

Terrorism and Education in Libya

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Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

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Summary:

Libya is the most insecure nation in North Africa with increasing jihadist movements due to its porous land, maritime borders, and internal wrangling due to the collapse of Gaddafi's regime. The state being divided into two opposing governments, the capital Tripoli in the west, supported by international community is controlled by Government of National Accord (GNA). While in the east, Benghazi, Libya's second most populous city, is largely under the control of Libyan General Khalifa Haftar, who enjoys the support of Egypt and Russia. Clearly, the mounting internal divisions and the failure to form a unified government contribute to greater instability and continuing violence throughout the country. In 2016, Daesh, AQIM and their affiliates as well as unaffiliated Islamic militants, resorted to a wide-range of attacks, including kidnappings, bombings, and assassinations. The attacks targeted military camps, checkpoints, ammunition depots, oil fields and facilities, and hospitals. These incidents killed and maimed a cross-section of Libyan society, such as politicians, security officers, clergymen, educators, and other civilians. This paper explores education as a major factor in the fight against terrorism and recommends national dialogue and use of educational psychologists in the academic milieu, in order to reconstruct Libya.

Introduction

Education is a basic human right and inscribed in nearly all constitutions in the world. Most Arab countries at times limit sustainable development goals (SDGs) agenda, aiming at ensuring equal rights for women and girls in relation to quality education, and other aspects of social contract. This paper will be exploring the gender breach between the female and male, while exposing the dangers of illiteracy through the rise of jihadism in Libya. In 2017, the Libyan population was estimated at 6.5 million: 49% female and 40% children (UNICEF, 2018c, p. 2). Since 1975, education for children within the age range of six to fifteen, had nine years of free and compulsory education (World Bank, 2009b, p. 74).

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education from 2011-2012, there were 4,800 schools in the country, 10.5% of which were private schools (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 10). With substantial public investment, prior to the 2011 internal wrangling, Libya achieved universal access for primary and secondary education, and enrolment in higher education comparable to middle income countries (World Bank, 2009a, p. 23). Libya was also considered the most highly educated Arab country in the region with 88% (95% for men; 81% for women), youth literacy rate (15 – 25 years old) was 100%. (Libya MoE, 2012, p. 13, citing UNESCO, 2011, pp. 274-275). The credibility of Libya education raised doubt when Dr M Taghavi comments, "Years of under-resourcing and poor management have now left the Libyan education sector in a dire position. In 2015, Peter Millett questioned the quality of education in Libya following the high rate of corruption and injustice, as the budget on education were enormous during Gaddafi's regime, and correlates with the classification made by WEF Africa Competitiveness Report 2013 ranking Libya's educational system number 142nd out of 144 countries ranked globally.

Internal wrangling in Libya led to closure of hundreds of schools and universities. The battle for Benghazi, restrained 63,000 children and 8,500 teachers from going to school. In 2016, Mustafa Fetouri, a Libyan journalist and academic, wrote that 250 schools in Sirte – Qaddafi's birthplace were abandoned following a crusade against the Islamic State (IS). It is necessary to recall that access to education is a strategic factor in combatting terrorism, following the 19th century principle or ideology, establishing

an Islamic caliph was predominant, as such areas in contemporary times quickly adhere to religious clerics who crusade for the establishment of a religious caliphate in such areas with no educational facilities, nor societal necessities like portable water, food stuff and health service, oppression. This issue facilitates the recruitment of youths in to radical organizations. This correlates with UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2018 data which revealed that 489 schools were affected by violence and at least 260,000 students experienced obstacles to accessing an education as a result.

These variables attest why an individual may consider and possibly embrace violence. Despite the motivating causes of terrorism above, psychological pathology remains a strategic aspect in combatting modern warfare. Though some researchers dismissed this factor, because it tends to be attributive, attempts to demonize the terrorists and exonerate their faith (Atran 2003, 1532–9), it is crucial to former fighters will to return home after denying extremist agenda. Nonetheless, the world witnesses the emergence of young terrorists adhering to their parent's agenda. For example, Hamza Bin Laden, of the 9/11 attacks face Osama Bin Laden of Al Qaeda and Mohammed Yusuf Son, who brought another faction of the dangerous sect Boko-Haram. Marxist theory perceives Islamist violence as revolution against globalization (Cronin 2002, 34). Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Malecková articulated on the idea that poverty causes terrorism at the individual level. On the contrary, Atran posits on a positive correlation between education and terrorism (Atran 2008, 5). But Mohammed M. Hafez (2004), focus on the repression in Muslim countries as primary cause of terrorism and violence, which are merely the forms of jihadist tendencies.

