



Children Recruiting And Exploiting By Terrorist Groups

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Abstract: *A large number of children are being trafficked by terrorist and violent extremist groups. Determining the childhood age limit for children exploited by terrorist organizations is important. Determining the boundary between childhood and maturity is a contentious issue. There are various points of contention over determining when childhood ends and adulthood begins. In international law “child” is defined as “every human being below the age of eighteen years.” Terrorist Groups prefer recruiting children due to visibility and propaganda, economic considerations and effectiveness, easy control and tactical advantages. The methods of terrorist groups to recruit children could be summarized as, forcible recruitment, economic enticement, transnational recruitment, use of schools (education), propaganda and online recruitment. The children in terrorist groups face to extreme violence and as a result they could easily have physical and mental harm, so rehabilitation and reintegration programs are main milestones in their new life. Governments ought to support transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation to create and carry out programs taking care of instances of children having been presented to terrorist groups. Sustained reintegration activities involve deradicalization, re-education, reintegration and community outreach jurisdictions.*

Keywords: *Children, Recruitment, Terrorist Groups, Reintegration, Rehabilitation.*

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1. Introduction:

Nearly all terrorist organizations from Asia to Africa look for recruiting children. In such regions it will get difficult to save children from a landscape in which they could be exploited as couriers, spies, fighters and even suicide bombers. Political, economic problems and insecurity give safe havens for these groups for setting up their training camps, especially in border regions. These children can easily be radicalized using simple things like food, some money, or just candy. They are trained to carry out suicide attacks.

It is highly critical to make a clear definition of the child. Although there are different criminal responsibility ages in different countries, international law defines the people who are under 18 as “child”.

The unemployment, illiteracy, common poverty and deficiency of the rule of law could cause the recruitment and exploiting of children by terrorist groups. Terror groups have many ways to exploit children such as coercion, financial aid or proposing protected status for children or their family. The rising violence and insecurity in the world make it easy for terror groups to reach and convince the children. In some places such as Syria and Afghanistan terrorist organizations offer two choices to families; giving some amount of money in every month or give one of their children. Families choose second one because of poverty and the reality of large families. In addition to this, family ties give another opportunity for recruitment: the child of terrorist become new member. Terrorist organizations can influence the education system in the regions under their control in such a way that they can train new members. This can be seen as another method for terrorist organizations to recruit children.

It is stated that terrorists exploit children because they can quickly gain the trust of potential victims. Terrorist organizations train children as suicide bombers, and it is often stated that the children exploited in this attack are not even aware of what they are doing.

The rehabilitation of formerly recruited children is another problematic issue. Due to lack of sufficient support for reintegration, these children could easily choose to return to terrorist groups. It is seen that in the studies carried out so far, a special approach for children exploited by terrorist organizations has not been revealed, and there is uncertainty about how these children will be reintegrated into society, especially when they are rescued from terrorist organizations. In this study it is

stated that rehabilitation and reintegration methods for adults are not suitable for children. It would be more beneficial to adopt an approach according to the age of the children, the time they spent in terrorist organizations, and the size and scope of the activities they participated in. The failure in the process of reintegration and rehabilitation may lead these children back to terrorist organizations. To sum up, the failure of countries and governments to develop a special program for these children may lead to the emergence of new and more radical terrorists. Besides, reintegrating children under the influence of terrorist groups such as DAESH into society and succeeding in keeping them away from radicalization may make DAESH lose its effect. However, the lack of a special regulation for these children in international law is one of the most important shortcomings.

2. Terms And Legal Regulations:

2.1. Definition of a Child:

Determining the childhood age limit for children exploited by terrorist organizations is important in many respects. Terrorist organizations generally prefer children because they can be persuaded more easily, they are punished less if they are caught, etc. In this regard it is highly important to define “who is child”.

There are many matters of dispute about determining the beginning and end of childhood.

