

## **Ministerial Submission**

**From:** Barbara Balogun

**To:** Home Office

**Title:** How efficient is the allocation of resources to counter Jihadi Ideology in Schools?

### **Issue**

Schools play an important role in early detection of radicalism. In the analysis of the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, we have seen that there was a clear link between nationals that had radicalized and terrorist attacks. Often, adolescents radicalize in school and the “easy” spread of the ideology could have been detected at that point. Although most of the radicalization happens in Syria or in the combat zones, the growing idea and belief in the Jihad clearly develops in school. Due to this phenomenon, we have seen a rise in teenagers leaving the country to join the Jihadi armed forces in Syria. It is necessary for the government to understand how individuals become jihadists and counter its rise through schools.

### **Recommendation**

1. Redistribute and reallocate the resources provided to specialize teachers in recognising deviant behaviours.
  - a. By revising the training that is given to teachers to emphasize the importance of talking and informing about the risks of the Jihad
    - i. Through the creation of yearly meetings between educators, police and the government to discuss the progress of jihadism as well as the new forms and techniques of radicalization
    - ii. Through the creation of a manual for teachers in which they could refer to
  - b. By creating a collaboration between expert teachers and teenagers that have gone to Syria and war zones to understand what motivated them and how their teachers or schools could have stopped their departure
  - c. By organising group work and studies in class to work on Islamic terrorism and understand the system of propaganda behind the organisation to prevent students from falling into the trap of the Islamic State

**Timing/ Priority** – **URGENT**. This is a question of urgent matter. Terrorist attacks from Jihadi groups are an ongoing issue which needs to be dealt with rapidly. Measures should be put in place by the end of August, beginning September in

schools to be able to start the educational process and teaching from the start of the school year.

### **Discussion/ Background**

Not long ago, three 17-year-old girls from Essex have left the country in order to join the Jihadi troops and become Jihadi brides. Those girls were getting good academic grades, were in a normal school with no major problems in their family and have nevertheless decided to leave. It is because of those events that we have to start to re-think our methods of analysis of radicalization and the beliefs in Jihadi ideology.

Indeed, this example shows that although a lot of teenagers depart the country because they experience difficulties with their family, an important part of this population showed no signs of radicalization prior to their departure.

Moreover, we have seen that most of the national teenagers that leave the country to get radicalized and that follow the views of ISIS regularly come back to commit terrorist acts. For example, using one of the latest incident in the United Kingdom, the perpetrator of the Manchester attack, Salman Abedi, was born and raised in Manchester, had gone into university though dropped out. He was seen as friendly and yet, he decided to go to Syria to get radicalized. He then pursued to come back and to detonate a home-made bomb during Ariana Grande's concert. This case is not a singular occurrence. The process has happened for Khalid Masood, the perpetrator of the Westminster attack as well as the Kouachi brothers who were the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo attack in France and much more.

It is important that the government rethinks its distribution of resources to counter the ideology in schools. Indeed, although it is always good to receive more funding, the way it is used today is not good enough.

Until currently, we had decided to give a very swift training to teachers on how to recognise a terrorist. However, from the feedback we have managed to get, we have understood that teachers were very sceptical and thought that the course was not helpful.

With our recommendations, we aim to re-think the way the training is completed by doing more recurrent meetings with the police and the government in which teachers would be filled in on how terrorists' functions and would be updated on the current situations. It is important that we decide to work closely with teachers as they are often the first point of contact to children and the best people to detect and counter a deviant behaviour.

As we have analysed from teenagers that have already left, often the children are disconnected from their family and do not have great communication with their parents. By working with their teachers, we hope to create a point of contact for the child.

Moreover, through our analysis, we have discovered that many teenagers leave in groups, convinced by one of them of the importance of the cause. As the example from the three girls from Essex, the teenagers are often in the same school, in the same class and can have a big influence on each other. By working alongside their teacher, we would be able to identify those cells and stop/break them before they take too much significance and before they end up convincing each other to leave the country.

We also hope that with such recommendations, we will be able to collect more information on the behaviours adopted by the teenagers as the teachers would be more aware and would be on the watch for this.

Equally, we have seen the rise of the problem of Trojan Horse School in which normal schools were slowly transformed into Islamic Schools.

With the collaboration between teachers and police on a more regular basis, it will be possible for the police forces to realize and deter such projects before they take such importance.

We have made a SWOT analysis that you will be able to find below in which we have analysed the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the main recommendation we have suggested.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Strength:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration would help deter new projects</li> <li>• Teachers are first-hand contact with students</li> <li>• Help understand and detect new techniques of radicalization</li> <li>• Teachers can understand what kind of reactions they should adopt</li> <li>• It will be easier to understand some of the techniques they use to convince</li> <li>• Students will be able to speak without feeling judged</li> <li>• Students will think about areas they would not have thought about</li> <li>• Many teachers are willing to work to</li> </ul> | <p><b>Weakness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers might seem like they do not have the time on top of their work to look out for deviant behaviours</li> <li>• The cost of the training will rise</li> <li>• It may be difficult to get students involved in the discussions groups</li> <li>• It may take some time to revise the way teachers are trained and find a new way that would be more helpful</li> <li>• Difficulty in finding resources, specialists and Jihadist to help us</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

|  |  |
|--|--|
| improve the situation  |  |
| <p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The capture of former jihadists would help us</li> <li>• Having teachers involved in the cause would motive more teachers</li> <li>• Working hand in hand with Europol</li> <li>• Good Press on a school in which the project works would be good to improve the view people will have developed on the project</li> </ul> | <p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rise of Daesh</li> <li>• The media talking negatively about the idea</li> <li>• The prejudices involved</li> <li>• A number of resources available to develop the project</li> </ul> |

**Options**

We have chosen to develop our main recommendation as we believe that it is an easier one to put into place and we believe that it will have more impact on students and the rates of radicalization than the others. However, we have thought about other recommendations that are possible for this issue. Those are the following:

1. Creating “listening” units among groups of schools in order to have areas for students to discuss and interact with other teenagers supervised by specialized teachers or psychologists
2. Work closely with validated Imams, Pastors, Rabbis and Popes to introduce a day in school in which every local chief of church would come and discuss their religions together
3. Work with validated Imams to create visits to local mosques and speak about the reality of jihadism to young students in order to prevent future radicalization
4. Encourage the police to come to school and discuss past cases of teenagers having left the country to serve for the Jihadi to discuss the reality behind the promises of the Jihadists and the war