

## 6.1 WHY IS IT MAKING HEADLINES?

Hi there. This is week six of the course, Terrorism and Counterterrorism, Comparing Theory and Practice. And in this week, we're going to discuss the issue of foreign fighters. Well actually last week we discussed how to deal with terrorism, the impact of terrorism, and terrorism related incidents. We looked into under-researched topics and the future of terrorism. And in previous runs, in the first two runs of this course that was the end of the course. But, in light of developments in Syria and Iraq, and given the global impact of the phenomena foreign fighters, we decided to add this video to the course because it's highly topical and I think it's, it deserves to be part of this course on terrorism. This is the number one issue on many agendas around the world. So what are we going to discuss this week? We're going to look into the question, why is it making headlines today? What's so relevant? What's so important about this phenomenon of foreign fighters? Then we look into the foreign fighters in Syria. Questions like, why do they go? What are they doing out there? And then third, we're going to look into different foreign fighting groups in Syria that are active there. Some are also active in Iraq, like Islamic State. And we look at foreign fighters as a threat. Do they pose a threat over there or in the countries of origin. And then finally we look into policy options. What can be done about this phenomenon, and we will use the UN counterterrorism strategy as a guideline. Why is it making headlines today?

Well it's very much related to the Syrian Uprising. A number of demonstrations in 2011 and in 2012 that turned into a civil war. Between on the one hand the regime of Assad and many opponents who want to get rid of that regime. But also many from outside Syria join to fight. So called foreign fighters. And according to a report by the Soufan Group in June 2014, no less than 12,000 fighters from 81 countries joined that civil conflict. And according to Gilles de Kerchove, the Counter Terrorism Coordinator of the European Union in, September 2014 there are no less than 3000 Europeans, E.U. citizens or residents that are also fighting in the conflict in Syria. So it's making headlines because of this international nature. But especially because of the fact that it's a very bloody civil war causing a lot of casualties, people being killed refugees, etc. Add to that the fear that some of these foreign fighters might return to their countries of origin and also start causing trouble out there. What do we know about these people and why they go? So what about research into this phenomenon of foreign fighters?

Well first, how to define it. I like the definition by Malet who defines foreign fighters as non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflicts. Basically it's people that are not part of that country, that go to another country to join the fight over there. And this phenomena is not new at all. Let me focus on Europeans but also others that joined a foreign fight in the past. Think of the Spanish Civil War. Many people from around the world. Here you see a picture of Hemingway, famous American writer was also part in that civil war. They joined either the conservative Franco side or the leftist side with the International Brigades. Another example from the 1930s, this took place in 1930s, was the invasion of Finland by the Soviet Union, 1938, the Winter War. Big nation versus small Finland, nobody, no other country went to the aid of Finland. But thousands of volunteers did, mainly from Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, but also from Britain, Germany, Hungary, and other states. And then more recent examples, Afghanistan also after the invasion of the Soviet Union 1979, a lot of people came to the aid of the Afghans as Muslim fighters that wanted to defend the unmapping attack by the Soviet Union. And also another example from the past is Bosnia. In the early 1990s where a lot of people came to the aid of the Bosnians and the Bosnian government. But what do we know about this phenomenon? What do we know from research? If I have to recommend one general study about foreign fighters it's the book by David Malet. Here you see the cover, foreign fighters' transnational identity in civil conflicts. And he collected data on foreign fighters. And looked into civil conflicts between 1815 and 2005, and he discovered in the 331 cases there were at least 70 of them featuring foreign fighters. But in general, there's surprisingly few studies. So it's not a new phenomenon, it's, it's, it's happening in 70 out of

330 cases, but very little studies. And most studies are case studies about countries, and single cases, mainly descriptive about numbers and trends. But no general explanations. And again, the exception to the rule is the book by Malet. There are more exceptions. A study by Mustapha about the Mujahideen in Bosnia. Foreign fighters as cosmopolitan citizens and, or terrorists. And a book by Mark Sageman. Understanding Terror Networks, that partly looped into, foreign fighters in, or, Afghanistan.

