

# De-Radicalisation Program, PREVENT Strategy & The Islamic Theology

Noor Dahri



Prevent Strategy



Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism

اسلام کے تھیولوجی آف کاؤنٹر ٹیرورزم

The recent London Bridge attack left many questions behind that yet need to be answered. The British born Pakistani terrorist Usman Khan, who was sentenced and ordered by the honourable court to stay in prison at least 8 years because he was declared a potential threat to the public if he was released.

## The Loopholes of CT Laws:

This terror incident has proven that those Jihadists who are released on parole from prisons or on the police tag, are still capable to plot or commit an act of terrorism such as a key ring leader of UK Jihadist, Anjem Choudhry who has also released from a prison and currently on the police tag. The Law that the previous labour government passed that directly benefited the most serious organised criminals and terrorist who could be released after serving half of the sentence in their prisons. It was a failure of the Justice system that allowed these laws to be implemented which endangered the innocent lives of the British people.

These laws were introduced in 2005 by the then Labour Home Secretary, David Blunkett, which releases prisoners halfway through their term, with the rest of their sentence under licence, but were abolished by the conservative government in 2012. Labour under Tony Blair dictated that any prisoners serving a determinate sentence would serve half of their sentence in custody before being released on licence, meaning Khan was able to walk free in December last year, the newspaper revealed. Usman Khan was not the only terrorist who benefited from the labour law, but Six of the eight terrorist plotters who were jailed along with him in 2012 have also been freed from prison. Another terrorist Mohibur Rahman was also released, but again imprisoned in 2017 as he was plotting a Lee Rugby style terrorist attack against the Police and Military.

## Warnings of Terror Incidents:

The UK officials got enough warnings in 2017 about the serious threat of the terror attacks which would be imminent, but these warnings seem ignored and high profile convicted terrorist were released from prisons. Please read below some of the warnings came from the EU, UK CT unit as well as from the head of Mi5 that the situation is going to be out of control and Islamist extremism is rapidly spreading across the country.

In September 2017, the EU officials also warned the UK home office and law enforcement departments that UK is home to at least 25,000 extremists who could pose serious threat to the country. Of them, 3,000 are considered a direct threat and OLN 500 are under constant surveillance.

On Oct 2017, Head of intelligence service said, Britain is facing its most severe ever terrorist threat and fresh attacks in the country are inevitable. "It's at the highest tempo I have seen in my 34-year career. Today there is more terrorist activity, coming at us more quickly, and it can be harder to detect."

In May 2019, the head of Britain's domestic intelligence agency Mi5, Andrew Parke also admitted that Homegrown Islamist extremists still an UK's biggest threat. He revealed that 80% of thwarted terror attacks involved individuals 'inspired by Isis'.

In August 2019, the head of Metropolitan police's counter terrorism unit, assistant commissioner Neil Basu announced that police alone cannot beat extremism and urged sociologists and criminologists to help tackle terrorism in the UK.

Those who committed terrorist attacks in 2017 only that left more than 35 people dead were known to the security services but not under surveillance. There are around 1,000 Brits who left the country to join the IS and nearly half of them have safely returned back to the country, the United Kingdom. These trained fighters could commit a terrorist act in the country and the security services are fully aware of their activities.

There was another danger that the police and the security services were worried about that those Jihadists/terrorists who were serving their prison sentences were to release by 2017. There were 193 prisoners who were jailed under terrorism charges in 2007, more than 80 of them were released by 2017. These were the great danger to the public because there were intel reports that they are uniting and establishing their Jihadist circle again.

## UK Prisons, The Breath of Jihadists:

The UK prisons are breeding nurseries for Islamist Extremism and Jihadists coordinate terrorist activities from prison cells. There is no proper system, how to tackle this ideology. Probations services and rehabilitation center have also failed to root the martyrdom ideology out of their minds of British Jihadists. Ian Acheson, a former prison governor and visiting professor of criminology at Staffordshire University has also concerned this fear a few years ago but it was completely neglected. He made sixty-nine recommendations how to counter Islamist extremism in prisons and presented before Michael Gove, then justice secretary in 2015 but these were not implemented except a few.

