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**THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND MINORS
IN RADICALISATION PROCESSES AND
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Summary: 1. INTRODUCTION. 2. PROBLEM ANALYSIS. 2.1. Women's participation in Jihad. 2.2. DAESH: Caliphate colonisation strategy. 2.3. Call for Muslims abroad to perform *HIJRA*. 2.4. Added value and specific profile of the mujahid wife. 3. CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS. 4. LIST OF REFERENCES. 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Resumen: El papel de la mujer ha venido evolucionando y cobrando cada vez más importancia en el contexto de la estrategia global de las organizaciones terroristas para la consecución de sus objetivos finales, siendo estos la ejecución fundamentalista de la Ley islámica o “Sharía” y establecer el Califato universal. Así, la mujer ha consagrado un papel protagonista, tanto en el plano activo como pasivo, para la consolidación y expansión de la ideología yihadista, materializándose tanto en el plano logístico, como en el plano de ejecución de acciones violentas, procesos de captación y radicalización de adeptos, así como enaltecimiento y financiación de estas organizaciones terroristas, funciones cruciales para el éxito final del grupo armado.

Abstract: The role of women has been evolving and becoming increasingly important in the context of the global strategy of terrorist organizations to achieve their ultimate objectives, these being the fundamentalist execution of Islamic Law or “Sharia” by establishing the global Caliphate. Thus, women have consecrated a leading role, both on the active and passive level, for the consolidation and expansion of the jihadist ideology, materializing both at the logistical level and at the level of execution of violent actions, recruitment and radicalization processes of followers, as well as glorifying and financing these terrorist organizations, crucial functions for the ultimate success of the armed group.

Palabras clave: Mujer, Menor, Radicalización, Captación, Yihad, Terrorismo

Keywords: Woman, Under-age, Radicalization, Recruitment, Jihad, Terrorism

1. INTRODUCTION

Women have proven to be a key element in the strategy of consolidation and dissemination of jihadist ideology worldwide, as has been made clear in various multimedia communication platforms such as the pro-jihadist magazine *Dabiq*. They play both an active role in processes of radicalisation and the execution of- or encouraging the execution of- violent actions by means of glorification of terrorism, recruitment of minors and other women for the terrorist cause, self-radicalisation for membership of terrorist organisations and predisposition to commit violent actions, among others; and a passive role by collaborating in terrorist organisations in terms of logistics, financing, providing "manpower" for the jihadist cause and indoctrination, to name a few.

In view of this, the present article aims to give an overview of the importance of the role of women in the expansion and development of the ideology of terrorist organisations, of their direct and indirect participation in carrying out the Jihad, and how this converges with or reinforces the strategy of colonisation of the Caliphate expressed by DAESH - that is, the *hijra* or migration to the so-called Islamic State - emphasising the added value that women bring to these organisations, and what specific profile is of greatest interest for the achievement of terrorist objectives.

Last, the most relevant conclusions are drawn regarding the central role of women, both as a human asset of the organisations and as a symbol of reinforcement and expansion of Jihadist ideology and morality among their acolytes and recipients of the message.

2 PROBLEM ANALYSIS

2.1. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN JIHAD

The warmongering jihad has traditionally been understood as an activity of men, sacrificing their lives if need be as martyrs for the cause of Allah. However, contemporary Islamist terrorism introduces new contingencies depending on circumstances and operational needs, with an ever-increasing participation in jihad among women (López De Zubiría Díaz, 2021).

In the last twenty years, women have even featured in suicide operations, especially in Russia and Iraq, where terrorists have taken advantage of them precisely because they are a more unusual and surprising element when committing an attack.

Having said that, the more traditional role of women in the world of jihad has focused on supporting the mujahideen (Jihad fighters), as described by Umaima Hassan, wife of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a letter to women, wives of mujahideen, entitled "*To Muslim Women after the Uprisings*", released in June 2012 during the height of the Arab Spring¹.

Within this framework of female participation, we can also include a fairly recent phenomenon called *jihadal-nikah* (jihad by marriage), according to which a woman can

¹ Broadcast in English by Al Qaeda's Fursan Al-Balagh Media.

marry a mujahid for a short period of time that can even be just a few hours. A woman can thereby satisfy the sexual needs of a jihadist without transgressing the legal limits of *Shari'a* or Islamic law (López De Zubiría Díaz, 2021).

