

Extremism in the Syrian Scene

Causes and Consequences

April 26, 2020



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INTRODUCTION:

No doubt that extremism, as a global and historical phenomenon, is one of the most complex phenomena experienced by all societies, especially Middle Eastern societies. It is also one of the most threatening issues to the international peace and impedes the progress of mankind, due to its catastrophic consequences and its negative consequences on all levels on the individuals' life and societies.

Even though all religions and divinely inspired messages have stood against this phenomenon, and it has been confronted by philosophical and social theories, and condemned by civil laws and international laws, yet it is still deeply rooted establishing its presence, recruiting its forces waving as 'scarecrow for future'.

'Extremism' has been at the forefront of the political and media landscape since September 11, 2011 events, leading to the so-called *Arab Spring* revolutions and the subsequent deterioration and chaos, and the complete collapse of many Arab regimes that exhausted their peoples after decades of suppression and tyranny. As a result, many political and extremist movements emerged, which imposed their policies and ideologies, and spared no effort to recruit as much as possible by their sides, even children and minors to be able to control and accede power.

The Syrian scene is the most noted platform of many extremist movements, as well as the bloody conflict between the regime and the opposition, which has claimed millions of precious lives, after Syria has become an open-ended arena to held conflict between the various internal, regional and international authorities. And this requires, due to the complexity and aggravation of the scene, continuous and intensive efforts by all performer and influencer authorities, whether local, regional or international, and requires further surveys and reconnaissance. In addition to, collecting data, exhaustive research and studies, aimed to get acquainted with all the important details of analyzing the framework, reaching extremism's contexts and its sources through comprehensive plans and programs that mainly object to establish peace and consolidate its principles, as well as to reduce violence and its threatening peace -effects .



EXTREMISM CONCEPT:

Linguistically, Extremism term is derived from the stem extremity (T.R.F) in Arabic. An extremity of something is its end point ¹, which means standing at the end point of something away from the middle point, of which it means moderation. It is said that a person became extreme: came to extremity, extreme man: a person who does not become determined ². It is also said that a person became extreme in something, which indicates exceeding moderation limit. Its origin is said to be sensual like taking a side while standing, sitting and walking, or it is said to be moral like extremism in religion, intellect or behaviors ³.

As a term, extremism means moving away from moderation, exceeding logical and reasonable limits, and transcending the prevailing moral values in society, and it takes various forms, such as intellectual, political and religious. ...etc.

Extremism is considered as a closed method of thinking that relies on exaggeration in adhering to opinions and ideas, and rejecting different beliefs, because the extremist groups believe that they are the only ones who know the truth, and everything else is false. Therefore, those groups impose their opinion and belief on others by all means, without any controls and violating all standards and values. It should be noted that extremism as a concept intersects with many other concepts in politics field, such as radicalization and intolerance, whether you support X or Y.

EXTREMISM FORMS:

1- POLITICAL EXTREMISM

Political extremism is considered one of the most prominent aspects of extremism as a political stance. Its advocates believe that their party was the only model that should be emulated, and that it should be the leader of the masses, because it represents its free-imbalance opinions and goals. In addition, they tend to exaggerate adherence to their political ideas mentally and behaviorally, as well as refusing any opportunity to conduct a serious dialogue, or accept any critical visions, even if they are rational and objective; they consider it a matter of violation of the sacred that should not be forsaken.

2-RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

Religious extremism represents exaggeration and chauvinism in any opinion or belief related to religion, without any scientific, logical or religious basis. It is based on a misunderstanding

¹ Lesan Al-Arab Glossary. P. 213.

² Al-Waseet Glossary. P. 555.

³ Al-Qaradawi, Youssef. (1982). Islamic awakening between ingratitude and extremism (3rd edition). Qatar: Presidency of Sharia Courts and Religious Sciences. P. 23.



of religion, taking knowledge from a source rather than its real source, and relying on religious texts that come out of their temporal context and scope and take them as excuses, either out of ignorance, or to achieve goals that focus entirely on implementing political agendas that consider religion as a shield for them. Religious extremists deem that their religion, sect, or denomination is more effective to follow and that it holds only religious and secular truths.

