

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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List of Contributors

Alex P. Schmid is Editor of the Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness and author of chapters 1, 2, 18, 24, 27 and 35. Dr. Schmid is a Research Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) in the Hague, the Netherlands. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Perspectives on Terrorism* and former Co-Editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence* – both leading journals in the field of Terrorism Studies. Until 2009, Prof. em. Schmid held a chair in International Relations at the University of St. Andrews where he was also Director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV). Previous positions include Officer-in-Charge of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime in Vienna and a chair in Conflict Resolution at the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Between 1978 and 2018 he also held various positions at Leiden University. Currently, he is Director of the Vienna-based Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI), a consortium of 16 institutes and more than 100 individual scholars seeking to enhance human security through collaborative research. Alex Schmid has more than 200 publication and reports in ten languages to his name, including the award-winning volume *Political Terrorism* (1984, 1988, 2006) and the *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism Research* (2011, 2013).

Kelly A. Berkell is author of chapter 3. Dr. Berkell is an Attorney and a Senior Research Fellow at the Center on Terrorism at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. She previously served as the National Security Fellow at Fordham Law School's Center on National Security, focusing on terrorism and cybersecurity. A graduate of New York University School of Law and Barnard College, As Attorney, Kelly Berkell previously practiced securities and white-collar criminal litigation, and served as Legislative Counsel to a New York State Assembly Member. Her current research focuses on preventing and countering violent extremism, particularly where initiatives intersect with US laws and the criminal justice system. Her writing on these topics has appeared in the *Harvard National Security Journal* and the *Journal for Deradicalization*.

Anneli Botha is author of chapter 28. Dr. Botha is a Senior Lecturer at the Department Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. She also serves as an independent consultant on radicalization, deradicalization, reintegration and terrorism in Africa. In the period 2003 – 2016, she worked as a senior researcher on terrorism at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria, South Africa. She has travelled extensively throughout Africa where she conducted research on terrorism and delivered specialized training on various aspects of the threat of terrorism, extremism, radicalization and counter-terrorism to law enforcement and criminal justice officials on the continent. Prior to her position at the ISS, she served in the South African Police Service (SAPS) for 10 years. Highlights included being a founding member of the Religious Extremism and Terrorism Desk at the Crime Intelligence Head Office and serving in the Rapid Reaction Unit and the Special Task Force on Urban Terror in the West Cape. At the end of her police career she provided strategic support to the Head of South Africa's Crime Intelligence Unit. Anneli Botha holds a Magister Artium degree from Rand Afrikaans University in Political Studies (1998) and Philosophiae Doctor from the Department of Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State (2014). Her award-winning Ph.D. thesis was titled: "Radicalization to Commit Terrorism from a Political Socialization Perspective in Kenya and Uganda." Additionally, she is a graduate of the University of Pretoria, Political Science (1991) and International Politics (1992).

Mahmut Cengiz is author of chapter 16. Dr. Cengiz is Assistant Professor and Research Faculty member with the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) at

the Schar School of Policy and Government of George Mason University. He has international field experience, delivering capacity building and training assistance to international partners in the Middle East, Asia and Europe. He also worked on various research projects for the Brookings Institute, the European Union, and for U.S. government agencies. Mahmut Cengiz regularly publishes books, articles and op-eds on the Syrian conflict, terrorism, transnational crime, and corruption in the Middle East. His book, *The Illicit Economy in Turkey: How Criminals, Terrorists, and the Syrian Conflict Fuel Underground Economies* (2019), analyzes the role of criminals, money launderers, and corrupt politicians and discusses the involvement of ISIS and al-Qaeda-affiliated groups in underground economies. Mahmut Cengiz holds two Masters and two doctorate degrees. His graduate degrees in sociology were obtained at Turkish universities. He holds a Master's from the American University School of International Service Program and a doctorate from the School of Public Policy program at George Mason University. Currently, he teaches Terrorism, American Security Policy and Narco-terrorism courses at George Mason University.