2.2. DAESH: THE CALIPHATE'S COLONISATION STRATEGY

At the dawn of the 21st century, the Al Qaeda leader wrote a letter which, as early as this, showed his full belief in the potential of propaganda and the use of technology and social media to spread his message. It was addressed to Amir *al-Mu'minin* and read as follows:

"It is obvious that in this century media warfare is one of the most powerful methods; in fact, its contribution may account for 90% of the total battle preparation".

Taking as a reference point the end of the 20th century, the different active terrorist groups were aware of the potential of the development of communications technology and the implementation and exponential development of the internet, which was leading to global interconnection, with certain documents such as *Al Qaeda's Strategy until 2020*, or more specifically the book by Mustafa Setmarihan *The Call for Islamic Global Resistance*², already being disseminated via the internet (Pérez Ventura, 2014).

The rapid development of communication technologies and the internet has amplified the chance to reach all the followers of these terrorist movements, which have adapted perfectly to them, as evidenced by the multiple digital platforms for sharing content, videos and magazines related to the jihadist ideology, mainly promoted by these organisations. This is so much the case that there are even perceptions of competition among the organisations themselves to be the preponderant head of the jihadist movement at global level.

An example of this is the position of the organisation calling itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (also known by its acronym DAESH³), for which propaganda and dissemination of ideas is a key element of its global expansion strategy. Given that its media presence is a primary component for the propagation of its ideology, the recruitment of new followers and incitement to violence, it has incorporated media and audiovisual content production companies into its organisation, resulting in an organisational, technical and visual level that is notably superior to other known terrorist organisations today (De la Fuente, 2016).

In view of the digital evidence and various international terrorism investigations, it could be argued that DAESH - even more than Al Qaeda, known as the leading organisation in *cyber-jihad* (De la Fuente, 2016) - is exploiting the full potential of instant messaging platforms, forums, social networks, etc., as well as displaying expert use of

² This manual of some 1,600 pages contains the strategic lines for jihadist terrorist groups, serving as ideological sustenance and reinforcement, and calling on every follower to wage warlike jihad anywhere on the planet, in any way and at any time, against the infidel enemy, thereby reflecting a decentralised effect of the organisation, which gives rise to the term "lone fighter".

³ More specifically, DAESH is the acronym for al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, ISIL, another of its designations).

the most advanced media in the creation of content, including videos and photographic reports.

DAESH's message today therefore reaches all its consumers in a more massive, effective and impactful way, which feeds back and strengthens the organisation, either by increasing the number of followers willing to join the ranks of fighters and travel to conflict zones under the control of the terrorist group, or by achieving a process of radicalisation that eventually leads to lone violent acts (De la Fuente, 2016).

Since the beginning of the armed revolution in Syria in 2011, the country has seen an unprecedented phenomenon in the number of Muslims from all over the world who, for different reasons, have decided to move to Syria to take part in the armed conflict against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad.

This reality, transformed into numerical data representing several thousand fighters, was exploited by the first terrorist groups (such as Jabhat al-Nusra)⁴ to recruit new militants, who were not only an important source of human resources on the ground, but whose nationality of origin could be used in the future to extend the organisation's networks beyond the Middle East (García-Calvo, 2024).

With the entry of the Islamic State of Iraq (or Al Qaeda in Iraq) into Syria in April 2013, under the new name of "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant" (DAESH)⁵, the polarisation of fighters towards the jihadist groups to the detriment of other more moderate (pro-Western) factions became almost absolute (López De Zubiría Díaz, 2021). The predominance of DAESH over the other armed groups meant that the bulk of foreign fighters- who were fighting with Jabhat al-Nusra- would switch from their groups to DAESH, particularly during this year (Molina Serrano, 2021).

2.3. CALL FOR MUSLIMS ABROAD TO PERFORM *HIJRA*

Over the course of 2014, a number of changes began to be observed in DAESH's policy regarding propaganda directed at Muslims. During its first year of operation (from April 2013) it had to face not only Syrian regime troops on the Aleppo (north) and Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor (east) fronts, but also rebel groups opposed to its presence (Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Free Syrian Army), and even the expulsion of the al-Qaeda organisation in early February 2014, but its primary need was to prevail on the battlefield and absorb the largest possible number of jihadists from outside the country. For this reason, and to win their support, its first message to the outside world was addressed to the combatants (García-Calvo, 2024).

Once the organisation overcame these initial difficulties, from March 2014 it set about consolidating the areas under its control, establishing a state system parallel to that of the Syrian government. This allowed it to launch a major offensive on Iraq's northern provinces in early June 2014, which according to García-Calvo (2024) meant that

⁴ Emerged in February 2012 and recognised in April 2013 by Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri as its affiliate in Syria.