We know very little on the individual level. Why did a person, what what's the motivation of persons to go there? The individual motivation. Little about return or reintegration. We know that thousands in the past have gone to places to fight, foreign fighters. Some have died, but many have returned. But how? And, and what have they done after, after their returned? There's also little on the organizational aspects and obstacles. People might want to join a group, but do they manage and how does that work? Are they accepted or not? And we also know very little about why some person might have had the idea or even expressed the idea that I'm going to join the fight, but in the end for certain reasons, did not go. Some conclusions on the yet relatively limited body of knowledge on this subject. Well the conclusions so far are not very surprising. They go for ideological or religious reasons or political religious reasons. It's often organized or part of a larger movement, transnational movement. And they're mainly young and mainly male. And most historical cases are cases in which government actors or governments directly or indirectly sponsored it.

Well, after 2012, you could say the situation has improved. There's a lot more interest in the study of foreign fighters. And we see a sudden increase in publications, reports, etc., mainly by governmental agencies, think tank, and consultants, and relatively few scholars, yet. And also these studies, especially from the West, are alarmist in nature. They focus on the potential threat to the countries of origin. And they're very policy oriented, focusing on prevention, the return and reintegration of foreign fighters. And they have less interest or there's less attention for the impact on the ground in Syria Iraq, and elsewhere. To what extent do these foreign fighters contribute to the atrocities? Are they a fighting force to be reckoned with or are they just cannon fodder or nuisance to these groups? Or are they important mainly for propaganda reasons? And also an important question are they accepted by the local population or not? Well we can explain the boom of course very, because there's money available, there's these pressing questions that the governments face. And they have provided funds to do research. Maybe more importantly, more important is that it's relatively open debate. The terrorism label has not always been used. It's not always a criminal offense to support foreign fighting groups. In most countries it is, but not in all countries. And many actors are involved. You can study this phenomenon from many different angles. From the impact that this phenomenon has on inter and intrafaith relate, relations, the role of parents in communities, to the international dimension. The military and diplomatic dimension.

And finally, very important, there's the possibility to have access to key players. The foreign fighters themselves. We discovered, with my team that it's actually surprising how many of them want to talk to you. Or people that have the intention to go want to talk to you. Either directly or by way of social media. To sum up, foreign fighters are not a new phenomenon, but it's been surprisingly under-researched, at least until recently. There has been a boom after 2012 because of the situation in Syria. And it's actually quite surprising how many opportunities there are to study today's foreign fighters. In the next video, we'll look into foreign fighters in Syria. Who are these people? And why did they go to join the fight in Syria?

## **6.2 FOREIGN FIGHTERS IN SYRIA – WHO ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY GO?**

Hi there. In a previous video, we discussed why the phenomenon of foreign fighters is making headlines, and we looked into the historical context, discovering that the phenomenon is actually not

very new. In this video, we want to look into the phenomenon of foreign fighters in Syria. Who are these people? Why did they go there? What are they doing out there?

According to a number of reports, their number is more than 10,000. The Soufan Group in 2014 spoke of 12,000 foreign fighters. Well, I'm not sure about these numbers. They're, they're estimates. And many say that in the summer of 2014 and the fall of 2014, these numbers have gone up. Well, here you have some other figures. 60 to 70% are believed to be from the Middle East, many from neighboring or nearby countries. And 20 to 25% are from Europe, other Western countries, and Russia. Well, Peter Neumann of the International, of the International Center for the Study of Radicalization in London in September 2014, talked about 3,000 people from Tunisia. That's the, the country that provides most, or provides, or where most foreign fighters are from. And then about between 1,200 to 2,500 are from Saudi Arabia, 1,500 from Morocco, 1,500 from Jordan. And then 700 from France, 500 from Britain, 400 from Germany. Well, you can read it yourself. 300 from Belgium, 130 from the Netherlands, and about 100 from the United States. Well, add to that dozens from Australia, also countries like Philippines and Indonesia, making it a really worldwide phenomenon. And perhaps as many as 800 from Russia, mainly from the Caucasus region, Chechnya, and more than 100, 150 from Scandinavian countries. Well, allow me to focus on, mainly on those that are from my part of the world, the European Union.

