

“Women in Terrorism: The Push and Pull Factors”

by

Tsepo Cheda

[PhD Candidate/Independent Consultant]

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study is to establish the reasons behind terrorist groups’ recruitment and use women in their operations, something that was not very common in the past. Desk research was conducted to gather information for the study and it was established that terrorist groups recruit and use women because they are not usually subjected to thorough searches at check points due to some social norms. Women and children frequent crowded places such as markets and places of worship which they can attack and achieve a high kill rate. Terrorist groups usually want publicity and media attention and using women in their missions can help achieve this, female suicide attacks generate eight times more media attention as compared to similar attacks by men. Women can also be used to gather intelligence by dressing as maids and nurses to infiltrate the enemy camp or to seduce military personnel. Finally, the study recommends strategies that can be used to curb the recruitment of women and children into terrorism. It is recommended that more research be done on female terrorism so as to understand it better. Other issues such as education and rehabilitation of former female terrorists have to be considered as well.

**Key words:** terrorism, suicide bombings, media attention, infiltration.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Carr (2003), Laqueur (2011) and Zalman (2008), terrorism dates back to the biblical times when the Romans were both perpetrators and victims of such activities. It was during these times that other Jewish groups such as the Zealots of Judea and the Sicarri used terror tactics against those they considered enemies, mainly the Romans and Greeks (Merriam-Webster, 1984). Zalman (2008) goes on to describe terrorism as being as old as humanity's willingness to engage in violence for political reasons. Terrorism continued into the modern times especially during the great war of 1618-48 and the Napoleonic Wars of 1799-1815. During the 21st century groups such as Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Anti Balaka in Central African Republic and Lord Resistance Army in Uganda began using their religious beliefs to engage in acts of terrorism (Bob Christian, The Seattle Times, 1 April 1996).

Of late terrorist organisations have recruited and used women in their operations something that was not very common sometime back. Terrorist groups have identified advantages of recruiting women into their ranks chief among them being their ability to access the target without much scrutiny and desire to get media attention. It is recommended that the security sector be capacitated to deal with the female terrorists by having more female officers to conduct body searches. Research should also be conducted on the level of female involvement in recruiting other women. It should also be determined if women join terrorism voluntarily and address the reasons behind this. The research seeks to find out the reason why women join terrorist groups and their role in these groups. The researcher found it necessary to do a desk research on female terrorism because no significant research has been done to date and there is also limited information regarding what motivates their involvement (Bloom 2011). This lack

of information about the role of women significantly limits the resources and approaches that analysts are able to employ when looking at terrorist events and the threat that each organization will pose (Bizovi 2014). Findings from the study will add value to the already existing knowledge and assist intelligence analysts in counter terrorism.

## **MAIN BODY**

### **The Push Factors**

According to Raghavan and Balasubramanian (2014), women join terrorist groups either voluntarily or through coercion. Women that join voluntarily do so for political/ideological, economic and personal reasons (Raghavan and Balasubramanian, 2014). Political/ideological reasons include desire for regime change or fear of religious persecution while socio-economic factors range from financial to material benefits. Personal reasons for joining terrorist organisations are the desire to revenge and adventure. Other women are forced or blackmailed into terrorism as discussed below.

#### **Political/ Religious Factors**

According to the Carter Centre Report (2017), women in Muslim communities flee to join the Caliphate so as to escape from Islamophobia, which is an attack against Islam. These women regard the proposed banning of burqa and the physical attacks on them for wearing head scarfs, as a threat to the Muslim community. Such threats make them feel vulnerable and obliged to turn to the Caliphate which they regard as a safe place to practice their religion (de Leede 2018).

Captured would-be Arab women suicide bombers claimed that they joined terrorist groups because they wanted to get rid of Israel in its occupied territory and advance a nationalist cause (Schweitzer, 2006b: 39). For women in Islamic groups that participate in Jihad, fighting against the enemy is similar to protecting their homes and families (Dearing, 2009: 66). Women also join radical organisations such as the Maoist in India for ideological reasons aimed for political and leadership change (Khan, 2006).