Richard J. Chasdi is author of chapter 32. He is a Professorial Lecturer, Department of Political Science, George Washington University. He is also an Adjunct Senior Fellow, International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Prior to that, Dr. Chasdi was a Professor of Management at Walsh College, Troy, Michigan. He received his B.A. in politics from Brandeis University in 1981, his M.A. in Political Science from Boston College in 1985, and his Ph.D. in Political Science from Purdue University in 1995. He has published four books on terrorism and counterterrorism, and several book chapters and refereed academic articles. Chasdi's first book, *Serenade of Suffering: A Portrait of Middle East Terrorism, 1968-1993* (Lexington Books, 1999) received Choice magazine's "Outstanding Academic Title" in the field of International Relations in 2000. Dr. Chasdi serves on the editorial boards of *Perspectives on Terrorism* and *Armed Forces & Society*. In 2017, Chasdi was a Fulbright Specialist at RSIS at Nanyang Technological University, working as a Visiting Fellow at the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR). He has served as a news consultant for various radio and TV stations in the United States and abroad.

John D. Colautti co-author of chapter 31. He is a researcher and doctoral student in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies, University of Massachusetts, Lowell. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Fitchburg State University, an instructor with Crisis Systems Management, LLC, and an instructor with the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee. He has over 30 years of probation, law enforcement and private security experience.

Jessica Davis is author of chapter 14. She is an international expert on terrorism and illicit financing. She began her career in intelligence analysis with the Canadian Military, then transitioned to a policy role at Global Affairs Canada before becoming a team leader with Canada's financial intelligence unit, FINTRAC. Ms. Davis's last role in government was as senior strategic analyst at CSIS where she was responsible for terrorism financing issues and managing the Indicators of Mobilization to Violence project. Ms. Davis is now the president and principal consultant with Insight Threat Intelligence, and works to bring evidence-based solutions to the private and public sectors to counter illicit financing and terrorism. Ms. Davis has published extensively, and is most recently the author of *Women in Modern Terrorism: From Liberations Wars to Global Terrorism and the Islamic State* (2017).

Kenneth A. Duncan is author of chapter 20. Dr. Duncan is a retired US Senior Foreign Service Officer. On September 5, 2001, he became Chairman of the Interagency Intelligence

Committee on Terrorism and its Community Counterterrorism Board. In this capacity he was responsible for providing formal warning of terrorist threats on behalf of the Intelligence Community to the highest levels of the Federal Government and for formulating and levying intelligence collection requirements on the Intelligence Community. Prior to his selection for this post by the Director of Central Intelligence, he was Charge d'Affairs, a.i. at the US Embassy in Haiti. He also served in the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) as Director of the Office of Intelligence Coordination and as Deputy Department representative on the National Counterintelligence Policy Board. As such he was Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State for all matters involving counterintelligence and sensitive law enforcement activities. He also served as the analyst for Middle-Eastern terrorism in INR and taught courses on terrorism at Yale University and at the United States Coast Guard Academy. On retirement from the Foreign Service, he became Senior Adjunct Professor of Terrorism at the George C. Marshall European Center for Strategic Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

James J.F. Forest is co-author of chapter 31. He is a Professor in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. From 2010 to 2019 he was also a Senior Fellow at the U.S. Joint Special Operations University. Currently, he is a Visiting Professor at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. Previously, Dr. Forest was Director of Terrorism Studies at the United States Military Academy. During his tenure at West Point (2001-2010) he directed a series of research initiatives and education programs for the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC), covering topics such as terrorist recruitment, training, and organizational knowledge transfer. Dr. Forest also served as an Assistant Dean at West Point. Prof. Forest has published 20 books and dozens of scholarly research articles and reports in this field, and is co-editor of the peer-reviewed scholarly journal *Perspectives on Terrorism*.