Ian warned in his report and raised the serious question on the efficiency of the services as well as system, he wrote: "Frontline prison staff were vulnerable to attack and were ill-equipped to counter hateful extremism on prison landings for fear of being accused of racism. Prison imams did not possess the tools, and sometimes the will, to combat Islamist ideology. The prison service's intelligence-gathering system was hopelessly fractured and ineffectual." The rejecting these recommendations resulted at least ten serious terrorist incidents in Britain that left many innocent lives dead. It is a pure failure of the system as well as the negligence of the government departments.

There is another serious concern that had been raised at the BBC by Sajid Iqbal, who is an expert of disclosing extremist networks in the UK. He disclosed a news that the religious guide that was recommended by the Ministry of Justice for the Muslim prisoners have extreme texts that could change someone to become a potential extremist and could also pose a great risk once released from the prison. The Manual Guide calls "i2i- Islam to Iman: The Tarbiyah Programme".

There is a chapter called "The Principles of Jihad and it was clearly advocated about the Physical Jihad in the chapter of the Tarbiyah Programme. The Muslim scholars have warned about the programme, Shaikh Musa Amdai said about the programme: "the Tarbiyah (Islamic study) programme, which has been used since 2011, had a section on jihad, or holy war."

This program guide can easily turn someone into Jihadi and it was requested by the BBC investigating team, including Sajid Iqbal to remove this guide from the prisons immediately as it directly affects the Prevent programme that's goal is to prevent someone from approaching this type of material.

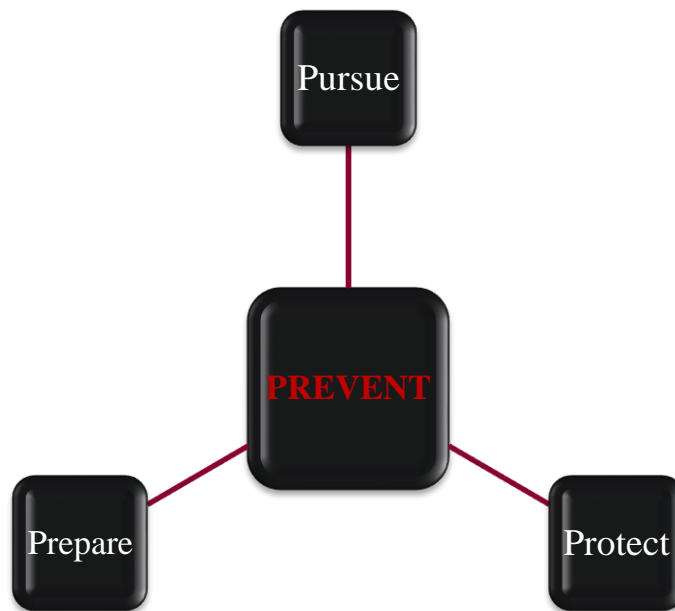


These courses and programs have been brought forward by the Home Officer under the Contest strategy and this strategy consists with four more sub strategies to counter extreme ideology.

## UK CONTEST Program:

The Home office introduced the CONTEST program which was a strategy to counter extremism. CONTEST was actually introduced in 2003 since that there were numerous terrorist attacks happened in the UK including 7/7. It was last reviewed in 2018, since that, more than 1,000 Brits have travelled abroad to join the Daesh (IS). There were four **Ps** in the Contest program and the most effective P is PREVENT strategy. It has been launched in 2006, The short meaning of the PREVENT is to “Safeguard people from becoming terrorist or supporting terrorism”.