3-INTELCTUAL EXTREMISM

Intellectual extremism is represented as the core which all extremist groups are centered about. It is a form of deviant thinking, characterized by closure, mental rigidity, the inability to openness and adaptability, and accepts any opinions or beliefs that differ from those of the person or group. Intellectual extremism is based on a set of concepts that rejects change, related to dogmatism, and are reflected negatively on intellectual and cultural security, in addition to the system of community values.

4-SOCIAL EXTREMISM

Social extremism embodies the derogation from society's general behavior, a violation of the familiar values, prevailing norms and traditions, moving away from moderation in relation to the social issues, as well as regulations to militancy, intolerance and discrimination in ideas and behavior. Social extremists are characterized by social closure and poor-consensus in all the social details that individuals experience on daily basis.

5-SENTIMENATL EXTREMISM

Sentimental Extremism is represented as the emotional attraction, which is characterized by high enthusiasm towards a person, idea, belief or group, blindly, without insight, without awareness and rationality .This emotion may drive the individual to harm himself or the others, as a result of excessive emotional charges that hold hatred and anger for the bearer of every opinion, thought ,or belief contrary to his.

6-BEHAVIORL EXTREMISM

Behavioral Extremism is a set of statements and actions, which are manifested as outward behaviors, beyond the limits, and are considered as a violation of the norms and values, without carrying any visions or values.

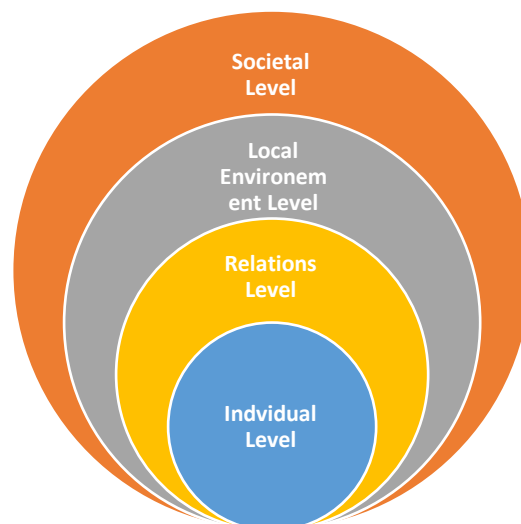
Behavioral extremism appears as a transformation of emotional charges and internal feelings extremes into tangible reality, whether by word or deed, manifested in one form of isolation and closure, or attack and aggression.



EXTREMISM REASONS:

Although extremism in its various forms do not come out of blue, at the end, it is the result of many political, social and economic factors that are interconnected in a way that creates a fertile environment for the formation of different of behaviors, attitudes and situations. However, each country has its own structure and history, which makes it unique in a distinct way, although the outlines are the same with regard to the causes and factors that lead to extremism, or prepare an environment for it.

Figure 1 shows the interaction of factors according to the Ecological model's four investors, which may form risk factors that lead individuals to engage into delinquency, extremism, or in violence by joining armed groups.



The First Level: it is focused on the individual himself, his evident instincts, such as weak personality, lack of self-confidence and the inability to confirm it, independency absence, poverty, unemployment, ignorance, low educational attainment, psychological factors, such as frustration and inferiority and humiliation sense, and personal experiences as being a victim of previous violence actions...etc.