#### **Economic Factors**

Women can be attracted to terrorist groups if they see that they are likely to gain materially. If women find themselves in a situation where they do not have basics such as food and water and can only get this support from terrorist groups they accept it and get drawn into the group

(Dudman, 2018). In Colombia, some women join terrorist organisations after having been promised safety, and education opportunities as was the case with Anne Phillips who had been in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army (FARC) for most of her life (Brittian, 2008). Anne came from a poor rural community and frequently suffered abuse by a family member. She eventually ran away from home and ended up joining FARC where she was promised safety, and education opportunities. She was trained by this group and was later to recruit other women. She eventually escaped from the organisation after she fell pregnant and was forced to abort her baby. For Anne and other women seeking material benefits from extremist groups such as FARC become an escape route from a patriarch society. Women who join FARC are also assured of financial stability as they are paid a salary of US \$350, US \$ 100 more than the US \$250 which is paid by the Colombian army (S. V. Raghavan and V. Balasubramaniyan, Jul-2014).

### **Personal Factors**

Personal reasons for joining terrorist groups include the desire for revenge after death of a loved one, sexual abuse, escape from stigmatisation as well as adventure.

#### *Desire to Revenge*

Terrorist groups recruit aggrieved women who have suffered segregation, sexual abuse and those who lost their loved ones to the enemy. Such women are easy to recruit and can do a good job because of their desire to revenge or get recognition (Bloom 2011). This was the case with the Chechen black widows, the Tamil girls and the victims of gender apartheid in the Gulf States among others. According to Bloom (2011), Iraq has more than 100,000 widows who are victims of war and sectarian violence. Terrorists groups will therefore recruit these women because of their desperation, anger and quest to avenge against the forces that they regard as responsible for the death of their husbands. Studies have established that eighty eight percent of Chechen’s black widows lost their husbands during the Russian-Chechen War (Speckhard and Akhmedova 2006, Bloom 2011). Women who have been sexually abused by government soldiers also join terrorist groups to seek revenge (Bloom, 2011). Some of the Chechen women who have been raped by Russian soldiers at checkpoints and Tamil women who have been sexually abused by the Sir Lankan government Sinhalese troops have also been recruited by the different terrorist groups (Speckhard and Akhmedova 2006).

#### *Escape from Stigmatisation*

According to Buchanan (2014), some women are attracted towards terrorist groups so as to escape from stigmatisation, social rejection and ostracization associated with sexual abuse. They therefore want to prove to the rest of the world that they are useful to other people, in this case the terrorist groups. According to Lantos (2002) women can join terrorist groups so as to escape from gender apartheid in Gulf States, Algeria, Yemen, and Sudan. These women are discriminated against and face gender discrimination in public institutions such as marriages and child custody. In some of these countries women are not allowed to drive, cannot travel alone and are also forbidden from receiving medical attention in hospitals without the consent of their husbands or male relatives. The system of gender apartheid exposes women to indoctrination and manipulation by terrorists who promise them a better life (Lantos 2002).

At times terrorists target those women who even when they are not discriminated against still feel that they lack a sense of belonging. This, according to Hearne(2009), is the case with regards to the women in Kyrgyzstan. A recent International Crisis Group report indicates that women in this country are recruited to a terrorist group Hizb-utTabhir (HT). The report finds that although the women enjoy relative equality in the newly independent country, there is lack of a coherent national identity which is found in an Islamic HT group. The HT emphasises on 'Islamic sisterhood' and also has gender-segregated HT meetings which enable women to interact with other women and share ideas. The case of Anne Phillips above is another example of a woman joining a terrorist group for economic reasons as well as sense of belonging.

According to Reyes (2016) women are regarded as dependents and this makes them feel marginalised. A case in point is that of Colleen LaRose also known as Jihad Jane who lived an obscure life committing minor crimes and was regarded as an eccentric alcoholic. She eventually joined an online community that supported Jihad terrorism where she felt welcome and appreciated. Her feelings of marginalisation and access to online community of radical Islamists gave her a sense belonging which she lacked from her community.

### *Adventure*

Some women join terrorist groups for the purposes of adventure, they find the idea of travelling to a different land very attractive (de Leede 2018). This was one of the reasons why some women decided to move to Syria and Iraq were some media houses portray male fighters in a positive light, describing them as heroes who were prepared to sacrifice their lives for a good cause. Some women therefore find it appealing to be associated with such men (de Leede

2018). Other women also want to live with and take care of their fighter husbands in these countries under Islam religion (Navest, De Koning and Moors, 2016).

### **Coercion**

At times women are forced to join terrorism through emotional blackmail or forced recruitment. Recruiters can blackmail females and later force them to join terrorist groups (Israeli Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2002a). In some cases, the recruiters would seduce the young women from conservative society and later black mail them (Raghavan and Balasubramaniyan 2014).

