

Returning foreign terrorist fighters: An imminent threat to manage

By Abdelhak Bassou

Introduction

During the last quarter of 2016, terrorism specialists were still busy with the issues of counter-radicalization, indoctrination, and the dangers of young recruits departing to tension hotbeds, when the question arose about the return to their countries of origin by those who have experienced war and acquired significant combat capabilities. For nearly the past decade, they have been flocking to Syria and Iraq from around the world.

In Iraq: Since the beginning of 2016, Daesh has been on a downward curve and is losing territory both in the provinces of Ninawa and Al Anbar as well as Salah Eddine. Launched in mid-October 2016, the battle to recover Mosul is progressing, albeit with difficulty, especially on the east side, which has already been recovered.

In Syria: Daesh is facing the same difficulties. Since its failure in 2015 against the Syrian Kurds (defense units of the Kurdish people) in Kobane and Tall Abyad, supported by the Western coalition, Daesh is also experiencing a wave of defeats aggravated by the Turkish armed forces' entry into battle, in support for the free Syrian army. The Syrian Kurds are on the verge of completely unseating the Daesh fighters from positions they occupied in the Syrian north on the Syrian-Turkish border. Previously, the so-called Islamic State had lost the symbolic city of Dabiq, which is both a territorial loss as well as a blow to the terrorist organization's propaganda apparatus.¹

Allied with several armed groups, Jabhat Fath Al Sham, formerly known as Jabhat Annusra, was obliged to

retreat towards Idlib after losing Aleppo. The regime's troops, backed by the Russian air force and the Hizbollah militia, took over the eastern districts of Aleppo, which is the stronghold of the armed opposition to the Bechar Al Assad regime, led by the former Al Qaeda group, which changed its name again in early 2017 to become Hay'at Tahrir Al Sham.

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Over the past two years, many foreign terrorist fighters have returned,² but the dismantling of the organized

1. According to a hadith, the final battle between the Muslim army and the "Crusaders" is to be held at Dabiq, halfway between the Turkish border and Aleppo. Daesh had occupied the city in August 2014, settled there and announced that it was waiting there for the Crusaders to fulfill the prophecy that predicted the final defeat of the heathen armies on this land.

2. According to the figures provided by Gilles de Kerchove, 50% of the European nationals or residents who have joined the ranks of the Islamic State (IS or Daesh) are still in Iraq and Syria at present, which represents between 2,000 and 2,500 individuals. Also according to Mr. de Kerchove, 30 to 35% of them have already returned to their native lands, and 15 to 20% have been killed. A number of those already returned have been sentenced to prison, while others are under surveillance.

military structures of Daesh and Jabhat Fath Al Sham will accelerate this migration. Returns will take place over the next two years in a more intense manner. The loss of territories by terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria and the issue of how the foreign fighters will be treated if they are arrested by the Syrian regime or Hachd Acchaabi fighters will force them to leave the field of operations to return home or to join other spheres of violence.

I. Definitions, training, and possible destinations

1. Who are the Foreign Terrorist Fighters?³

a. Security Council resolution 2178 (2014)

The Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) defines foreign terrorist fighters or combatants as individuals “who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict”.

Three conditions are contained herein. The person must:

- Go to a country other than that of nationality or residence;
- Have the intention to participate, by any means, in terrorist acts or to receive / provide training in terrorism.
- A clarification is added regarding the framework of the armed conflict.

b. Thomas Hegghammer⁴

The Norwegian expert provides a more comprehensive definition by establishing four criteria. According to Thomas Hegghammer, the foreign terrorist combatant is an individual who:

- “Joined an insurgency and operates within it;
- Is not a citizen or a relative of the Parties to the conflict;
- Is not affiliated to an official military organization and;
- Is not paid”

“When jihadists join the organization, they are sent to an “initial preparation” training camp. There they undergo intensive training that covers the handling of weapons... This training is accompanied by religious courses designed to legitimize all the atrocities that combatants are required to perform.”