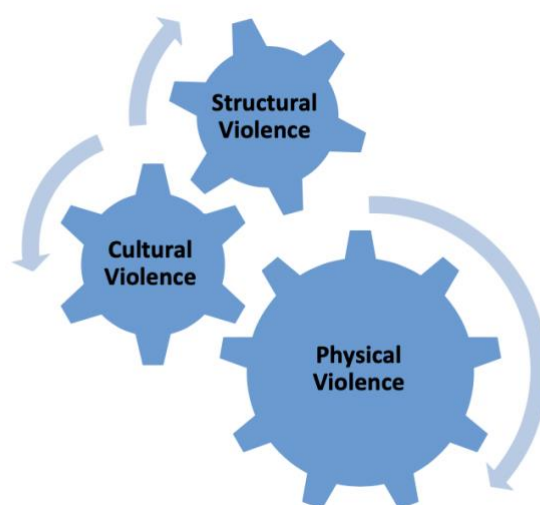
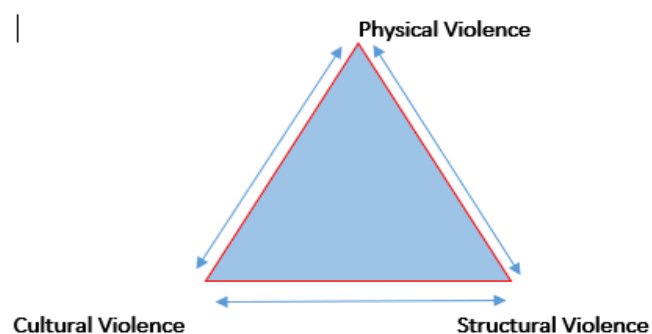
The Second Level: is the focal point of the existing individual's relationships, especially the nearby social matrices, such as family and peers, which play a central role in personality formation and its directions. People who experience family violence, or experience it within fellowship and friendship circles, are more likely to respond, influence, engage in violence, or embrace extremist ideas.

The Third Level: is related to the local environment in which the individual lives. The weak public services, economic structure's deterioration, the lack of employment opportunities, social incoherence, and the presence of ethnic conflicts of historical proportions, especially

with the presence of immigrant communities, such as the displaced people in light of the high population density, are among the most prominent local factors that encourages the generation of extremist ideology, conflicts and violence acts , in addition to chaos and insecurity, and the low level of local education.

The Fourth Level: is the broadest level among the others, and it deals with the values and laws that form the general structure of collective awareness, political and social mentality in the public domain. Societies, in which the social justice and equality are absent, and in which there is lack of civil liberties and rights, in the light of a dictatorial regime, tend towards extremism and violence, and the sovereignty of male dominance, as well as women marginalization, and incitement to revenge concepts. Thus, encouraging effective factors to make a fertile environment for violence and extremism on all levels including the clan or sectarian level, and societal level as whole.

It is also possible to take advantage of **Johan Galtung's** Conflict Triangle, shown in figure 2, to illustrate conflict and violence, as well as extremism, and explain the mechanism by which violence transforms as a structure, and then as a culture into a real and physical transformation level.



First: Structural Violence

The structural violence is reflected in the imbalance of the general structure of the state and society, as the case is in the Syrian state, as well as the individuals' inability to achieve their goals in the light of oppression, political marginalization, the absence of social justice and equality, and the lack of equal opportunities. Structural violence implicitly includes contentious issues at all levels, and goals to be pursued and achieved.

Second: Cultural Violence

Driving from the structural violence, the inability to achieve goals and self-assertion, individuals comprise negative nature in both positions and feelings in the light of resentment and injustices. At this level specifically, many means, such as the media, parties, movements, and clerics play a major negative role in manipulating these positions and feelings and amplifying them. Consequently, promoting the transform from the level of thought and non-acceptance of the other to the levels of rejection and the necessity of exile and cancellation.

Third: Physical Violence:

Physical violence is the final stage after the exacerbation of positions and feelings through media mobilization over various channels, to move to the stage of expressing itself as physical violence, through various behaviors, which may be magnified to killing state as the utmost level of violence.

Driven by this vision, we will try to highlight the most important reasons behind extremism in Syria including its various forms and levels, as well as the motives that drive the Syrian youth to join extremist groups and movements, or be engaged in them and adopt violent behaviors as a lifestyle.