Four **Ps** of CONTEST:



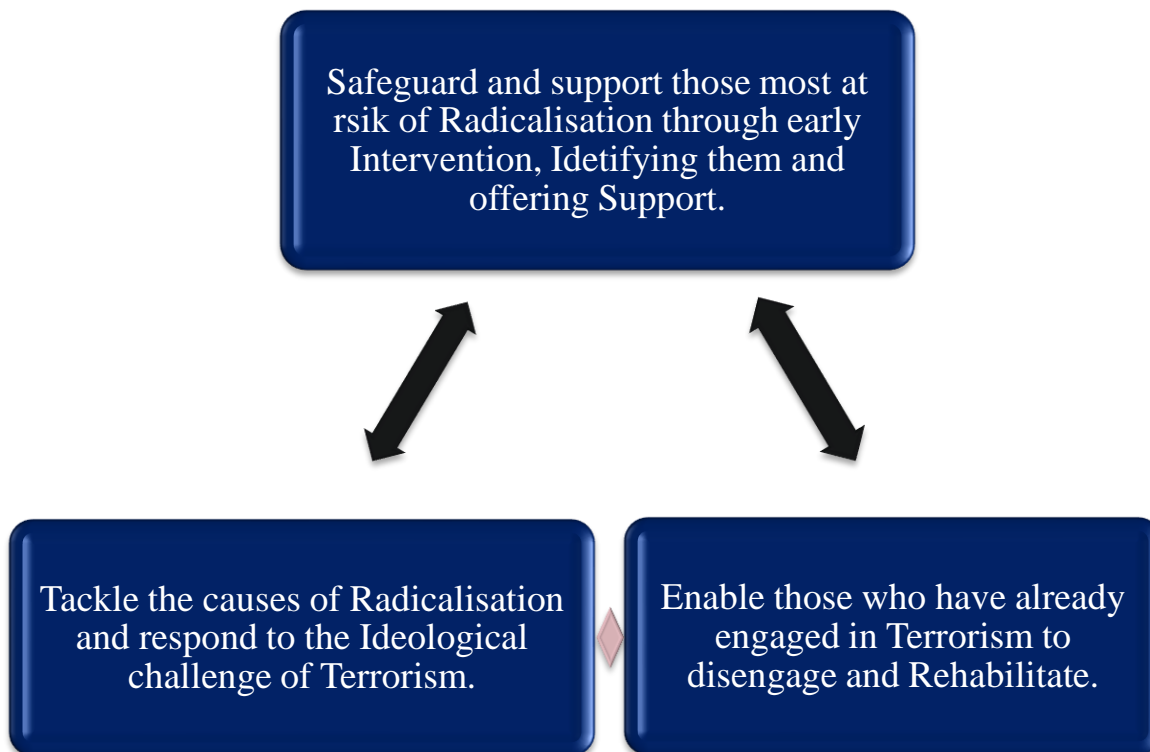
## The PREVENT Strategy:

Prevent is a main program of the home office on how to stop someone becoming radicalise. These all four UK government’s strategies are very powerful if being used effectively. The prevent is a prime strategy which is purely based on de-radicalise programme.

If the home office has the right tools of the Prevent, they can successfully stop someone becoming an extremist. Then the rest of the three Ps (Pursue, Protect and Prepare) would be easy and under control to exercise in order to prevent the terrorist attacks. If the right methods are missing in the Prevent strategy, they cannot reduce the capability of the attack from happening and also cannot reduce the impact of the attack on the country and the public nationally and internationally.



There are three main goals of the **Prevent Strategy, which** are as below:

