



GLOBAL ISLAMISM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review
Ideological Trends in the Islamic World

Global Islamism Monitor No. 108

March 11, 2024 **Ilan I. Berman, Avery Borens**

Related Categories: Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Islamic Extremism; Terrorism; Warfare; Border Security; Iran; Israel; United Kingdom

JERUSALEM AND JAKARTA WERE DRAWING CLOSER – AND STILL MIGHT

Before the October 7th terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas, Israel and Indonesia were making significant progress toward normalization. According to an expose in the *Jewish Insider*, the two countries had preliminarily approved the establishment of reciprocal liaison offices, consular services, the provision of business visas, Israel's removal from Indonesia's visa blacklist, and an exchange of trade offices. The intent of the effort between Jerusalem and Jakarta was to "expand upon the Abraham Accords and promote peace, co-existence, mutual understanding, and respect among peoples of all faiths, ethnicities and nationalities."

But this effort is now halted, at least temporarily. The announcement between the two countries was originally supposed to take place in October 2023, but Hamas' terror campaign and Israel's subsequent offensive in Gaza has stalled the normalization process. Sources claim, though, that the agreement is not off the table, in principle. However, the current timing "is problematic," and further progress will need to wait until the end of the current conflict. (*Jewish Insider*, February 28, 2024)

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE, OR TERROR SUPPORT?

Against the backdrop of the war in Gaza, Republican Senators are moving to limit the Biden administration's ability to skirt existing anti-terrorism laws. The White House has so far sent more than \$300 million in aid into Gaza and the West Bank, despite State Department warnings that Hamas could benefit from the funds. The Administration has also exempted international groups, such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which was recently found to be employing Hamas militants, from anti-terror restrictions. In response, Republican Senators Ted Cruz, Tom Cotton, Bill Hagerty, and Marco Rubio have drafted new legislation that removes the authority of the White House to bypass relevant federal laws and provide aid that could potentially end up in the hands of terrorists. (*Washington Free Beacon*, February 27, 2024)

AFTER 10/7, IT'S "ADVANTAGE: IRAN"

The Islamic Republic has emerged as the principal beneficiary of spreading regional disorder in the Middle East in the wake of October 7th and Israel's current offensive in the Gaza Strip, a top U.S. military official has warned. In recent testimony before the Senate Armed Service Committee, Gen. Michael "Erik" Kurilla, the head of U.S. Central Command, laid out that regional instability – from the ongoing threat to maritime commerce posed by Yemen's Houthi rebels to the targeting of U.S. forces and interests in Iraq and Syria – are part of a larger pattern, with the Islamic Republic at its center. "The events of seven October not only permanently changed Israel and Gaza — it created the conditions for malign actors to sow instability throughout the region and beyond," Kurilla said. "Iran exploited what they saw as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the Middle East to their advantage." (Associated Press, March 7, 2024)

RETHINKING COUNTER-EXTREMISM IN LONDON

In the UK, a "permissive environment for radicalization" is now developing, requiring urgent government action, a top British counterterrorism official has warned. Writing in London's *Telegraph* newspaper, Robin Simcox, the British government's Commissioner for Countering Extremism, notes that, post-October 7th, extreme rhetoric and anti-Semitism are exploding throughout the country, and outlines how Downing Street is mobilizing in response.

The task, Simcox argues, begins with refining Britain's definition of extremism, something that the government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is now undertaking. "If the maxim that you cannot defeat what you cannot define is true, then recent history suggests we are in trouble," he notes. "While debates over a definition can feel like academic navel-gazing when actual extremist acts are so common, the work does have a clear purpose: it will be used to guide future decisions over who government does and does not engage with and fund."

But the British government needs to move further still, Simcox says, including through new legislative measures and curbs on association and mobilization. "We have not betrayed democracy if extremists are no longer able to operate television channels," he argues. "And we will not have become an authoritarian state if London is no longer permitted to be turned into a no-go zone for Jews every weekend." All this, he says, requires a new, forward leaning governmental strategy focused on "the need to tackle radicalisers operating below the terrorism threshold." (*The Telegraph*, March 7, 2024)