Although, the exploiting of children in armed conflicts is forbidden by international law many terror groups prefer to use them. According to international law “child” refers to a human being under the age of eighteen years but there are different age limitations e.g., the age of criminal responsibility, the age of sexual consent could be different in many countries. In 2007 the UN in the Paris Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict defined children in combat as follows: *“Children in combat are defined as “any person below the age of 18 who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, exploited as fighters, cooks, porters, spies, or for sexual purposes,” according to the Principles on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.”*²

² Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (“the Paris Principles”), at: <https://www.icrc.org> (accessed on 25 May 2021), p.7.

The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child describes a child as an individual under the age of 18.

In line with the Article 31 of the Turkish Penal Code:

“Children who are under the age of 12 when the conduct is committed are not criminally liable. These people cannot be criminally prosecuted, although child-specific safety measures might still be necessary.

There is no criminal liability for those who committed the act but were over the age of twelve but under the age of fifteen because they were unable to understand the conduct’s legal significance and repercussions, or because their capacity to control their behavior was insufficiently developed. If the offense calls for aggravated life in prison, the defendant receives a sentence ranging from fourteen to twenty years, and if the crime calls for life in prison, the defendant receives a term ranging from nine to twelve years.” (TCK artc.31)

Many factors such as cognitive abilities, emotional maturity and social development play role in the definition of a child. It is difficult for countries to determine a common legal stance on the exploiting of children by terrorist organizations because the criminal responsibility age and conscription varies due to the different cultures of the countries.

2.2. The Recruitment and Exploiting of Children by Terror Groups under International Law:

In an armed conflict, children are seen as easy targets not only for violence, but also for coercion and indoctrination, because of their young age they often do not have a pre-established value system, so children are more easily coerced and indoctrinated than adults. DAESH’s exploiting children as a propaganda instrument and as militants has become quite common. Children have carried weapons, guarded strategic locations, arrested civilians, been subjected to sexual violence, forced marriage, and exploited in suicide bombings.

Although in the case of states there are some limits in international law regarding the age limit of child soldiers, in the case of terrorist organizations it is not possible to talk about such a limit on the members’ age. Since the norms of international law are not binding for most terrorist organizations, it is possible to come across children exploited by terrorist organizations at almost any age.

Within the context of the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) estimation, since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011, nearly 5,000 foreign fighters have traveled from Europe to Syria and Iraq. The United Nations is also urging states to bring children back from Syria. A large amount of them are children of DAESH terrorists in Iraq and Syria. According to U.N. humanitarian officials, about 62,000 people live in Al-Hol, the country's largest camp for refugees and displaced persons.³

Within the human rights perspective, Article 38(2) of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child states, "*States parties shall take all practicable measures to ensure that persons under the age of 15 do not directly participate in hostilities*" and Article 38(3) "*requests States not to recruit children under the age of 15 into their armed forces*". The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child accepted in 2000 and it paved the way for the broadening the international law framework by raising the age for participation in hostilities to 18 (Article 1) and prohibiting the recruitment or exploiting of persons under the age of 18 in hostilities by armed groups (Article 4).⁴ The African Union accepted the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 1999. It defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 without exception. International treaties also include recommendations on prevention and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts in traditional armed conflict, some of which are aimed at countering violent extremism of children, but additional international standards are required in these particular cases.

Some international documents that define the age of childhood could be seen in Additional Table 1.

³ Russia Repatriates 34 Children from Camps in Syria", Daily Sabah, Apr 19, 2021, p.1.

⁴ Nina H.B. Jørgensen, "Children in Conflicts as Victims and Perpetrators? Reassessing the Debate on Child Soldiers in Light of the Involvement of Children with Terrorist Groups", (Questions of International Law, Jun 30, 2019) p.11.