The notion of “foreign terrorist combatant” is thus bicephalous:

- A “foreign combatant” is an individual who has left his or her country of origin and joined a non-State armed group in an armed conflict abroad by ideology, belief or affinity.
- He or she is a terrorist. This attribute refers to two explanations:
 - Either an individual who moves to countries where terrorist organizations are located and have training camps where the individual can receive training that will allow him/her to carry out attacks upon return to his/her country of origin.
 - Or an individual combatant who commits terrorist acts in the territory where the armed conflict takes place, knowing that this territory is not that of the individual’s country of origin.

2. Calculated and targeted training and qualification

a. Initial preparation

The training that all Daesh recruits undergo is a sort of basic program that qualifies the candidates and prepares them to join the combat zones. Thus, when jihadists join the organization, they are sent to an “initial preparation” training camp. There they undergo intensive training that covers the handling of weapons, including Kalashnikov rifles, machine guns, and pistols as well as sports and endurance events. This training is accompanied by religious courses designed to legitimize all the atrocities that combatants are required to perform. These courses

3. For more information on the definition see: <http://www.ocppc.ma/publications/combattants-terroristes-trangers-le-temps-des-retours#.WJNzLXe42Tc>

4. Norwegian, specialist on terrorism, since September 2015 he has been an assistant professor at the Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo. He is the author of several statistics on terrorist acts, on foreign terrorist fighters and maintains a data bank much used by analysts and decision-making centers, especially in Europe.

are more sessions of indoctrination and radicalization than mere classes of Muslim theology. The nature of this training, called religious, aims to make the combatant a killing machine that executes barbarous acts without emotion or remorse. According to a report released by Europol in January 2016,⁵ the training of Daesh recruits focuses on the use of weapons and explosives as well as on different techniques to kill. They are also trained for clandestine actions, for intelligence and counter-surveillance as guerrilla or urban terrorism techniques. After being integrated into combat units, terrorists undergo more specific training in “continuity” camps, which can be called a kind of continuing training or specialization.

Daesh fighters have nothing to envy of those trained by Al Qaeda. If the performance levels in terms of rigorous rules of survival, endurance and handling of weapons and explosives are equivalent in both organizations, in terms of barbarism the performance level of fighters trained by Daesh exceeds that of Al Qaeda. The current foreign terrorist fighter is inhumanly barbaric, cruel and atrocious - more than the inhumanly violent Afghan Arab in the 1990s.

Daesh’s barbarism is based on the work entitled *مسائل من فقه الجهاد* “Questions from Jihad Jurisprudence” (Masa’il min Fiqhi IJihad) by an Egyptian theologian named Abu Abdallah Al Mouhajer.⁶ This work legitimizes all sorts of barbarism, from decapitation and assassination of Muslims, including women and children. The teaching of Al Mouhajer’s theories results in convincing recruits of the legitimacy and legality of the barbarism they practice.

b. Training of elite units

In the summer of 2016, Gordon Welters for the New York Times interviewed Harry Sarfo, a German veteran of the Islamic state, who is serving a three-year sentence for a terrorism charge in a Bremen prison.⁷ This interview has so far provided the most information about the training of Daesh’s elite units, the commandos destined for the

missions outside. For a long time they are questioned, enumerated and re-interrogated.

After the administrative formalities, the test of will to fight begins:

Harry Sarfo reported: “Showering was forbidden. So was eating, unless they gave you food. Five or six people shared a cave that served as a dormitory. Drinking water was severely rationed. Each dwelling was given half a liter of water per day, put on the doorstep, with the objective of testing the recruits to see who had the strongest will.”

