

INACH annual conference 2018 - Contextual remarks by **Dr. Selma Muhic Dizdarevic**, Sociologist, Charles University Prague, INACH board member.

Since 1994, the [United Nations General Assembly](https://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r060.htm) has condemned terrorist acts using the following political description of terrorism: "Criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes are in any circumstance [unjustifiable](#), whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them." <https://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/49/a49r060.htm>

Summary of definitions (intent as opposed to sectoral definitions), including or excluding state, including of excluding self-determination and national liberation violence – "In the meantime, the [international community](#) adopted a series of [sectoral conventions](#) that define and criminalize various types of terrorist activities." – like for example in air traffic https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definitions_of_terrorism

A group can be perceived both as victim and perpetrator of terrorism (self-defined Muslims are both for good and bad reasons). Mental illness (in case when perpetrator is our own, quote the case of Brejvik) vs. terrorism (in case the perpetrator is the other, Orlando mass shooting).

We cover some terrorisms, some we don't cover. We cover Islam but not Christian, Judaism, Hindu or Buddhist inspired terrorism. We cover right and left wing inspired terrorism or in case of the left rather support for terrorist activities but we don't cover animal-rights inspired terrorism or misogyny as a special case. We cannot cover everything and surely the choice of this conference reflects views of the organizers, locally important issues (local=mostly Europe and North America) and available sources.

Animal rights vs. Islam inspired terrorist activity and difference of treatment in case of murder of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh. In the first case "Since 1996, militant animal activists in Belgium and the Netherlands have done about two hundred attacks. In the Netherlands, members of the Right Animal Treatment/ Animal Justice front (RAT/AJF) have committed serious arsons."¹ but no one talked of terrorism, rather of political assassination, there were no inquiries about where he was radicalized nor did it mean that all animal rights organizations or the cause as such was seen as illegitimate. In case of Van Gogh and Mohammed Bouyeri (btw. Van Gogh was murdered a month before finishing a movie about Fortuyn's murder) whose act is called act of Islamic terrorism, seen as a part of a bigger issue and who serves life sentence, while Volkert van den Graaf was released in 2014 after serving two thirds of his sentence. Bouyeri was particularly nasty, he tried to decapitate van Gogh, otherwise the acts are rather similar. Van den Graaf claimed he killed Fortuyn to protect

¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20110721174143/http://www.newcriminologist.com/article.asp?nid=870>

Muslims but it is also true that Fortuyn wanted to revive the mink trade and that both Graaf and Bouyeri were monitored by the police, the former for activities not related to Muslims.

On the other hand Thomas Mair who killed Jo Cox, a Labor MP in the UK, was tried under Terrorism act but in various media and in the Wikipedia entry it is stressed that he was mentally ill, a loner, who never had a girlfriend.

Misogyny

Attributing the rampage in Isla Vista to 'a madman' ignores a stark truth about our society, On Friday night, a man – identified by police as Elliot Rodgers – allegedly seeking "retribution" against women whom he said sexually rejected him [went on a killing spree](#) in Isla Vista, California, [killing six people](#) and [sending seven more to the hospital](#) with serious gunshot injuries. Three of the bodies were reportedly [removed](#) from Rodger's apartment.

Before the mass murder he allegedly committed, 22-year-old Rodger – also said to have been killed Friday night – [made several YouTube videos](#) complaining that he was a virgin and that beautiful women wouldn't pay attention to him. In one, he calmly outlined how he would "slaughter every single spoiled, stuck-up, blond slut I see". -

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/24/elliott-rodgers-california-shooting-mental-health-misogyny>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/22/this-isnt-feminism-its-islamophobia>

But demanding that feminists of every race and faith drop all our campaigns and stand against "radical Islam" sounds more and more like white patriarchy trying to make excuses for itself: "If you think we're bad, just look at these guys."

It's the dishonesty that angers me most. It's the hypocrisy of men claiming to stand for women's rights while appropriating our language of liberation to serve their own small-minded agenda. Far-right groups like the English Defence League and the British National party rush to condemn crimes against women committed by Muslim men, while fielding candidates who make claims like "[women are like gongs – they need to be struck regularly](#)".

Some of their members tell me that since they are standing against the sexism of Muslim barbarians, as a feminist I should be on their side. When I disagree, I am invariably informed I deserve be shipped to Afghanistan and stoned to death.

Hijacking the agenda for twisted purposes. Rightful critique of violence committed in the name of one group (Islam or some other) turns into weapons against for example feminism (you should be lucky to live in the West, what are you complaining about, only Muslim and brown men are the oppressors)

Online grooming of young women for example bore striking similarities when they were groomed for prostitution and radicalism for holy wars in Syria. In addition it all happened

online, theoretically we could all see it. The question is how to prevent it.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/26/french-journalist-poses-muslim-convert-isis-anna-erelle>

But measuring crimes differently based on skin color, class belonging, gender, etc. has been here since time memorial and it even used to be codified as such, inspired sometimes by foundational sacred texts (Exodus 21:20), what is new is the online environment where both those good and bad and all of us in between can associate, connect, plan, learn, organized. The fact that we can't define terrorism in some overall definition and the fact there is injustice in the application of the term should never prevent us from searching for the ways to prevent and combat it. That's where online know-how of a network such as INACH is necessary. I think we managed to gather top experts in their fields and we are organizing this conference with the idea in mind to understand, prevent and counter online speech that leads to radicalization of all kinds and finally to its painful form – the terrorism.

To quote Daniel Koehler, director of the German Institute on Radicalization and De-radicalization Studies based in Stuttgart, "When it comes to specific metrics, to use recidivism as an example, we do not have any base rates for terrorists who do not go through a program. Does recidivism only count as going back to the same terrorist group? What about going back to the same ideology? What about a different violent extremist ideology? Or does it simply mean any form of crime?"

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/05/can-terrorists-be-deradicalized>

However, we know from INACH network experience that monitoring and pushing those who make profit out of our online presence as well as establishing rules and regulations help understand the scale and content of the phenomenon of hate speech, which is usually a necessary but not sufficient condition for violent extremism. This conference should bring us a little closer to understanding of who are the actors of hate speech, what are their recruitment trajectories and strategies and finally how combat terrorism as much as each of us can.