Additional Table:1International Law and the Age of Childhood⁵

ROME STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT	GENEVA CONVENTION AND ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS
<p>Established 1998.</p> <p>122 States Ratified.</p> <p>Age of Child: Under 15.</p> <p>Recruiting a child to actively participate in international or domestic hostilities is a war crime.</p> <p>The forced transfer of children from one group to another is genocide.</p> <p>Rape, sex slavery and forced pregnancy are crimes against humanity and war crimes in the conflict.</p>	<p>Established 1949.</p> <p>196 States Ratified Convention IV.</p> <p>Additional Protocol I Ratified by 174.</p> <p>Age of Child: Under 15.</p> <p>Children under 15 years of age are prohibited and use is not recommended if under 18 years of age are directly involved in the conflict.</p> <p>Children have the right to food, medical care, protection, and family reunification where possible.</p> <p>If prosecuted, separate accommodation and exempt from the death penalty if under 18 years old.</p>
OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT	
<p>Established 2000.</p> <p>162 States ratified.</p> <p>Age of Child: Under 18.</p> <p>Playing a direct role in the conflict is prohibited for anyone under the age of 18 in the armed forces and groups, but the armed forces may enlist 16- and 17-year-olds if they volunteer, with appropriate parental consent and proof of age.</p> <p>Purposes for full reintegration, with States giving the necessary funding.</p>	
THE PARIS COMMITMENTS	THE PARIS PRINCIPLES
<p>Established 2007.</p> <p>Summary of Paris Principles.</p> <p>100 States Ratified</p> <p>Age of Child: Under 18.</p> <p>Address the harms of engaging in conflict through technical support and funding.</p> <p>Committed to addressing the imbalance in helping girls in conflict.</p>	<p>Established 2007.</p> <p>100 States Ratified</p> <p>Age of Child: Under 18.</p> <p>Prohibit children from confrontation in active and supportive roles such as cooks, porters, messengers, spies, and sexual partners.</p> <p>Prevention and GDR guidelines; financial, educational and community opportunities.</p> <p>No death penalty, life imprisonment, or international prosecution for persons under 18.</p> <p>Children who run away are not deserters. No torture, voluntary search for truth.</p>

⁵ Noman Benotman & Nikita Malik, "The Children of Islamic State", (The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, Quilliam 2016), p.13.

3. The Advantages of Exploiting Children By Terrorist Organizations

Children are seen as the next generation of DAESH. Child warriors are defined by the organization as “Cubs of the Caliphate”. According to a study conducted in early 2016, it was determined that DAESH enslaved 3500 people in the areas it controlled, and 800 to 900 children were kidnapped in Mosul alone to be raised as terrorists.⁶ Since 2015, children’s training camps have been opened for their education, and in these camps, they have been provided with training in many fields from suicide attacks to armed attacks and to take active duty. In the published propaganda videos, children dressed in camouflage are seen with their leaders, who command them.⁷

The Advantages of Using Children by Terrorist Groups could be summarized as follows:

- Visibility and propaganda:

Terrorist groups and violent extremists frequently exploit children to increase their awareness, as evidenced by Boko Haram and DAESH propaganda. The photographs are designed to shock the public while also demonstrating the group’s power and cruelty.

- Economic considerations and effectiveness:

Terrorist groups and violent extremists, as well as armed groups in general, gain from significant financial advantages when recruiting children. Children are often paid less (if at all) and need less food to survive, whether exploited in a support or warrior role. Parallel to this, combat has evolved, and the prevalence of small guns, in particular, has narrowed the effectiveness difference.

- Control:

Children are more easily intimidated and controlled than adults, both physically and intellectually. In addition to this, being deprived of adequate educational opportunities and unemployment are also important factors in the easy deception of children by terrorist groups.

⁶ “Kuruluşundan Eylem Yöntemlerine DEAŞ Terör Örgütü”, (TERAM (Terörizmle ve Radikalleşme ile Mücadele Araştırma Merkezi), 17 Temmuz 2020), p. 5

⁷ Ibid.

- Tactical advantages:

Children are increasingly being exploited as spies to deliver messages, transport equipment and make suicide attacks. The reasons for this are often pragmatic: young people have a limited understanding of the risk they face and are therefore less worried about it.⁸

4. The Methods Used By Terrorists To Recruit Children

It is stated that there are six phases in children's social adaptation into DAESH: Seduction, Schooling, Selection, Subjugation, Specialization, and Stationing.⁹

Seduction: Initial exposure to ideas, standards, and practices through advocacy, offsite participation in public events, and indirect outreach to employees.