The training itself consisted of:

- The first week the candidates spent hours running, jumping, doing pushups, parallel bars, and crawling. Some recruits fainted.
- Training began with a Kalashnikov assault rifle during the second week. The recruits were ordered to keep the rifle at all times, even while sleeping, until it becomes “like a third arm.”
- The punishment for disobedience was severe. “A boy refused to stand because he was too exhausted,” Sarfo told the authorities. “They tied him to a pole, bound him and left him there.”
- This special forces program included 10 levels of training. After graduating from level 2, the candidate was taken to an island on a river in Tabqa, Syria. The recruits’ bedding was made of holes in the ground, covered with sticks and twigs. They were trained in swimming, scuba diving and navigation.

Daesh counts on this type of fighter for its special operations, which, according to the jargon of the organization, “hurt the enemy.” If several European intelligence sources report that several such fighters have already returned to Europe and other countries, their reinforcement by those who will be forced to return after the defeat of Daesh increases the risks and threats.

c. Training of children

The jihadist organization attaches great importance to the children. It calls the boys “lion cubs” and girls “pearls.” Where do these children come from?

- Some of them lived in Iraq and Syria before Daesh’s conquest of the lands where they resided;
- Others accompanied their parents who came from the West, as a family, to lead the Jihad in the Middle East;

5. “Changes in modus operandi of Islamic State terrorist attacks”, a review by experts from Member States and Europol on November 29 and December 1, 2015; The Hague, January 18, 2016.

6. Abderrahmane Ali, an Egyptian who studied Muslim theology in Pakistan at the University of Islamabad, spent some time in Afghanistan where he established a preaching center at Khalden camp. He later taught the Arabic language in Kandahar, then in the mujahedin camps in Kabul. When Abu Mosaab Al Zarqawi established the Herat camp in northern Pakistan in the late 1990s, Ali was involved in religious education. He returned to Egypt after the January 25, 2011 revolution before fleeing a second time abroad. Several reports indicate that he is now located in Raqqa, Syria.

7. <https://www.les-theses.fr/comment-une-branche-secrete-de-lei-a-etabli-un-reseau-mondial-dassassins-par-rukmini-callimachi/>.

- There are also those born in the “Dar al Islam” territory, according to the denomination used by Daesh to designate the territories fallen under its control since 2013. In these zones, women are obliged to give birth, from one year to eighteen months maximum from their date of marriage.

According to the testimony of two Syrian children who fled from the Daesh camps,⁸ the children follow an identical and repetitive program, in order to transform gestures into reflexes and thoughts into instincts:

Awake at 8 am, followed by breakfast and physical training. The boys had to run with weighted balls. When they dawdled, their instructors did not hesitate to shoot real bullets around them. Next, the boys practiced shooting with a gun and pistol.

After lunch, lessons about the explosive belt, followed by how to kill an enemy by planting a knife in his neck. Each move is repeated to reach perfection.

Killing thus becomes the most normal thing in the world.

3. Probable destinations

Regarding probable destinations for foreign terrorist fighters, both those affiliated to Daesh and those of Jabhat Fath Al Sham, three possible solutions are presented below:

a. Lead the ultimate fight

The successes achieved on the ground by the Western and Russian coalitions as well as the advances of the Turkish army do not mean that the end of the fighting is expected within the weeks or months to come. If Daesh is in its final fight in Iraq where it defends its last stronghold in Mosul, its situation within the Syrian territory is better. The organization still controls large parts of the Syrian territory at Raqqa, Dir-Ezzour, and on the Iraqi-Syrian border, notably in the region of AlQaem. The organization has also regained control of Palmyra. In these last fiefs, Daesh will maintain pockets of resistance where some foreign fighters would prefer to fight until death. The same is true of the Idlib region in Syria, where Jabhat Fath Al Sham and its allied groups retreated after their defeat at Aleppo. The foreign fighters from this organization can

still remain in these regions and lead resistance.

b. Move to other countries, gray zones, or other hotbeds of tension

• The Balkans:

Some Balkan countries can serve as a temporary refuge for terrorists returning from Syrian-Iraqi zones. Countries such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania retain traces of the Al Qaeda networks that congregated in these countries in the 1990s. Responding to the question of whether the Islamic State had a particular interest in Jean-Arnault Dérens, editor-in-chief of the “*Courrier des Balkans*,”⁹ said that “this is indeed a matter of concern ... the Balkans are a particularly favorable ground for jihad candidates who can take advantage of relays in the region. Bosnians who go to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside the Islamic State are mostly young men who often grew up abroad with the “myth” of the mujahedeen who came to “save the nation” and jihad is sometimes seen by this generation as a way to adhere to their identity ... ”

• North Africa:

Two destinations are attracting attention in North Africa. On the one hand, Sinai, where the organization Ansar Beit Al Maqdis, affiliated with the so-called Islamic State, has established itself, and on the other hand Libya, where terrorist organizations and groups of all kinds have congregated.

If the first destination is characterized by its proximity to Iraq and Syria, the second is a possible destination because of the absence of a veritable state and the persistence of chaos where tribal, criminal influences and terrorists convene, especially in the south. Some returning fighters may choose to continue the jihadist efforts in these areas.

• The Sahel:

The Sahel region is infested with groups linked to Al Qaeda, so it is open to Maghrebin sympathizers who for the most part are today alongside Jabhat Fath al Sham. Some Daesh fighters may also opt for the Sahel, with a switch of allegiance.

8. <http://www.lejdd.fr/International/Moyen-Orient/Le-recit-glacant-de-deux-anciens-enfants-soldats-de-l-Etat-islamique-776093>.

9. Interview by Lucas Burel, in the Daily Mirror on July 21 2015; see: <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/monde/20150721.OBS2971/camp-de-l-ai-en-bosnie-un-drapeau-de-Daesh-ne-signifie-pas-que-l-europe-est-menacee.html>.

- **Asia:**

In Southeast Asia, 22 groups and jihadist groups pledged allegiance to the self-proclaimed Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The two most influential groups are Djamaa Islamiya in Indonesia, and the Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines. Indonesia is the epicenter of the radical Islamist phenomenon in Southeast Asia. The country has been experiencing violence for many years. An analysis based on Afghan history shows that during the 1980-1990s, hundreds of Indonesians, Malaysians and Filipinos went to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. They returned trained and indoctrinated by al-Qaeda, and committed several attacks and hostage-taking missions.

In Central Asia, some experts also fear for Uzbekistan, following the death of President Islam Karimov who led the fight against extremists with an iron fist. The Ferghana valley as a hotbed of groups and radical groups could also be due to radical indigenous tendencies and Afghanistan's proximity, to become a new asylum for foreign fighters from all over the region.

Afghanistan may once again become a land of asylum for foreign terrorist fighters forced to leave the Syrian-Iraqi area.

c. Return to their homeland

Fighters come from numerous countries of origin. Some sources cite over one hundred countries, which is more than half of the States in the world. However, the risk for each country with each returning fighter will not be of the same intensity given the number per country of combatants that departed to Syria or Iraq to join Daesh or Jabhat Annousra.

The return of these combatants to their countries of origin raises questions beyond the issue of how they should be treated: the question of whether the conditions in which these countries that led to radicalization have changed, and whether they will come back to live in the same environment that facilitated their departures.¹⁰ In this case, not only would the reintegration of these veterans who fought in Syrian and Irak be difficult, but also it could

¹⁰. It may be interesting to refer to work initiated by the Italian Institute for International Political Studies entitled "Jihadist hotbeds," which described the conditions in several cities, neighborhoods and other areas in Europe and elsewhere. One paragraph on its 4th cover page refers to the following conditions: "...this report outlines a broad spectrum of radicalization factors leading to the emergence of jihadists hotbeds, such as poverty, unemployment, lack of job prospects, juvenile delinquency, trafficking and smuggling, socio-political, economic and physical marginalization, the role of Salafist ideology..."

contribute to the radicalization of the youth.

