



Research Report

Forum: General Assembly Third

Issue: Setting up a framework for the role of religion in society

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Table of Contents

Personal Introduction.....	3
Issue: Setting up a framework for the role of religion in society.....	4
Major organizations/countries involved	5
Timeline of related events	5
Key terms	6
Sources	7



Personal Introduction

Dear all, my name is Hana Mahmoud and during the weekend I will be functioning as the President of the General Assembly. I have been a member of the Organising Committee in the first two editions of CalsMUN and this year I've served as Expert Advisor, guiding the new staff. Currently I'm in my first year of studying Law at the University of Utrecht.





Issue: Setting up a framework for the role of religion in society

Throughout the last centuries, people have become more in touch with other religions, due to technological developments in travel. Let's have a look at the Netherlands; in 2016, the CBS (Central Bureau for Statistics) estimated that the amount of religious people (which divides in various religions) was equal to the amount of irreligious people.

Religion in society serves as an integrative force. This means that it functions to reinforce the collective unity or social solidarity of a group. Sharing the same religion or religious interpretation of the meaning of life unites people in a cohesive and building moral order. Solidarity sets groups of people apart. Friction is caused when different religions have contrasting opinions. Segregation is a process that happens when a minority is barely incorporated with the majority. This involves people of a certain religion living in a part of town, and people of other religions living in other part. Separation can cause mixed feelings between the groups which can potentially lead to extremism.

Extremism can be defined as "a tendency or disposition to go to extremes or an instance of going to extremes, especially in political matters". Extremism in the news can be characterised as violent acts against the population, performed in the name of religion. Obviously, not every person is an extremist. Religious books, such as the Quran and Bible, consist of stories that people have different interpretations to. Also, religion does not mean the same to everyone and it can have a different role in people's lives. Therefore religion is a broad aspect that can have a negative effect on a person.

Extremism leads people into extreme acts that they believe are in line with their religion. Extremist acts involve terrorism in forms of killings, mass shootings and suicidal bombings. This is a big issue that is not appropriate in modern society and therefore should be eliminated.

The Islamic State (IS) is one of the most well-known militant groups because of their brutality nowadays. 'It has demanded that Muslims across the world swear allegiance to its leader and migrate to territory under its control', this is typical for an extremist group. Extremists actions by IS include bombings, mass shootings and abductions. By eradicating an extremist group, there will be significantly less extremists attacks. The eradication of IS is troublesome because of its size. In February 2015, there were between 20.000 and 32.000 fighters in Iraq and Syria. To destroy IS there are two factors that should be taken into account. On the one hand, the supply of weapons and money needs to stop. More importantly, people should not be wanting to join extremist groups simply because of their religion. The latter is what the debate lies on in this issue.



To achieve this, the people should start by accepting their differences, especially in religion. Differences should not make us unequal or separate us. Differences should not result in segregation. Segregation is fought with desegregation in ways of changing school policies and housing policies.

Major organizations/countries involved

Islamic State

Also referred to as IS (Islamic State), ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). The Islamic State is a jihadist group that demands that Muslims across the world wear allegiance to its leader and migrate to territory under its control. IS has also told other jihadist groups worldwide that they must accept its supreme authority

Timeline of related events

Any extremist attack can be referred to as a related event to the issue. Below is a minimal list of events that have reached worldwide news.

1987 – 1993: First Intifada. Important event in Israel-Palestine conflict

September 2001: September 11 attacks, twin towers

October and November 2005: French riots, also referred to as the French Intifada

October 2012: attack on Malala Yousafzai by Taliban

November 2015: attack in Paris claimed by the Islamic State (IS) that killed at least 130 people and wounded hundreds.

December 2017: Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital, causing more chaos in the Israel-Palestine conflict.



Key terms

Extremism

Extremism is the opposition to fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs. It is often referred to as the holding of extreme political or religious views, which means to have extreme views in for example religious aspects. This includes taking religious texts out of context.

Terrorism

Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims. Terrorist attacks are often seen in the news as these are not acceptable, but still happen too often.

Segregation

Segregation is simply 'to remove one thing from the presence of another and treat it as separate entity. This practice can be recognized in societies in which new inhabitants (for example immigrants) come to live in an area that used to be ruled by the original inhabitants.

Secession

Secession is the withdrawal of a group from a larger entity as a result of segregation.



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