



TALKING TERRORISM . . . DID YOU KNOW?

We all know that violent extremism and terrorism is a real phenomenon that seems to be constantly in the news and frighteningly random. And we all have opinions about it. But are our opinions based in real—and not fake—facts? Below we share some of the real facts that we think are worth knowing...

An Overview:

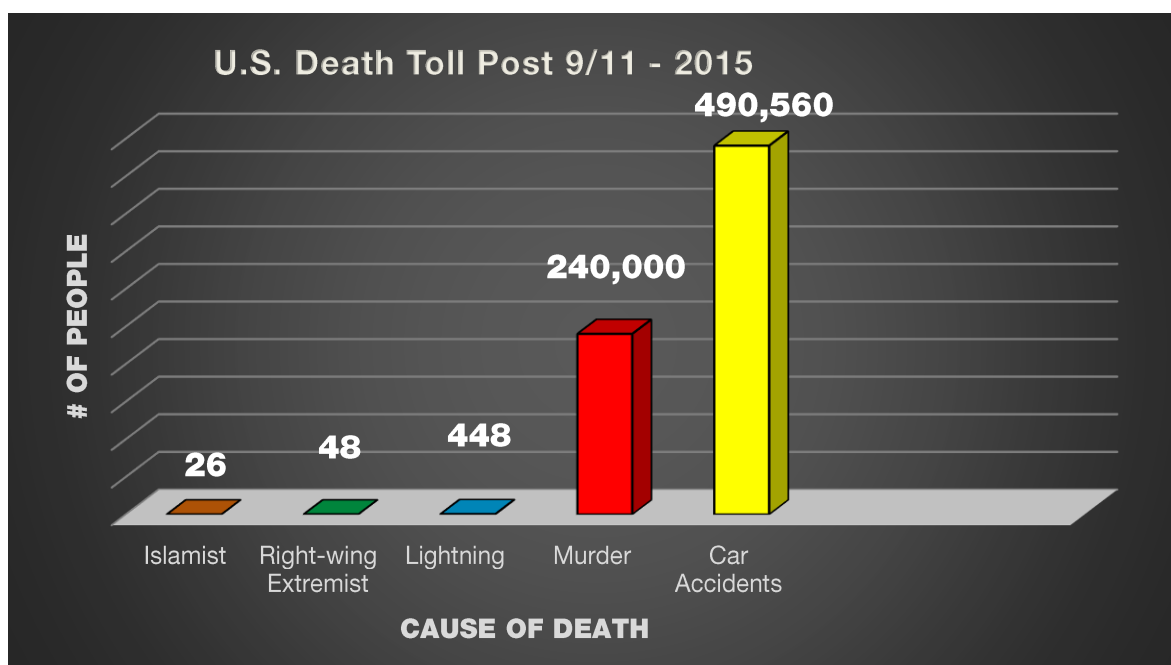
- **There is language to use when describing violent extremists and terrorists.**
 - **Terrorist:** Someone who attacks or financially or logistically supports for political purposes an attack against civilians, military personnel not engaged in a conflict zone, or military chaplains, doctors or other personnel whose duties do not include fighting, , and who does so with the intention of creating fear in an audience larger than the immediate victims, often for coercive purposes.ⁱ
 - **Fundamentalist:** Although the media uses the term fundamentalist to mean radical or extremist, the dictionary defines the word as “a person who ascribes to a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles.”ⁱⁱ In the case of religion, a person of faith who strictly adheres to their sacred text and tenets may be called a fundamentalist.
 - **Islamist:** The Washington Institute defines Islamist as someone who ascribes to a radical interpretation of Islam for political ends. Militant tactics are sometimes used to achieve the agenda. (Note: The majority of Muslims consider Islamists as outside of Muslim practice).ⁱⁱⁱ

Professor Hussein Rashid notes that the term “Islamist” is no longer used by many people as it is overarching, and that extremists claiming the mantle of Islam should be called/are better defined as Nihilistic or Puritanical.^{iv}

In fact, in many Muslim majority countries, ISIS or ISIL is referred to as Da’esh to underscore the illegitimacy of their self-proclaimed affiliation to Islamic Doctrine and Principles.^v

- **Islamic:** An adjective to describe something or someone pertaining to the faith of Islam.^{vi}
- **White Supremacist:** Someone who believes: (i) that white people, excluding Jews, are innately superior to people of other races:^{vii} (ii) that they are fighting for the survival of the “white race,” and that the “white race” is under attack and at risk of extinction.^{viii}