"The question of the return of foreign terrorist fighters is all the more worrying because statistics from several studies reveal that one out of nine fighters, among those who return, succeed in escaping security measures and perpetrating an attack."

It would perhaps be instructive to cite the case of the Sidi Moumen neighborhood in Casablanca from where the suicide bombers of the 2003 attacks came. The INDH has been working to change the living conditions in this neighborhood as well as throughout its surrounding district. The Economist edition No. 4844 dated August 26, 2016 published the testimony of a Moroccan Residing Abroad (MRE) living in Italy: "I am native of Bernoussi. Yet, on my return during this vacation, I did not recognize my neighborhood. I thought I got lost at the entrance to the highway." Any fighter may have this kind of reflection upon return to their native city, district or neighborhood.

The question of how to deal with these radicalized young people upon their return to their countries of origin would therefore be all the easier since the conditions leading to their departure would have changed: on the one hand, it would facilitate their reintegration by giving them food for thought and thus encourage them to change, and on the other hand, it would deprive the steadfast among them, who decide to recruit the youngest, of arguments (marginalization and precariousness) that previously convinced themselves to be recruited, as victims of these conditions.

II. Threat assessment: its nature and first response

1. The threat

a. Committing attacks

The question of the return of foreign terrorist fighters is all the more worrying because statistics from several studies¹¹ reveal that one out of nine fighters, among those who return, succeed in escaping security measures and perpetrating an attack. This means that out of every thousand fighters who will return the next two years,

¹¹. Database by Thomas Heghammer of the Norwegian Defense Research Institute (see footnote 1)

111 will escape the vigilance of the security services and perpetrate an attack.

b. Strengthening of sleeper cells

Daesh's publications, intelligence reports, and interrogations and interviews of arrested and imprisoned combatants confirm the existence of sleeper cells in several countries around the world. The interview with Harry Sarfo quoted above is very edifying on this subject. The veteran fighter claimed that "a group of people living in European countries is waiting for orders to attack European populations."

The more that fighters return the more cells will be strengthened, not only in numbers but also in terms of terrorist know-how.

"Foreign terrorist fighters who return to their countries of origin represent both the danger of terrorist attacks, as well as the spread of the hate message advocated by terrorist organizations."

c. The radicalization of a new generation

Foreign terrorist fighters who return to their countries of origin represent both the danger of terrorist attacks, as well as the spread of the hate message advocated by terrorist organizations. They thus constitute an ideological extension as a vehicle of radical, extremist and hateful concepts. This extension is expressed by the conversion of a maximum of young people to Daesh's ideology.

The lesson derived from Afghanistan tells us that the second generation of Al Qaeda is a generation whose individuals have had no contact with Afghanistan or Jihad against the Soviets. They were recruited, radicalized and trained by the veterans of the first generation.

d. The formation of new armed groups

It is at this point judicious to make a comparison to the returning veterans of Al Qaeda. In the 1990s, several Arab and Muslim countries witnessed the creation of new armed fighting groups, due to the prevailing conditions. A common denominator brought these groups together. Veterans who had returned back from Afghanistan led these groups.

In Algeria, Morocco, Libya and elsewhere, these former trained jihadists, indoctrinated and radicalized by Al Qaeda, have regrouped in other structures they have created like the GIA in Algeria, the GICM in Morocco and GICL in Libya.

Unlike the groups that were created after the war in Afghanistan and only concerned Arab and Muslim countries, future groups can be established even in European countries, which have a significantly increasing number of jihadists.

2. Suggestions for action

What action should be taken against the threats posed by the return of foreign terrorist fighters? Are the measures adopted by international bodies sufficient, such as Security Council resolution 2178, or should specific measures for the treatment of returns be crafted?

How to detect the border entries by these terrorists?

Should we opt for intransigence and clamping down with full security?

