

## **Combating Violent Extremism: A special reference to the concept of *Al-Wasatiyyah***

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the world has witnessed a new wave of violent extremism that has taken the lives of many innocent people of different faiths, races and nationals. The number of deaths from violent extremism and terrorism has been increased in different ways. Radicalization, an important precursor to violent extremism, is also on the rise globally. Radicalization impacts different age categories (although youth are more involved than others), different faiths, the educated as well as the non-educated, the employed and the unemployed, and men as well as women. The root causes of violent extremism are complex, multifaceted and intertwined, and related to the structural environment in which radicalization and possibly violent extremism can start to take hold. Violent extremism is the product of historical, political, economic and social circumstances including the impact of regional and global power politics. Growing horizontal inequalities are one of the consistently cited drivers of violent extremism. Critically, unemployment or poverty alone is not the only push factor inciting violence and extremism: perceptions of injustice, human rights violations, socio-political exclusion, widespread corruption or sustained mistreatment of certain groups, are also considered important push factors. UNDP declared PVE strategies in 2016 that clearly indicated the burning necessity to work with faith based organizations and religious leaders to counter the abuse of religion for terrorist purpose. However, in appointing “moderate” Islam as an antidote to “radical” Islam, the implication is that, conceptually at least, the two terms are contradistinctive. What is a “moderate” Muslim

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community and how would it act? What are the implications for a “moderate” community in relation to pluralist societies? And, can such a “moderate” community offer a practical response not only to “radical” Islam, but, perhaps, more importantly, to increasingly antagonistic, liberal contexts? This study aims to address those understandings based on the secondary sources.

**Keywords:** Radicalism, violent extremism, Islam, Justly balanced worldview.

### **Introduction**

Violent extremism is not a new phenomenon and not associated only with radical religious beliefs. Rather violent extremism can be rooted into ultra-ethno nationalism, socio-economic disparity and despotic regime. The origin of World War II was Nazism, a violent totalitarian ideology that crossed national borders and took the lives of millions of civilians around the world. Ethnically motivated violence even between communities practicing the same religion has claimed millions of lives (e.g. most recently in Rwanda and *Burundi*). But in present, the ability to use modern communication technology (social media in particular) in addition to the more traditional networks (e.g. universities, religious communities, social groups) ideologically in order to seduce groups and individuals into carrying out acts of violent extremism across widely dispersed territories.

Despite important differences in ideology, composition, and targets, groups and individuals practicing violent extremism also share a number of characteristics. a. A deliberate targeting with the objective of inflicting harm of civilians, both individuals and communities, based on their identity. b. A lack of tolerance for multiple narratives that challenge their fundamentalist belief system. c. A related and violent disregard for civic discourse, culture, scientific or rational thought, human rights, due process, and for the traditional and modern embodiments of law and authority. d. A reference to symbols, whether religious (e.g. the Sharia law and the Bible) or other (e.g. the *Swastika*). In some cases, a rejection of the nation-state or at least of the existing boundaries; The systematic discrimination and abuse of women and their subordination through rape, enslavement, abduction, denial of education, forced marriage, sexual trafficking, which has been part of the ideology or practice of several violent extremist groups.

Violent extremism offers critical challenges at the national, regional and global levels, rendering inadequate many of the traditional tools of violence prevention, peace

building and democratic governance. It requires policy makers and practitioners to appreciate the unique nature of these ideologies, many of them seeking the wholesale destruction of civic order as opposed to its reform or even restructuring. UNDP in 2016 formulated PVE strategies that sought to work with religious leaders and faith based organizations to prevent the abuse of religion<sup>3</sup>. The abuse is mainly led through indoctrination by serving misinterpretation and misrepresentation of religious texts and practices. Since nine eleven attack and the declaration of war on terror, the world has witnessed a massive flow of Salafi interpretations of Islam, which advocates verbatim meaning, and extreme antagonist towards modernity.

In Islam there is an approach which could be a form of restructuring the existing structure to combat radicalism, violent extremism in the society. The approach is *al-wasatiyyah* which is derived from an Arabic word was at, which means middle, fair, just, moderate, milieu and setting<sup>4</sup>. The word in its different forms is used in several contexts in the holy Qur’ān, with all the word forms revolving around similar linguistic meanings. Mohd Shukri Hanapi explains that the term wasata means:

*“Chosen, the best, being fair, humble, moderate, Istiqamah (steadfastness), follow the teachings of Islam, not extreme to either end in matters pertaining to worldly or the after-life, spiritual or corporeal, but should be balanced between the two ends”<sup>5</sup>“.*

In opting for a middle position between two extremities, Mohammad Hashim Kamali contends that al-wasatiyyah, or moderation is closely aligned with justice on the basis that moderation implies acting in fairness and even-handedness. In turn, continues Kamali, the opposite of al-wasatiyyah which denotes an *“inclination toward the peripheries”* and is known as *“extremism”, “radicalism”, and “excess”<sup>6</sup>“.*

In this sense, if the concept of al-wasatiyyah are practiced in everyday life, the individual would be not inclined towards either form of extremity that is, neither an over

<sup>3</sup> Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity UNDP, p. 31. 2016, accessed on 02/03/2020 <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undpogc/documents/Discussion%20Paper%20Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20Development.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See more at Spahic Omer. Al-Wasatiyyah (Moderation) as an Agenda of the Ummah , 2013. Accessed on 02/02/2020 <https://www.islamicity.org/5465/al-wasatiyyah-moderation-as-an-agenda-of-the-ummah/>

<sup>5</sup> Mohd Shukri Hanapi, “The Wasatiyyah (Moderation) Concept in Islamic Epistemology: A Case Study of its Implementation in Malaysia”, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol. 4, No. 9(1), 2014, p. 54.

