

Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness

Edited by Alex P. Schmid

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“There needs to be a renewed and sustained focus on prevention, including addressing the underlying conditions that cause young men and women to be lured by terrorism. This includes preventing conflicts, addressing fragility, strengthening state institutions and civil society, building durable peace and promoting sustainable development to tackle the poverty, inequality and lack of opportunity that feed despair.”

- UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ remarks to the African Regional High-Level Conference on Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism, 10 July 2019.

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Foreword

More than a year ago, Prof. em. Alex Schmid approached the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - the Hague (ICCT) with a proposal. He was working on another handbook on terrorism, this time specifically focused on prevention and preparedness. A formidable line-up of academic scholars and leading edge practitioners from around the world had already agreed to submit chapters. He was visiting The Hague inquiring whether ICCT would consider the handbook for publication.

Naturally, my colleagues and I jumped at the opportunity. At ICCT, we are honoured to count Prof. Schmid as one of our longest-serving Research Fellows. His research contributions have in many respects powered the growth and success of the ICCT Journal, serving as a beacon to all those seeking to understand the phenomenon of terrorism. His seminal 2013 paper entitled “Radicalisation, De-Radicalisation, Counter-Radicalisation: A Conceptual Discussion and Literature Review” has become essential reading on countless counter-terrorism academic curricula, and is the most well referenced research contribution ICCT has ever produced. I asked Prof. Schmid, “What made you write and compile this new Handbook?” His answer,

“It had been on my mind for more than twenty years – ever since I became Officer-in-Charge of the Terrorism Prevention Branch at UNODC in 1999. However, I never had the time and I also hoped that somebody else would bring together all that we know about prevention. But when nobody else did it, I felt that I had to do it myself. It was like a burden I carried with me during all those years. Now I feel a great sense of relief.”

The second question I had was, “Why bring your handbook to ICCT rather than a traditional publishing house?” I remember the reply vividly. Prof. Schmid said that he had considered producing his handbook through the normal publishing channels and had offers from two major publishers. However, he feared choosing that route would result in a handbook too expensive for general use and therefore one destined for dusty bookshelves in university libraries. He had a different vision for his work and that of his contributing authors.

Together, we decided that the *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*, as it is now titled, would sit better with ICCT because of our institutional commitment to make counter-terrorism research freely available. Extending beyond our journal, this handbook is the first official publication of ICCT as an independent press - ICCT Press.

The ICCT Journal is at the core of the institute’s knowledge-sharing activities and is the most visible aspect of ICCT’s work to inform the public debate on countering and preventing violent extremism and terrorism. Its open access format means that its publications can be read, debated and cited in any context, from first-year university student papers to European Parliamentary debates and United Nations Counter-Terrorism working groups.

ICCT takes great pride in our highly professional editorial team and large global readership, but we also knew from the outset that the comprehensive nature of the Handbook – running upwards of 500,000 words across 35 in-depth chapters (six by Prof. Schmid himself) – would push our editorial practices to their limit. As a result, we decided to publish it in five parts, ultimately bringing it all together in 2021 in a single online volume of over 1,250 pages. Along the way, we will host a series of online events, giving our global community an opportunity to engage directly with the Handbook’s prestigious authors.

It is our shared ambition that the *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness* – produced by ICCT Press and hosted freely on the ICCT website – becomes an authoritative resource on many aspects of anticipatory counter-terrorism. The strength of its contribution to the field is unarguable: starting with first principles and an extensive analysis of lessons for

terrorism prevention that can be drawn from related fields, the handbook then follows the full arc of the terrorist threat – from prevention of radicalization to prevention of preparatory acts and preparedness for mitigating the consequences of attacks – shedding new light on how to strengthen our institutions, our infrastructure and our societies to better counter the threat of terrorism.

I am sure that the readers of these chapters will find it a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing today’s policy-makers and counter-terrorism professionals, and a vital and enduring ready reference on terrorism prevention and preparedness.

Alexander von Rosenbach
Interim Director, ICCT

The Hague, 1 July 2021

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Alex P. Schmid

The Hague, July 2021