### **The Pull Factors**

This part of the paper looks at the reasons why terrorist groups prefer to recruit women into their camps. Issues such as their inability to raise suspicion, easy access and invisibility, publicity as well as their ability to raise funds are some of the reasons why terrorist groups are recruiting them. The researcher gives examples of instances where terrorist groups have used women to their advantage.

#### **Easy Access and Invisibility**

According to Buchanan (2014), women are generally regarded as peaceful and subordinate to men in their lives and are not usually treated with suspicion. Women are regarded as not being capable of causing harm and they therefore raise less suspicion where ever they go (Schweitzer 2006). Even today women are still trusted and regarded as unlikely candidates for suicide bombings despite the fact that they were responsible for 16% of suicide bombings between 1985 and 2006 (Schweitzer, 2006).

In a study carried out by a Russian magazine a female journalist was made to walk down the streets in Moscow with a satchel clutched around her body and acting in a suspicious manner. She was dressed like a traditional Moslem woman with a scarf and a black gown but she was never intercepted by the Russian police, instead no one appeared to notice her despite the fact that Chechen men were routinely stopped and interrogated by Russian security personnel (Buchanan 2014). In most Muslim societies, conducting thorough searches on women is considered inappropriate and may result in condemnation by women's groups and the conservative populations (Bloom M 2014). Most women therefore find it easy to access their target since most security check points are controlled by men.

Attractive women tend to distract the attention of the male security personnel thus enabling them to go through check points with little scrutiny (Bloom 2014). According to Harmon and Holmes-Eber, (n.d) terrorist groups take advantage of this loop hole and used women to carry out suicide bombings as was the case with the 1987 bombing of the South Korean Airline. The bombing was carried out by Kim Hyun Hee, a young model and former North Korean propaganda films actor. She played the role of a granddaughter to an older male North Korean spy and the pair struck very little attention. She was able to bypass security checks because of her confidence, beauty and youthfulness (Harmon and Holmes-Eber, n.d).

In another incident in Kenya, three young women dressed in veils walked into a police camp to report a stolen phone, and were not subject to thorough searching (Koigi 2016, 28 October). Once inside the police camp they opened fire and threw grenades and petrol bombs setting the police station alight. These women were young, aged between 19 and 25, and according to the Kenyan government, terrorist groups target these age groups because they are easy to indoctrinate and also regard terrorism as a noble cause (Koigi 2016, 28 October).

In some cases even men dress as women so as to avoid thorough scrutiny. A case in point was the situation Somali in December 2009 where a suicide bomber dressed as a woman complete with lady's shoes and veil managed to detonate an explosive in a crowded Mogadishu hotel killing three Somali ministers (Hearne 2009). Some women can gain easy access to their target because the security personnel do not have the capacity to interrogate or conduct thorough searches on them (Hearne 2009).

In a related incident in Sri Lanka, a female suicide bomber disguised as pregnant entered a Sri Lanka army hospital and blew herself up successfully killing and injuring a lot of people including the Commander of the Sri Lanka Army (BBC News, 25 April 2006). The woman used a fake identification document and informed the security personnel that she had an ante-natal appointment at the army hospital inside the complex, and was allowed through.

Studies have shown that female suicide attacks have a higher kill rate as compared to those carried out by men because women visit more crowded places such as markets and churches as compared to men. According to a study of five different terrorist groups, attacks carried out by women had an average of 8.4 victims while attacks by men had a kill rate of 5.3 victims (Bloom 2011).

## **Expendable**

Besides their ability to avoid detection and access the enemy camp, Speckhard(2008),says that terrorist groups prefer to use women in suicide bombings as they are expendable. Most women do not have senior leadership positions and special skills within the organisations so losing them will not have a major effect. Matfess (2017) interviewed an anonymous defected Boko Haram insurgent who confirmed this and went on to note that women were cheap and using them would serve the group's male fighters (Warner and Matfess 2017).

### **Couriers**

Terrorist groups have also been used by terrorist groups as couriers. Terrorist groups have developed a Stealth Bra which they use for smuggling small weapons and arms. The bra is made up of material that leaves the detection screen blank, absorbs radar and x-ray making it impossible to detect any weapons. A woman was caught trying to smuggle weapons in a similar bra filled with small weapons in France (Clayton, 13 July 2002).