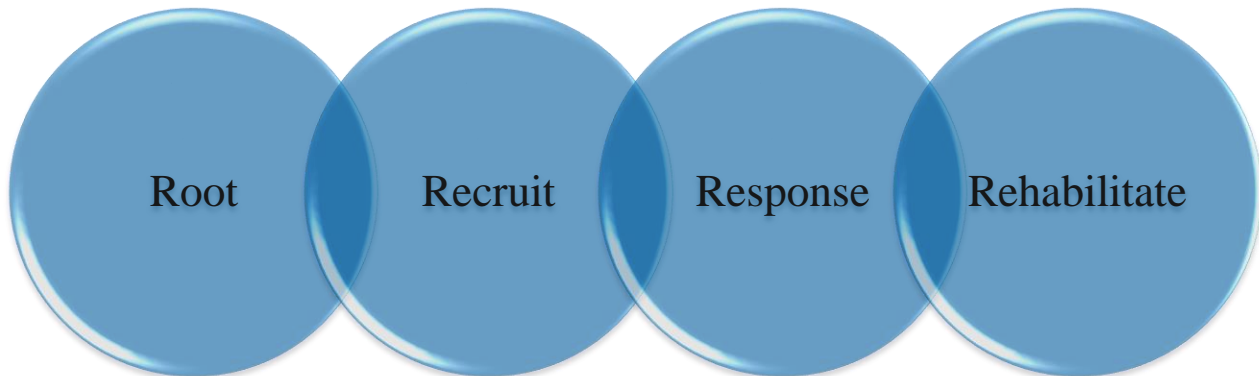


We need to assess either these three goals have been achieved and if successfully achieved, then at what level, what was the outcome and what methods have been used. When we look at the outcome which was already explained above in a very short brief, it shows that the PREVENT strategy has not been implemented properly or the UK home office did not exercise the right and accurate tools/methods to de-radicalise Islamists.

We need to understand that these Islamists are radicalised by extremist clerics such as Anjem Choudhry who misused the Islamic texts in order to lure vulnerable youngsters to achieve their political aims.

### The ITCT's De-Radicalise Program:

Here I present four **Rs** of de-radicalisation that we need to understand before we bring those effected back into the society. Without analysing these four stages, we cannot de-radicalise individual.



These four stages can assess someone from the beginning to the end that how to deal with such individual who has been affected by the radical messages in his mind. If we use these four (**Rs**) stages on the Islamists, we have to approach them Islamically, this is the only method we can use to deradicalize an Islamist. There are a few reasons behind using Islamic methods (Theology) to de-radicalise someone because the Islamic texts have been embedded in his mind in order to convince him that only this path is better for him/her in the world and hereafter.

Root	Recruit	Response	Rehabilitate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the root causes of an individual?</li> <li>• What type of ideology he/she possessed?</li> <li>• How he/she became an extremist?</li> <li>• What are his/her grievances?</li> <li>• What is his/her religious or political goal to achieve?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the process of recruitment?</li> <li>• How has he/she been recruited?</li> <li>• What is his/her motivation and capability?</li> <li>• Why he/she been recruited?</li> <li>• Is he/she vulnerable?</li> <li>• Has he/she got any criminal record?</li> <li>• Converted into Islam?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should we tackle such individual?</li> <li>• What should be our legal response to combat such Islamists?</li> <li>• What force should we use against such individual?</li> <li>• What type of category should we place him?</li> <li>• Is such individual a serious threat to the society?</li> <li>• Is such individual in a Prison, in Open Society or Returnee?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How should we rehabilitate such individual?</li> <li>• What type of methods should we use?</li> <li>• How to provide moderate religious teachings?</li> <li>• Islamic Books?</li> <li>• Islamic Scholar lectures?</li> <li>• Islamic Videos?</li> <li>• Discussion events with Scholars, etc?</li> </ul>

If such individual possesses an Islamist ideology, then we can find out which type of ideology he/she possess? What is his ambition to fulfil? Martyrdom (Suicidal belief), etc.? In this stage, we are clear that he/she wants to implement his belief over other people by imposing force such as killing innocent people (stabbing, car roaming, firing or suicide attack, etc.).

### The Islamist Ideologies:

These are four Islamist ideologies that have been induced in his mind and these ideologies cannot be taken out from his mind unless we counter them via using the correct Islamic methods in order to bring the individual in a society as a peaceful and harmless citizen.

**Al Wala – Wal Bara**

Loyalty and Disavowal for the sake of God

---

**Takfir**

Excommunication (Also used for Muslims)