Ioannis Galatas is author of chapter 17. He is a retired Brigadier General in the Greek Army and as a military physician he specialized in Allergy and Clinical Immunology. Since 2001 he has been involved in CBRNE operations as planner and instructor and trained (including live agent training) in a number of countries abroad. During the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, he served as Commandant of the Olympic Hospital's CBRN Response Unit. He holds an MSc. on "International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Global Security" (Coventry University, UK) and he is a Ph.D. candidate (Athens Medical School/ Forensics). His last assignment was as Head of the Dept. of Asymmetric Threats, J Mil Intel Service, HNDGS. Currently, he is the Editor-in-Chief of the online "C²BRNE Diary"; a Senior Research Associate at the Center for Security Studies, HMOI (Greece); a member of the Didactical Board of the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" for "International CBRNe Master" programs; a CBRN consultant, Emergency Department, Gemelli Policlinico, Catholic University of Sacred Heart, Rome (Italy); the Manager of the CBRN Knowledge Center, International CBNE Institute (Belgium), and a Senior CBRN Consultant at HotZone Solutions (The Netherlands).

Hans J. Giessmann is co-author of chapter 4. Between 2012 and 2019 Prof. Giessmann was Executive Director of the Berghof Foundation and Director of Berghof Conflict Research. Before joining Berghof in 2008, he was Deputy Director and Senior Researcher at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH). His systematic research on terrorism began in 1995. At the beginning, his research focus was primarily on the challenges for countering terrorist violence whereas his main interest shifted later to provide technical support to actors willing to enter into peace negotiations in asymmetric armed conflicts, most recently in Afghanistan. From 2009 until 2014 he was a member of the Global Council on Terrorism to the World Economic Forum, and chaired the Council in 2011 and

2012. He graduated from the Humboldt University in Berlin in 1978 (Dipl.-Phil.) and holds doctorates in philosophy (1981) and in political science (1987). In the past, he has held guest professorships in the universities in Garden City (N.Y.), Wroclaw and Shanghai and visiting fellowships at EWI in New York and EU-ISS in Paris. As author, editor or co-editor he has published more than 40 books and about 400 research reports and articles, with numerous translations into more than ten languages.

Sajjan M. Gohel is author of chapter 15. He has a multi-disciplinary background in global security issues. Dr. Gohel's current research includes looking at the ideologies and doctrines that feeds international terrorism, the varying tactics and strategies of trans-national political violence, border security challenges, and the role new media play for strategic communications. As International Security Director for the London-based Asia-Pacific Foundation, a policy assessment think-tank monitoring emerging geopolitical threats, Sajjan acts in a consultancy role for law enforcement agencies, foreign ministries and defence departments, multilateral organizations, universities, NGOs and the international media. Sajjan Gohel has also provided in-depth reports on security issues to the European Union, UNHCR, NATO, OSCE and INTERPOL. Sajjan's research is case-study driven and he has fieldwork experience in 23 countries. Sajjan has provided expert witness testimony to numerous political standing committees on the evolving challenges and threats in Afghanistan-Pakistan, North Africa and the Middle East. In his role as Senior Advisor to the Partnership for Peace Consortium's Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG), he heads its programme development on countering violent extremism. The CTWG is a collaborative research project investigating current transnational security threats and comprises of members from over 30 countries and multilateral organizations. Sajjan received his BA (Hons) in Politics from Queen Mary, University of London. He also holds both a Master's degree in Comparative Politics and a PhD in International History from the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) entitled, "Insurrection of the Ideologues: The Evolution of Egyptian Islamist Radical Ideological Thought from Hasan al-Banna to Ayman al-Zawahiri."

Joseph Gyte is co-author of chapter 12. He is the Senior Program Associate within the Capacity Building Department at Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi. Joseph Gyte supports the curriculum development, implementation and evaluation of capacity building programs, and leads a program for psychologists and social workers to support families affected by violent extremism. Prior to joining Hedayah, Joseph Gyte worked as a Terrorism Prevention Program Consultant at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. In this position, he acted as focal point for the planning and implementation of capacity building activities related to Counter Terrorism in Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines. He also contributed technical inputs towards the development of a National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism in a Southeast Asian country, and produced multiple training manuals, handbooks, publications and Op-Eds, on behalf of UNODC. Joseph Gyte has also worked in the Office of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in Brussels, where he was directly involved in the EU's development of policy responses to the evolving phenomena of foreign terrorist fighters and violent extremism. Joseph Gyte's educational background includes a Master's degree in Terrorism Studies from St. Andrews University and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Cardiff University.