<sup>6</sup> Kamali, The Middle Path of Moderation is Islam, Oxford University Press; 1 edition (2015), p. 11.

adherence to nor a neglect of faith. Furthermore, *Kamali* explains that conceptions of the “middle way” or “golden mean” are ancient concepts, which are described in various traditions often in relation to ethical contexts<sup>7</sup>. In Western philosophy, one encounters the concept of the “golden mean” in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*<sup>8</sup>. *Aristotle*, explains Rivera, describes the “golden mean” as “the intermediary point between two extremes of excess and lack”<sup>9</sup>. The “golden mean”, therefore, states Kamali, “is the desirable middle between two extremes, one of excess and the other of *deficiency*”<sup>10</sup>.

### What is Violent Extremism?

Violent extremism has no universally agreed definition over all. It refers to the acts, attitudes, beliefs of an individual or a group of individuals in order to pursue their particular political, ideological religious and any other goals or objectives. Therefore many definitions came from different governmental and intergovernmental organizations while they step up to formulate their PVE/CVE strategies. According to the Department of Public Safety Canada (2009) “Violent extremism” is where an offence is “primarily motivated by extreme political, religious or ideological views”<sup>11</sup>. Australian National Parliament (2015) agreed on “Violent extremism is the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. This includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and communal violence.”<sup>12</sup>

In the United States the definitions of Violent Extremism has been varied within their different bureaus such,

According to FBI “Violent extremism is the “encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious,

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by J. A. K. Thompson, London: Penguin Books, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Nuraan Davids. Islam, Moderation, Radicalism, and Justly Balanced Communities, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, (2017) DOI: 10.1080/13602004.2017.1384672 Accessed on 02/02/2020 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2017.1384672>

<sup>10</sup> Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation is Islam*, Oxford University Press; 1 edition (2015) p. 37.

<sup>11</sup> Pressman, E. Risk Assessment Decisions for Violent Political Extremism. User Report 2009-02. Ottawa: Public Safety Canada. (2009)

<sup>12</sup> Australian Government measures to counter violent extremism: a quick guide. Parliament of Australia (2015). Accessed on 26 January 2020 [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick\\_Guides/Extremism](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/Quick_Guides/Extremism)

social, or economic goals”<sup>13</sup>. On the other hand USAID (2012) defines defines violent extremist activities as the “advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives”<sup>14</sup>.

According to Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (2014), “Violent extremism constitutes activities of persons and groups that are willing to use violence in order to achieve political, ideological or religious goals”<sup>15</sup>. In according to Swedish Government office (2011), “A violent extremist is someone “deemed repeatedly to have displayed behavior that does not just accept the use of violence but also supports or exercises ideologically motivated violence to promote something”<sup>16</sup>. On the other hand, HM Government (UK) defined it as “as the vocal or active opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, as well as calls for the death of United Kingdom armed forces at home or abroad”<sup>17</sup>. However, in view of OECD (2016), violent extremism is “Promoting views which foment and incite violence in furtherance of particular beliefs, and foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence”<sup>18</sup>. UNESCO (2017) in its’ PVE strategies defined it as “the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or

<sup>13</sup> Federal Bureau investigation, “What is Violent Extremism”? Accessed on 26 January 2020 <https://www.fbi.gov/cve508/teen-website/what-is-violent-extremism>

<sup>14</sup> USAID (2011). “The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles In to Practice.” USAID Policy, September 2011. P. 2. Accessed on 26 January 2020 [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI\\_Policy\\_Final.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/VEI_Policy_Final.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security (2014). " Action Plan Against Radicalization and Violent Extremism." P.7 Accessed on 26 January 2020 [.https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/Action-plan-against-Radicalisation-and-Violent-Extremism/id762413/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/Action-plan-against-Radicalisation-and-Violent-Extremism/id762413/)

<sup>16</sup> Government Offices of Sweden.” Sweden Action Plan to Safeguard Democracy Against Violence Promoting Extremism.” Government Communication 2011. 12:44, Point 3.2. Accessed on 26 January 2020 <https://www.government.se/49b75d/contentassets/b94f163a3c5941aebaeb78174ea27a29/action-plan-to-safeguard-democracy-against-violence-promoting-extremism-skr.-20111244>

<sup>17</sup> HM Government (UK). Counter-Extremism Strategy. London, Counter-Extremism Directorate, Home Office. Para. 1. (2015). See too HM Government. Prevent Strategy. The Stationery Office, Norwich. Annex A. Note that the 2013 UK Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism defined "Islamist extremism", (2011). Accessed on January 25,2020 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/470088/51859\\_Cm9148\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Development Assistance Committee (2016). DAC High Level Meeting, Communiqué of 19 February 2016. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/DAC-HLM-Communique-2016.pdf>

political goals”. This can include “terrorism and other forms of politically motivated violence”<sup>19</sup>.

Violent extremism is basically refers to the beliefs and actions of individuals, or group of individuals which cause damage, harm, disruption to individuals, groups, community, nation or to the whole world in order to attain their particular political, ideological, religious or any other goals. These definitions explicitly denote that the extremist views are not defined merely by means of actions, rather by the consequences and the intentions of beliefs and actions.

### **Conceptions of justly balanced worldview**

To prevent radicalism and violent extremism justly balanced view is extremely needed. In terms of Quranic exegeses, conceptions of *al-wasatiyyah* (moderation, justly balanced view) are generally associated with the perspectives, beliefs and actions of the individual, as well as notions of a collective community. Kamal *Hassan* explains that community is constituted through a universal community, based on a shared faith, and the implementation of its law<sup>20</sup>. The definitive passages, explains *Denny*, in which the term community appears to refer exclusively to the Muslims are found in the Medinan period that is the time after the Prophet Muhammad had migrated to the city of Medina. *Denny* notes that the concept of community “*itself develops from a general one, applying to non-Arab groups, too, toward a more exclusive one which is limited to the Muslim community*”<sup>21</sup>.