⁵ Acronym for Islamic State (IS; in Arabic): *الدولة الإسلامية الدولية*, *ad-dawla al-islāmīya*).

DAESH managed to achieve almost complete control of the northern half of the country in less than a month.

On 29 June 2014, having secured territories in Syria and Iraq, DAESH proclaimed the re-establishment of the Caliphate in the land of *Sham*⁶, naming the organisation's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the new Caliph. At this point, the priorities of the organisation, which controlled a vast territory from Aleppo (western Syria) to the Iraqi province of Diyala (north), started to change, the main focus now on repopulating the Caliphate with Muslim families to be educated under the tutelage of the Islamic State (Molina Serrano, 2021).

The "colonisation" of the Caliphate is of such importance for DAESH that the then Caliph, al-Baghdadi, in his first speech⁷ and as the highest authority of the Ummah (Islamic community), made express mention of the obligation of all Muslims to perform the *Hijra* (Hegira in English, meaning migration) to the Caliphate. His message was of enormous importance, not only because he was the central figure of the terrorist organisation DAESH, but also because, invested with the dignity and authority conferred by the Caliphate, his precepts were unquestionable before the Ummah, whose believers had to swear allegiance and obedience to it. His words referring to the *Hijra* were, therefore, an explicit guideline for Muslims, understood as men, women and children (García-Calvo, 2024).

Given that al-Baghdadi's speeches to his followers were rare, every word addressed by the Caliph as *Amir ul Muminin* (Amir of the believers) had to be taken into utmost consideration because of the repercussions on DAESH supporters inside and outside the Caliphate (Molina Serrano, 2021).

It could be argued that one of the main premises of extremist organisations in the framework of their global strategy, both from the point of view of legitimising and expanding their ideology and regarding the means or channel for disseminating their terrorist acts, is propagandistic dissemination, which seeks to penetrate the conscience and reason of the cyber-soldier so that they will join the struggle (Pérez Gómez et al., 2020).

In this regard, there are numerous and confirmed cases of individuals who, prompted by massive consumption of terrorist propaganda, have taken the step - in a framework of self-radicalisation and consolidation of a conversion to jihadist extremist ideology - to carry out violent action.

Official propaganda is replete with calls to make *Hijra*, i.e. to migrate to the so-called Islamic State. In doing so, they promise both women and men that they have fulfilled their religious duty. Migration is shown as an obligation for all pious Muslims, both in *Dabiq*⁸ and in official DAESH statements. In an article in Umm Sumayyah al-Muhajirah, women are portrayed as the "twin halves" of men when it comes to migration.

⁶ Historic territory for Muslims that would encompass the regions of Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Israel-Palestine.

⁷ "A message to the mujahideen and Ummah Muslims in the month of Ramadan", released in a text document by AL HAYAT MEDIA CENTER, DAESH's media production company, on 2 July 2014.

⁸ *Dabiq* is the title of the official magazine of the Islamic State.

There is no gender difference with regard to *hijra* duty. *Al-Muhajirah* writes: "This decision of *hijra*, emigration, is an obligation for women as much as it is for men" (Molina Serrano, 2021).

Implicit in the definition of self-radicalisation is the acceptance of the ideological discourse of the terrorist organisation that preaches and disseminates it through jihadist propaganda, at which point this "virtual soldier" accepts the interpretations and instructions of terrorist leaders and ideologues.

It is interesting to recall what happened in November 2016 when, to coincide with the International Coalition's offensive against the jihadist stronghold of Mosul (Iraq), the then leader of DAESH, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, ended a year of silence by making a global call for his acolytes to resist in the city and take action in any *wilaya* (province of the Caliphate) (BBC, 2019).

This communiqué was catapulted into the spotlight by the platform of the internet and, in response, several attacks and violent actions were carried out outside Syria and Iraq - all of which were later claimed by DAESH through its online news agency, *Amaq* (BBC, 2019).

According to DAESH rhetoric, it is impossible to live as a pious and righteous Muslim in Western countries, which are full of sin, and where good Muslims are said to be "contaminated" by values that go against God's will.

There is a false belief that women in the West who wear religious clothing such as the *hijab* or *burqa* are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. This allows DAESH to assert that it is impossible for Muslim women to live a righteous and pious life in line with the interpretation of Islam. Umm Sumatyyah al-Muhajirah reminds women that staying in Western countries is a sinful action (De la Fuente, 2016).

