet, propaganda is spreading across the public eye at an uncontrollable pace; it is becoming progressively more difficult to prevent individuals, particularly the youth, from being indoctrinated against democratic governments. The Islamic State target youths specifically through the use of modern day social media sites. According to New York Magazine, Islamic State has recruited over 30,000 foreign fighters. Now, more than ever before, greater efforts must be made to reduce and control the strength of said propaganda.

Alternatively, ideologies and new ideas that threaten stability in democratically elected governments do not always originate from interpretations of religions but rather from different perspectives of the political spectrum. It is often that these ideas are created and spread through times of extreme circumstances and thus when people are desperate, they turn to extreme ideas (as seen in Nazi Germany post 1929) It is imperative to ensure that the elected government should be able to remain in control of their nations without being threatened by other ideologies and movements that may threaten their place.

Looking back across history, we can point to examples of ideologies that have changed and overthrown democratic governments. One example of this would be the Nazi party, which seized power during a time of distress in Germany, which was the 1929 Wall Street Crash. Due to the mass support Adolf Hitler and his party had, it was no wonder he was able to gain enough power to bring Germany to its knees.

Democracy is the key principle that the United Nations is built on, therefore any ideologies that threaten this are considered dangerous and unfriendly. As Ban Ki Moon once said, “Democracy is essential to achieving our fundamental goals of peace, human rights and development. Consolidated democracies do not go to war against each other. Human rights and the rule of law are best protected in democratic societies. And development is much likelier to take hold if people are given a genuine say in their own governance, and a chance to share in the fruits of progress.”

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Democracy**

Where people choose their government and rather than being ruled by an individual or a family. Examples of this would be the governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom. This is the opposite to a dictatorship.

### **Destabilise**

In the context of the topic, this means to threaten the security and authority of the government. One might say that high levels of insurgency may destabilise a government.

### **Glorify**

This means to honour something or to make it more admirable than what it truly is. This is largely used in connection with propaganda in this topic.

### **Ideology**

The set of ideas and beliefs of a group or political party. Such beliefs may be communism, democracy or nationalism.

## **Movement**

With regards to the topic, this word means the transferral and spreading of a new idea. This could be from person to person or from nation to nation.

## **Extremism**

This means a person or group who hold extreme views. This generally applies to people who encourage and endorse illegal, violent or other extreme actions. This term has been more and more used to describe groups like Islamic State of the Levenant and groups like Al-Qaeda.

## **Leapfrog Technology**

The process where developing countries can “jump over” several stages to move rapidly from standard-modern to highly modern technologies.

# **Background Information**

## **Terrorism and the “New Wave” of ideologies**

The movements and ideologies that pertain to the topic are of a wide variety. On one hand, we have religious extremism, such as the ever-growing problem of the Islamic State, and on the other we have non-religious movements such as the recent coup in Turkey or the London Riots of 2011.

### **Islamic State**

The Islamic State originated in 2004, one year after the invasion of Iraq by the United States. Its leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, pledged allegiance to Osama Bin Laden. At this point in time, the group was known as “Al-Qaeda in Iraq” (AQI). Then, after the death of their founder, the group became an umbrella group known as “Islamic State in Iraq”. However, a change in leadership in 2010 brought a new leader for the group. Baghdadi, a former US captive, slowly began to rebuild the strength and notoriety of the group. In 2013, the group had regrown and was now targeting the Iraqi government. It was the same year that Baghdadi combined his forces in Syria and Iraq to create the “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria” (ISIS). This is the group we have come to know of today, with their most significant achievement being the acquisition of the city “Mosul” in June 2014.

### **London Riots of 2011**

The London riots took place in August 2011. The number of rioters was so overwhelming that police lost control of numerous areas of the city for five days. The total amount of damaged that was caused totalled at around \$50 million. The cause of the riots is debated, with many stating that the riots were in retaliation of the shooting of Mark Duggan, a 29 year old who was shot dead by police. That being said, many believe that the riots were just an excuse for thousands to commit crimes without consequence. What makes the London riots significant and relevant to the topic is that the riots were generally co-ordinated by social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Blackberry Messenger. This proved a challenge for the authorities to control, as massive amounts of information were being transferred instantly from person to person.

### ***Turkish Coup of 2016***

In July of 2016, a group, originating from a branch of the Turkish military seized control of bridges over the Bosphorus River in Turkey. Jets were seen flying over the capital, Ankara and gunshots were reportedly heard. In order for the coup to succeed in overthrowing the ruling President Erdogan, the coup needed support from both the public and other branches of the military. Ultimately, the coup failed, largely due to the overwhelming response of a rally against the coup by President Erdogan, who at the time was on holiday in the Mediterranean. However, perhaps the most interesting part of these events was the response of the Turkish government. In retaliation to the coup, the Turkish government detained over 26,000 individuals, 130 media outlets were shut down and 50'000 passports were cancelled.