1-POLITICAL REASONS

1.1 MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD MOVEMENT AS HISTORICAL PAVE

It is not possible to talk about the historical structure that paves extremism approach in Syria without mentioning Muslim Brotherhood Movement, which played a major role in establishing exaggeration and religious extremism and embodied a prominent model of political Islam since its founding in Syria in 1940 by Mustafa Al-Sibai. Mustafa Al-Sibai called to return to Islam, and he made Islamic law as the constitution upon which the state is based, on the premise that divine laws are the most capable and effective in regulating human dealings and conducting their affairs.

At first, these ideas did not receive a popular base as wished for, and its spread was limited because " Arab Nationalism" idea ,back then, was the most prominent one, but the scales were tipped in favor of the Brotherhood after they suggested "Jihad to Liberate Palestine" after



1948, so that they would have a mass base. Their base started to widen after launching public demonstrations against the regime, declaring itself the loyal group of the people. Hama city had the largest share of those confrontations that erupted in 1964, where Hama's people destroyed liquor stores and Al-Ba'ath party centers. The regime then brought military tanks to suppress the rebellion and uprisings, resulting in killing about 100 people and detaining many others.

Sveral years later, in 1982, this tragedy reached its peak by Hafiz Al-Assad who destroyed Hama city, where thousands were killed, many of whom were imprisoned, and leaders fled outside Syria. Additionally, the Syrian regime has implemented the 'Law 49', which states the execution of every member of the Brotherhood, and thus the page of this group had been folded in Syria, and confronting the Brotherhood became a repeated slogan in all Syrian schools.

1.2 POLITICAL EXCLUSION AND THE SECURITY GRIP:

Exclusion and political marginalization, and the absence of pluralism under the sole rule, as well as the lack of discipline in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is one of the most vigorous factors in establishing and developing extremism according to studies and research that address extremism concept and its motives. In 1971, Assad regime spared no effort since he took power to completely rule in absolute power, through a firm security and military grips, where The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party was the leading party of the state and other political parties were nothing but only formal parties.

Those parties did not have whatever means of power, authority or influence. In the light of the total absence of fair elections, the same principle applies to the People's Assembly, which is nothing more than a civilized and formal interface for passing the agendas of the party and the leader, and its members are nothing but models of devotion and loyalty to the Ba'ath and the leader.

The president, as the sole representative of the executive authority and the supreme commander of the army, has managed through decades of authoritarianism, repression, and tyranny, to eliminate any political life beyond Al-Ba'ath's system, bridle any attempt to rise, and silence any voice calling upon for rights and freedom. As a result, the Syrian people had no option except for becoming cheerleaders of Al-Ba'ath, and repeating the slogan "with our soul and blood, we shall redeem you, O Hafez," and after the father, they repeated, "with our soul and blood, we shall redeem you, O Bashar. "

1.3 SECTARIANISM AND MINORITIES MARGINALIZATION

According to the research results and social theories, extremism indicators rise in countries that are not characterized by national, ethnic and sectarian homogeneity, as the case in Syria is ; the country that witnesses a national diversity of Arabs, Kurds, Syrians, Assyria, Armenians, Circassians ...etc, and its people embrace numerous religions ,such as Islam, Christianity and Yazidi, in addition to group of atheists.



Furthermore, there are numerous sects and denominations on the Syrian lands, including Sunnis, Shiites, Druze, Ismailis, Murshidiyyah ...etc. Although sectarian pluralism is an indicator of cultural and civilizational diversity, and is not a problem in itself, Al-Ba'ath Party has managed to reproduce sectarian awareness, prevent its development into a national situation, and reinforce sectarian divisions and make them time explosive bombs, while benefiting from denominational and tribal allegiances in consolidating its distinct rule pillars, granting his Alawite sect many political and military privileges, and ignoring the other sects. At the same time, to protect community and strengthen its relations and internal structure, as an independent entity in its own right, prepared for any historical circumstance, giving it the ability to express itself, its identity, and its rights.