Gary Hill is author of chapter 8. He is the chief executive officer of CEGA Services in Lincoln, Nebraska (USA) and president of Contact Center, Inc., a private, nonprofit, international information and referral clearinghouse working in the areas of human services, criminal justice and illiteracy. Hill has been working in the field of corrections since 1964 and is the recipient

of the American Correctional Association's highest award. On special assignment to United Nations organizations, he has drafted more than forty training manuals in support of formal training programs for prison workers. Gary Hill is the Staff Training and Development Director of the International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) and works with several Institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Program. He served on the United Nations Committee of Experts which prepared the update of the United Nations Standards for the Treatment of Offenders (the Mandela Rules) and the development of the standards for female offenders (the Bangkok Rules). For the Best Practices Unit of the United Nations Office of Peacekeeping Operations, Gary Hill reviewed the corrections activities associated with UN Peacekeeping and prepared a "Lessons Learned" document and a guidebook for use in future missions. He serves as an expert on three Council of Europe projects dealing with prison radicalization.

Shashi Jayakumar is author of chapter 29. Dr. Jayakumar is Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) and Executive Coordinator, Future Issues and Technology at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Shashi Jayakumar was a member of the Singapore Administrative Service from 2002-2017. During this time, he was posted to various ministries, including the Ministries of Defence, Manpower, Information and the Arts, and Community Development, Youth and Sports. From August 2011-July 2014 he was a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. His research interests include extremism, social resilience, cyber issues, and homeland defense.

Brian Michael Jenkins is author of chapter 26. He holds academic degrees from the University of California at Los Angeles. He also studied at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico, and at the University of San Carlos, Guatemala. Commissioned in the Army at the age of 19, Mr. Jenkins became a paratrooper and captain in the Green Berets. He served in the 7th Special Forces Group in the Dominican Republic and later as a member of the 5th Special Forces Group in Vietnam (1966–1967). He returned to Vietnam in 1968 to serve as a member of the Long Range Planning Task Group. In 1989, Mr. Jenkins served as an advisor to the national commission established to review terrorist threats following the bombing of Pan Am 103. Following the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, he served as a member of the team assembled to review threats and develop new security measures. In 1996, President Clinton appointed Mr. Jenkins to the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security. From 1999 to 2000, he served as an advisor to the National Commission on Terrorism. Mr. Jenkins is the Senior Adviser to the President of the RAND Corporation and also the Director of the National Transportation Security Center at the Mineta Transportation Institute. B.M. Jenkins is the author of *International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict*; the editor and co-author of *Terrorism and Personal Protection*; the co-editor and co-author of *Aviation Terrorism and Security*. His other books include *Unconquerable Nation* and *Will Terrorists Go Nuclear?*

Asad Ullah Khan is co-author of chapter 10. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS). Until recently, he was a Research Fellow for Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. Asad Ullah Khan's area of research is national security and counter-terrorism. He represented Pakistan on many national and international forums on the subject matter. He is the author of numerous research articles, book chapters and opinion articles in journals, books and magazines in the domain of countering violent extremism. Mr. Khan has recently represented Pakistan at a Colombo Defence seminar in Sri Lanka and shared his research work on the forum.

Nina Käsehage is author of chapter 11. Dr. Käsehage is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology, University of Rostock, Germany. Currently Nina Käsehage is preparing a ‘Habilitation’ on the religious socialization of children who were raised by the Islamic State. In 2017, she completed her doctoral dissertation ‘The current Salafi Scene in Germany - Preachers and Adherents’ (‘Die gegenwärtige salafistische Szene in Deutschland- Prediger und Anhänger’) at the Department of Religious Studies of Georg-August-University, Göttingen. Her thesis was based on more than one hundred in-depth interviews with Salafi preachers and members of groups such as Milatu Ibrahim (MI). More recently, she conducted 60 interviews with female Jihadists in nine European countries for her forthcoming book ‘Women in Jihad’ (‘Frauen im Dschihad’). She is a member of the German Association of Religious Studies (DVRW), the Commission for Diversity and Equality of the University of Rostock and the European Experts Network on Terrorism Issues (EENeT). She is a member of the think-tank Cologne Forum for Domestic and Security Policy (KFBIS). In addition, she is the founding member of the scientific advisory board RadiPräv, a Göttingen-based organization for the prevention of religiously motivated radicalization. In addition, she offers consulting services in the field of Salafism, Jihadism, Takfirism and on religious radicalization.