Besides the smuggling of weapons, Muslim dresses can also be used to smuggle medicine, food and military items. According to Holmes in the Reuters Report, young women in Syria would pretend to be conservative Muslims, dress in long dresses and scarfs which they then use to hide food and other non-food items which they bring out of Damascus to Homs city (Holmes, 25 April 2012).

### **Publicity**

Schweitzer (August 2006), states that the use of women in terrorist attacks especially suicide bombings attracts a lot of media attention which inturn helps publicise the activities of their organisations. Bloom (2005) agrees and goes on to state that the 1991 attack on Rajiv Gandhi, the former India Prime Minister, generated a lot of attention and publicity and also boasted revenue from the diaspora donations. Because of their ability to infiltrate public places and enemy territory with easiness, women have a very high kill rate, more than four times that of men. (Bloom, 2011).

In Pakistan female suicide bombers receive a lot of attention and are regarded as heroines, their funerals are usually attended by a lot of people. They are also idolised and have their posters plastered in public places with some teenagers even placing their pictures alongside those of international celebrities(Bloom2011).Terror attacks by females are usually reported in more detail as compared to those committed by their male counterparts. The reports usually provide more information on the possible motive of the attacker while those committed by men are



associated with the group's motive. Such attacks also increase the chances of the problems experienced by the groups being highlighted in the media. It is often after such attacks that problems such as discrimination and poverty are featured in the media thus encouraging other organisations to also use women (Shedd 2006).

The high jacking of a passenger flight in 1969 received a lot of media attention in a way very appealing to terrorist recruiters (Hearne 2009). The plane was hijacked by Leila Khaled, a 21 year old female Palestinian terrorist with the Popular Front. The media placed a lot of emphasis on her gender and went on to describe her as the pin-up of the armed struggle, and likened her to Che Guevara.

The publicity associated with an attack by women brings sympathy to the cause of the group. Such attacks are also used by the terrorist groups to manipulate the general population's sense of outrage in the event of the death of the attacker. The general population tends to blame the targeted regime for the death of the attacker (Brown 2005).

## **Propaganda**

Terrorist groups use women for propaganda purposes to attract more recruits, spruce up the group's image and also shame the enemy.

### *To recruit others*

Terrorist organisations such as ISIS use women to recruit others since they have the ability to penetrate the grassroots networks and screen potential recruits (Badurdeen 2018). The recruiters meet their victims through family and social networks where they socialise and build trust with them, promote sisterhood and create a sense of belonging (Saltman and Smith, 2015). Female recruiters are preferred by the terrorist groups because they are viewed as having motherly love and are therefore able to influence family members for recruitment (Cragin and Daly 2009). They are also able to lure potential male recruits with false promises such as the possibility of finding a bride (Ndungu and Salifu, 2017).

According to Bloom (2018), female recruiters are able to lower the potential recruit's guard and allay their suspicion. This was the case with Susan who was recruited by an AlShabaab female recruiter after responding to a job advert. The recruiter was friendly, created a rapport and built trust making her very comfortable (Badurdeen 2018). The recruiter later drugged her and handed her over to a terrorist group.

Nora el-Bathy, a 15-year-old French schoolgirl, was also lured into joining a terrorist group by other women through Facebook. She befriended “sisters” who helped her escape to Turkey after she was promised a job helping children and the wounded in Syria (Nailiet al, 2014).

#### *Improve the group’s image*

Terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda have an online women magazine run by women and it portrays life in Al Qaeda camps as nice and comfortable. The magazine shows women in these camps dressed nicely, eating good food as well as drinking expensive cocktails (de Leede 2018). The impression given by the magazine is contrary to the real situation on the ground (Huckerby 2015). Some of these women even give live testimonies on social media portraying their organisations in a positive light. Through these tactics, terrorist groups are in a position to recruit even more members into their groups. The FARC group of Colombia uses women to mediate in conflict and to also look after orphans in areas under their control among other duties. This gives a positive image of the group portraying it as pro peace, less threatening and more approachable (Buchanan 2014).

#### *Intimidation*

Use of women in terrorism serves the psychological effect of intimidating the enemy. The enemy feels vulnerable that no one is safe as even the women who were supposed to be gentle were now part of the attack. Such an attack also sends a message to the entire world that the situation is very dire, it emphasises on the seriousness of the situation at hand.