Within the previously mentioned context, sectarian pluralism under the oppressive and authoritarian regime turned into a negative tendency, embracing resentment and extremism seeds within itself.

1.4 THE KURDISH ISSUE; EXISTENCE DENIAL AND OBLITERATION OF RIGHTS

Despite that the Kurds in North of Syria are living on their historical land, as people with their own nationality, history, language and culture, the Syrian authorities have kept practicing many arbitrary procedures against it, denying its historical existence, its legitimate political and cultural rights. Besides, the exceptional census 1962 is nothing but considered as simple example of those measures that deprived hundreds of thousands of Kurds of the Syrian nationality, not to mention those Identity-Credit Deprived(Maktoumi Al-Qaeed), in addition to the Arab Belt Project that was implemented in 1974 along a length of 300 km and a width of up to 15 km in the Kurdish areas to seize the Kurdish lands and give them to Aleppo and Raqqa people, and 4000 Arab families had already been settled in the border strip, and more than 700,000 dunums had been distributed to them.

The dominant Ba'ath Party pursued a systematic policy to demolish the Kurdish identity and its culture's features, and try to merge it with the Arab unity by restricting, punishing and repressing it, as well as arresting activists, as they are a threat to the state's security, and are separatists aiming to divide the country's unity.

In addition, the Syrian authorities changed the names of the Kurdish villages, towns, and archaeological sites to Arabic names, and denied the Kurdish identity to all Kurdish personalities who had a major role in the country and the Arab world, such as Salah Al-Din Al-Ayyubi, Youssef Al-Azma, Ibrahim Hanano, and others. They also prevented the Kurds from speaking in their mother tongue, separated Kurdish students from the others in institutes and universities relaying on un-truthful excuses, and many other practices that introduced injustice sense and drove birth to the curse and desire in Kurdish people's un-conscious for more insistence in obtaining their legitimate rights.

Despite all of this, what is regrettable the most for Kurdish people is that the Syrian opposition reaction, after the 2011 Syrian revolution, shares the same vision and advocates with the



Syrian regime, and stands with it against the Kurdish people when it comes to the Kurdish issue and their legitimate rights.

2-RELIGIOUS REASONS

Even though religion itself may not be a source of extremism and terrorism, a misunderstanding of religion, or its lobbying, can cause catastrophic consequences and make it a strong source for every overrated and extremist thought or act.

In Syria, during Al-Assad family regime, both the father and the son, the role of religion and its men was hidden for many decades, especially after the unpleasant experience with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Therefore, the clerics were only state employees, showing the highest verses of loyalty and obedience to the ruler, and preaching on the mosques' platforms what was dictated to them from the security branches and the Baathist leaders. Many religious books were banned in Syria, especially those related to the Brotherhood or that call upon disobeying the unjust ruler.

This led to the emergence of self-education, and receiving knowledge and science from the unqualified, which led to the confusion in concepts, lack of familiarity with semantics, or the historical contexts and scopes of many verses that extremists and terrorists take as an excuse for violence and killing, such as the Quranic verse, "And kill them wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al- Haram until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers," {Surah Al- Baqarah, 2:191} ⁴. Also, as the Quranic verse, "If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers," {Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:44} ⁵. In addition to a large number of hadiths, one of them which is, "Know that Paradise is under the shades of swords. ⁶"

Although there are many moderate interpretations that adhere to the historical scope of a verse or hadith, extremist groups apply them on all ages and times. In addition, they are committed to the strictness in all religious and secular events with facilitation obligations, considering all those who disagree with them imperfect in jurisprudence and religion.

In the light of the Syrian revolution, these groups were able to seize the mosques, making their platforms the 'mouth of the community and the prince', and many Shar'ia institutes were opened for all age groups to plant in the minds of young people poisoned and extremist ideas, based on exaggeration and atonement, aiming to make Bin Laden the legendary hero of many.