Susanne Martin is author of chapter 25. Dr. Martin is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the International Affairs Program at the University of Nevada, Reno. In addition to her work on prevention, Susanne Martin’s work on suicide attacks also includes studies of the history of suicide tactics in warfare and analyses of changes in suicide tactics. Susanne Martin also works on themes relating to political violence and warfare, more generally, with a focus on the groups that engage in violent activities, the conditions under which groups use violent versus nonviolent tactics, and the types of groups that are more likely to abandon violence. Insurgent groups and terrorist groups are the focus of much of her work, along with the political parties with which some of these groups have affiliations. Professor Martin is co-author (with Leonard Weinberg) of *The Role of Terrorism in Twenty-first-century Warfare* (Manchester University Press, 2016). In this work the authors explore patterns in the timing of terrorism within wider-scale warfare. Susanne Martin is also author of “Dilemmas of ‘Going Legit’: Why Should Violent Groups Engage in or Avoid Electoral Politics?” (2014), published in the journal *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*. She is also a student of language, with formal training in German, Spanish, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian, French, and Czech. Professor Martin earned her doctorate in Government at the University of Texas at Austin.

Clark McCauley is author of chapter 6. He is Research Professor of Psychology at Bryn Mawr College. His research interests include stereotypes, group dynamics, and the psychological foundations of ethnic conflict and genocide. He is co-author of *Why Not Kill Them All? The Logic and Prevention of Mass Political Murder* (2006), co-author of *Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us* (2011, second edition 2017), co-author of *The Marvel of Martyrdom: The Power of Self-Sacrifice in a Selfish World* (2018). Dr. McCauley is founding editor *emeritus* of the journal *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict: Pathways toward Terrorism and Genocide*. He is also a lead investigator with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland.

David McIlhatton is co-author of chapter 23. He is a Professor of Protective Security and Resilience, and the Director of the Institute for Peace and Security at Coventry University. He has published widely on counter-terrorism, and is on a number of editorial boards of international peer-review journals and reviews for multiple terrorism journals. His research portfolio includes projects with a value of over £ 17 million in security and business related

research areas internationally. He has been awarded with numerous international prizes for research excellence, and was nominated to the Royal Society of the Arts as a result of his work in human security. He is also a Visiting Scholar at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Juan Merizalde is co-author of chapter 31. He is a researcher and doctoral student in the School of Criminology and Justice Studies, University of Massachusetts, Lowell. His research interests include asymmetric warfare, the private defense sector, counter-terrorism policy, and community resilience. Previously, Juan served in the U.S. Air Force where he was deployed in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Rachel Monaghan is co-author of chapter 23. Dr. Monaghan is Professor of Peace and Conflict at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University. Her research interests focus on political violence, informal justice, single-issue terrorism, counter-terrorism and crime and insecurity. She has been researching animal rights extremism for 30 years and has published articles on the subject in *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*. She is Co-Editor of the journal *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism & Political Aggression* and is currently the President of the Society for Terrorism Research.

Shannon Nash is author of chapter 30. Dr. Nash is the Postdoctoral Network Manager of the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN). This collaborative network provides timely, relevant, and reliable expert advice on North American and Arctic defence and security topics. Shannon Nash is a Research Fellow at Trent University with NAADSN and has ongoing projects at the University of Waterloo, examining education and training in national security and counter-terrorism in Canada and exploring how the “terrorism” label is informed and applied to violent attacks in Canada. She received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto with a focus on 20th century American history, terrorism, and international relations. She studies past and present terrorist threats and attacks as well as Canadian, American, and international defence, security and counterterrorism policies. Shannon’s doctoral thesis focused on the reality of al Qaeda espionage methodology and how the idea of a sleeper agent was perceived and adapted to fit the terrorist threat posed by al Qaeda from the 1990s onwards.