**Al-Hakimiyya**

Political Sovereignty of God

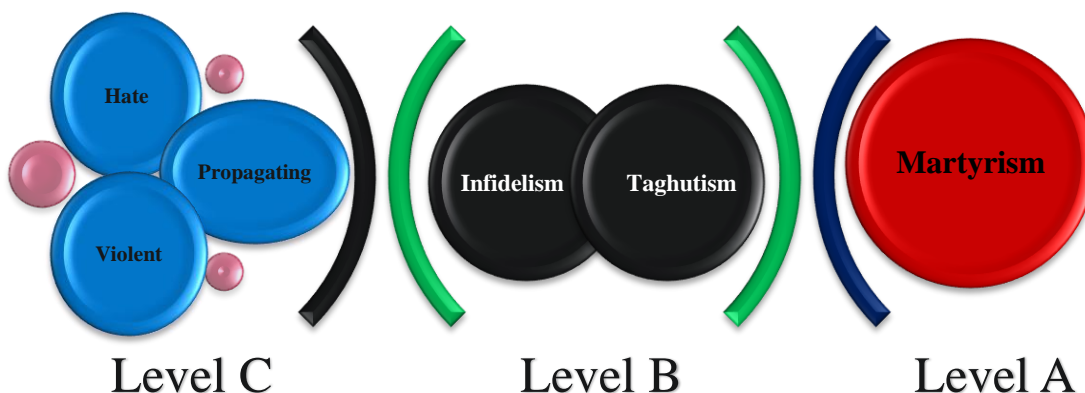
---

**Jihad**

Armed Struggle (Misused)

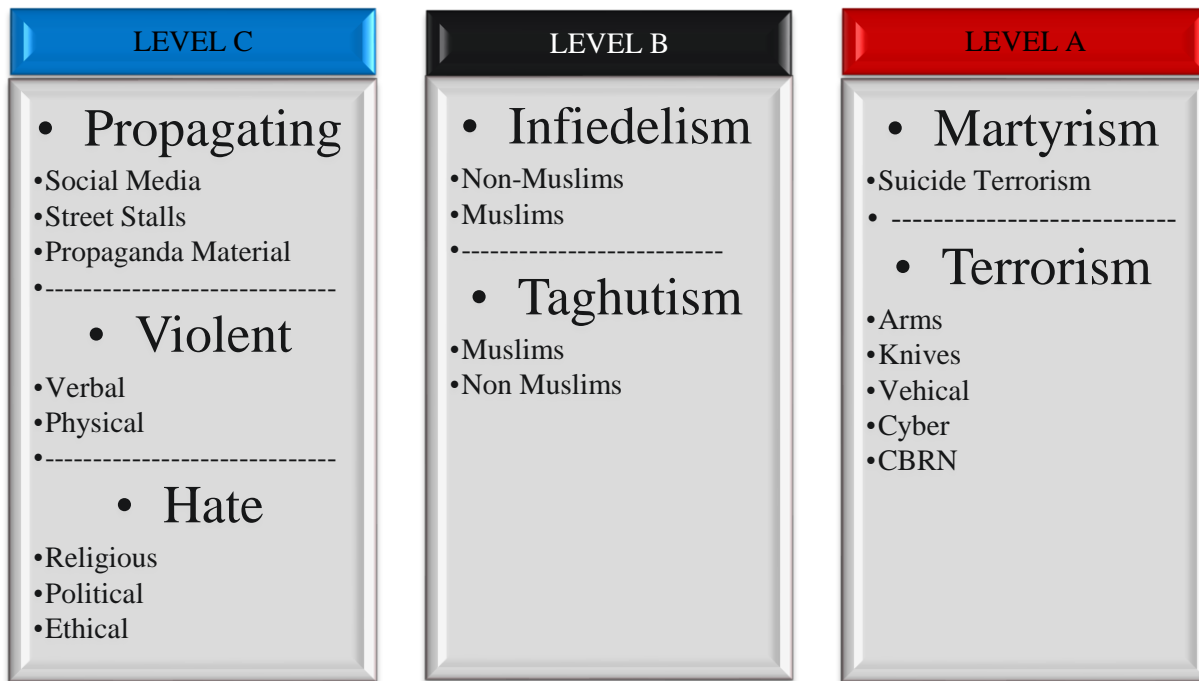
The Home Office must assess whether an individual possess these ideologies and if he does, then he is a potential danger to the society and if he is in a prison, must not be released without eradicating of these ideologies from his mind. The Home Office must introduce a new programme that include to counter these four ideologies. These four ideologies are deeply rooted and the process to root them out is not only a lengthy and complicated process as we must examine an individual at the categorical level.