Terrorism Landscape in Sub Saharan Africa

The non-respect of the 1648 Westphalia treaty demurs a formidable prerequisite for the fragmentation of states, organized crimes and the proliferation of jihadist movements in the world. Coupled with the quest for global dominance in Africa or hegemonic system by some states poles and alliance have been created to follow the ideology of the 'new world order'. The 19th century is a strategic era in Islamic theology and development in Africa as well as in world history. Islamic scholars prone for the respect of faith and provided several scholarships to citizens particularly in Nigeria, which after the abolishment of 'Islamic caliph' some states and regions face socio-economic difficulties. Looking at the Libya situation, is no doubt that Salafi-jihadist have gained grounds in the territory due to declining standards of living, marginalization of minorities, and victimhood (child soldier, prostitution) facilitating jihadi recruitment. The group membership is quickly grab by natives because of the salary, and services that the state would not provide. Stopping the present internal wangling in Libya will require investing in educational sector, demilitarization programs, and redefine the concept intelligence to Libya's officers and as well regional taskforce for restoration of peace in North Africa. For as long as the chaos persist, mass casualties be registered, institutions will be fragilized, and Salahi-jihadi movements will equal flourish.

Libya's internal wrangling since 2011 has damaged vital education infrastructure, and impacted on the education system's delivery and quality, with some areas affected more than others (OCHA, 2018, p. 29; UNESCO, 2017, p. 1). In the same 489 schools closed their doors, allowing 244,500 children with inadequate knowledge about trending issues of the state (OCHA, 2017, p. 41). The drop-in school enrolment rate to 20% in 2015 across the country (21% boys / 17% girls), and 96.7% gross enrolment for children in primary and secondary school in 2017, including almost global enrolment of displaced

Libyan children (OCHA 2017, p. 11; UNICEF, 2018c, p. 3). However, areas with the most acute needs (internally displaced people) are strategic in the evolution of extremist torts due to educational vacuum. An assessment carried out on eight localities with a large number of IDPs, with focus on education revealed that around 30% of school-aged children were not enrolled (REACH, 2017b, p. 2, 10; REACH, 2017a, p. 8, 49).

The rhetoric over employment in Africa base on education remains a long-term research question for educational psychologists and criminologist on the debate on antisocial behavior and international security. Walter Laqueur (2004) addresses the issue of unemployment as a catalyst for organized crimes and also links it to the prevalence of religious extremism. As people develop high concerns towards the unemployment issue, emanates protest either peacefully or violently, in order to voice their suffering from social marginalization and some adhere to religious groups ideology as a sort of revenge against the state. High vulnerability rate leads child labour or recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups; and adolescent girls forced marriage (OCHA, 2017).

According to Krueger, growing concern for the lack of access to education is a major factor for extremist attitudes and the reason why some people adhere to terrorist ideology. Despite the use of both old and new forms of media, educational establishments, state and/or private support jihadi groups aspire more than just a caliph. Some scholars subscribe to the fact that lack of access to education breeds terrorism and remains a significant cause for aspirants in the movements (Krueger 2007). Adequate education, and other social amenities and rights are necessary for social caution in Africa.

Combatting Modern Terrorism in Libya

Education is a prerequisite for social development and its effects be it positive or negative are substantial to political and religious beliefs (Durmaz, Sevinic and Yayla, 2007). The impact of education reflects on attitudes, influenced and the structure of words of a person. In africa and around the globe, particularly in conflict zones, schools are used for shelter and act as a protective environment for children (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 2017, p. 41). Youth education is being affected by the internal wrangling in Libya. For the past seven years, scholars are focus on the geopolitical situation of Libya, due to the failed administrative mechanism, and ethno-religious lines (Freedom House, 2018; OCHA, 2017, pp. 7-8). As such, some areas of the country are vulnerable due to population density with a proliferation of weapons and militias, and as well as deteriorating public economy (Freedom House, 2018; OCHA, 2017, p.7).