We've done research into this phenomenon, so I can say a little bit more about these people than about foreign fighters in general. Well, what do we know? Well, they're mostly nationals from the EU countries, few residents, few refugees, but mostly nationals that are born and raised in these countries. So these are Britons, French, Danes. They are from these countries, born and raised in these countries. Many ethnic backgrounds. Many from Morocco, Turkish background, Algerian background, and also relatively many converts. Some statistics speak as, speak in in, from Germany speak of 14%. If I look into the numbers in my own country that seems like a similar number. So one out of seven, maybe even more, are converts. They're mainly young men, but also women, a few older men, older persons, and according to Peter Norman again, ten of 20% percent of those who go to Syria are women. Why do they go? Why do people that were born and raised in European countries go to Syria? Well, one way to study it is by making a distinction between push and pull factors. Well, pull factors are factors that make Sy, that, that explain why Syria's attracting these people, and the push factors are factors that might explain why people want to leave Europe for Syria. Let's first look at the pull factors. There are many different categories.

The first category is doing something good, a purpose in life, feeling responsible to protect poor people that have, are being attacked by the Assad regime, children, women, etc. And many claim they are going there, especially when they're returning, the authorities ask them, you know, what have you done there? Their answer is I went there to help people. Humanitarian aid. Well, some do. But we know that many of them are involved in the fighting. It's also being used as an excuse, as was used in, in the case of Afghanistan in the past. But many fight for what they believe is right to help people.

That brings me to a second category, the religious motivation. Some do so and they just don't mention women and children, but they, they say I do this to protect and it's my duty. From a religious perspective, my duty to protect the Ummah, the community of believers, the women and children and others in Syria. Add to that the idea to be part of the establishment of an ideal state based on religion, under Sharia law that is linked to the concept of a caliphate, a new Islamic, large Islamic state for all Muslims that covers the entire Muslim world. Also, a religious motivation is to be part of a radical change in the Middle East. The prophecy that now it's the end of the old times and the beginning of something new, an ideal new world under the black banner as used by groups like Islamic State. So the prophesy is also a pull factor.

Then a third category of factors of reasons why people are attracted to join the fight in Syria, and that's comradeship, group processes. And in week two, we discussed that, the social psychological approach, and we refer to an article by Max Abrahms What Terrorists Really Want. And he discovered that this comradeship is very important as well. Well, we also see that in the case of Syria and those that go to Syria. And then the violence, thrill and adventure as such is also a pull factor. Some people want to experience something exciting, and they even go there because of the killing.

And then a final explanation of pull factor is the possibility, if you believe in this, to, to go to paradise, to die as a martyr. Well, then the push factors. We came across a number of these push factors while doing research on Dutch cases, of people who went to Syria, together with my colleague Daan Weggemans and Peter Grol. It's recommended reading. I suggest that you read, it gives you some concrete examples of life stories of those people that went to Syria. And while studying this, we discovered that many had personal problems, failures in life, traumatic experiences, as well as trouble with the authorities, trouble at school. And from literature, we know that also socioeconomic and sociopolitical situations or sociopolitical climate has to be mentioned as a possible explanation why people leave European countries. They don't feel at home, don't see any opportunity there, feel discriminated, marginalized. That might be another push factor why people go to Syria. In our research, we found little evidence of that, and apparently we need to do much more research into these factors that might help us explain why people go to places like Syria. To sum up, in this video, we looked into the phenomenon of foreign fighters in Syria, and we saw that they're from different countries and that there's no archetype foreign fighter. They have different backgrounds and they go there for different motivations. In the next video, we'll look into the different groups that are active in Syria.