It is also during the Medinan period that the concept of Wasatan (justly balanced community) emerged as a description of the Muslim community. In this regard, *Denny* explains Wasatan (justly balanced community) came into effect at a time when the Muslim religious community reached its most developed stage which, of course, might not necessarily be the case, since communities, like individuals are perpetually in a state of becoming.<sup>22</sup> This, in turn, renders some ideas. This categorization or depiction takes into account the religious and spiritual maturity of the Muslim community inasmuch as it offers commentary on this interaction of the community with

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<sup>19</sup> United Nations, UNESCO. Preventing violent extremism through education: A guide for policy-makers. Paris, France. (2017). [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247764\\_eng](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247764_eng)

<sup>20</sup> Kamal Hassan, Voice of Islamic Moderation from the Malay World. Emerging Markets initiative Research, Malaysia. 2011

<sup>21</sup> *Denny*, “The Meaning of ‘Community’ in the Qur’ān”, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

the Jews and Christians who, at this time, co-existed with Muslims in the city of Medina. The depiction of Wasatan (justly balanced) is encapsulated in the following Qur'ānic verse:

*“And thus have We willed you to be a community of the middle way [that is, justly balanced], so that [with your lives] you might bear witness to the truth before all mankind, and that the Apostle might bear witness to it before you. (Qur'ān, Chapter 2, Verse 143)”*

Following on the aforementioned Qur'ānic verse, ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community) contain a theological inclusion of all people, thereby discounting dichotomies between those who lay claim to a Muslim identity, and those who do not. In this sense, the mythical vision of the “best of peoples”, or the ideal community, is completed by postulating an ideal transmission of a series of historical events, narrations, and models known that would condition the perennial nature and spiritual quality of the ideal community. In turn, *al-Qaradawi* expresses the view that a community, which follows the middle or moderate way, is a community, which is balanced between “knowledge and action; worship and interaction; culture and character; truth and strength; as well as an invitation and political engagement”. It is such a community which rejects and opposes all kinds of extremism<sup>23</sup>.

Likewise, *Davids and Waghid* maintains that Wasatan (justly balanced) is one that exercises independent critical judgment, by “formulating and articulating particular responses to contemporary social issues, so that the voice that is expressed is one of engagement, integration and belonging, rather than separation and otherness”<sup>24</sup>. They continue that a justly balanced and moderate community has to offer an “educative response to all forms of oppression, extremism and injustices”<sup>25</sup>. In this sense, acting in moderation demands a particular response that holds to account that which is out of balance, unstable, and unjust. To act moderately, therefore, is not limited to an individual's actions in relation to him- or herself; it also has to do with acting against that which is counter-intuitive to being balanced and just. It is for this reason that Kamali describes Al-Wasatiyyah (moderation) as a “transitive” action as “it is not self-contained in itself unless it is applied to a subject that it can

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<sup>23</sup> Yusuf al Qardawi. *Islamic Moderation and Renewal: Wasatiyyah-Tajdid*. 2013

<sup>24</sup> N. Davids and Y. Waghid, *Ethical Dimensions of Muslim Education*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

qualify”. In other words, states Kamali, moderation, on its own, does not “impart a definite meaning”,<sup>26</sup>.

### **Relation to the Pluralist Societies**

Following on the aforementioned explications, it becomes apparent that while the concept of Al-Wasatiyyah (moderation) takes on numerous forms in relation to Qur’ānic exegeses, it remains foundationally connected to notions of balance and temperance, which, in turn, draw on qualities or virtues of fairness and just action. Furthermore, as much as notions of moderation are irreconcilable with notions of extremism—that is, peripheral or fringe perspectives conceptions of a moderate or justly balanced community assume the theological inclusion of all people, rather than being attached to a singular religious community. As pointed out by Denny, the concept of an Ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community) evolved as a commentary on the religious and spiritual maturity of the first Muslim community in Medina<sup>27</sup>.

However, this maturity cannot be considered without taking into account the Medinan context in which this Muslim community thrived. In other words, it is not just that the Muslim community reached some measure of fruition in relation to establishing itself as a Muslim community as per the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad during this time, but it also has to do with the geographical and social context in which this Muslim community found itself. This understanding returns us to Kamali’s argument of the non-definitive meaning of moderation, namely that it has no meaning unless it is applied or lived in relation to another. History reveals that the relational context of this religious and spiritual mature Muslim community comprised Christian and Jewish communities. The fact that this Muslim community is referred to as an Ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community) means that it co-existed with other communities (Christians and Jews) in a particular way defined by balance, fairness, humility, and peace. Its description, therefore, of an Ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community) is derived from how this Muslim community acted and responded to other communities. According to al-Faruqi, what designates Islam as justly balanced and as a golden mean is that it is “*both general and particular,*

<sup>26</sup> Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation is Islam*, Oxford University Press; 1 edition (2015) p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> Denny, “The Meaning of ‘Community’ in the Qur’ān”, op. cit., p. 45.



*universal and specific, formal and contextual, monolithic and pluralistic, individualistic and socialistic; and that is its strength*”<sup>28</sup>.

The plurality to which al-Faruqi refers is made explicit in the following Qur’ānic verse:

*“O humankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you .... (Qur’ān, Chapter 49, Verse 13).”*

To Davids and Waghid, this verse accentuates “the Qur’ān’s preference for an ethical code that is commensurate with equality and diversity, pluralism and dialogical engagement, and moral virtue”<sup>29</sup>. In as much as this verse takes into account diverse groups of people and their associated differences, the reference to plurality is inclusive of plurality within constructions of a Muslim community. At a very simplistic level, constructions of Muslim identity in Pakistan and Jordan might be decidedly different to those encountered in Sudan and China. What the aforementioned verse therefore brings to the fore is as much a commentary on diverse forms of existence, as it is a recognition of diverse ways of thinking, whether within Muslim communities or not. While the propagation of diverse ways of thinking might be an attractive consideration in relation to the recognition of difference and disagreement, one of the implications of diversity is that it offers the flexibility and latitude necessary for the justification of particular interpretations. In turn, these particular interpretations might be irreconcilable with other dissenting views, such as the justification of suicide bombings. While these justifications cannot be denied, and ought to be taken seriously, argues Moosa, discursive interpretations and usages of Islam, however, cannot remain uncontested.