- **PART OF THE STORY: In the United States, since 9/11 through 2015 (14 years), 26 people were killed by Islamists.^{ix}**
- **THE FULL PICTURE:**
 - During those same 14 years, in the U.S., 48 people were killed by right-wing extremists (who include white supremacists and anti-government radicals).^x
 - Also during those 14 years, more than 240,000 people were murdered.^{xi}
 - In 2013, 96 people were killed in car accidents *every day* (i.e. nearly 500,000 people over a 14 year period).^{xii}
 - 32 people are killed by lightning *every year* (i.e. 448 over 14 years).^{xiii}100



- **A 2016 assessment of the peacefulness of different countries, determined that 48 countries became more peaceful that year. It also deemed 77 countries less peaceful due to terrorism.^{xiv}**
 - The regions with the greatest rise in conflict and destabilization due to terrorism were the Middle East and North Africa.^{xv}
 - The peacefulness of 37 of 163 countries was not affected by terrorism.^{xvi}
- **2016 was the deadliest year in terrorism caused by suicide bombings.^{xvii}**
 - 469 suicide bombings were carried out by 800 perpetrators in 28 countries, killing about 5,650 people. Like many preceding years, the main locale of bombings was the Middle East.^{xviii}

- **Europe retains its position as the most peaceful region in the world, despite an uptick in attacks.**^{xix}

The U.S.

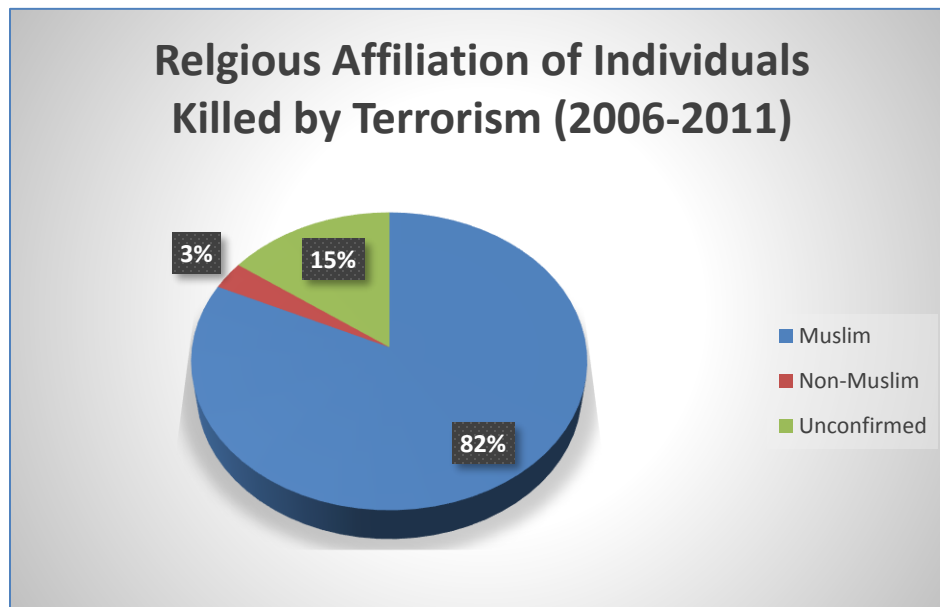
- **No secular or religious group has a monopoly on violent extremism or terrorism.**
 - Between 1990 and 2014, the U.S. Extremist Crime Database identified 177 lethal events in the U.S. motivated by far-right extremism (including by white supremacists) that killed 245 people; and 38 incidents motivated by domestic Islamist extremism that killed 62 people. The events varied in the number of people killed.^{xx}
 - Between 2001 and 2014, the U.S. foiled approximately the same number of violent extremist plots planned by Islamist and far-right extremists (200-300 each).^{xxi}
 - Since 2015, the number of anti-Muslim hate groups has risen by 197%.^{xxii}
 - In the U.S., there were 663 anti-government “patriot” groups as of 2016.^{xxiii}
 - There were 193 Black Separatist groups in the U.S. in 2015.^{xxiv}
 - The Southern Poverty Law Center identified 130 KKK groups in the U.S. in 2016.^{xxv}
 - In 2016, there were 15 “nativist extremist” groups (organizations that personally confront suspected undocumented immigrants or those who hire or help them).^{xxvi}
- **Most Americans report that they do *not* see widespread support for extremism among Muslims living in the U.S.**^{xxvii}
- **Muslim-American communities, including mosques, are documented as effective deterrents against violent extremism in their communities.**^{xxviii}

Around the World:

- **The majority of terrorism victims live in the Middle East or Asia.**^{xxix}
 - Between 2004 and 2013:
 - The U.S. experienced 131 terrorist attacks—of which 20 caused fatalities.^{xxx}
 - France was attacked 47 times.^{xxxi}
 - The United Kingdom experienced 400 terrorist attacks. Most occurred in Northern Ireland, and almost all of them were non-lethal.^{xxxii}
 - In contrast, Iraq suffered 12,000 terror attacks, 8,000 of which were deadly.^{xxxiii}
 - During those 9 years, about half of all terror attacks and 60% of fatalities from those attacks occurred in three countries: Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Following them were: India, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.^{xxxiv}

- **Between 2006 – 2011, Muslims around the world suffered 82-97% of terrorism-related fatalities.**^{xxxv}

- Muslim majority countries experienced the greatest number of attacks involving 10 or more deaths. Afghanistan sustained the highest number of terrorist attacks (47), followed by Iraq (44), Pakistan (37), Somalia (28), and Nigeria (12).^{xxxvi}



- **Groups like Da'esh^{xxxvii} (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda claim to follow Islam, while some of the world's largest and richest terrorist groups (as well as smaller groups) claim allegiance to other religions or no religion at all.**^{xxxviii} **For example:**

- His Lord's Resistance Army, a Christian rebel group that started in Uganda has killed around 100,000 people since 1987, continues to have a stronghold in Central African countries.^{xxxix}
- In March 2013, in the Central African Republic (CAR), a loose network of anti-Balaka Christian and animist extremist militias^{xl} started murdering members of the country's Muslim minority to exact revenge for a successful coup by the Seleka (Muslim rebels). Although Christians returned to power in January 2014, the persecution of Muslims in CAR continues, as fighting for power and scarce resources persists.^{xli}
- The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), bigger than either Boko Haram or Al-Qaeda, considers itself atheist.^{xlii}
- In Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), members of the extremist Buddhist group Ma Ba Tha escalated a long-standing history of discrimination against the country's Rohingya minority by the Buddhist government into what the U.N. deems ethnic cleansing. The Rohingya are targeted both as Muslims and because they are a different ethnicity than the majority of the country's population. The Rohingya have been stripped of their citizenship by the government and faced killings, forced disappearances, rape, and other human rights violations.^{xliii}

- **Surveys show that in several countries with significant Muslim populations, most people have an unfavorable view of Da'esh (ISIS).**^{xliv}
 - This includes virtually all survey respondents in Lebanon and 94% in Jordan.^{xlv}
 - In 10 countries (all but one surveyed)^{xlvi}, there were respondents who expressed no opinion about Da'esh (ISIS) or support for Da'esh (ISIS) —but this always involved less than 15% of those surveyed.^{xlvii}
- **In many cases, people in countries with large Muslim populations are as concerned about the threat of Islamist extremism as people in Western nations.**^{xlviii}
 - In 2016, about 2/3 of Nigerians (68%) and Lebanese (67%) reported being *very* concerned about Islamist extremism in their country, up significantly from 2013.^{xlix}
 - Across the 10 countries with Muslim populations of around half or more (Nigeria, Lebanon, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Senegal, Palestinian territories, Jordan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey), the median who are very concerned about Islamist extremism is 42%.^l

Violent Extremists/Terrorists:

- **There is no clear, predictable path to radicalization.**^{li}
- **Male terrorists both from religious and non-religious backgrounds often have a history of domestic violence against women.**^{lii}
- **Religion can be one of many identities within a person and is rarely the sole motivator for taking violent, extremist action.**^{liii}
- **Terrorist attacks are often rooted, at least in part, in geopolitics.**^{liv}
- **Although the number of *suicide bombings* by women fell sharply in 2016, the use of women as suicide terrorists spread geographically.**^{lv}
 - Though most were foiled by security forces, female suicide bombers attempted or actually carried out attacks in countries where they hadn't previously operated: France, Austria, Morocco, Libya, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.^{lvi}
 - In 2016, there were 469 suicide bombings worldwide of which 44 involved 77 women in 8 different countries, killing around 400 people.^{lvii}
- **Conversely, women are also known to be skilled at detecting and helping prevent early signs of radicalization.**^{lviii}
 - Women's rights and physical integrity are often the first targets of extremists.^{lix}
 - Women are recognized as being well-placed to challenge and prevent extremist narratives in homes, schools, and communities.^{lx}

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ⁱ Drawn from several sources, including the CIA, FBI, NATO and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

ⁱ <http://www.secbrief.org/2014/04/definition-of-terrorism/>

ⁱⁱ Merriam-Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fundamentalism>

ⁱⁱⁱ Cagaptay, Soner. The Washington Institute. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/muslims-vs.-islamists>

^{iv} Hussein Rashid via e-mail June 14, 2017.