When an enemy comes across a female terrorist, they become irritable as losing against a woman would be considered disgraceful. In societies where men are regarded as the protectors of the family, the use of women in terrorism has a shaming effect on the men thus compelling them to also join the terrorist groups (Bloom 2011). The men will be asking themselves questions like;

*“If a woman can do it, why can’t I?”*

Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the deceased leader of AQI once remarked on his website posting;

*“ ..... are there no men, so that we have to recruit women?”*

In religious traditional groups like the Muslims organisations, men are expected to play an active and leading role of protecting the family, these organisations believe in a strong male gendered lead. Terrorists however use the women who are regarded as the weaker sex to shame

the male headed households (Bloom 2007; Brunner 2005 cited in Suttan, 2009; Galvin, 2013).

### **Human Shield**

The ISS in Syria used their wives and children as human shields to defend Baghouz village, their last piece of territory just before they finally succumbed to the US backed Syrian Defence Force. According to The Associated Press (AP) and ITV the ISS fighters were said to have placed thousands of women and children on the battle's front lines to slow offensive advances against them. They deliberately put the women and children on harm's ways so as to save themselves and the caliphate (Ma, Mar 25, 2019).

In the Philippines, the Maute fighters and other bandits in Marawi City also used women and children as human shield to prevent the government forces from accessing the city which was under their control. The use of human shields forced the government forces to revisit their counter terrorism strategy in a bid to protect non-combatants. This United Nations General Assembly has since voted against the use of the women and children as a counter terrorism strategy (Ma, Mar 25, 2019).

### **Gather Intelligence**

The fact that women are attractive and create less attention or suspicion makes them useful in gathering intelligence for the terrorist groups. Buchanan says that women can dress up as maids, prostitutes, nurses, teachers and other professionals so as to infiltrate and seduce the enemy to gather intelligence (Buchanan, 2015). According to Cragin and Daly (2009), organisations such as the Irish Republican Army, IRA, also used women to lure soldiers to a remote location in order to kill them. The IRA had a para-military base called Cumann na Bannín in Ireland where its female members would seduce the soldiers before they were assassinated by IRA snipers (Cragin and Daly, 2009).

### **Fund Raising**

Terrorist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria use women to raise and transfer funds through charitable organisations, sex slave trade and kidnapping (ISS Report, October 2018). The money raised through these activities is then used for other terrorist activities such as the purchase of weapons, medical supplies and food (Ksowski, 19 January 2018). In 2014, women sympathetic to the terrorist cause transferred thousands of dollars to the al-Shabaab militants in Somalia using small transactions and coded language to avoid detection. A total of fifteen

women were later arrested across the United States of America over these transactions (Alexander, Nov 2016). Meanwhile in countries such as Palestine, several women including the wives of Pakistani Jemaah Islamiyah leaders have also been arrested for running charity organisations which fundraise for the Palestine Islamic Jihad group (Katharina Von Knop 2007).

Kidnapping for ransom (KFR) is another source of funding for terrorist organisations. According to the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, the use of kidnapping and ransom in some regions of the world has become a threat to peace, security and regional stability. Nasser Al-Wuhayshi, former leader of Yemen-based Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, described kidnapping as profitable and lucrative (Rhode, 2014) while OumarOuldHamaha, commander of the Mali-based Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, AQIM, noted that kidnapping was the Jihadist's source of funding in the Western countries ( Nossiter 2012).

There is also speculation that the Nigeria government paid ransom to the terrorists to facilitate the release of the Chibouk girls who were kidnapped by the Boko Haram in Nigeria, in 2014 (ISS October 2018 report). Since women are regarded as gentle and innocent it is easy for the terrorists to demand and receive ransom from sympathisers. Boko Haram also used the kidnapped women to negotiate for the release of their jailed counterparts (Abatan 2018).

The sale of women as sex slaves is very common among the IS fighters. According to Catherine Powell, IS fighters were even captured on video battering for kidnapped Yazidi women at slave market to generate revenue. The Islamic State has also established bureaucracy for sex slavery, including sales contract with potential buyers. The female slaves are used to lure men from Muslim society where dating and casual sex is forbidden.

In some cases terrorist groups have brothels where they keep and use the kidnapped women as prostitutes (Attwood, 25 May 2017).

### **Child bearers**

Some terrorist groups believe that the success and continuation of their cause depends on the ability of women to give birth and raise children who would be tomorrow's fighters. Osama Bin Laden used to praise the women for bringing up children who later became Al Qaeda fighters. He said that women were responsible for raising the fighters who committed the 9/11 attack and those that fought in Palestine, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Chechnya (Lahoud 2002).