There are three categorical levels of beliefs that an individual possesses in his/her mind and each level has sub categories.



## The Propagating Jihad and its Levels:

Let's deeply look at all levels and assess the Islamist's mindset.



The individual who possesses this ideology cannot be cured until his mindset narratives are completely changed by using Islamic theology because these narratives are based on Islamic texts that have been manipulated and used to recruit him/her. It will take a long time to counter these religious narratives, it may take months or years depend on how much is mind has been corrupted by this ideology. I have already presented the misuse or Jihadist ideology in my previous research paper "[Exploring the Concept of Jihad and Qital in Islam](#)" where I explored the difference between Jihad (Strive) and Qital (Fight).

The Jihadis are unaware of the teachings of Islam, therefore they follow the extremist Imams without having a proper knowledge of the religions. They do not understand the Arabic meaning of the word as there are several meanings of the single Arabic word to use. For example:

There is a huge difference between these three Arabic words which are highly misused and misinterpreted by the Jihadists/extremist Imams.



**Jihaad**

To Strive

- Jihad is derived from the Arabic verb “Jahada”, which means “to struggle or strive”.

**Qitaal**

To Fight

- Qital means to use the force to repel or remove but the point here is not to kill.

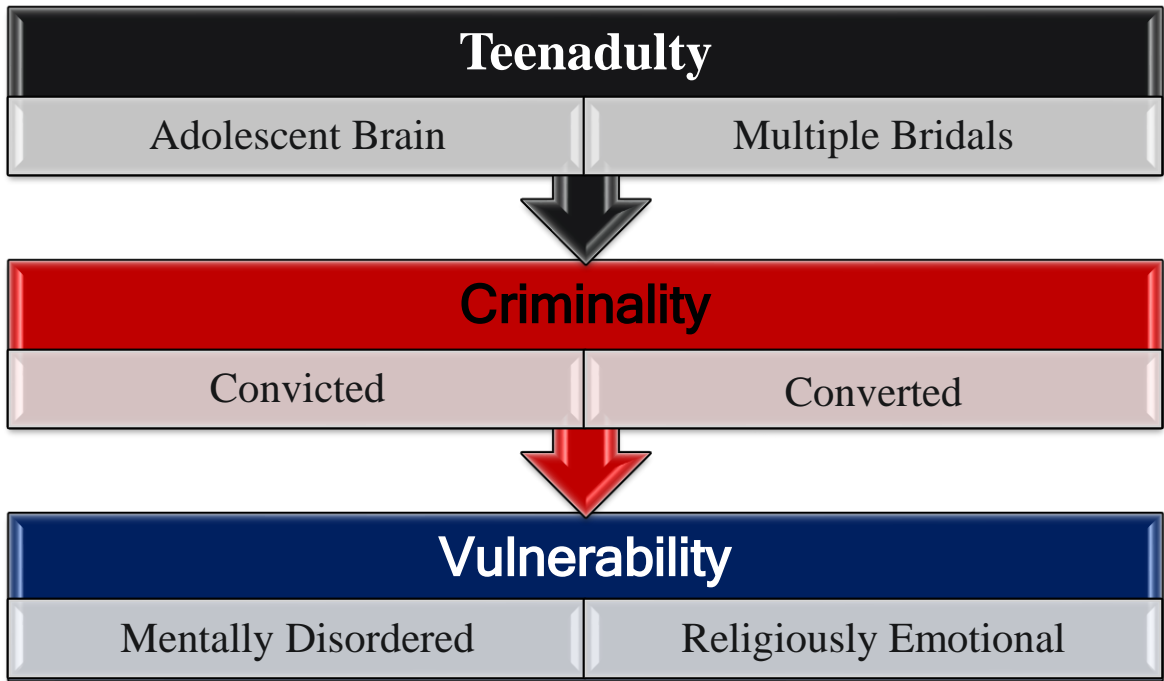
**Uqaatil**

To Kill

- The word “Muqaatalah” would be used for “killing” and this word is nowhere mentioned in the holy Quran.