Schooling: Routine, direct exposure to personnel, accompanied by heavy indoctrination.

Selection: Employers focus attention, select skills, and prepare for military training or other roles.

Subjugation: Physical and psychological brutality through comprehensive training, separation from family, wearing of uniforms, and deeper commitment through acts of loyalty, sacrifice, and discipline; the emergence of unity through shared challenge. **Specialization:** Professional advancement and exposure to specialized training. **Stationing:** Assign and deploy roles; including participation in public events to recruit new members.¹⁰

The methods used by terrorists to recruit children could be summarized as follows:

- Forcible recruitment (Coercion):

Violent extremist and terrorist groups are primarily participated in the forcible and usually brutal recruitment of great numbers of children. Children can be kidnapped, threatened or bought from human traffickers. Like street children, children living in poverty and without parental care are particularly vulnerable to forced conscription.

⁸ "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System", (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Vienna, 2017), p.11.

⁹ John Horgan et al., "From Cubs to Lions: A Six Stage Model of Child Socialization into the Islamic State", "From Cubs to Lions: A Six Stage Model of Child Socialization into the Islamic State", Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, Vol. 40 (7), (2016), p.11

¹⁰ Ibid., p.12.

Under some circumstances, recruitment through connections with group and community leaders plays a substantial role. In this case, members of families and communities can encourage children to participate in the armed groups.

In DAESH, children between the ages of 5 and 10 in religious education camps, while children between the ages of 10 and 15 receive military training.¹¹ Media reports indicate that children were beaten, tortured, raped if they refuse to obey DAESH orders. In addition to this, local tribes reportedly forced families to send their children to DAESH in some cases. The families who do not allow DAESH to take their children asserted that the children were forced to participate in conflict.

DAESH prefers more indirect and systematic coercion. People, especially children, are forced to join organizations out of fear. DAESH continues to cruelly punish and kill people who do not comply with its code of conduct or who believe that it is contrary to its ideology.¹²

- Economic enticement:

In some cases, terrorist groups may propose payment, food, shelter and protection, encouraging loyalty.¹³

In the past, the payment of wages by armed groups was seen as a vital factor in the recruitment of children, as was the case often with children in the DAESH. The exceptionally excessive wages paid with the aid of the DAESH encouraged children and their families in a tough and conflict-torn economic environment.

- Transnational recruitment:

The transnational characteristic of terrorism and violent extremism facilitates the emergence of transnational recruitment and participation of children in foreign terrorist fighters. Some children who joined terrorist organizations across borders did so by themselves, some traveled with their families or adult relatives, while others were forcibly abducted and then crossed borders as part of participating in violent extremist organizations. Some groups have developed comprehensive recruitment strategies, including a lot of recruitment styles suitable for different situations.

¹¹ Benotman & Malik, "The Children of Islamic State", p.34

¹² Ibid., p.32-33.

¹³ Lorne L.Dawson, "A Comparative Analysis of the Data on Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: Who Went and Why?" (ICCT Research Paper, February 2021), p.40.

- Use of schools (Education):

Terrorist groups and violent extremists try to extend their power through schools, which are used as a forum for children to be indoctrinated.

First of all, socialization involves interacting with children, often in public places or mosques, and promoting contact with DAESH by providing free toys and sweets, or opportunities holding the DAESH flag and in some cases, weapons. At this phase, the children are exposed to DAESH ideology and are attracted by the military success of the so-called Caliphate.

- Propaganda:

The group develops a precise communication strategy aimed at emphasizing the benefits of taking part in the group or generating empathy. Being a member of a group could present status and prestige, elegant uniforms and weapons. It could be seen as a chance for gaining power, particularly for children who have no educational opportunities or jobs. DAESH also frequently pays attention to “victimization” and uses images showing “enemy crimes” to release anger, arouse sympathy for the injured or killed, and create a desire for revenge. In addition to this, such groups use some interactive media tools such as computer games and cartoons to distribute their information. The aim of glorifying terrorist attacks could be seen at the core of these materials.