Who should be involved in receiving and managing these lost young people after they return home?

a. Border detection

The greatest danger is that these fighters are not detected at the border of the countries to where they will return. If they are able to reach the countries anonymously, they will have enough time to construct a labyrinth for clandestine life (false papers, hiding places, supply networks) and then become increasingly out of the reach of security services.

Great vigilance is therefore necessary at the border posts, in particular with regard to the use of falsified or counterfeit documents as requested by the UN Security Council.¹² The routes and techniques used by foreign terrorist fighters ensure that the work of the frontline agents, particularly at the very difficult and delicate borders, requires specialized and very advanced training.¹³

¹² Resolution 2178 (2014), adopted by the Security Council at its 7272nd session on September 24, 2014, states in its recommendation No. 2 that the Council: "Reaffirms that all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents.

¹³ For example, the letter dated May 13, 2015 from the Security Committee Chair established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) on counter-terrorism addressed to the Security Council Chair states that "When they travel, foreign terrorist fighters often try to confuse the routes, in particular by dividing their journey in several stages in order to prevent the border control agents from determining their true provenance. It is urgently necessary to define concrete methods that

However, such measures are challenging in particular due to the financial means that they require. All States within the international community have neither equal means nor equal capacity to install devices at their borders that are capable of detecting forgeries and counterfeits. As the threat is global, the international security chain is broken when one of its links fails.

According to the report by the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council,¹⁴ “only 51 states, or about a quarter of all United Nations members, have a passenger information program, specifically, systems to improve the security of borders and airspace, and to detect the arrival or departure of potential foreign terrorist fighters. The report adds that only half of these 51 states use these systems in practice.

Development aid in the framework of human security must take this aspect into account in order to allocate some aid to securing borders. Donors should also ensure that a portion of their loans and grants are devoted to measures that aim to restrict the free movement of terrorists in general and foreign terrorist fighters in particular.

b. Repression and reintegration

One of the thorny issues facing public policy responses to the problem of returning foreign combatants is choosing between repression, reintegration or a combination of the two. Indeed this category of persons can be grouped under a single banner as constituting a contingent that has traveled abroad, outside a State institutional framework, to participate in acts of non-legitimate violence in a third country. However, it would be neither judicious nor just to treat them in a standardized way, not taking into account the differences that depict their degrees of involvement.

Upon their return, they can be categorized by at least three types:

- Those who will constitute an extension of the armed wing of terrorist organizations;
- Those who will form the missionary corps to continue expanding the jihadist ideology;
- Those who will become aware of the heresy of which they were victims and who could serve Jihadist’s counter-propaganda.

Government responses should be tailored to reduce

will significantly improve agents’ ability to identify suspicious multi-stage paths.”

14. Idem. note 25

risks and to take into account public opinion and popular expressions. They must also consider the differences between the degrees of involvement of these returning fighters and not press governments for inappropriate measures.

States sometimes have difficulty arbitrating between the legally correct and the popular tendencies dictated by both the subjective and the affective.¹⁵

“The solution can therefore only come from an intelligent combination of repression and recovery.”

From the point of view of several specialists, opting for automatic and excessive repression is not the appropriate solution:

- Restrictive and repressive policies discourage fighters who have become aware of their mistakes and who have revolted against the barbaric acts of Daesh and Annousra and who have chosen repentance and return to their country of origin.
- Such policies also reduce the likelihood that families will encourage their family members who have committed to terrorist organizations to return, for fear that they be sentenced to heavy sentences without proper study of their cases and without differentiating between those who are steadfast and unrecoverable, and those who show the desire to repent.
- Any exaggeration or automation of repression will only generate injustices that can in turn lead to radicalization and future violence.