4 Surah Al-Baqarah from. Verse 191.

5 Surah Al- Ma'idah. Verse 44.

6 Sahih Muslim. The Emirate's Book. The door to prove Paradise for the martyr.



3- ECONOMIC REASONS

The Syrian proverb "Poverty is Blasphemy and Disbelief" carries many indications that involve the compulsory situation which compels its owner to take any behavior, even if he is not familiar with it to secure his livelihood, by any means. This means that the deteriorating economic situation, weak public services, lack of job opportunities, and the growing level of unemployment, can be significant motivation factors for many people to advocate radical ideas and engage in violent behaviors, or join extremist groups.

All the previously mentioned factors are clearly present in Syrian society, although Syria is one of the richest Arab Countries, but its resources are confined to the pockets of a small category that seized the country's revenues from oil, agriculture and livestock, ...etc., under the pretext of strengthening the army. This is how millions of the Syrian people found themselves below the poverty line, working for low wages, or looking for a job opportunity, dreaming of traveling to a European country, so that they may have a decent life.

4-PYCOLOGICAL REASONS; FRUSTRATION AND HUMILIATION SENSE

Some study centers address frustration and humiliation sense as the most important reasons of adopting extremist ideas. Syrian people, in general, suffer all these feelings, as a result of the abusive practices that violated their sanctity as human beings by the ruling regime, and deprived them of many rights and freedoms that are among the simplest rights that a person should have in accordance with international covenants and human rights covenants.

Poverty, the widening gap between what the individual deserves and what he receives, deprivation of services, health and work, objective education, security need and the dignity sense, the need for political participation, the need for a sense of belonging and identity... etc, are all necessities that Syrians lack.

These traumatic experiences may drive many people to adopt extremist attitudes and behaviors, based on violence as a way of life to solve their problems at home, street, school, institution ... etc. In addition, it makes them easy targets and victims for many extremist organizations that exploit this instable structure and seek to attract them within their activities.

5- SOCIAL REASONS

Links, networks and social structures are considered the environment on which human relationships are based, and through which communication and work developments interact, and it also strengthens the sense of many concepts regarding belonging and identity. Further on, it implies meaning to individuals as part of an integrated social system; the system that was crushed by war and conflict that has raged for more than nine years, which has made Syrians live on a devastating social context margins, after the collapse of social ties and networks in



conditions of explosions and bitter violence experiences, including killing, displacement of hundreds, and loss of family and the loved ones.

Shocks, loss and daily death have undermined every sense of meaning, and made suffering the only bond in the Syrian tragedy. Furthermore, it paved the way for many extremist organizations to exploit the gaps and the destructive social context to recruit and involve many within its ranks through an ideology that attempts to reshape and form the meaning by fighting, as a religious, moral and patriotic duty, exploiting and fueling the vengeance tendencies, calling for revenge, and to defend the land ;There is no longer anything for the Syrians to lose after losing everything.

6- EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE

Education has always been and remains a conflict platform for many ideologies that seek to embed their values, principles and ideas in the young youth's minds. The Syrian government, which considers the father Assad as the 'First Teacher', has spared no effort in embedding Baathism and Arabism values in students' minds in all educational levels, through its privileged ideology.

Despite of the quantitative expansion in the Syrian education system, it was not associated with improving the quality of public education, which was based on memorization and repetition, through outdated notion educational methods. Those methods as a result, have burdened students and made their most desired ambitious to obtain a certificate as a way to get a job and secure a livelihood, regardless of education's real achievement and raise awareness and culture levels among learners and graduates alike.

Over decades, the Syrian educational system has neglected the promotion of peace values, the integration of conflict resolution skills, acceptance of the other and respect diversity, through encouraging fundamentalism and sole-nationalism, as well as the exclusion of many minorities' linguistic and ethnic , avoiding pointing to it or including it in the curricula aiming to withhold diversity, and indorse the 'one-identity'. And This created extreme marginalization sense among individuals and the minorities, and it created vulnerable environment for operating hostility and extremism.