On the one hand, a refusal to engage with subversive views could be misinterpreted as agreement with those views. On the other hand, an unwillingness to engage with subversive views can be misinterpreted as an exclusion of those views, which, in turn, could be considered as an exclusion of divergent viewpoints.

Both positions of refusal or unwillingness are further complicated by the reality that not only are descriptions or categorizations of what is “radical” or “subversive”

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<sup>28</sup> Ismail R. Al-Faruqi, *Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982, p. 122.

<sup>29</sup> Davids and Waghid, *Ethical Dimensions of Muslim Education*, op. cit., p. 22.

entirely relational, but as Kamali argues, constructions of “moderate” are often contextualized, and given different readings in different parts of the world. One obvious concern is that the appeal for moderation is seemingly exclusively directed at Muslims. According to Kamali, in the Western media and political discourse, “moderation and moderates” often denote a calling and demand addressed particularly and exclusively to Muslims. Similar demands are seldom directed at other (religious) groups<sup>30</sup>.

### **Adicalism and Moderate Islam**

One of the pressing concerns about dealing with or responding to constructions of what is “radical” and what is not, is that, like *Al-Wasatiyyah* (moderation), it is not self-contained. That is, the term “radical” only has meaning when it is applied to a subject in this case, Islam and Muslims. In much the same way that moderate, when used on its own, has no definitive meaning, so too “radical” does not say much, and imparts even less meaning in the face of acts of terror. For this reason, my first point of departure would be to detach myself from a description of Islam as either radical or not, since such a description has the potential of homogenizing the actions of all Muslims. Perhaps the greater risk with homogeneity is that it has the potential to suppress dissent. In other words, if all Muslims are treated with suspicion as Donald Trump’s attempts at a Muslim travel ban implies then these suspicions and subsequent prohibitions would inadvertently suppress dissent among Muslims<sup>31</sup>. Secondly, I would agree with Crane, that unless one wants to reduce all religions to the level of tribalism, there is no “Islamic extremism, any more than there is Christian or Jewish extremism.” As such, responses to radicalism or extremism have to be dislodged from religious markers, if diverse, pluralist communities are to offer meaningful responses.

To this end, any calls for “moderate” responses to “radical” actions have to be directed at all people, and not only at this or that religious group specifically. This is because the actions of “radical” people are not limited to particular groups or individuals. If communities are constitutive of all individuals, then whatever dystopia affects one individual or group, affects the entire community. “Radical” Islam is not only intolerant of non-Muslim communities; it is as intolerant of Muslim communities.

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<sup>30</sup> Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation is Islam*, Oxford University Press; 1 edition (2015) p. 37.

<sup>31</sup> Trump travel ban: What does this ruling mean? 2020/02/02 on Accessed .2018 BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-39044403>

To this end, “radical” Islam is as problematic to Muslim pluralism as it is too liberal pluralist societies. To trap these discourses into languages of division between those who are Muslim and those who are not, only serves, as Nussbaum informs us, to stoke fear and hatred. Fear, explains Nussbaum, is a “dimming preoccupation: an intense focus on the self that casts others into darkness. However valuable and indeed essential it is in a genuinely dangerous world, it is itself one of life’s great dangers.”<sup>32</sup>

Following *Nussbaum*, it becomes essential to ask what purpose, if any, does the dichotomy, “moderate” versus “radical”, actually serve. Will, or can such a dichotomy fulfill the goal of peaceful co-existence, if that is what “moderate” Muslims are expected to do in relation to “radical” Muslims? Stated differently, how does juxtaposing moderation with radicalism assist pluralist societies in arriving at and cultivating just communities because surely, it is only through just action that a good citizen is discerned from a bad citizen? To this end, I would be interested to understand how both a “moderate” and a “radical” community might realize just interactions and co-existence. Therefore, instead of defending a “moderate” Islam, or vilifying a “radical” discourse, as dominant media and academic discourses have been inclined to propagate, I would much rather focus on how all people might counteract forms of human injustice, including violence and terror regardless of whether these people consider themselves as “moderate” or “radical”. That is interested in understanding how “moderate” people might exert “radical” voices and actions.

If contemporary world events are anything to go by, then it seems that the voices of “moderation” have not achieved much in quelling “radical” acts. To my mind, it would seem, that indeed what is required, is a “radical” response. It is exactly a “radical” response, for example, which saw the Muslim community’s flight from Mecca to Medina. The Muslim community’s presence in Medina was not by choice. They were forced to flee Mecca, because of the growing persecution of the Muslim community, as well as the threat of assassination of Prophet Muhammad by the ruling tribe, the Quraysh. The Prophet was unwanted in Mecca, because of his religious beliefs: he denounced the polytheistic practices of the various tribes, and spoke out against unfair business practices. The departure from Mecca to Medina known as the Hijrah (migration) signified the beginning of the severing of Prophet Muhammad’s ties with his clan, the Banu Hashim, of the Quraysh tribe. Within the Arabian land-

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<sup>32</sup> Nussbaum *The New Religious Intolerance: Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age*. Belknap Press: An Imprint of Harvard University Press; 2013

scape and context, not belonging to a clan meant no protection, and this made the Muslim community vulnerable to attacks. In this regard, the Muslim community's self-imposed exile from Mecca depicts a preparedness to make a radical break with the past so that they might pursue their convictions. It seems to me that "radical" action, such as speaking out against atrocities and terror, might be exactly what is needed to counteract the patterns of violence, which continue to cultivate horror and fear among all people. A "moderate" response will not counter this. Furthermore, to expect "moderate" Islam to act as a buffer against "radical", Muslims is to be remiss of the ideological, political, and social depths, which underscore any identity. As Bernard Lewis observes:

*"In the Islamic world, from the beginning, Islam was the primary basis of both identity and loyalty. We think of a nation subdivided into religions. They think, rather, of a religion subdivided into nations. It is the ultimate definition, the prime definition and the one that determines, as I said, not only identity, but also basic loyalty. And this is quite independent of religious belief."*<sup>33</sup>

If what is desired as an alteration of acts of wanton violence and bigotry as exhibited by those who commit these crimes then both the capacity and capability of that alteration reside within the voices and actions of all people. For as long as crimes against humanity are categorized in terms of this or that religious or ethnic identity, these crimes will continue to thrive. The holocaust, for example, is not an exclusive crime against Jews; it is indeed an unspeakable affront against all human beings. Similarly, the horrific "ethnic" violence between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, or between the Serbs and Croats, or the more recent Syrian carnage, speaks to unprecedented and diabolic levels of disregard for all human life. When crimes against humanity are framed in terms of religion, ethnicity, or tribalism, it serves not only to reduce the crime, but it also limits the crime to a particular group and, in turn, limits the scope of who might be able to address and counter it. Nussbaum identifies three possible options or preconditions to guide humans out of the quagmire of fear, hatred and, hence, the marginalization and vilification of others.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Bernard Lewis. *Islam and the West*. Oxford University Press. 1994

<sup>34</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum. *Women and Human Development*. 2000 available at [https://genderbudgeting.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/nussbaum\\_women\\_capabilityapproach2000.pdf](https://genderbudgeting.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/nussbaum_women_capabilityapproach2000.pdf)

Return to Kamali's assertion that an Ummatan Wasatan is a "justly oriented" or balanced community.<sup>35</sup> In the discussion below, I consider what such a community might stand for, and argue that what distinguishes an ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community) from others is its willingness to speak out against all forms of extremism, persecution, and humiliation even if this speaking out assumes "radical" forms.

There are factors necessary to break from past silences and passivity in order to cultivate peaceful and just coexistence among all people not regardless of their religious, ideological, and political identities, but because of it.

### **Causing factors of Radicalism and violent extremism**

The causing factors of radicalism and violent extremism are multiple and interrelated, with political, economic, historical, ideological and religious dimensions; they engage and affect communities, groups, and individuals at local, regional, national and global levels. While a global, transnational challenge, violent extremism thrives on and draws recruits through a combination of fanatic ideology and the challenges of inequality, exclusion, unemployment, intolerance, and alienation plaguing many societies and communities.

### **The Worldwide and Local Politics**

Violent extremism is the product of complex political, economic and social circumstances, including colonial legacies, as well as the impact of regional and global *geo-politics* that have destabilized regimes or inflamed regional or sub-regional tensions. The promotion of international human rights and gender equality that interfered with traditional local customs has also incited violent reactions. The decision to dissolve the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Armed Forces, without alternative livelihoods or socio-political (re-) integration in the country's new structures left thousands of well-trained Iraqi soldiers and officers bitter and unemployed. It is reported that many of these now provide ISIS with military *expertise*. The power vacuum in Libya has resulted in the emergence of a variety of armed insurgent groups that are destabilizing Libya and neighboring countries. International foreign policy positions on the Israel-Palestinian conflict continue to fuel perceptions of a biased approach towards development and conflict. The decision taken by European leaders to accept a large cohort of

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<sup>35</sup> Kamali, *The Middle Path of Moderation is Islam*, Oxford University Press; 1 edition (2015). p. 11.

refugees and migrants from crisis-affected countries is fueling nationalist extremist behavior.

### **Psychological Motivation of the Terrorists**

A study was conducted by the US Federal Research Division of Library of Congress that revealed the psychological motivation of terrorists that begins at the level of recruitment, and induction into terrorist groups. Youth mainly inclined to fantasy and adventurous life of terrorists including their personalities, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and careers as terrorists<sup>36</sup>. According to the observation of Brian M. Jenkins (1980) there are some other elements that motivates the youth to terrorism including the nature of terrorist mindsets, ideology, leader-follower relations, organization, decision making about targets and tactics, and escalation of violence.<sup>37</sup> Due to psychological inclination towards radicalism, the youth who has been involved or get touched with the terrorist networks cannot come out. It is like a cycle of terrorists where the logic or conscience has failed to come. Terrorists are envisioned always towards a fantasy or heroic adventurism by which they were indoctrinated.

### **Indoctrination through religious misinterpretation**

Terrorists are apparently seen driving through indoctrination by terrorist ideas. The abuses of Religious elements or ideological tenets are always seen as the driving force of this indoctrination. Religions though always foster peace, tolerance, harmony and coherence. But the misinterpretation and the misrepresentation of religion particularly religious texts and other norms have led a wider range of disharmony and intolerance among the people. The world has witnessed a massive flow of extremist ideas and ideologies since the end of 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Thanks to the effort of Huntington, Samuel P. (1993), who designed the world in cultural and civilization viewpoint<sup>38</sup>. Terrorist takes it as opportunity to motivate the people particularly the Muslim to religious extremism. The Salafi interpretation of Islam which advocates the literal meaning and the strict opposition to modernism has widely promoted extremism and intolerance to dissent. The world since the Iranian Islamic revolution led by Shiite cleric Imam Khomeini, has

<sup>36</sup> Rex A. Hudson, "The Sociology and Psychology of Terrorism: Who Becomes A Terrorist and Why"? Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, Washington, 1999

<sup>37</sup> Brian M. Jenkins "The Terrorist Mindset and Terrorist Decisionmaking: Two Areas of Ignorance, Terrorism", 3:3-4, 245-250, 1980 DOI: 10.1080/10576108008435463

<sup>38</sup> Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?" Foreign Affairs 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49. Accessed on January 25, 2020. doi:10.2307/20045621.

seen a widespread propagation of Salafism or Wahabism. The acts of terrorists consequently in various Middle East countries have been erupted in last several decades.