As with the fight against radicalization, clamping down security and repression do not seem to yield favorable

15. In Tunisia, on December 28, 2016, when President Béji Caïd Essebsi was discussing with his head of government the plans put in place by the government to deal with the issue of Tunisians returning from tension hotbeds, political parties warned against any “secret or announced agreement” that encourages their return. These parties noted that these Tunisians constituted “a real danger for national and regional security.” Some protesters went so far as to demand that the nationality of these combatants be forfeited to prevent them from returning to Tunisia. The Tunisian government is therefore faced with the dilemma of treating nationals who have broken the law and committed crimes within a legal framework or responding to popular subjectivities that dictate extreme and quasi-illegal measures.

On this point the British seem to have found a compromise: in some cases, the British law allows judges to cancel the passports of the British nationals who went abroad to fight and to add them a no-fly list of persons prohibited from flying to the United Kingdom. The person concerned must then return to his home to request permission from the British authorities. This allows the authorities to study the case, such as issuing a visa and assessing the case before the person enters the UK territory. These people are not, as demanded by the Tunisian demonstrators, deprived of their nationalities, but instead obliged to go through a return authorization process.

opinions among a large majority of decision-makers, researchers, analysts and experts, nor among defenders of human rights.

There should also be no automatic amnesty policies on mere repentant statements by candidates for return. This could allow terrorists using the Taqqia¹⁶ technique to hide their intentions and thus escape the necessary controls.

The solution can therefore only come from an intelligent combination of repression and recovery.

Domestic, community and / or national laws or regulations must aim to create places where sorting operations must place. The foreign terrorist combatant who wishes to return to his or her country or who is intercepted at the border must be taken to "special centers" where the person's status is not that of detainee but instead of a person whose status is to be verified. There, the candidate for return will be examined by specialized committees (judges, theologians, imams, psychologists, sociologists, intelligence specialists) who will determine whether the candidate should be:

- Entrusted to civilian or governmental organizations to help them to overcome the trauma of the living conditions they experienced during their stay in Syria or Iraq and thus facilitate their reintegration.
- Entrusted to the intelligence services for debriefing and possible participation in programs for Jihadist ideological counter-propaganda.
- Entrusted to the judicial services for hearing proceedings before the courts.

c. Involvement of families

Families of foreign terrorist fighters, their friends and relatives are an important link in the remediation of these people when they return to their countries of origin. They can even, for countries that want to encourage returns, be tools that can help convince the most recalcitrant of fighters.

¹⁶ A technique that allows terrorists, especially those who are acting, to conceal their intentions: The terrorist begins to act in a normal way: the man shaves his beard, (women remove the veil), banishes radical language, no longer frequents the mosques, drinks alcohol, goes to nightclubs, etc. Everything is done to deceive observers. For terrorist organizations, the Taqqia is an art of war that is taught in the minute details during recruit training.

Many of these fighters, or even a majority, remained in contact with their families after their departure. Some family members even provided valuable information about the lives of their loved ones in Syria and Iraq, for sometimes in their despair the people who joined Daesh confided in their friends or relatives to describe the difficulties of their adventures.

These same relatives can play an important role in the reintegration of certain foreign terrorist combatants who prove to be "recoverable." The involvement of parents and relatives implies the participation of civil society alongside justice, security, health services and municipalities in order to organize debates, trainings, outreach and determine the best ways to make families of foreign terrorist fighters a partner in how to respond to returning fighters.

d. A new Security Council resolution

Several provisions of Security Council Resolution 2178 on Foreign Terrorist Combatants can be used by States to inspire new measures regarding the return of this category of persons. Certain measures such as those taken at the borders to prevent the departure of fighters to Syria and Iraq can also help in detecting returns. However, the question of returns will arise more acutely during the next two years and concerns more than half the States in the world, and requires the development of a new Security Council resolution:

- On the one hand, the resolution would encourage States to take the threat seriously and to apprehend it as a global danger that can only be combated or curbed through international involvement.
- On the other hand, the resolution would serve as a guide to inspire common foundations for regional, national and even local measures.
- However, it would be appropriate for a possible resolution to give greater emphasis to international cooperation, in particular regarding aid to countries that cannot fulfill their share of measures to meet community concerns on the issue.

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