RAMIFICATIONS OF THE SYRIAN WAR :

1-EXTREMISM; FROM IDEA TO ACTION

Over decades, the context of life in Syria at all levels, political, economic and social, was the focal motive of growing resentment and oppression sense, taking violence as an expression of pent-up resentment, a channel for revenge and rehabilitation, and a life style in the light of the context of bloody events that the country is going through after the regime succeeded in stripping the revolution of its peaceful nature through brutal suppression of protests and using extreme violence against those calling for freedom.

Besides, it made conflict and violence open-ended to all internal, regional and international authorities, to allow the appearance of these underlying and timed ideas and conflicts, as well as making its transmission possible to reality through all available channels, including factions and militias and engaging violence and blood chain cycles.

2- INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTIONS AND THE GROWTH OF EXTREMISM

The Syrian scene is witnessing a conflict between many forces, American, Russian, Turkish and Iranian; these forces have made the Syrian reality as means to achieve their agendas, ambitions and national interests, and to extend the Syrian tragedy. These forces sought by all means and resources to play the Syrians and recruit them into their ranks and the ranks of the factions and militias affiliated with them, taking advantage of the tragic and fragile conditions to incite violence and establish the discourse of hate, broadening extremism circle, and provoking fighting among the Syrians themselves. They pursued to achieve this through recruitment campaigns in Iranian forces' ranks and their militias.

As well as, through the Turkish interventions and the factions loyal to it, especially in NES, targeting the Kurdish component in the operations of Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch and Peace Spring, through which they captured Afrin and the areas between Ras al-Ain and Tal Abyad. This resulted in the killing, arrest and displacement of thousands, in addition to the daily violations committed by the factions loyal to them against civilians, and that entrench the hostility between the Kurds and those factions, and unleashes extremism and violence.

3- THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

The bitter experiences the Syrians experienced, the trauma they received, and the losses they suffered from, overwhelmed by violence, killing and displacement, are sufficient influences to distort the Syrian-self, shred the social texture which contains it, and engage the Syrians' ability in violent contexts and to join armed groups, especially in light of the of asylum countries' contempt, refugees' oppression feeling, discrimination and exploitation in the host communities. As a result, a strong incentive was constituted for the Syrians to return back and join a group after those societies failed to heal their wounds, and create proper environments for integration and psychological support, as well as the inability to provide basic services that may contribute to creating a kind of stability, and take away the specter of displacement, loss and a sense of alienation and inferiority.



It is worth noting that, according to the Human Rights Watch World report, the Turkish authorities detained many Syrians and forcibly returned them back after making them sign "Voluntary Return" forms, where they ended up in Idlib and the areas under the control of Al-Sham Liberation Army. Lebanon also, which hosts about 1.5 million Syrian refugees, expelled 2731 Syrians between May 21 and August 28, 2019, and handed them directly to the Syrian authorities ⁷.

4- EXTREMIST GROUPS AS ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVE

The economic reasons and the failure to secure a livelihood are among the most prominent reasons that made many Syrians join the armed groups that lavished on them grants, gifts and salaries, and opened up the door for many to thefts, looting and smuggling, whether for Syrians present in Syrian or refugees in the neighboring countries, who were subjected to exploitation and work at the lowest wages.

The deteriorating economic system, in light of the sanctions and the collapse of the Syrian currency, the destruction of industrial and commercial enterprises, the occupational dismissal of those wanted for national service, the disruption of livelihoods means, the low wages in light of the high living cost and standards, and the increasing rates of poverty that exceeded 80% of those living below the poverty line ⁸, as well as unemployment and lack of job opportunities, had put the screws to Syrians, made many, face to face with violence by joining an armed faction, in the absence of alternatives.