Social Marketing

One of the major aspects that made the 9/11 events historical is social marketing. Social marketing is 'selling' attitudes to influence associated behavior be it antisocial or socially cursive. It is a tool which can be used to attain specific behavioural patterns, as well as limit social inequalities and their related issues (Stead et al. 2007). Breckler and Wiggins define attitudes as 'mental and neural representations, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence on behavior' (1992, 409). Socio-economic structure (environment) of a state influences the way its citizens may perceive and interpret government responsibility.

According to Randy Borum, two factors affect perception of provocation and intent, which are internal and external factors. Some of the main influences have been identified as: tele vision, religious authority (Imam), social media, and friends. As such, religious clerics should preach peace and not hate, some tv channels are sometimes pro-extremist by continually showing successful attacks of jihadists on soft and hard targets which may initiate likes and even draw members in to the organization following exposure. An example in place is Jihadi John, who as recognized in a video beheading several individuals. Hoffman (2006) critically links contemporary terrorism to religious motivations, and his assertion was endorsed by John W. Morehead (2001) claiming: 'As we will see, the shift toward terrorism motivated by religious considerations is one of the reasons for terrorism's increasing deadliness.' Coordinated attacks claimed by terrorist networks with mass casualties are direct response to religious extremism.

Educational Psychologist

Educational psychology is a branch of psychology, which according to this paper will involve the study of how people learn, adapt to new issue or topics (security, extremism and global jihad), the instructional process, individual differences and ideology in society. Also, psychologists apply to how people learn and retain new information system and way of life. According to Durmaz, Sevinic, and Yayla (2007), there exist a negative relationship between terrorists and their 'uneducated' parents. They prone for the presence of some consultants in schools, in order to help young people, gain self-awareness and an awareness of social issues through symposiums on terrorism and organized crimes, as youngsters do not discuss of contemporary issues with their parents. In relation to the 9/11 events, each nation should implement psychology to every human dimension of this national security, as well as to a range of policy initiatives involving science and education.

Training of Imam

The most respected person in Islam after Allah is an Imam. An Imam is a Muslim clergy (religious leaders), who uses the Holy Quran as source of Islam to preach in the mosques (Islamic places of worship) and in Muslim communities. In the Arab world, the spiritual leader has the final say, critical to suggest that with proper training and opportunities for professional development, imams could act as a powerful force against violence and extremism. For example, in Moroccan, Imams are installing for religious education alongside and murshidats (female religious specialists), requiring them to obtain a degree in religious studies from a state university. In their curriculum, they equally includes classes in foreign languages and information and communication technology, as well as courses in the arts and humanities, in order to produce a more 'grounded' clergy. As such, it will help in the fight against global terrorism and religious extremism even via media-related domains. Counselling skills are also gained in order to limit and assist members of their congregations who are targeted by terrorist or extremist groups and through this initiative the dangers of joining radical movements is communicated to parents at the mosques, so that they in turn are able to better help protect youths.

Conclusion

Contrary to the situation in Africa, Jefferson and Pryor (1999), argues that, the determinants of the existence of extremist groups across states in the U.S in particular, have different characteristics; which adult population with high school diploma, have positive connection with the probability of joining a group. Our paper focusing on Libya, explain us that, transnational Salafi-jihadi movements have taken advantage of internal wrangling to establish safe havens, impose their ideologies, and aspire for a re-establish caliphate. Though the conservative religious nature of Libya, Salafi-jihadi groups have been able to attract some recruits and maintain operations to meet their objectives because of declining standards of living, easy access to weapons, money, and foreign fighters, and support from some local spiritual leaders.

Combatting violent extremism in Libya will require encouragement to Muslim leaders in the promotion of moderate Islam, as well as counter-radicalization programs that limit the appeal of extremist recruiters, in particular from Salafi-jihadi affiliates and Islamic State. Despite the ongoing political and security vacuum in Libya, there are several ways international partners could assist in the fight. For instance, advanced targeting of Salafi-jihadi recruitment networks; investment educational sector and economic opportunities for vulnerable youth, organize national reconciliation or dialogue, and developing intelligence sharing in order to crackdown smuggling of weapons, illicit financial transactions, and trans-border smuggling networks.

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