Taking part in terrorist groups such as DAESH ensures children a degree of satisfaction because they are needed and appreciated. Furthermore, under the indistinct conditions of conflict, membership of DAESH gives a sense of power. As a result of ongoing wars, the majority of the people feel exhausted and powerless. At that point, joining a terrorist group could be seen as a solution to their problems.¹⁴

In a video released in February 2015, 80 youngsters, some as young as five years old, were seen dressed in camouflage, standing in formation, and engaged in military drills with rifles. These kids were supposedly taught how to decapitate people and wield AK-47 rifles.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁵ Mia Bloom, “Weaponizing the Weak: The Role of Children in Terrorist Groups”, (Washington & Lee Public Legal Studies Research Paper Series, No. 2019-06, Chapter 09, January 14, 2019), p.3

- Online recruitment:

The use of online communication is called as a new way of disseminating extremism and terrorism propaganda. It is useful for conveying ideology of terror groups all over the world and children are subjected to such activities as active internet users.¹⁶ The terrorist groups learn to use this instrument gradually. While social media platforms such as emails, chat rooms, mail groups, electronic products, message boards and other applications become popular, terrorist groups adapt their recruitment tactics according to these new platforms. However, these new recruitment methods cause a tailored recruitment approach.

One of these methods can be defined as “modification”, which relies on the perpetrator to understand the individual’s interests in order to adapt to the method and establish a relationship of trust. The other technique could be called as “targeted advertising”: By tracking the online behavior of internet users, a group can identify those groups that are vulnerable to its propaganda and customize the narrative according to its target audience.¹⁷

With the increased usage of children, they have been deployed as soldiers, human shields, couriers, spies, and guards. Boys are assigned specialized tasks and stations after attending DAESH schools and learning military skills in its training camps. These usually entail acts that children are better suited to.

Girls receive a domestic education in which they learn how to care for their husbands’ needs, raise their children within the conformity with the DAESH’s ideology. DAESH doctrine, known as the “*flowers and pearls of the caliphate*,” has very precise requirements for girls: they must be properly covered, disguised, and never leave the house unless under extraordinary circumstances.¹⁸

With its territorial grip in Iraq and Syria slipping away, it is unclear whether DAESH will be able to continue its recruitment efforts indefinitely. DAESH ran a slick, modern social media campaign from its Mosul and Raqqa centers for several years, distributing messages in as many as 25 languages across a variety of open Application Programming Interface (API) and encrypted social media platforms (such as Twitter, Kik, Pinterest, WhatsApp, Viber).¹⁹

¹⁶ Dolunay Şenol, Sezgin Erdem, Elif Erdem, “İŞİD: Küresel bir Terör Örgütü”, Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 26 (2) (2016), p.286.

¹⁷ “Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System”, p.13.

¹⁸ Bloom, “Weaponizing the Weak: The Role of Children in Terrorist Groups”, p.1

¹⁹ Ibid., p.2.

5. The Status of Children Associated With Terrorist Groups

Except for the general effects of war on every human, it affects children in many different ways. These effects include not only physical harm (death, injury, disability or illness) but also psychological harm. The drawn-out presentation and desensitization to savagery that children involvement amid war causes long term injury, which disables the mental and ethical advancement of the children. Moreover, the insufficiency of foundation like schools and healing centers hinders get to instruction and healthcare, which can have a negative affect both within the short and the long-term. As an example, more than 800,000 people were killed in a three months period in Rwanda in 1994. According to a study which focuses on this event, it is highlighted that 95.9 percent of children saw savagery, 87.5 percent faced to dead bodies or body parts and 69.5 percent were witnessed slaughtered or injured people. Although a long time passed, the ongoing effects could be seen on those who have survived.²⁰

In this regard, the effect of war on children can be complex. However, what is obvious is that the negative results can take years to remove. Agreeing to UNICEF, more than 16 million babies were born in strife zones in 2015, a figure that underscores the defenselessness confronted by expanding numbers of children.²¹

The children formerly associated with terrorist groups do not only face to a trauma but also other post-conflict fears rage from revenge attack, re-recruitment, stigmatization, deep poverty and family violence. As a result, these children create some solutions for their traumas, as an example they refuse to think about their wartime experiences. At that point the role of their family and friends become highly vital for coping with the emotional stress of their experiences.