Annelies Pauwels is author of chapter 22. She is a Research Fellow at the Flemish Peace Institute in Brussels, where she focuses on terrorism and violent extremism. Prior to that she conducted research on crime prevention and criminal justice for various international organizations, including the EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). Her previous research projects have focused on various aspects of international security, including jihadist and far-right terrorism, migration, and organized crime. Annelies Pauwels holds an LLM in International Criminal Law and an MA in Intercultural Mediation, with a specialization in Arabic and Russian. She is fluent in English, French, Italian, and Dutch and has a working knowledge of Spanish, Arabic, and Russian.

Tom Parker is author of chapter 34. He was until recently the Chief of Party of a European Union project providing assistance to the Office of the National Security Adviser in Baghdad, Iraq and is currently providing advice to the Nigerian government. Tom Parker has previously served as an adviser on human rights and counter-terrorism to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and was one of the principal authors of the UN’s Preventing Violent Extremism Plan of Action. He has also worked as Policy Director for Terrorism, Counterterrorism and Human Rights for Amnesty International USA, as a war crimes investigator for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former

Yugoslavia (ICTY) working in the field in Bosnia and Kosovo, and as an Intelligence Officer in the British Security Service (MI5). He has taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses on international terrorism in Yale University's Residential College Seminar Program, Bard College's Globalization and International Affairs Program, and the US National Defense University at Fort Bragg. He is the author of *Avoiding the Terrorist Trap: Why Respecting Human Rights is the Key to Defeating Terrorism* (2019).

Marie Robin is the author of chapter 33. She is a PhD candidate affiliated with the Center for War Studies at the University of Southern Denmark, and the Centre Thucydide at Université Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas. Her dissertation proposes a conceptualization of the role of revenge in International Relations by analyzing the revenge narratives of the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, and Boko Haram. For her dissertation, Marie received funding from DGRIS/IRSEM. She presented her research at ISA Toronto, EISS Paris, as well as various national conferences. Marie taught courses of Ethics and of International Relations at Sciences Po, at the Université de Lille, and at the University of Southern Denmark. She also organized the first edition of the Graduate Conference of the War Studies Network in January 2020. In addition to her PhD, she works as a research assistant and translator for various academic publications and centers.

Alexander von Rosenbach is author of the Foreword. Currently he serves as Interim Director of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT). Before joining ICCT, he worked as a Senior Technology Analyst & Project Manager for a New York City startup, managing enterprise-level business processes and technology solutions. He also worked for five years at Jane's, a London-based open-source intelligence provider to militaries, governments, intelligence agencies and industry. There, he led a team of analysts and researchers assessing military capabilities and threats around the world. As ICCT's Interim Director, Alexander von Rosenbach brings more than 10 years of commercial and security experience to bear on ICCT's content, strategy, finance and organizational design. Prior to his appointment as Interim Director, Alexander held the position of Operations Manager of ICCT. He holds a Master's degree in International History from the London School of Economics and a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of British Columbia.

Thomas Koruth Samuel is author of chapter 7. He is a consultant with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). His main areas of interest include Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE), countering terrorist narratives, the role of education in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and youth radicalization. He started off as a volunteer Health Officer for World Vision East Timor in 2003. Thomas Samuel has an Honours degree in Biomedical Technology, a Master's degree in Strategic and Defence Studies and is at present pursuing his Ph.D., focusing on the role of the quest for personal significance in motivating terrorism among Malaysian youths. He has been a Senior Fellow with the International Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (Hedayah Centre) since 2014. In 2018, he was appointed as a member of the Commonwealth CVE Cadre of Experts.