Umayma al-Zawahiri, the wife of Ayman al-Zawahiri, also encouraged other Muslim women to raise their children to love and defend Muslim territories and properties.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram would impregnate captured women so that they give birth to future soldiers (Powell, 2015). These children are then indoctrinated from birth, so that they grow up being loyal to the organisation. The Islamic state, IS, refers to these children as Cubs of the Caliphate. Women in the Islamic State have given birth and raised more than seven hundred children as a way of expanding the growth of the caliphate (Darden 2019).

## **WAY FORWARD**

The Global Counter Terrorism Unit, OSCE, the United Nations and other counterterrorism scholars have made the following recommendations to prevent women's involvement in terrorism.

### **Research**

Analyse the factors that put the women at the risk of recruitment and design policies that can address these factors (Raghavan and Balasubramaniyan 2014). There are push factors that drive women to recruitment and pull factors that violent extremists use to target and recruit these young women and girls. However, there is limited information on these factors and it is important therefore to gather more information on girl's involvement in violent extremist so as to design effective interventions. Researchers, practitioners and policy-makers across disciplines need to work together to get such information which will then add value to the already existing but limited knowledge on the problem.

### **Advocacy**

Female teachers, community elders, religious leaders, and former female violent extremists can be involved in educating women on the dangers of joining terrorist groups. The education and counselling should address the needs of the women and girls at risk of being recruited. Testimonies of attacks, abuses, and restrictions experienced by credible former female terrorists will be of great assistance in the education. Social media can be a very powerful vehicle of communicating these messages especially to the young urban women while outreach programme would be suitable for the rural population with no access to social media. Since

terrorist groups use the internet as one of their recruitment vehicles, potential female recruits should be guided on appropriate response to terrorism messaging-activism on social media.

### **Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation and re-integration centres for former terrorists should be established and in cases where they are already in existence, they should be gender sensitive and address experiences and specific obstacles and challenges that women and girls may face. The rehabilitation centres should be able to deal with problems such as trauma from assault and caring for children whose fathers are often dead or not present (Cronin, July 08, 2019). These centres should also consider the ways women and girls in particular can exit these groups and develop reintegration options that take into account their specific needs and experiences.

### **Education**

Education can be used to reduce recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Education can either be formal or informal and should focus on community engagement, human rights, tolerance, peace and reconciliation. Educating girls and young women reduces their chances of being recruited into violent extremist groups that exploit religion and misinterpret political and historical facts. With an education the potential recruits will be in a position to analyse and challenge these narratives.

### **Security**

There is need to close the security gap of searching women and children during raids and at roadblocks and check points, so as to prevent them from smuggling weapons and suicide bombs which they eventually use to blow themselves up. Afghanistan has started addressing this issue by recruiting and training more female police officers to be used at checkpoints. This will also provide independence, a staple job and useful skills for the women (Cronin, Jul 08, 2019).

### **Sanctions**

Women and men involved in terrorism should receive equal treatment from investigation to prosecution. Women have been receiving lenient sentences based on the belief that they were either duped or forced into engaging in terrorism. The UN therefore calls on its member states to analyse the causes of female terrorism and create more effective counterterrorism strategies. Policy makers should therefore dismiss the gender stereotype and recognise the plurality of women's experiences in terrorism especially in ISIS (Jones, April 9, 2019).

## **Human Rights**

Basic human rights such as right to life and physical integrity, right to liberty and security, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, right to protection, among others should be respected as failure to do so can result in alienation and resentment. Terrorist groups can use these violations to “establish a victimization discourse, justify their acts and recruit new members, including women” (OSCE Secretariat, 12 and 13 March 2011).

## **CONCLUSION**

It is very important for counter terrorism activities to include women as full partners in developing and planning counter-terrorism efforts. In instances where the terrorist groups are promising to give women a voice to their communities and opportunities, it is important to equally empower women in voicing against terrorism. Women can therefore be provided with platforms to counter terrorist recruitment propaganda(The Word Press, 21 May 2019).

The rehabilitation and reintegration of former female terrorist back to society must also include other women. In Afghanistan for instance, Women without Borders, a Non-Governmental Organisation, has an initiative called Sisters Against Violent Extremism, which is currently educating women living along the Afghan border on how to prevent the radicalization of their children, and reintegrate former extremist group members back to their family and society (The Word Press, 21 May 2019).

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