2.4. ADDED VALUE AND SPECIFIC PROFILE OF THE MUJAHID WIFE

Women are assured that they play an important role in DAESH's state-building ambitions. They are presented with multiple possibilities to contribute to the cause of the DAESH community. One of the most important promises is work: women are offered the possibility of becoming doctors, nurses and teachers in a newly created state (García-Calvo, 2024).

In an article defining the "Islamic State's welfare system", a writer explains the merits of studying at a new medical college that has just opened in Raqqa.

By saying that half the students are highly motivated women with great potential, the *Dabiq* article displays an opportunity for future female medical teachers hoping for a challenging job. By migrating to DAESH-controlled territories, women can make a real difference and have everything they need.

Dabiq explains that women who wish to engage in religious studies can do so in an Islamic State safe house (Molina Serrano, 2021). DAESH also provides courses on 'Shari'a Science'. Umm Sumayyah makes it clear that it is a woman's obligation, just as it is a man's, to acquire knowledge about the world around them and about the Islamic faith.

The promise of marriage is a common invitation in DAESH propaganda, where women take on the key role of supporting their husbands.

For unmarried women, DAESH guarantees that the men fighting on their side are "the best", and they appear in the propaganda as suitable husbands for upright women who do *hijra*. DAESH aims to attract women without male partners.

According to DAESH ideology, it is important to live within the boundaries of marriage and to respect the will of the husband. Although, as a rule, divorce is not an alternative, official propaganda openly encourages women who live with men who do not strictly follow DAESH's extreme interpretation of Islam to leave them (García-Calvo, 2024).

For women with a husband who does not live according to Islam - as interpreted by DAESH - the *hijra* may present new opportunities (Molina Serrano, 2021). Official propaganda promises great rewards to those who leave their infidel husbands behind in their home countries and migrate to DAESH territories.

Women who lose their husbands in war are also encouraged to remarry after the mourning period. Official propaganda warns widowed women not to return to their home countries. Umm Summayyah al-Muhajirah reminds *Dabiq*'s female readers that they will be rewarded according to their suffering (Ballesteros Martín, 2017).

Along with work opportunities and marriage, a third and equally important task in state-building for women is motherhood.

Women are perceived by DAESH as a strategic element for the expansion of its army of fighters, often referred to as 'lion cubs', on whom the survival of the state depends. Umm Summayyah emphasises the importance of motherhood in an article published in *Dabiq* in 2015.

Raising Islamic State children according to the organisation's interpretation of religion, rather than secularism and infidelity, is vital. In doing so, DAESH promises to help mothers in this venture (Ballesteros Martín, 2017).

Official propaganda goes to great lengths to communicate a sense of belonging to all Muslims living in DAESH-controlled territories. In official propaganda, the Islamic State is portrayed as a safe place for men and women alike, without discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity or nationality - but not ideology. Every individual who ascribes to the Muslim identity is welcome to join their community.

It is said that everyone is welcome regardless of nationality. The same theme is addressed in *Dabiq*, where the writer Umm Summayyah stresses that the diversity of Muslims within DAESH territory does not dilute the organisation, but unifies it in the spirit of religion (Ballesteros Martín, 2017).

The promise of adventure in joining DAESH is often portrayed through vivid accounts of the journeys made by women who want to migrate to DAESH territories. Official propaganda speaks extensively of the brave women that can be found among the individuals migrating to Syria and Iraq (Ballesteros Martín, 2017). This is made clear in

an article published in *Dabiq*, where Umm Sumayyah speaks on behalf of all the women she has met that have gone to the Caliphate, showing the journey as a life-changing experience, full of joy and adventure.

The message of the promise of adventure as offered by DAESH is simple: the new land, depicted as a paradise of ruggedness and challenges, and only fit for "brave sisters". DAESH propaganda also juxtaposes images of dead and mutilated Muslims with texts justifying violent acts and killings, such that carrying out Jihad, defined as armed struggle for the cause of religion, is framed as an obligation for all righteous and pious Muslims, referring to the men.

In another article published in *Dabiq*, also written by Umm Summayyah, she emphasises other acts that are more suitable for women to carry out, explaining that the "women's weapon" is good behaviour and knowledge, elements for engaging in another kind of jihad - the one known as the greater jihad.

Official DAESH propaganda commonly associates the role of women with their commitment to religious studies- as opposed to physical fighting- although in an article about the San Bernardino attacks in California (USA) in December 2015, DAESH praises the husband-and-wife perpetrators of the fatal action.