DAESH is thought to have transnational potential thanks to its indoctrination and weaponization of children. This is, DAESH's ability to withstand and survive territorial defeat.²² For this reason, reintegrating these children under the influence of DAESH into society and succeeding in keeping them away from radicalization may make DAESH lose its effect.

²⁰ Benotman & Malik, "The Children of Islamic State", p.46

²¹ Ibid.

²² Asaad Almohammad, "ISIS Child Soldiers in Syria: The Structural and Predatory Recruitment, Enlistment, Pre-Training Indoctrination, Training, and Deployment", (ICCT Research Paper, February 2018), p.2.

5.1. An End or New Beginning (Rehabilitation and Reintegration)

Whatever their role the children in terrorist groups confront extreme violence and as a result they could easily have physical and mental harm. It could be seen that many very young members in terror groups and DAESH in particular. For example, the photograph shows a 7 years old child holding up a decapitated head of a victim of DAESH. The other example is a video that includes 4 years of child detonating a car-load of explosives in January 2016.²³

Due to the poor life conditions of Syrian refugee camps, the immediate ways to save children from these problems, should be priority for in international community.

Despite growing public awareness and efforts to repatriate children, national actions are limited and ad-hoc. Separation from their DAESH-affiliated parents is another concern raised by children repatriation. Separation could aggravate pain suffered by children, despite the fact that DAESH-affiliated parents have put their children in danger by traveling to DAESH territory. This emphasizes the importance of evaluating the methods of repatriation and rehabilitation requirements for children on an individual basis.²⁴

The actions and methods used by states parties for the children repatriated from Syria and Iraq should be in conformity with the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Firstly, according to the regulations in international law, states have obligations to accept all possible measures to hinder the recruitment of the children under 18 years old by terrorist groups.

Secondly in line with the responsibilities derive from international law, states should provide rehabilitation to the children who have recruited by terror groups. The states should be treated these children according to their rights, needs and dignity in line with the obligations stem from the CRC.²⁵

Thirdly, because of the possibility of becoming the victims of trafficking, these children could need special protection under the international law. These children could be forced to work for the trafficker or others. Their duties could

²³ John Horgan et al., "From Cubs to Lions: A Six Stage Model of Child Socialization into the Islamic State", p.8.

²⁴ Joana Cook and Gina Vale, "From DAESH to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State", International Centre for the Study of Radicalization, Department of War Studies, King's College, (2018), p.10.

²⁵ UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/291

contain anything from banded or forced labor to commercial sexual exploitation. International regulations make it clear that no children could be punished, prosecuted or threatened for being a member of an armed group.²⁶

The treatment of children should be consistent with the age, role and the membership consent of the children in a terrorist group. Besides, these treatments should pave the way for the reintegration of the children to the society.²⁷ According to the CRC every child has a right to acquire a nationality. The Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness bans States from depriving a person of nationality if doing so would render the person stateless and everyone has a right to enter their own country.²⁸ Finally, children could not be detained due to their or their parents' immigration status and no children should be subjected to preventive or administrative detention for counter-terrorism aims.²⁹

Despite the obligations arising from international law, many differences are observed in the approaches of states to children who have connections with terrorist organizations and their policies towards these people.

The returned children face to many rehabilitation processes in their home countries. As of July 2019, 403 children had returned to Kazakhstan from Iraq and Syria, and nearly 41 children returned to Tajikistan for two-year period.³⁰ Denmark has preferred its "Aarhus model" for the returnees' reintegration. Aarhus model includes cooperation and coordination between social workers, police and religious groups. Nevertheless, this model is focused on the children groomed by the terror groups to commit criminal offences.³¹

Rehabilitation programs can fail when the underlying policy is not well understood. Programs that are not well thought out, that do not take all factors into account, are likely to fail. In other words, the disadvantages of such programs could be

²⁶ Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups ("the Paris Principles"), principle 8.7.

²⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (accessed on 05 May 2021), Article 40(1).

²⁸ Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness 1961, at: <https://www.unhcr.org/un-conventions-on-statelessness.html> (accessed on 04 May 2021) Article 8(1)

²⁹ Convention on the Rights of the Child, at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx> (accessed on 05 May 2021), Articles 3(1) and 37.

³⁰ Russia's Repatriation of ISIS Members", Foreign Policy Research Institute, 12 April 2019, at: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/04/russias-repatriation-of-isis-members/> (accessed on 24 May 2021).

³¹ Child Rights International Network (CRIN), "Bringing Children Home: A children's Rights Approach to Returning from ISIL", 28 Jan 2020, at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/bringing-children-home-childrens-rights-approach-returning-isis> (accessed on 27 May 2021), p.3.

more than their advantages. In this regard, policy tools need to be accurately and logically aligned with the objectives of the program.³²

5.2. The Attitude of Other Actors (Governments or Home Countries)

Governments ought to support transnational and multidisciplinary cooperation to create and carry out programs taking care of instances of children having been presented to DAESH narratives. Prior to setting out on the improvement of any strategies or projects to help kids that have been living heavily influenced by DAESH, it should be directed a few appraisals to assess the degree to which the children had been exposed to the narratives of DAESH, just as the degree to which those narratives had been internalized. It is significant to keep away from worsening the situation by calling individuals and ideas as 'extremists' or 'terrorists.' This will only deepen the gap between communities and likely decline the possibility of establishing trust and dialogue with these individuals. In this context, public awareness about the government's repatriation, rehabilitation and reintegration policies is important to ensuring the public is equipped with accurate and up-to-date information.

Deradicalizing children from DAESH who have known no alternate lifestyle, and who have gone through serious physical and mental injury, will be a thorough interaction. It will be essential to initially decide if kids are joining voluntarily, or with their families. Another determining factor is age, regardless of whether the children being referred to join DAESH in their adolescent years or at a more youthful age. As such any course of appraisal ought to perceive the level of office and free idea behind radicalization, and in doing as such decide how much children are revolutionaries or confused.

Taking children back to normal life will be troublesome, and it is prescribed appraisal offices to assess the degree of every child's radicalization dependent upon the situation, and to offer ways for reintegration, trailed by a broad time of help from a local area organization. Tracking the children with proposals from the appraisal group will likewise assist with figuring out which kids can start deradicalization programs without legal procedures, and help in fair treatment of ceaseless evaluation and assessment.

³² Tinka Veldhuis, "Designing Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs for Violent Extremist Offenders: A Realist Approach", (ICCT Research Paper, March 2012), p.17.

The reintegration process involves four steps such as; Deradicalization, Re-Education, Reintegration and Community Outreach:

Deradicalization: Preventing radicalization can disperse and dissolve extremist ideology and understanding. Also, radicalization in prisons and the problem of returning terrorists is addressed through prevention programs.³³

Deradicalization methodology will mean to rescue children once again from the way of life they have embraced, with adequate thoughtfulness regarding the physical and mental injury brought about by struggle. Measures ought to have a “values-based” educational plan which re-teaches kids with public qualities, gives philosophical and philosophical recalibration, and scholarly, social, and enthusiastic help.

National deradicalization operations must consider possible DAESH returnees and the people who have extremist ideologies in state borders, in conflict areas and in other foreign theaters. All parties must be encouraged and adequately supported to integrate children in all post-conflict legal, judicial, and recovery and transitional justice processes.

Re-Education: The aim of this stage is destroying the DAESH’s credibility and changing these narratives with the positive ones. The endeavors would delegitimize DAESH’s philosophy, and discredit the outrageous thoughts of nationhood and strict influence that children would have encountered in their past schooling framework in DAESH. It would consequently be imperative to deconstruct the instructive and scholarly parts of DAESH’s educational program, and make another educational plan to uproot this. Besides this, all children will ultimately require help with getting a new line of work, a school, and a home, just as significant enthusiastic help and elective references and perspectives.