### **6.3 FIGHTING GROUPS IN SYRIA**

Hi. In the previous video, we discussed the phenomenon of foreign fighters in Syria. Who are these people and why did they go? And, in this video, we'll look into the groups that these people join. Well, there are many different groups, and that's, that's together, have a fighting force of maybe around 100,000, different estimates, somewhere between 75,000 and 115,000 rebels. So these people that fight against the regime of Assad. And of these fighters, about 12,000 are foreign fighters, probably more. So where did these foreign fighters go to? What groups did they join?

The three most noteworthy are the Free Syrian Army, Jabhat al-Nusra and Islamic State, also known as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria or Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham. The Free Syrian Army. It was founded in 2011 by officers and soldiers that defected from the army of the regime of Assad. It has a secular outlook and it has a lot of international support. Some governments have said that Assad is not the representative of Syria anymore and said the opposition is the legitimate representative and the Free Syrian Army is its army, is its military wing. And, again, it has support from a number of countries, not all countries, not Russia, not China. But from another, a number of countries. And our goal is, like all the other opposition groups, to bring down the regime. And its members are mostly Sunni Arabs but also it has a lot of other groups. A lot of other ethnic and a lot of other religious groups among its ranks. The problem is it has been badly organized and badly supplied. There's a lot of internal division and therefore it's never been a very effective fighting force. That's the reason why it lost a lot of support. Many defected to Islamist or Jihadist groups like Jabhat al-Nusra and Islamic State. Jabhat al-Nusra. Also known under the name the Support Front for the People of Sham. Sham being the name for Syria. So the Support Front for the People of Syria. And it was founded in 2012. It's linked to al-Qaeda. It's recognized by al-Qaeda central, so al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan, as a local affiliate of al-Qaeda. And it's got an al-Qaeda-ist agenda. It's also fighting the Assad regime, but more on religious ideological grounds. And its goal is not only to topple the regime, but also to create an Islamic state in Syria and a caliphate in the Levant. The Levant meaning that now is comprised of the territories of Syria, partly Turkey, small part, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian

territories. It's been designated a terrorist organization by a number of countries, among them the United States, but, more importantly, it's on the UN list of terrorist organizations. Its tactics and modus operandi include suicide bombing and it has clashed in the past with many other groups, including, the Free Syrian Army and Islamic State. Among its ranks are many Syrians but it also attracted a large number of foreign fighters, including foreign fighters from Europe. Hundreds of them went to Jabhat al-Nusra, but also, recently, hundreds defected to other groups, mainly Islamic State, including the foreign fighters. Islamic State, also known as Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham, al-Sham being the name for Syria. And so it's Islamic State, of Iraq and Syria, currently under the name Islamic State. Okay, what is Islamic State?

That's a, a difficult question to answer. It's an insurgent group, it's a rebel group, it's a terrorist group. It's on the UN list of designated terrorist organizations. But it's much more. In many ways, it is also a state, controlling large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq, which they conquered in, the summer of 2014. It runs bakeries, schools, hospitals, organizes public facilities. So it's got many different faces. It is composed of foreign fighters, many of them joined, Islamic State, but also local Iraqi, sometimes Syrian, tribes, rebels that, resist the central government either in Damascus or in Baghdad. So it's, it's a network of organizations with different, sometimes different agendas, all under the same name, Islamic State. And if we add to that, for instance, their outreach through propaganda, which is very professional, you could even say it's got supporters globally from Australia to the Netherlands and from Morocco to Chechnya. And, in that sense, it's almost also a social movement. So it's got many different features, many different ways you could define it. It makes it very difficult to actually say what is IS. But I, this, this, this confusion is perhaps part of it. IS, very difficult to describe. Much clearer is, to describe its leader. It's, it's Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, who managed to merge several groups into this, militant group. And he tried to merge this group even with Jabhat al-Nusra, which we discussed earlier, in 2013. But that was rejected by Jabhat al-Nusra, but also by al-Qaeda itself. So the al-Qaeda leadership, Al Zawahiri, rejected IS as an al-Qaeda affiliate. Its goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate, which it, which it did in June 2014 and its goal is not only fighting the Assad regime, but also that in Baghdad, and also fighting other opposition forces. And the opponents are almost everybody who disagrees with them.