^v New Republic. <https://newrepublic.com/minutes/123909/world-leaders-have-taken-to-calling-isis-daesh-a-word-the-islamic-state-hates>

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/white-nationalist>

^{viii} ADL. <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/state-of-white-supremacy-united-states-2015.pdf>

^{ix} New America. <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/>

^x Ibid.

^{xi} Kurzman, Charles. Duke University. https://sites.duke.edu/tcths/files/2017/01/FINAL_Kurzman_Muslim-American_Involvement_in_Violent_Extremism_2016.pdf

^{xii} Centers for Disease Control. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_02.pdf

^{xiii} The Intercept. <https://theintercept.com/2015/06/24/greatest-obstacle-anti-muslim-fear-mongering-bigotry-reality/>

^{xiv} Institute for Economics and Peace. <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/06/GPI-2017-Report-1.pdf>

^{xv} Ibid.

^{xvi} Institute for Economics and Peace. http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/02/GPI-2016-Report_2.pdf

^{xvii} The Institute for National Security Studies. <http://www.inss.org.il/publication/suicide-attacks-2016-highest-number-fatalities/>

^{xviii} Ibid. These numbers represent bombings that were reported by at least two independent sources; many unverified reports by organizations seeking to glorify their name, headed by the Islamic State, were not counted, and coordinated bombings on a number of targets carried out simultaneously were counted as one bombing.

^{xix} Institute for Economics and Peace. http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/02/GPI-2016-Report_2.pdf

^{xx} National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. <http://www.start.umd.edu/news/threats-violent-islamist-and-far-right-extremism-what-does-research-say>

^{xxi} Ibid.

^{xxii} Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

^{xxiii} Ibid.

^{xxiv} Ibid.

^{xxv} Ibid.

^{xxvi} Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/once-again-number-nativist-extremist-groups-falls>

^{xxvii} Pew Research Center. <http://www.people-press.org/2017/02/16/3-views-of-islam-and-extremism-in-the-u-s-and-abroad/>

^{xxviii} Duke University. <https://fds.duke.edu/db/attachment/1255>

^{xxix} U.S. National Counterterrorism Center. <https://fas.org/irp/threat/nctc2011.pdf>

^{xxx} BBC. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30883058>

^{xxxi} Ibid.

^{xxxii} Ibid.

^{xxxiii} Ibid.

^{xxxiv} Listverse. <http://listverse.com/2015/11/19/10-counterintuitive-facts-about-modern-terrorism/>

^{xxxv} U.S. National Counterterrorism Center. <https://fas.org/irp/threat/nctc2011.pdf>

^{xxxvi} Ibid.

^{xxxvii} NBC News. Many people use the term Da'esh, a transliteration of the Arabic acronym formed of the same words that make up ISIS, instead of ISIS so as not to legitimize the organization's claim to be Islamic. <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/isis-terror/paris-attacks-what-does-daesh-mean-why-does-isis-hate-n463551>

^{xxxviii} Listverse. <http://listverse.com/2015/11/19/10-counterintuitive-facts-about-modern-terrorism/>

^{xxxix} Ibid.

^{xl} <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-26200013>

^{xli} Centre for Religion & Politics (part of the Tony Blair Institute) <http://www.religionandgeopolitics.org/s-l-ka/what-seleka>

^{xlii} Ibid.

^{xliiii} United Nations Office of the High Commissioner. <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/MM/FlashReport3Feb2017.pdf>

^{xliv} Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/>

^{xlv} Ibid.

^{xlvi} The country with zero percent favorable views of Da'esh (ISIS) was Lebanon. Israel and Jordan showed little support or apathy toward ISIS. Nigeria showed the most favorable views (14%, which was disproportionately held among Muslims) and 62% of respondents in Pakistan said they had no opinion about the extremist group.

^{xlvii} Ibid.

^{xlviii} Ibid.

^{xlix} Pew Research Center. <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/07/16/extremism-concerns-growing-in-west-and-predominantly-muslim-countries/>

^l Ibid.

ⁱⁱ Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/religion/news/2013/05/01/61933/3-facts-about-religion-and-violent-extremism/>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Cut. <https://www.thecut.com/2016/07/mass-killers-terrorism-domestic-violence.html>

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*

^{liv} BBC. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30883058>

^{lv} The Institute for National Security Studies. <http://www.inss.org.il/publication/suicide-attacks-2016-highest-number-fatalities/>

^{lvi} *ibid.*

^{lvii} *Ibid.*

^{lviii} Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/event/countering-violent-extremism-engaging-women>

^{lix} *Ibid.*

^{lx} *ibid.*