Furthermore, there are known to be at least two all-female brigades within DAESH, al-Khansaa and Umm al-Rayan, who are responsible for Islamic policing to ensure the morality of women in public spaces, and for carrying out body searches of other women at check points and in house searches. Meanwhile, the al-Khansaa brigade, which has a media wing on the internet, published a manifesto in January 2015 on the role of women in DAESH, describing jihad as one of women's duties⁹ (García-Calvo, 2024):

"... women can go out to serve the community in a number of situations, the most important being Jihad, should the enemy be attacking their country and the men cannot sufficiently protect them, and the imams issue a fatwa¹⁰ in this respect, just as the blessed women of Iraq and Chechnya did [...]."

In addition to all the above, which is primordial from the point of view of DAESH's recruitment strategy and from the doctrinal and moral point of view with regard to the *mujahid* wife, it is important to assess the data from the last five years (2019-2024) - at least in Spain - on investigations into terrorist crimes in which women have been directly or indirectly involved (García-Calvo, 2024).

In these investigations, the women, previously recruited by DAESH and fully indoctrinated - or at least at an advanced stage of indoctrination - in line with the intentions of DAESH, have tended to play vital roles, either alone or in small cells, in the achievement of the organisation's general objectives, and have been charged with crimes

⁹ "Women in the Islamic State", disseminated on 25 January 2015 via the Twitter profile @_Khansaa_Media.

¹⁰ A fatwah or fatwa (in Arabic: فتوى fatwā; plural, فتاوى, fatāwā) is a legal pronouncement in Islam, issued by a specialist in religious law on a specific issue.

such as glorification of terrorism, self-education and recruitment, as well as intention to move to a conflict zone and join the ranks of DAESH, among others¹¹.

For their part, as mentioned above, minors have also been affected as potential targets of the terrorist organisation.

Since the official proclamation of the Caliphate in 2014, the terrorist organisation DAESH has been steadily supplying audiovisual material - videos and photographs - of minors taking part in extremist meetings, present at military training facilities, and even perpetrating prisoner killings (De la Fuente, 2016).

It has therefore been proven that the use of minors for terrorist purposes is not exclusive to Syria and Iraq, with evidence that some terrorist groups have previously used minors as spies and messengers (ABC, 2024).

Most notable, and undergoing a formidable evolution, are the recruitment methodologies that DAESH in particular is using to attract, recruit, indoctrinate and train children for terrorist use.

In the context of studying these organisations, the term "Cubs of the Caliphate" (*Ashbal al-khalifa*) has been coined, these children representing both a present and a future threat (Vergara, 2023). DAESH leaders themselves have seen the wealth and potential of minors as the organisation's quarry, based on the following characteristics (Vergara, 2023):

- They are more permeable and vulnerable to indoctrination than adults.
- They generate less suspicion.
- From a punitive point of view - although this issue does not seem to be the most worrying in DAESH's eyes - minors enjoy benefits and receive less serious criminal sentences for the organisation than do the adults.

In view of this, DAESH's aim in recruiting minors is to create a highly indoctrinating "teaching guide", seeking to sow the seeds of its radical Salafist ideology in the hearts of minors to ensure a future army of soldiers in the service of Jihad.

These minors, having been victims of violent radical proselytising at such a young age, are considered by the organisations to be "pure" members and are more likely to be rewarded by dying for the jihadist cause (Molina Serrano, 2021).

Another purpose of jihadist propaganda boasting the use of minors, in addition to serving as a catalyst for the radicalisation of other minors and adults, is to serve as an intimidating showcase, since the message conveyed to their "adversaries" breaks the boundaries of international norms and methods of warfare, provoking a state of terror and fear of the jihadist Caliphate (Molina Serrano, 2021).

In line with the development of technology and video games, DAESH has not hesitated to take advantage of these advances to introduce their new ways of reaching minors. In a media interview with Civil Guard Colonel Francisco Vázquez Aznárez, Head

¹¹ Data extracted from the database of the General Council of the Judiciary (Ministry of Justice - Spain).

of Special Central Unit No. 2 of the Civil Guard, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11-M in Madrid (Spain), he reportedly stated the following:

"Video games today have become a mechanism of transmission and connectivity of minors with terrorist organisations. There are already video games with terrorist symbology, fully customised to their cause; minors are given the opportunity to play at being terrorists. [...] This is one of the great battlefields we have in the fight against terrorism, [...] to educate the platforms that offer these video games and to introduce quality controls".