Well, after conquering many of the territories they, that are under IS control, now we've seen lots of atrocities. Lots of killings, beheadings of local groups, of American journalists, aid workers, many different people. So it's well known for its brutality. It's, at the same time, a very effective fighting force, fighting Kurds, other groups, and conquering more lands. So it's a, it's a huge challenge. It's, for instance, a challenge to al-Qaeda, who is the number one Islamist Jihadist movement or organization in the world. Many would say it's not al-Qaeda anymore, it's IS. And, of course, it's an enormous challenge to the countries in the region, to neighboring countries, and to countries that support these countries like the United States. And these countries, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United, United Arab Emirates, et cetera, together with the United States, European countries, Australia have formed a coalition that is actually now fighting IS from the air since September 2014. What are these people doing out there? Those who joined Jabhat al-Nusra, Islamic State, or Free Syria Army and the many other groups. Well, here's a list of relevant activities. One is being bored and waiting. Warfare is not 24/7 at the front, so many are bored and waiting for what's happening. Many have, been involved in training, sometimes basic training, sometimes more sophisticated training, and they're involved in guard duties and help behind the front lines. And, of course, there's the fighting. Fighting with sniper rifles, all kinds of weapons, heavy weapons, Kalashnikovs, anti-tank rockets, et cetera, et cetera. And, unfortunately, there's also many that are involved in war crimes. And some even go as far as to be part of suicide attacks. Well, that's the warfare part.

Propaganda's also very important. Many of them are very active on social media trying to recruit others or to, make sure that people donate money for the fighting. So propaganda is an important element as well. And, of course, back home when they, are questioned by the authorities, they say, I

went there to provide humanitarian assistance, and it should be stressed that some do, but many do so next to the fighting. To sum up, we looked at three groups that have attracted many foreign fighters, from Europe and other places. The Free Syrian Army, Jabhat al-Nusra, and Islamic State. And we have seen that they have different agendas and some are more radicals than others. We've seen that many foreign fighters went from, one organization to the other and ended up in the more radical ones, Jabhat al-Nusra and especially Islamic State. These more radical or extremist organizations have a wider agenda, not only to topple the regime, but also go for other, have other goals as well. To establish an Islamic state or even a caliphate in the region or beyond the region. In the next video, we will look at foreign fighters as a threat. Are they a threat, yes or no, and to whom?

#### **6.4 FOREIGN FIGHTERS – A THREAT**

Hi there. In a previous video we looked at what foreign fighters are doing out there in Syria and what groups they join. And in this video we would like to look at the threat they pose. Or the potential threat they pose to the countries of origin to Syria and Iraq, and other places. Well, these are the questions we would like to address. What is the actual and potential threat posed by foreign fighters, and how do they pose a threat and to whom? And the focus is on Europe because we got relatively a lot of information about threat assessments in Europe. And we got a little bit more information about how and why they could pose a threat in countries within the EU. Well, the idea that they might pose a threat was made public early 2013, when a number of European Intelligence Security Services. Publicly sounding the alarm bell over the increase in, in numbers of people from Europe that went to join the fight in Syria.