Andreas Schädel is co-author of chapter 4. He is a Research Fellow at the Berghof Foundation in Germany and Advisor for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation in peacebuilding and conflict transformation projects. He has worked for the disarmament section at the Swiss Mission to the United Nations in Geneva and in various positions in the academic and financial sectors. Andreas Schädel earned his Ph.D. from the Chair of International Conflict Research at ETH Zürich with a dissertation on the role of reputation in separatist conflicts. He holds an MA in International and Comparative Studies from ETH Zürich and received his BA in Political

Science and Economics after studying at the University of Zürich and at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Bordeaux.

Joshua Sinai is author of chapter 21. Dr. Sinai is a Professor of Practice in Counterterrorism Studies at Capitol Technology University, in Laurel, Maryland, USA. He also teaches a graduate-level distance learning course on “Global Terrorism” at Southern New Hampshire University’s Criminal Justice Department. He has more than 30 years of professional experience in terrorism and counterterrorism studies in the U.S. Government, academia, and the private sector. He specializes in analyzing and mitigating what is termed “active threats”: terrorism, active shooters, workplace violence, and “insiders”. A widely published author, his publications include “Active Shooter: A Handbook on Prevention” (ASIS International, May 2016, 2nd edition); a chapter on “The United States of America’s Domestic Counterterrorism Since 9/11,” in: Andrew Silke (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Terrorism and Counterterrorism* (Routledge, 2018); and a chapter on “Israel and Combating Terrorism: Assessing the Effectiveness of Netanyahu’s Combating Terrorism Strategy”, in Robert O. Freedman (ed.), *Israel Under Netanyahu: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy* (Routledge, 2020). As a veteran book reviewer, he serves as Book Reviews Editor of the online journal *Perspectives on Terrorism*, for which he also writes the “Counterterrorism Bookshelf” review column. He earned his Master’s degree and PhD from Columbia University in Political Science.

Ishaansh Singh is the compiler of the general bibliography of the *Handbook of Terrorism Prevention and Preparedness*. Since 2018 he is a student at the Symbiosis School for Liberal Arts, Pune. His major and minor fields of specialization are International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies. Additionally, he served as an intern for the Terrorism Research Initiative, Vienna. He is currently preparing a thesis on the factors that led to Brexit.

Barbara Sude is author of chapter 9. Dr. Sude has served more than 30 years with the U.S. Government, where she specialized in analysis of terrorism, political Islam, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East. As an adjunct researcher and former senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, Barbara Sude most recently focused on counterterrorism, refugees, and asymmetric warfare. She has given several public presentations and media interviews on counterterrorism issues and is the lead author of *Lessening the Risk of Refugee Radicalization: Lessons for the Middle East from Past Crises* (RAND Corporation, 2015) and co-author of *Knowing the Enemy: Understanding the Islamic State and Principles for Defeating It* (RAND 2017) and *An Economic Analysis of the Financial Records of al-Qa’ida in Iraq* (RAND Corporation, 2010). She received her BS in Arabic from Georgetown University and her Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University.

Branislav Todorovic is co-author of chapter 19. Dr. Todorovic is a member of the Institute for National and International Security (INIS), Serbia, and a Senior Research Associate in NTUA - National Technical University of Athens and AUA - Agricultural University of Athens, Greece. He also cooperates since 1989 with MASBG - Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade, Serbia. He is a full member of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) and the Technical Chamber of Serbia. Branislav Todorovic has participated in many commercial and R&D projects, and produced international conference papers. His background covers 30 years of work in environmental sciences, energy and water topics, Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), cyber security and IT/ICT, especially GIS, CAD, programming & software development, 3D modelling, databases, etc. He has worked in multidisciplinary projects related to capacity building, public participation, energy and water resources management, renewable resources, modelling of processes, Decision Support Systems (DSS), expert systems, and complex designs.