Islamist Vulnerability:

Most of the UK Jihadists who were recruited by the extremists were vulnerable, some had a criminal background and others had mental internal and external issues. There were also those, who were disassociated and disconnected from the society based on various reasons. Extremist clerics have targeted level of recruitment and they used these levels to lure people in order to carry out extremist activities.



These are the three stages that an Islamic cleric take disadvantage to lure and recruit someone in order to use then in terrorism and extremism. Let me put a little light on each of them.

**Adolescent Brain:** We need to understand the concept of adolescence especially in Jihadism.

Adolescence is a period of a life between childhood and adulthood, during this time, important changes

take place in the structure of the brain, and in the mental abilities which underline some of the most sophisticated human behaviours.

This is prime age to be recruited because, their brain is so vulnerable to deciding what is right and wrong. Their mind would be empty of the emotions of good and bad, therefore it would be easy for Islamist clerics to induce the Jihadist ideology into the teens' minds. There are various examples that most of the Jihadist who travelled to join ISIS were in their teen ages.

**Multiple Bridals:** Jihadists saw an easy opportunity of wedding more than four wives in the Jihad zone (Syria and Iraq) plus several salve girls (abducted from the conquered areas). There are many examples recorded that Islamists used women as a pawn to recruit teens and vulnerable, whether by getting married or using a love jihad pattern.

**Convicted Criminals:** Convicted have also been recruited to carry out Islamist activities because they are already disassociated and disconnected from the society. They also have some type of grievances and hatred (Religiously – Ethnically) inside against the entire systems.

**Converted:** Islamists most effected and soften the target after the teens recruiting are converted especially with the criminal record or those who have spent some time or have in prisons and are new into the religion. There are a few reasons to recruit specifically converted (white and black ethnicity). Their skin colour, their cultural tidings, newly born into the religion and easily used as disguised under these qualities.

**Mentally Disordered:** I personally know a person whose son was teen and mentally disorder, but was recruited by an Islamist via getting his married with a converted European girl and finally sent him to Syria to fight. He then died in fighting with the Syrian forces. The same network used the same girl to recruit others vulnerable British teens.

**Religiously Emotional:** People who are religiously emotional and sensitive are easy target for Islamist clerics to induce Jihadist ideology in their minds by using and manipulating Islamic texts. If the target is teen and religiously emotional, he/she would be easily recruited and used in order to achieve Islamist's goals.

There are two Operational Grounds for Islamist clerics to use their recruiters and in each ground, they have some criminal, extremist and terrorist activities. For Example:



They also have some categorised levels for recruiters, they allocate them some responsibilities and targets to carry out. They allocate the despicability to those who are capable to complete it. For example:



The Islamist clerics decide who is capable of what activity and they allocate recruiters to such category in order to carry out the job. They also have two sub categories under the red category.



## Conclusion:

Religion is a prime shelter and safe umbrella that Islamist use before and after arresting and convicting. The normal criminal gangs have no room and sympathy in the society, however under the Islamic shelter they not only get a support from the community but also make strong network in prisons.

The first step towards countering Islamist terrorism is to accept these three facts by the Muslim community of the county:

- Islamist terrorism is wrongly associated with the Islamic religion,
- But it is undoubtedly committed by misguided Muslims,
- By manipulating Islamic religious scripture.

Without accepting the responsibility, Muslims cannot move forward to counter the horror that has engulfed the world in fire and blood. And with that in mind, we decided to launch a think tank which will have a primary purpose of countering the narratives of Islamist terrorism and extremism by using the tools of Islamic Theology.

These are the some of the reasons that UK Home Office should consider seriously and create a separate unit under the Prevent Strategy in order to counter the religious ideology that has devastated the peaceful society of the country as well as the positive image of the majority law abiding Muslim citizens of the United Kingdom.

ITCT is a unique think tank in itself since there is not a single organisation around the world that specifically counters the narratives of Islamist terrorism by using the tools of Islamic Theology. Our aim is not only to counter the menace of Islamist Terrorism but also to educate misguided Muslims who are