Here are a number of quotes of people that expressed their concern. Let me start with the report by Europol, the Terrorism Situation and Trends Report 2014. In this report, returning fighters, it says, have the potential to utilize their training, combat experience, knowledge and contacts to for terrorist activities inside the EU. And Germany's Minister of the Interior feared that Syrian. Jihadist veterans returning to Europe after being trained in what he called deadly handwork will be, again a quote, ticking time bombs. While these are very worrisome expressions. By, especially the administrator of the interior of Germany, but also Europol director Rob Wainwright. Said returning fighters could incite others to join the armed struggle. Or use their training, combat experience, knowledge and contacts to conduct violent activities within the borders of the EU. But it's not only European leaders of police organizations, intelligence organization, that express concern. What about the worries of those responsible for security in countries of origin outside Europe?

Let's take the case of Tunisia. They got 3,000 foreign fighters that are active in Syria and Iraq. It's the largest contingent actually, and relatively small Tunisia has as many foreign fighters as there are from the European Union. And that country worried as expressed by the Tunisian interior minister, who in February 2014 said the following. We said, we have managed to prevent nearly 8000 people from going to Syria. And we don't have exact numbers for those who have returned but they are estimated to number around 400. So, a relatively large group. And he's worried about, and expresses it in the following way. He says, we're following them very closely. We have built up a database. And they have a quiet experience in training and must be monitored. So, worries also in countries like Tunisia, and neighboring countries of Syria and, and Iraq, from which many countries have left to, to join the fight. Why is this the case? Well, most of them have joined jihadist groups, related to or inspired by al-Qaeda. And their agenda is more than just trying to assist local groups to topple the regime of Assad. Some, and, and actually, many of these group have a wider agenda, they want to establish an Islamic state. One who's borders are not the borders of Syria, but a larger area. A Caliphate, which might include also ideally, Jordan and many other parts of the Islamic world. So especially, for the countries in the region this is very worrisome. But some of these groups have, have a wider agenda in the sense that they also want to punish or attack powers that support what they call, Infidel or corrupt regimes, including countries like the United States. And many also have on

their list Israel as an enemy that has to be defeated. So, there are many countries that are worried about what's going on in Syria.

If you look beyond the agenda of the jihadist groups and focus on the individual level. The worries of governments of the countries of origin pertain to the following issues. And as we mentioned already by some of those that I've quoted. And that's the further radicalization. Combat training and experience them being part of an International Jihadi Networks. So, some of them go as individuals, but they come back as part of a larger network and some countries fear that they are being sent home to stage an attack. Also, it's been mentioned very often that, they might have a very important role in propaganda and recruitment of new people going out there to fight. [SOUND] And then it's more of a second order of effect or an indirect effect. It has been mentioned that governments are worried about potential problems related to possible high number of traumatized returnees. Many of these people have gone to Syria unprepared. Have seen horrible things. Have maybe participated in horrible things. Or were bystanders. And they might be fall victim to post traumatic stress syndrome. That could lead to all kinds of violence, depression, suicide. and, and other worrisome developments that might occur only later on. Very difficult topic of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, but the traumas could be lead to second order effects. Apart from threats from returning foreign fighters.

Many countries of origin are also worried about support groups in their countries. That support the, the jihad in Syria and other places from their homes by way of financing it, or recruiting people, or being part of the propaganda machine. And also they're worried about the possibility that these groups will further radicalize and accept. Intimidation of violence as a legitimate instrument or course of action against the government. Or against perceived unbelievers or not good Muslims. For instance, those who speak out, against the jihad and especially, against IS or against other groups. They're also worried about the Sunni/Shia clashes within their countries. But also think of polarization within society because of what's happening in Syria and Iraq. These horrible pictures that of people committing murder in the name of Islam. And it real, it leads to a lot of anti-Muslim feelings, and of course doesn't make the situation of Muslims in non-Muslim countries any easier. And we have seen this also in the town of The Hague where we, where youngsters have been waving the IS flag and have congratulated IS with the, the conquering of Mosul, the city in Iraq. And at the same time we've had demonstrations of right-wing groups that strongly reject the idea of. Or, or this perception of Islam taking over certain neighbourhoods. So we've seen already these clashes. Call them clashes of civilization at the local skill, but they are important as well and worry a lot of local officials.