## **Key Issues**

### **Poverty and desperation**

When people suffer, they turn to desperate extremes. Factors like poverty, famine, natural and manmade disasters can easily turn governments upside down. It is at these points that extreme ideas can take charge and gain massive support from the general public as people often look for desperate solutions to big problems.

### ***Philippine Drug Situation***

As of President Rodrigo Duterte's inauguration on the 30th of June 2016, there has been an extreme crack down on drug dealers, drug pushers and drug users. Drug usage in the Philippines has been an ongoing issue in the nation, often in the more deprived areas. However, whilst Duterte was campaigning for President, one of his promises was the stance he would take against drug crimes. Duterte has allowed individuals to take it upon themselves to kill anyone associated with drugs. Since the inauguration of Duterte, nearly 2'000 Filipinos have been killed due to the elimination of drug related criminals. However, this has not come without international criticism. When Obama was due to raise concerns over human rights in the Philippines during the G20 summit, Duterte responded by insulting Obama, to which discussions were eventually scrapped. With Duterte being quoted as saying, "I don't care about human rights", it is clear that there is a desperate measure taken against an extreme problem.

### **Religious Extremism**

Recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have been becoming more and more of a threat towards western society and ultimately global peace and security. Perhaps more alarmingly, Islamic State has been gaining popularity and recruits through the use of social media and other platforms, nearly unseen up to this point in time.

### ***How propaganda is spread***

The Islamic State uses a variety of techniques to spread their propaganda. The most apparent and popular method would be the use of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. However, Islamic State also issues a magazine entitled "Dabiq". This magazine contains information for aspiring terrorists and glorifies the actions of the group and actively encourages members to convert to Islam and then ultimately the group itself.

### ***Methods of prevention***

One of the largest problems that face combatting the methods of glorification is that the majority of propaganda that surfaces is from remote parts of the world, often far away from authorities and is often hard to trace. This poses a major problem with shutting it down. However, this is not to say an effort is not being made by social networks, such as but not limited to Facebook and YouTube to remove extremist propaganda. Furthermore, a Twitter account called "U.K. Against Daesh", made by the United Kingdom (Daesh is an alternative

name given to Islamic State which the group despises). This account broadcasts anti-Islamic State propaganda and eagerly encourages individuals against the Islamic State.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

### Nations policies towards the spreading of Islamic Extremism

The following paragraphs are the views of several nations and how they respond and penalize “hate speech” and the broadcasting of “extremist propaganda”.

#### *United States of America*

In the United States of America, the first amendment prohibits the passing of any laws that may infringe on the freedom of an American citizen. This part of the constitution is extremely broad and thus legal issues have arisen over the amendment. In 1992, the court case of “R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul” arose. What had happened was that a teenager had burnt a cross in the backyard of an African American family during a racist attack. The issue came about when the court determined that although burning a cross in someone's backyard is “reprehensible”, the Supreme Court embraced the idea that “hate speech is permissible unless it will lead to imminent hate violence.” The Islamic State like propaganda does however fall under hate speech, rather than freedom of speech as it encourages attacks on Shia Muslims and westerners alike.

#### *United Kingdom*

There are numerous laws that have been passed to ensure that outlaw hate speech. The Public Order Act 1986 outlaws any communication that is “hateful, threatening, abusive, or insulting and which targets a person on account of disability, ethnic or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), race, religion, sexual orientation, or skin colour.” Hate speech carries harsh penalties of imprisonment, fines or both.

#### *Russia*

In Russia, on the 16th of May 2016, a new set of laws was passed, known as the Yarovaya laws. These laws lengthen the sentences for a number of criminal activities and new reasons to allow or decline entry or departure from Russia. The laws also enforce that telecom providers save all information about phone calls and text messages from six months to three

year's. These laws greatly hinder the effectiveness of extremist propaganda. There is no death penalty for terrorists in Russia.

## Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Date	Description of event
	<b>Resolution 110: Measures to be taken against propaganda and the inciters of a new war</b>
November 3, 1947	This condemns the creation of propaganda designed to create a new war. This is significant to the topic because it is often this kind of propaganda that can create wars and recruit individuals to fight in wars.
	<b>September 11 Attacks (9/11)</b>
September 11th Attacks, 2001	The September 11 attacks were a series of four co-ordinated attacks against the United States of America by Al-Qaeda. These attacks took the lives of just under 3'000 people and resulted in an increase of laws designed to fight terrorism, such as the Patriot Act.
	<b>Arab Spring</b>
17 December 2010- mid 2012	This was a set of protests across the nations of the Arab League to attempt to shift governments to a more democratic way of functioning. This demonstrates how easily stability can be lost in a region, as one protest in Tunisia set of revolutions in Libya, Egypt and more nations.
	<b>Military Intervention against the Islamic State:</b>
13 June 2014 – present	This military operation marked the start of operations against the Islamic State. Whilst it was the deploying of Iranian drones and American aircrafts that marked the start of the fight against the Islamic State, since mid 2014, international efforts have increased against the group.