### **Online Radicalization**

The world has currently witnessed a massive flow of information and communication as blessings of global transition towards digitalization. The global community is now more interconnected and interrelated among themselves due to great contribution of telecommunication and social media. Thanks to the effort of globalization that brings the world into more unity and integrity through promulgating greater connectivity and diversity. According to International World Stats (2019) 58.8% of the world population is connected through internet<sup>39</sup>. However, in recent decades, the world has seen a terrific abuse of online communication tools including social media for widening terror networks. Terrorists opened online platform for communication among them and to other terrorists through deceiving the eyes of law enforcement agencies. It also abuses different online tools including websites and social media for indoctrinating their targeted people, particularly the youth who is considered at high risk. Terrorists disseminate videos, graphics, writings and pictures in social media and their websites that provokes the youth to radicalism.

### **The Junction of Inequalities**

Inequality as a driver of radicalism and violent extremism has global as well as national and local dimensions. *Oxfam International* recently reported that the world's richest people have as much combined wealth as the poorest 3.6 billion<sup>40</sup>. In a globally connected world, where information is openly available on the web or through other media, the picture of a global inequality problem does influence violent contestation. At national and local levels, horizontal inequalities (economic, political, social, and cultural) linked to a lack of identity and perceptions of injustice that can persist for

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<sup>39</sup> International World Stats 2019, "World Internet Usage and Population Statistics: 2019 Mid-Year Estimates" Accessed on 24 January 2020, <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm>

<sup>40</sup> World's billionaires have more wealth than 4.6 billion people. International Oxfam. Accessed on 24 January 2020 <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/worlds-billionaires-have-more-wealth-46-billion-people>

generations, are important drivers of radicalization. The risk of violent contestation increases when some groups witness inequality across different dimensions (political exclusion; lack of access to assets, land, jobs and social services; and discrimination based on culture, religion or language). Economic, social and cultural inequalities tend to mobilize people; political inequalities tend to mobilize elites. Policies to correct economic, social, and political inequalities and unequal cultural status should therefore be prioritized in multi-ethnic *societies*.

### **Corruption and Injustice**

The correlation between poverty and unemployment and young people's willingness to engage in political violence is not explicit. There appears to be a stronger correlation between political violence and experiences or perceptions of injustice, corruption and systematic discrimination<sup>41</sup>. People do not take up guns because they are poor, but because they are angry and frustrated. Perceptions of injustice may also be fueled by high levels of corruption domestic as well as international (e.g. illicit financial flows). These and protracted impunity for corrupt behavior in particular are important drivers of violence, as they fuel sentiment that violent action is justified when it aims to rectify the inequality and injustice that result from it. The targeting or profiling of particular groups or entire communities can, over time, also provoke violent group reactions. Insensitive policing or profiling in public locations and at security checkpoints and lack of awareness of social or cultural particularities of minority groups can add up to a sense of *persecution*.

### **Existing Political and Socio-economic System**

Most violent extremist groups offer an ideological alternative to the combined narrative of free markets, democracy and multicultural diversity. This was also the ideology used in the past by groups such as the Baader-Meinhof Group in Germany or the Red Brigades in Italy, rejecting the established global order and many of the parameters of the modern nation-state. The world's growing economic inequality whereby nearly half of the wealth is owned by 1% of its population and the sense of injustice that stems from this, is projected by violent extremists as a result of a socio-economic and

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<sup>41</sup> Olaniyi Evans & Ikechukwu Kelikume. The Impact of Poverty, Unemployment, Inequality, Corruption and Poor Governance on Niger Delta Militancy, Boko Haram Terrorism and Fulani Herdsmen Attacks in Nigeria. *International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences*. Vol. 8(2) 2019, pp. 58 – 80. DOI:10.32327/IJMESS.8.2.2019.5



political system that is rigged to serve a wealthy and powerful few<sup>42</sup>. In contrast, the narrative professed by extremists offers empowerment, order and security, with violence as one of the tools for imposing this view on the wider society. Hence they often allude to the necessity for a violent overthrow of a decadent and corrupt system. This perverse ideological narrative seems to appeal to groups and individuals of all ages, across all lines of identity and *income*.

### **Refusal of Growing Diversity in the Society**

Diversity can give rise to feelings of fear or anger because certain benefits that were previously the privilege of a group or community may now be distributed among a larger group, some of whom may speak a different language or belong to a different race, religion or ethnic group. The tendency to maintain the supremacy of a certain group that others can lead to violent extremist behavior (New Zealand's incident is a good example of racially-inspired violent extremism). Extreme right-wing nationalist reactions to the wave of refugees and migrants in Europe and the United States are also inspired by a rejection of diversity. Religious extremists usually also reject religious pluralism. Hence, while diversity is not a problem per se, it can become so when specific groups feel their interests or safety threatened by other groups.

### **Weak Structure of the State Capacity**

A State's failure to provide citizens with basic rights, services and security not only contributes to growing inequality, it also creates a vacuum that allows non-state actors to appropriate state functions, including the monopoly of *violence*. There is a risk that political transitions, with weak institutions, poor law enforcement and inadequate checks and balances, when protracted, provide a fertile breeding ground for violent extremism, which banks on the State's incapacity to control (for example) the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs, which in turn can provide income to extremist networks. Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Mali, Syria, Somalia, and the Central African Republic are examples of countries where weak state capacity and a deteriorating security situation have led to a power vacuum that non-state groups attempt to exploit and sustain by offering services and *security*. Weak states not only provide a safe haven for

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<sup>42</sup> Evans, Olaniyi. The impact of poverty, unemployment, inequality, corruption and poor governance on Niger Delta militancy, Boko Haram terrorism and Fulani herdsmen attacks in Nigeria. International Journal of Management, Economics and Social Sciences (IJMESS) 20192020/02/02 on Accessible <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/200987>

radical extremists, they also do so for international organized crime syndicates, thus providing a fertile ground for the cementing of ties between them.