In fact, this is simply DAESH's opportunistic use of all the means at its disposal to propagandise and spread its ideology and way of being, and to offer a sign of identity to the most vulnerable minors.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above, it can be concluded or summarised that the entry of women into the Caliphate, as declared by DAESH, seeks the re-Islamisation of the new Muslim society they want to establish, with young couples and children educated according to the values and principles of the terrorist group. Moreover, the marriage of these women to foreign fighters is part of the 'ideal state' project offered by DAESH to its jihadists, who it wants to keep satisfied by providing a salary, housing and a partner with whom to start a family.

The vision of DAESH is powerfully attractive to young people with no future or who live in marginalised social and working conditions in Europe because, in addition to the traditional promise of a better after-death life in Paradise, they are offered the possibility of a full earthly life starting from nothing in a purely Islamic state.

The propaganda depicts a "perfect" life replenished with meaning, possibilities, honour and adventure for women living in the Islamic State, where they are called to take an active role and are given the possibility to contribute to society in various ways.

Notably, despite the eventual involvement of women in terrorist attacks, the use of violence - in the eyes of DAESH - does not appear to be a main task for female migrants in territories controlled by these terrorist organisations, or in which they are present.

However, regarding minors, a series of inferences or conclusions can be drawn about the crucial importance of propaganda in the *modus vivendi* of terrorist organisations, and how it is enshrined as one of the main means to effectively transfer their radical Salafist ideology to their present and potential radicalised followers.

First, these propaganda and recruitment activities through information technology and social media have been recognised by Islamist ideologues as part of Jihad itself, referred to as the *Jihad of the word*. These propagandistic actions are therefore one of the fundamental pillars of what is known as *global Jihad*.

Digital platforms and global interconnectedness set the stage for the construction of an ideology of *global jihad* theory, facilitating the link between Western society's supposed 'sense of marginalisation' with the Muslim world, which is annexed to the existing cluster of violent conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Somalia. This type of

message or discourse permeates intensely among youth, thereby fuelling a sense of having to take action to contribute to the overthrow of such injustices.

It is important to emphasise that propaganda is not a substitute for violent action, but rather acts in parallel. To this effect, some of the main functions of jihadist propaganda are:

- Propaganda is a relevant source of violent radicalisation, inviting direct or indirect participation in it.
- It is therefore useful for indoctrinating new followers.
- It is an effective method of obtaining support, funding and recruitment - potentially among children.
- It is an invitation to immediately join the ranks of terrorist groups.
- It is extremely useful as a training platform, providing combat techniques and means of making explosives.
- In short, it is another way of conducting Jihad, and can be seen as an intermediate step towards becoming a mujahid¹², performing the Jihad of the sword and actively taking part in combat in the following ways:
 - Moving to a conflict zone to join the armed struggle.
 - Becoming the material perpetrators of attacks as "lone actors" within the territory of the country they are in.

To this effect, the role played by propaganda, in terms of its capacity to convey an ideology and provoke a change in the individual recipient to achieve the terrorist organisation's final objective, is given the same importance as the active role played by a combatant in the midst of an armed struggle.

Another important aspect of the use terrorist organisations make of propaganda and the media- the dissemination it offers being the backbone of their strategy- is the leading role it plays in the vindication of violent actions, thereby preventing other media from distorting the message they intend to convey with the violent action carried out.

From the point of view of attractiveness, DAESH is a magnet for young people in conditions of marginalisation, from broken families or with identity deficiencies, as it offers group membership and a better life in Paradise - after death or suicide.

Another conclusion that can be drawn is that the recruitment and use of minors by DAESH is not just another strategy, but is one of its most valuable assets, due to the permeability to its discourse among this group, the blind obedience they can obtain from these children, and the basic consolidation of an army of soldiers sympathetic to the cause- either to be the perpetrators of violent actions or for other types of indirect actions, but certainly aligned with the terrorist cause- once they have been converted and fully convinced that they are acting solely and exclusively in the interests of Jihad for the benefit of the terrorist organisation they have joined.

¹² As discussed above, in an Islamic context a *mujahid* is one who carries out jihad, i.e. one who makes a "spiritual sacrifice of military effort". In the West it is called a "fundamentalist Islamic fighter".

Last, and notably, among the main promises DAESH makes to attract and recruit women, shaping their motivation to migrate to DAESH territory, is the fulfilment of their religious duty by being a builder of the Islamic State through both work and study, and marriage and motherhood, to experience of a sense of militancy and adventure.

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