



Making a Stand against Political or Religious Extremism

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International Academy for Leadership
IAF
Gummersbach, Germany

Topic

„Religious extremism“ is a loaded concept in use throughout the world and often, intentionally or not, it elicits an immediate and aggressive response. It has been widely used for many years. The phenomenon it refers to has been a priority issue in many different countries and huge efforts have been made to counter such „extremism.“ The efforts are multi-tiered, including not only measures implemented by the state but also by other key actors including media, local communities, organisations claiming to represent civil society, clerics, and academia.

However, there is still a need to understand the concept itself. What „religious extremism“ is considered to consist of varies from country to country and even from person to person. The concept is far more problematical than it seems and needs further scrutiny. It lacks clarity. We maintain that analysis of what such „religious extremism“ involves – and what perceptions of such extremism are – might help us in developing and implementing effective policies and countermeasures. Governments, for instance, might be well advised to target their measures more precisely and thereby avoid the dangers inherent in blanket measures, measures that can lead to what is euphemistically termed „collateral damage.“ Similarly, non-governmental organisations or civic action groups might better be able to devise targeted strategies or campaigns more attuned to the realities of the environment in which „religious extremism“ is considered to exist. Conceptual clarity is a must.

There are some key questions that need to be addressed. Why does the understanding of „religious extremism“ differ from country to country? What are these differences and how do they affect policy? How does „religious extremism“ spread? Who has an interest and a stake in preventing and countering its spread? What is the relationship between religious and political extremism? Are they similar and, if so, are the instruments we can use the same? Or are we dealing with something completely different, so different that we need to devise completely new instruments for the task of tackling „religious extremism“ in an effective manner?

Objectives

The seminar will focus on the following topics:

1. Analysing the term
What is „religious extremism?“ Why do we need to discuss the concept? Why is the phenomenon we are referring to so problematic? How should it be discussed?
2. Analysing the phenomenon itself
What are the effects of „religious extremism“ in different countries and areas of life? Is there a pattern? What are the possible reasons for its growth? What are the methods used by extremists and to what end?
3. Dealing with „religious extremism“
What are the skills we need? What could the role of different stakeholders be? Is there potential for a division of labour? Do we have examples of best practices that might indicate which tools (including tools in the field of communication) are most effective in dealing with such extremism?
4. Developing an action plan
What might a concrete action plan look like? How do we go about developing tailor-made plans to counter „religious extremism?“

Target group

This seminar is devoted to imparting analytical and practical skills to government officials, civil society activists, politicians, experts on religious affairs and others actively engaged in dealing with or countering radicalisation that claims to be rooted in religious belief.

Facilitators



Arno Keller

Arno Keller has been the representative of FNF in Pakistan/Afghanistan, in the Mediterranean Countries and in West Africa from 1998 until the end of 2007. Since then he is working as a freelance consultant of FNF in several countries and as a facilitator of IAF seminars. Based on his CV his main focus lies on Political Management and Political Leadership, Strategic Political Communication, and Civil Society Development. As he has been an elected city councilor for 15 years everything in context with Local Government is part of his activities.

Keller is member of the advisory board of the liberal Wolfgang Doering Foundation. In addition he is working as management consultant for some German and international companies



Gulmina Bilal Ahmad

Gulmina has a rich thirteen years of experience in the development sector with a sharp focus on communications, sensitization, research and capacity building. Developed a client portfolio of national, regional and international clients. Over the years has been recognized as an international facilitator whose clients include companies based in United States of America, Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Pakistan and India. In addition, also recognized and invited as an able resource person on public policy and communication studies. Since 2009 she has been managing a thirty plus team of employees and a Consultants database of fifteen consultants. Recognized as an opinion maker through her weekly Daily Times column as well as her publications on women in politics and police.

Sine 2012 she is the Director of Individualland, a Pakistan based consulting group with a strong advocacy wing. Presently, she is involved in a number of community engagement and outreach programs in Pakistan Details about Individualland's work can be accessed at www.individualland.com Gulmina Bilal

The Foundation

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The programmes of the Foundation's **International Academy for Leadership (IAF)** form an integral part of our international work and offer Liberals from all parts of the world opportunities to engage in dialogue, an exchange of ideas, networking and mutual cooperation. We aim to inspire.



Venue

International Academy for Leadership (IAF)
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Contact

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260 €