### **Changing Global Role of Media**

Societies have become saturated by images of violence, from 24-hour news coverage, movies, magazines, books, and increasingly brutal interactive games. People no longer witness violence as something exceptional, but are entertained by it on a daily basis, which poses serious questions about the way in which societies teach the ethics of violence. Research on the impact of violence on human behavior concludes *inter alia* that children in elementary school who watch many hours of violence on television show higher levels of aggressive behavior as teenagers<sup>43</sup>. Research has also found that exposure to media violence can desensitize people to violence in the real world and that the frequent watching of violent video games can increase a person's aggressive thoughts and behavior. Other research rather pointed to a negative impact only on individuals already at risk (e.g. delinquent youth). The routine exposure to violence is thus a factor contributing to a culture of violence exploited by violent extremists.

### **The Cornerstone of Preventing Radicalism and Violent Extremism**

Violent extremism is indeed a security problem. But the hard-line approach, inspired only by security measures, risks further inflaming violent extremism. In the rare cases where societies have managed to limit the problem, a multi-dimensional approach has been the key. For instance, state and civil society have coalesced around a forward-looking manifestation of modern Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia that has served as an important bulwark against violent extremism. In the Western democracies, attacks by right-wing extremists have invited condemnation from across the political spectrum as leaders have sought to reaffirm democratic values and human rights.

As states and communities begin to close their doors to certain groups, the economic potential of a society is reduced and development is negatively impacted. Alongside the economic impact, closed doors also mean an erosion of equal rights, of equitable access, and of the rule of law, hence potentially further amplifying certain drivers of violent extremism. The growth of violent extremism also drains resources from development as a society invests more in security. Growth areas such as tourism and economic innovation are usually also negatively impacted. In already fragile or

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<sup>43</sup> TV Violence -- a Cause of Child Anxiety and Aggressive Behavior? Grow by Web MD  
<https://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/tv-violence-cause-child-anxiety-aggressive-behavior#1>

conflicted societies, this obstructs the search for negotiated solutions and for sustainable peace. Sustainable solutions for the prevention of violent extremism therefore require an inclusive development approach anchored in tolerance, political and economic empowerment, and reduction of inequalities. There are building blocks of strategies for preventing violent extremism:

The building blocks are: (1) Promoting a rule of law and human rights-based approach to PVE; (2) Enhancing the fight against corruption; (3) Providing effective socio-economic alternatives to violence for groups at risk; (4) Enhancing participatory decision-making and increasing civic space at national and local levels; (5) Strengthening the capacity of local governments for service delivery and security; (6) Supporting credible internal intermediaries to promote dialogue with alienated groups and re-integration of former extremists; Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (8) Engaging youth in building social cohesion; (9) Working with faith-based organizations and religious leaders to counter the abuse of religion by violent extremists; (10) Working with the media to promote human rights and tolerance; and (11) Promoting respect for human rights and diversity and a culture of global citizenship in schools and universities<sup>44</sup>.

### **Approaches to De-radicalization and De-extremization**

The launch of the global *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism* by the UNSG in December 2015 prompted the development all over the world of many *National Action Plans* (NAPs) on the same topic. These national plans are supposed to be inspired by the global action plan; in reality many authoritarian regimes across the world used this opportunity to recycle in the NAPs their liberticidal anti-terror legislations causing blatant violations of human rights. According to *Hervé Gonsolin*, independent consultant on peace and security,

*“There are some 40 de-radicalization programs throughout the world and they are all different. Some of them are suspected of being a disguised means of reorienting sub-*

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<sup>44</sup> Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity, UNDP, 2016 Accessed on 05/03/2019 <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Discussion%20Paper%20%20Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20%20Development.pdf>

*mission of Jihadists towards goals which are more consistent with the interests of the established governments.*<sup>45</sup> “

Most religious institutions and state-sponsored research centres working on “disengagement and de-radicalization” (DDR) or “countering violent extremism” (CVE) are perceived by the target groups as being controlled by, or at least too close to, governments and therefore rejected. But there is more and more involvement of the CSOs and particularly those working in the field of conflict transformation (the peace-building community) in de-extremization, and a number of publications have been issued in recent years to present alternatives to the hard security approach to de-extremization.

Another more constructive way of addressing extremism is through *medianization*, i.e. to bring the extremist individuals and groups (from both the high and the low extremes) back to the median position and to the role of nonviolent active citizens. A successful strategy of de-extremization recognizes that behind (extreme) violence there is an underlying “unhealed trauma and/or unresolved conflict”, to use a *Galtunian* expression. This approach aims at transforming the conflict between the extremist (individual/group) and the community (local, national, international), by mending the relationship between the conflicting parties, not by eliminating one of them.

A successful strategy of de-extremization must be home grown, sensitive to the local context. An African PVE expert warned against importing Western approaches in dealing with violent groups in the Arab world and the Sahel regions. He believes that

*“For Westerners these groups are foreign entities representing a threat for their security and hence must be eliminated. For us, they are our children who have gone astray. They must be considered as part of the social fabric to be re-integrated. Our duty is to bring them back to the straight path. We should also reflect on how Westerners deal with their violent right-wing movements”*<sup>46</sup>.

Empathy is therefore a keyword. The extremist individuals/groups must be viewed as human beings to convert, not abstract entities to eradicate. De-humanizing and demonizing extremists is a hard security recipe aimed at building a consensus on the

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<sup>45</sup> Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. UN office of Counter terrorism. Accessed on 02/02/2019 <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/plan-of-action-to-prevent-violent-extremism>

<sup>46</sup> Journey To Extremism In Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment. UNDP. 2017 accessed on 05/03/2019 [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/denmark/docs/Journey%20to%20Extremism\\_report.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/denmark/docs/Journey%20to%20Extremism_report.pdf)

necessity of eliminating an evil. Empathy prescribes reaching out to these actors, listening to their grievances, acknowledging their suffering and the truth content in their discourse, as well as the legitimate part of their goals, and in the end salvaging as many of them as possible, because they are also victims.

A successful strategy of de-extremization must address the three steps of the extremization process and not focus exclusively on the last step leading to violence. To prevent extremism and violence is to address the hearts, the minds and the hands, and to deal with the causes, the arguments and the acts.