Darko Trifunovic is co-author of chapter 19. Dr. Trifunovic is a Senior Research Fellow and lecturer at the Faculty of Security Studies of the University of Belgrade and a Senior Adviser at the Research Institute for European and American Studies in Athens, Greece. He is also a guest professor at FUDAN University – Center of American Studies, Shanghai, China. Dr. Trifunovic is a specialist in Security Studies, Intelligence & Counter Intelligence Studies as well as Counter-Terrorism, National and International Security Studies. He is a former diplomat (First Secretary of the Foreign Service of BiH at the UN). Dr. Trifunovic is the representative for Serbia and Montenegro in the International Strategic Studies Association (ISSA). He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Institute of Transnational Studies, Munich, Germany. Dr Trifunovic is regular speaker at the International Counter Terrorism Institute, Tel Aviv, Israel, and one of the founding Members of the International Counter Terrorism Academic Community (ICTAC). He has published a number of academic books, papers and articles.

Ifrah Waqar is co-author of chapter 10. Her academic career is in International Relations. She has extensive experience of working with various national and international organizations over the past five years on issues ranging from terrorism, countering violent extremism and radicalism, foreign policy, as well as strategic and nuclear issues. She has been developing and working with the Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies' CVE project, SALAM, which deals with innovative methods to address radical extremism and countering violent extremism in Pakistan. She was Project Manager for Countering Violent Extremism, under the premises of the Centre's flagship project SALAM. In 2017, she visited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the invitation of a Saudi think-tank. Ms. Waqar has also served as the Special Assistant to the Convener of Pakistan-Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Senate Friendship Group, Senator Sehar Kamran, from May 2016 till March 2018.

Rob de Wijk is author of chapter 5. Prof. de Wijk is founder of The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) and Professor of International Relations and Security at the Faculty Governance and Global Affairs (ISGA), Leiden University. He studied Contemporary History and International Relations at Groningen University, and wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on NATO's 'Flexibility in Response' strategy at the Political Science Department of Leiden University. Rob de Wijk started his career in 1977 as a freelance journalist and later became head of the Defense Concepts Department of the Dutch Ministry of Defense, head of the Security Studies at the Clingendael Institute, and Professor of International Relations at the Royal Netherlands Military Academy. He wrote extensively on security affairs, including *The Art of Military Coercion* (Amsterdam: AUP, 2004) and *Power Politics* (Amsterdam: AUP, 2015).

Ahmet S. Yayla is author of chapter 13. Dr. Yayla is Assistant Professor at De Sales University's Homeland Security Department. He is also a Research Fellow at the Program on Extremism at George Washington University and a faculty member at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies. Ahmet Yayla served previously as a Full Professor and Chair of the Department of Sociology at Harran University in Turkey. He is a 20-year veteran of the Counterterrorism and Operations Department in the Turkish National Police and served as the Chief of Counterterrorism in Sanliurfa between 2010 and 2013. He is an experienced practitioner in counterterrorism and has advised senior government officials around the world during his career in law enforcement and academia. Ahmed Yayla has published both scholarly works and written or co-authored numerous articles on mainstream news platforms related to counter-terrorism and homeland security.

Sara Zeiger is co-author of chapter 12. Sara Zeiger is the Program Manager for the Department of Research and Analysis at Hedayah, the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi. Sara Zeiger supports the Director in managing the Department's resources and programs, including the Counter-narrative Library, Hedayah's non-resident Fellowship Program and Hedayah's annual International CVE Research Conference. Sara was also the lead content developer for Hedayah's App, MASAR, that provides practical guidance on MM&E for CVE. She has also been a co-Director for a NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) grant on enhancing the role of women in international CVE efforts. In addition to her duties in the Department of Research and Analysis, she was also Hedayah's liaison with the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) to support the development and drafting of their framework document, the *Abu Dhabi Memorandum on Good Practices for Education and CVE* and the follow-up *Action Plan*. Sara Zeiger is currently a Non-Resident Fellow in International Relations and Counter-Terrorism for TRENDS Research & Advisory. Prior to joining Hedayah, Sara worked as a Research Assistant at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. She also served as a Head Teaching Fellow for the Harvard Extension School where she taught courses on anthropology in the Gulf, politics in the Middle East, and Islam in the West. Sara Zeiger holds a Master's in International Relations and Religion (concentrations: Security Studies and Islam) from Boston University, and graduated as valedictorian with a B.A. in Psychology and Religion from Ohio Northern University.

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