Reintegration: The majority of crafted by the organization will be on long haul reintegration of children in their networks. While children create new personalities and look for another feeling of having a place, it is basic they discover acknowledgment and freedoms to feel of strengthening and self-esteem inside a peaceful way of life. Instructive and business openings can help with assisting kids with focusing on their new way of life, and whenever the situation allows, ought to use the remarkable abilities of the children, and move them to occupations or instructive jobs inside the common state.

³³ Andrew GUNN ve Ahmet DEMİRDEN, “Radikalleşmenin Önlenmesi& Terörizm Olgusu”, (Polis Akademisi Yayınları:72, Rapor No: 24, Haziran 2019), p.15.

Community Outreach: Policy can't direct community perspectives that guarantee fruitful reintegration, which can be particularly difficult as returning unfamiliar contenders frequently come from minority foundations inside their networks. Infrastructure is therefore anticipated to cooperate with return and reintegration efforts at both the global and local level, depending on the planned network. They ought to draw in networks for input with respect to children and include them in joint drives.³⁴

Recently, government agencies in Turkey have been trying to design studies for removing returning DAESH members from extremist ideology and violence. People who are considered to be a threat are monitored and trying to deter those deemed to be turning to DAESH by using short-term detentions.³⁵

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

The status of children in Iraqi and Syrian displacement camps and repatriated children affected by DAESH is a significant issue. It is critical to reverse the indoctrination process and support reintegration into education systems that provide specialized assistance to children on positive self-identification and social coherence. These are essential for breaking a perilous cycle of violent extremism and protecting children, which is a fundamental human right.

Policies and rehabilitation methods to be developed for children rescued from terrorist organizations by states are factors that will determine not only the future of these children, but also the future of countries and terrorist organizations from which they left. The issue of how to tackle the cases of DAESH-affiliated children is a critical problem. Societies are afraid of people that have formerly been affiliated with DAESH, even children, because they think that rehabilitation and reintegration attempts might be useless at reversing the radicalization process. Governments should definitely describe the periods for rehabilitation and reintegration of DAESH-affiliated children and give opportunities for the community to contribute to the formation of policies. After that the path of unification and peace could start and all children could be protected.

³⁴ Benotman & Malik, "The Children of Islamic State", p.65.

³⁵ International Crisis Group, "İŞİD'e Katılıp Dönen Türkiye Vatandaşları: Mevcut Yaklaşımları Geliştirmek", (Avrupa Raporu, N°258, 29 Haziran 2020), p.ii.

Although the lessons and practices associated with DDR programs are well established, they are usually for child soldiers. There is a need to adapt DDR programs to children recruited by terror groups. It might be anticipated a similar dynamic to wrap future talks almost how to reply to DAESH's children, but given the emerging spectacle of a potential future era of combatants, comprehending this could be a genuine concern. In the implementation of such programs, security organizations, prison staff, religious scholars, social opinion leaders, among various stakeholders, including psychologists and specialized NGOs coordination is important. Such programs are criticized in some countries due to diverting them from their original purpose due to targeted stigmatization of the environment, instrumentalized by the state for monitoring activities, or the use of social programs for counter-terrorism purposes.

The social reintegration of children should contain health and psychosocial recuperation and support; instructional and vocational opportunities; returning to family and community life. These components are interrelated, and failing to address any of them will almost certainly have a detrimental effect on the success of the whole reintegration process. Children's programs and services should adopt a comprehensive approach, including the children's unique needs and rights, as well as the expectations and demands of families and communities, as well as the features of the setting in which the reintegration process will take place. Reintegration measures ought to take into consideration the specific settings of children, including children in cross-border situations, children facing release from terrorist or violent extremist groups and children in contact with the justice system as alleged offenders.

If the international community is to have any hope of reintegrating those children who survive and leave DAESH, one thing is certain: it will take a degree of coordination and inventiveness that has never been seen before in any deradicalization campaign.

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