5-EXTREMIST EDUCATION AS POLITICAL AGENDA

The educational infrastructure in Syria deteriorated as one of the consequences of the war that the educational institutions were not safe from, in light of the insecurity and aggression, and the attacks on the educational facilities that amounted to 478 attacks according to UNICEF report in March 2020 ⁹. The report also stated that 4,691 children had been recruited to fight. Whereas HNO Organization pointed out that 2.1 million Syrian children are dropped out of school, 1.3 million children are at risk of leaving it, and around 6 million Syrians need to receive education ¹⁰.

Extremist groups, and ISIS in particular, have been able to take advantage of the weak educational realities and devote significant resources to establishing their own education systems through their puritanical religious curricula in schools and legitimacy institutes, to spread violence culture, extremist and exaggerated interpretations of religion, and contribute to increasing the other's lack of acceptance, within the same time frame of prohibiting the teaching of some subjects, such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology.

⁷ Human Rights Watch. Syria (events of 2019). <https://www.hrw.org/ar/world-report/2020/country-chapters/337033>

⁸ United Nations News. 1 March 2020. <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2019/03/1028152>

⁹ UNICEF. March 2020. (Syria 9: facts and figures). <https://www.unicef.org/mena/media/7786/file/MENA-Syria9-Facts-Ar.pdf>

¹⁰ HNO. 2019. (severity of needs in Syria). <https://hno-syria.org/#sector-needs>



In addition, the lack of educational opportunities in the host communities has driven many young people towards the recruitment into armed groups after they had flourishing hopes of completing their lost education.

6- MEDIA AS A PROMOTER OF HATE AND VIOLENCE

All media, whether or not affiliated with the regime or the opposition, or those loyal to them worked on harnessing all their capabilities and efforts through all written, audio and visual means, and through the modest technologies, to tear the Syrian society apart, dominate and affect the recipients' minds, spread hate speech, and form opinions to reject the idea of accepting the other and viewing the other as a terrorist, separatist, or enemy that must be fought as a national and moral duty.

Media has turned into systematic means of war and destruction, after it practiced everything that is professionally and humanly prohibited, by falsifying current and historical facts, fabricating events, lying, taking advantage of the psychological and emotional state of the Syrians in light of the bloody context, loss, and revenge desires, basing on the mental forgery and logical fallacies, to manipulate the minds in a way serve their agendas, and the interests of their funding agencies to highlight the media as the most dangerous tool for spreading extremism as both idea and behavior in the Syrian scene.

CONCLUSION :

It is clearly evident for the audience based on the objective analysis of the causes and consequences in the Syrian complicated scene, that all political, economic, social, religious,...etc factors are interlinked together to shape the extremist's mentality and thought, and the structure upon which violent actions and behaviors are based.

This makes the need serious and urgent to take more effective steps towards the source and motives that lead to address extremism through comprehensive working teams, and plans involving civil society organizations, community leaders, youth and women, researchers, and other actors, using communication and consultations to analyze threats and drivers, assessing the required needs and resources.

As well as, through identifying policies and mechanisms to address those drivers, through comprehensive programs and plans, including the United Nations Plan to prevent violent extremism, benefiting from its guiding principles, and concentrating on the seven priority strategic areas which includes conflict-prevention, dialogue, good governance, the participation of local communities, empowering youth, gender equality, education, and strategic communication.

A greater understanding of extremism in local context, ability to address it, or attempting to reduce its impact through societal approach assures the development of interventions across the local partners who have more detailed knowledge about their communities and their



members' mentality and orientations. This is achieved through programs to introduce peace, education and opposing violence and extremism, targeting the most vulnerable individuals by involving actor bodies and authorities to provide non-violent alternative means of activism, and to advance alternative resolving disputes' mechanisms, such as mediation arbitration, and restorative justice to resolve conflict resolution and lasting peace.

Such programs can provide the youth with a sense of purpose, empowerment, and behavior modification to be able to influence positively and strength supportive social networks, enabling them to deal well with shocks, hatred and revenge desire, and realizing the importance of positive civic participation away from extremism, violence and armed groups.



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