### **The Change of Attitude**

The drivers of hate and the root causes of violence, summarized by the triad of injustice “ignorance-aggression-exclusion” must be addressed. *Ignorance* is reduced by promoting encounters which foster the knowledge of the other, deconstruct stereotypes, and build confidence. This leads to mutual recognition and respect not only a passive cohabitation but a positive interaction. Encounter cannot be envisaged with the rise of *identitism* a corrupt form of the identity need closed and constructed by opposition to other identities. *Aggression* is reduced by promoting fairer international and national relations based on the power of law, not the law of power. This is a global collective effort, involving not only the elites but the whole civil societies. *Exclusion* is reduced by promoting inclusive participation in building the society and the state, by fighting marginalization at every level and giving space for people to express their goals peacefully.

### **The Ideological Consolidation**

To deal with the ideological/religious consolidation of *extremitude* in Islamic contexts, an investment must be made in education (formal and non-formal) and the media (mainstream and alternative). The concept of *wasatiya* must be promoted as an alternative to glue both among children and within and around extremist youth groups. This type of constructive discourse must be carried by influential scholars, often radicals, with recognized knowledge and independence, through credible vectors and channels. Any investment in non-credible scholars, who might be very well-known and respected in official circles, is a waste of resources, leading to non-effective, even counterproductive results.

### **The Change of Behavior**

Preventive and repressive security measures are legitimate and necessary to prevent and counter extreme violence. These measures must be lawful, fair and respectful of human

rights and dignity. Government agencies that fail to uphold these principles and practice indiscriminate collective punishment, unlawful targeted assassinations, and punish not only acts but also ideas, thoughts and intentions, do not provide security to their societies; rather, they use state violent extremism and ultimately fail to end the individual and group violent extremism they are supposed to fight. On the contrary, they contribute to its regeneration and sustainability.

Change in extremist violent behavior requires the dissemination, by credible vectors, of the basic provisions of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the religious law of war (RLW), among the armed groups, and also the promotion of the culture of nonviolence, by appropriate means adapted to the local context. The youth must be encouraged to use strategic nonviolence for social/political change and made aware of the effectiveness of this method in situations of power asymmetry.

### **Involvement of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Faith Leaders**

It is apparent that the world wide extremism has been rampant through abusing religious sentiment. The world has seen flaring up a large number of propagandas and disinformation about trajectory happens at the fate of minority, particularly about Muslims in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Palestine that triggered grievance and intolerance among the Muslims all over the world. Misinterpretations and misrepresentations of Islamic texts are also consistently triggering the force of extremism. Terrorists targets youths mainly to indoctrinate by offering religious misinterpretations. The growing extent of terrorists has been becoming unbridled nowadays. It is most particularly regarding the spread out of terrorist ideas through using online tools including social media. The propagation of terrorist's ideas has been gradually unchecked. However it is badly needed to involve Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), particularly different religious organizations and faith leaders in the combating radicalism process. UNDP in 2016 proclaimed its' PVE strategies that placed the role of FBOs and religious leaders in strategy 6<sup>47</sup>. It mainly stressed on the demystifying the terrorist ideas, knowledge and the misinterpretation of religious texts. It is worth mentioning that the religious leaders now possess the most influential role in leading religious education and practices in the Muslim world. So the involvement of the faith leaders

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<sup>47</sup> Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity, UNDP, 2016 Accessed on 05/03/2019 <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/Discussion%20Paper%20%20Preventing%20Violent%20Extremism%20by%20Promoting%20Inclusive%20%20Development.pdf>

and faith based organizations will have impacts over the society and the Muslim world as well.

The Muslim world has witnessed a steady increase in the intensity and scale of extremism and violence. For almost three decades, Al Qaeda was the emblem of this phenomenon, but the last decade has seen the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabab in the Horn of Africa and the emergence of ISIS in Iraq, Syria and beyond, with an even higher level of atrocities committed by these armed groups. Violence is obviously a destabilizing factor in countries where it takes place and in the region as a whole. Fighting and, most importantly, preventing extremism and violence is therefore a duty of all states and must involve all segments of society. Any national strategy in this field should be homegrown and adapted to the local social and cultural context.

In the fight against violence and extremism, the use of the proper terminology is of significant importance. It is central, for intellectual rigor and for effective action, to distinguish between extremism, radicalism and violence and to understand how they relate to each other. It is also important to be aware of the various pathways to hate and violence and to understand the process of extremization in all its complexity. This is a pre-requisite to the design of any de-extremization program that seeks to make a real impact. Hard security approaches have shown their limits in the last couple of decades. It is time to invest in conflict transformation and to adopt holistic approaches that address all the steps of the extremization process and all the push and pull factors leading to violence, including the root causes, the aggravating conditions and the facilitating environment.

## **Conclusion**

The problems addressed in this framing paper call for a global, integrated, and multi-dimensional approach combined with regional and country-specific analysis and initiatives. While responses at regional and country levels are urgently needed and funding needs to be secured, it is equally important to provide a global strategic framework and corporate guidance on policy and programming to support a long-term, coordinated response. The corporate framework for action presented in this paper provides an indicative plan of action to ensure that innovative programs and initiatives that are already being undertaken and/or planned for the near future at regional or country level - benefit from a global research-informed policy and programming perspective that has been developed with the engagement of a wider group of partners. Implicit within such a call is the understanding that radicalism can be juxtaposed by moderation. In recognizing that conceptions and debates on moderation have been

relatively limited in philosophy of Islamic education, I looked at various understandings not only of moderation, but also of an Ummatan Wasatan (justly balanced community). Following on explications of what might and what might not be understood by “radical” Islam, I advanced my argument that perhaps a dichotomous understanding of “moderate” and “radical” might not be useful at all in countering contemporary dystopias. Instead, I argued for a reconsideration of the two signifiers that is, “moderate” and “radical” so that the focus shifts onto just human relations, deliberation, and co-existence.