**Resolution 2199:** On threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida

February 15, 2015

Resolution 2199 was crafted in response to the threat posed by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Al Nusra Front and other groups associated with Al Qaeda. The core values of the resolution address Oil smuggling and the trade with said groups, as oil is a major asset to these groups. Furthermore, the resolution also condemned the looting of antiquities (one of the most famous examples being the ancient site of Palmyra). Arms trading and supplying to these groups was reiterated, for nations to work together when nationals are kidnapped and expressed concerns over donations to said groups by member nations.

**Turkish Coup Attempt:**

July 15-16 2016

Soldiers took several bridges that ran across the Bosphorous river and jets were flying over Ankara. The coup was launched by a section of the Turkish military, calling them the "Peace at Home Council". The coup did not work and eventually thousands were arrested in connection.

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

Below is a list of relevant UN Treaties and Events that relate to the topic:

- Resolution 2170 Condemning Gross, Widespread Abuse Of Human Rights By Extremist Groups In Iraq, Syria, 24 September 2014, (2178)
- Resolution 110 Measures to be taken against propaganda and the inciters of a new warm 3 November 1947 (110)
- Resolution 2199 On threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaida (2199)



## Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

As mentioned earlier, social networks like Facebook and Youtube have been removing extremist propaganda videos. The videos are removed and the users are often banned. This reduces the audience and the reach of the propaganda videos. However, one could argue the practicality. Obviously the removals are done automatically and thus take time and are often slow to detect offensive material. Although attempts are being made to remove said propaganda, one could argue that these major companies aren't doing enough against the war on extremist propaganda. On the other hand, in the last six months, according to Twitter, 235'000 terrorism related accounts have been suspended. The Islamic State Twitter traffic has plunged 45%. This goes to show that although efforts are slow, there is an effort being made.

The G7 nations have vowed to commit 3.6 Billion USD to help re stabilize Iraq. This will allow Iraq to get back on its feet and also hinder the progress of the Islamic State. This is a good step forward in protecting the Iraqi government and allowing them to fight back against the Islamic State. Furthermore, with Iraq's poor economy, this aid will help make up for the damage that the Islamic State has caused.

## Possible Solutions

### *Remove social media accounts affiliated with extremism*

One of the largest problems that face combatting the methods of glorification is that the majority of propaganda that it surfaces from some remote part of the world, often far away from authorities and is often hard to trace. This poses a major problem with shutting it down. However, this is not to say an effort isn't being made by social networks such as Facebook and YouTube to remove extremist propaganda. Furthermore, a Twitter account called "U.K. Against Daesh", made by the United Kingdom (Daesh is an alternative name given to Islamic State which the group despises). This account broadcasts anti Islamic State propaganda and eagerly encourages individuals against Islamic State.

### *Amplify stories from defectors*

Islamic State's propaganda creates a somewhat facade as to what life is in their occupied territories. With hospitals being reserved for foreign fights, electricity coming for

around two hours a day and lines for food growing longer and longer, we can see that life in occupied Islamic State territories is far from ideal. If these ideas were broadcasted more publicly and went viral across social media, this would help allow the truth to be recognised and seen by those who fall victim to extremist propaganda.

### ***Educate individuals against undemocratic ideologies and the importance of democracy***

People of all ages, (especially the youth) must be aware that rebelling against governments goes against stability and that doing so could introduce extreme effects that one might not be aware of. On the other hand, one must ensure that individuals are given the freedom of choice but are discouraged from promoting instability.

### ***Running more aggressive counter propaganda campaigns on social media networks***

When we look at the power of the Internet, we can see that it can easily be used as a tool for propaganda. With hundreds of social media accounts broadcasting pro-extremist propaganda, perhaps one solution would be to broadcast anti-extremist propaganda. Although such accounts exist, they are not very powerful or well advertised to the public. One reason this would be useful as a solution is because social media users are only ever getting one side of the story with propaganda on the Internet. With the use of these accounts, this would allow facts to reach the individuals that groups like Islamic State target and prevent the individuals from becoming foreign fighters.

### ***Educate individuals against undemocratic ideologies and the importance of democracy***

People of all ages, (especially the youth) must be aware that rebelling against governments goes against stability and that doing so could introduce extreme effects that one might not be aware of. On the other hand, one must ensure that individuals are given the freedom of choice but at the same time that they are aware of what can take their freedoms away.

### ***Encouraging nations to interact more with one another when under threat***

The United Nations was built on the purposes to prevent another world war and to encourage more communication between nations. Nations must reach out to one another when they are countering an issue that may threaten their stability and control over a nation. Without the willingness of other nations, one nation may crumble and then bring instability to

the area, something that can easily bring nations to their knees (as seen in the Arab Spring of 2010).

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