If I have to look at the threat posed by foreign fighters to countries of origin, I see that many home countries have a very home-centric view, a too home-centric view. The folks has mainly only returning four and five and I think that's too narrow. It makes sense because these governments are primarily responsible for the security in their territory jurisdiction. But I think their citizens cause serious problems outside these countries. In Syria and Iraq. And they are part of, of, of war crimes in these countries and the presence of these foreign fighters makes future settlements far more complicated. [SOUND] And they've threatened aid workers, they've threatened journalists. And they are a threat to stability in the region as a whole. And finally, many foreign fighters will not return to their countries of origin, partly because their passports have been taken away. For many reasons, because they fear prosecution. So, they go to other countries and might one day settle down somewhere, hopefully, peacefully. But they also might move on to the next fight, continuing this violence in the region. So, we have to be very worried about that as well.

To summarize the threat posed by foreign fighters: there are many different ways to look at it. It's, it's a huge, they have a huge impact in Syria and Iraq but they also have an impact on primarily the social peace and inter-group relations in their countries of origin. And allow to me to add and stress

the fact that have caused a lot of death and misery in Syria and Iraq. And yes, there has been incidence and attacks in countries of origin. But if you compare the two, the deadliness of this phenomena is in Syria and Iraq. Well, and I, if I have to sum up the threat posed by foreign fighters to the countries of origin I would not stress the physical impact but I would stress the impact on social peace and inter group relations. In the next, video we will explore some policy options. To deal with the very complex phenomenon of foreign fighters.

## 6.5 POLICY OPTIONS

Hi there. In the last video we discussed the threat posed by foreign fighters. And in this video we will explore some policy options to deal with this phenomenon. What can the world do about the threat posed by foreign fighters? Well, in week four of the course we discussed the need and opportunities, and also the obstacles of a holistic or comprehensive approach. And we came to the conclusion that it's easier said than done. While that might be true. But looking at the situation in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, doing nothing is not an option. We have to do something. We have to learn very quickly to deal with the threat posed by foreign fighters and other groups in these areas. We need an answer. Doing nothing is not an option. And in this video, we would like to see if the UN strategy could serve as a guideline. Well, what does this UN strategy look like? What measures does it consist of?

Well, basically four types. The four, the first type of measures are measures, to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. And a second set of measures are measures to prevent and combat terrorism. The third category are measures to build states' capacity to prevent and combat terrorism, and to strengthen the role of the UN system in this regard. And finally. It consists of a set of measures to ensure respect for human rights for all. And the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism. Let us have a look at each of these categories, the first category, measures,. To deal with the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. What, does the UN documents say about this? They have a long list of, individual measures and I think these three are among the most important ones.

First, to promote dialogue and tolerance and prevent defamation of religion, religious values, beliefs and cultures. Well, that's very important. In the previous video, I mentioned the indirect impact of foreign fighters and what's happening in Syria and Iraq on intra and interfaith relations. Also linked it to what some believe to be a clash of civilizations, anti-Muslim feelings. Now, we have to be careful about that. And measures to promote dialogue and debate and tolerance might help to limit that impact. Then the second issue. To ensure for realization of the development goals including the Millennium Development Goals. They relate to. Poverty, health larger issues like that, social economic issues. Well, in week three we discussed the link between poverty and terrorism. And I believe there's no direct link. But the UN thinks that these larger conditions, these conditions that re, which relate to. Health education and, and poverty. There is a link with terrorism. And they believe that in the long run, it might lead to less terrorism. But it's not a short term measure. Then to scale up cooperation and assistance in the field of rule of law, human rights, and good governance. And I think the latter is very important. The good governance element. We should do more about that. If you look at the Arab Spring, Arab Uprising, Arab Awakening in many of these countries, they were related to a lack of good governance if you could say that. And also in Syria, the Syrian uprising is linked to that and if we could do more about good governments in, many of these countries to deal with corruption etcetera. That in the long run might have an impact as well lead to less terrorism.

Then measures to prevent and combat terrorism. Four issues stand out, refrain from facilitating and financing or tolerating terrorist activities. Well especially the financing part is important. Many believe that IS got a lot of support from a number of countries and a number of individuals, in the past, and that made it possible for this organization to grow and become very strong. And recently, a



lot of policy makers and governments have said, we have to stop this. And that could even have an impact on the medium term. Then to ensure that territories are not used for terrorism training camps or the preparation of terrorism acts. Well of course that makes a lot of sense. And if you could do more about that that could even have a short term impact. Then to ensure the apprehension and prosecution or extradition of perpetrators of terrorist acts. So apprehension and extradition. I believe that's very relevant in the case of foreign fighters. Many of them of course don't fly directly into Syria or Iraq but cross many different borders also that of neighbouring countries. These neighbouring countries face a lot of troubles with, with refugees but they might or they could do more in apprehending foreign fighters preventing them to cross the border into Syria. And extradite them to their countries of origin. Again that's also easier said than done. But more is needed in this field. And then finally to combat illicit arm trades that makes a lot of sense. Of course we have to do more about that. Again that could have even a short term or medium term impact.

Then measures to build state capacity and to measures that relate to the role of the UN. Well to contribute to the capacity building programs in the area of port and civil aviation security is an interesting measure, especially in relation to civil aviation security. In the last months and last year groups like Islamic State and other groups have again threatened the airline industry. Which worries a lot of people that, that, that fly. And more could be done, could be done to improve security. Perhaps not in a number of, of countries but in some other countries. We could do more to make that even safer. And then, to encourage frequent exchanges of information and technical assistance among bodies dealing with counter terrorism. A lot could be learned from different countries can learn a lot from each other. Best practices, but also worst practices. And the best way to learn is not to find out yourself what you do wrong, or what is successful, but to sit around a table and to share ideas, experience, etc. That could have some impact on the medium term, and then to cooperate with other organisations such as the World Bank,. Think about think of money laundering, and terrorism financing, and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

Then the final category. The measures to ensure respect for human rights, and rule of law. Well some of the measures mentioned, or the issues mentioned in the UN strategy. Are you could say a good advice to governments. To make sure that there's effective counter-terrorism policy. But that these counter terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals. But complimentary and mutually enforcing. They go hand in hand. It's not. Human Rights, or security but they have to they are one of the, of the same. You cannot have a lot of security while not respecting human rights. And then counter terrorism measures need to comply with international law.

And a final point I would like to make. Perpetrators have to be brought to justice. And I think if we see the images, the horrible images in Syria, and Iraq and many other parts of the world. I think the family of the victims and the victims themselves, need to know, and be sure about the, the idea that their perpetrators. Will be brought to justice. How to translate these ideas into concrete measures and to implement them effectively. Well, this is difficult, and takes us back to week four, where we discussed, the pros and cons, the possibilities and obstacles. To a comprehensive or holistic approach. And we said it's easier said than done. And this is also the case with regard to the UN strategy. But nonetheless, it's highly valuable for a long term approach. But in the short term, it will not stop the fighting. And it will not immediately stop the flow of foreign fighters going to Syria and Iraq. Today the military option is the predominate one. And also that will not bring the solution. Might have an impact on the short term, but it will not be the solution. Ideally, we would find a proper mix between short term measures and long term measures. That also focus on the conditions that led to the rise of groups like Islamic State, Jabhat al-Nusra, and other groups.

To sum up, there are several theoretical options to deal with foreign fighters. And the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy lists a number of these measures in four different categories. But the problem of these measures is that they mainly relate to the medium and long run. And in the short

run, there are fewer options. And this means we should not expect any solutions soon. And as many have already indicated, the situation in Syria and Iraq will not be solved in a few months time. It will take years, unfortunately.