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TERRORISM IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

THE USE OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA BY TERRORIST ORGANISATIONS

Abstract

With constant development of communication, actors are adjusting their communication strategies. Terrorist organisations embraced Internet and social media, using them to the maximum in spreading their message to different audience. Easy accessibility to Internet allows them to disseminate their ideas further than ever. Internet is suitable for their media campaigns due to the fact that the number of Internet users exceeded 3 billion last year. Still, the reach of terrorist campaigns has lesser range. Most influential social media, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are used by terrorists for different purposes that vary from propaganda to recruiting and training. Abusing social media is problematic in the contemporary world, and it is evident that counterterrorism strategy regarding this topic should be well thought and prepared. Especially, having in mind how this is the line between protecting human rights and allowed measures to restrict them when it comes to matters of national security. Contribution of social media to the fight against terrorism is also important, but these companies need to preserve customer's privacy. Collision of different stakeholder's interests began to manifest by the end of 2015, and solution is yet to be found.

Key words*: terrorism, Internet, social media, communications, Islamic State, freedom of expression*

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1. TERRORISM AS AN ACT OF COMMUNICATION

Terrorism is a form of political violence used by sub-state actors as a tactic of asymmetric warfare. Terrorism is always political, and as such, it is connected with some communicative content.[1] Mohsen defines terrorism "*as the process of delivering a message through the use of symbolic acts, in the form of violence, to create a change on the part of receiver's political behaviour.*"[2]

From this definition it can be concluded that terrorism is a form of communication, but terrorism represents a special negative, morbid form of communication.[3] Terrorists are using violence in order to communicate with their primary target, most often political leaders and state officials. If the communicative model is used to explain terrorism, there is a necessity for distinguishing three types of actors. As in all forms of communication, it has to have transmitter, instrument of communication and recipients. In the case of terrorism, main actors are terrorists, but also the target of violence (which does not have to be a primary target) and intended recipient. Terrorists are, by using violence, acting on a target of violence; caused accident, fear, terror are transmitting a message, usually political, to the intended target. The aim is that the intended target under the effect of terrorist act makes a decision in favour of terrorist organisation.

In that sense, Alex Schmidt defines terrorism as "*an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population and serve as message generators. Threat and violence – based communication processes between terrorist (organisation), (imperilled) victims, and main target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought.*"[4]

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1 Pattwell Ashley, Mitman Tyson, Porpora Douglas, "Terrorism as Failed Political Communication", *International Journal of Communication* 9(2015), aviable at: http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/2247/1359, downloaded on: 26.03.2016, pg. 1121
2 ibid, pg. 1124
3 Đorić Marija," Modern Communication and Terrorism in International Relations", *Государственное управление. Электронный вестник Выпуск* No 36. Февраль 2013 г.
4 Engene Oskar Jan, *Terrorism in Western Europe: Explaning the trends since 1950s*, Edward Elgar Publisher Inc., UK, 2004, available at: https://books.google.rs/books?hl=en&lr=&id=8VR

With the development of mass media, the manner of covering terrorist acts is essential. Mass media shapes public opinion and therefore have influence on creating support for government decisions in countering terrorism. On the other hand, terrorists have a straight forward aim and that is to send message all around the world and to transmit fear. They are using unexpected, vicious, unimaginable forms of violence because they know that media will cover tragic events. Terrorism counts on media exploitation in order to achieve maximum publicity as a multiplier of influence. Their strategy relies on symbolic strength of the act, because the use of terror lies in transmission of messages.[5] With certainty, terrorist organisation is convinced that with one act they will spread fear on two levels: physical – what they can do; and psychological effect on those who are seeing the activity – no one is safe.[6]

When terrorism is seen as a form of political communication, it must be said that it can fail. Communication counts on receiving message, and if it is not received, we can conclude that communicative action has failed. But, terrorism as a form of political communication does not always fail. One of the reasons why it does not fail is in its complexity and in the fact that it is addressed to multiple audiences.

Terrorists know how to apply communication strategies. Mass media and Internet enabled them communication asymmetry with which they compensate a significant part of asymmetry in military power.[7] The advent of social media created new opportunities for terrorist organisations to spread their message. By stepping into the digital age, societies embraced its positive effects, and are dealing with the negative one in the best possible way, but there is always a space for improvement.

765amvzAC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=explaining+the+terrorism&ots=O9BEN_xtE0&sig=f00BqT pY3Ipo8aJPzBGjOzfBHW8&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false, downloaded on: 25.03.2015, pg. 7/8

5 Bockstette Dr. Carsten, *Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques*, The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany, 2008, available at: https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/14536/uploads, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 8

6 Đorić Marija,“ Modern Communication and Terrorism in International Relations”, *Государственное управление. Электронный вестник Выпуск* No 36. Февраль 2013 г., available at: http://e-journal.spa.msu.ru/uploads/vestnik/2013/vipusk__36._fevral_2013_g./ kommunikazionnii_menedjment_i_strategitcheskaja_kommunikazija_v_gosudarstvennom_ upravlenii/36_2013djoric.pdf, downloaded on: 26.03.2016., pg. 22

7 Bockstette Dr. Carsten, *Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques*, The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany, 2008, available at: https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/14536/uploads, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 5

In order to deal with the media campaign of terrorist organisations and their use of Internet and social media, the phenomenon of new media must be analysed.

2. TERRORISM AND INTERNET

Expansion and influence of social media in modern society is increasing on daily basis. Digital revolution made creation of a "global village"[8] possible, and this phenomenon is in the focus more than ever. Now it can be found out more easily what is happening in the world, due to the fact that the amount of exchanged information exceeds 2 billion GB on daily basis.[9] The flow and speed, in which we find new information, may be explained the best by the following example. When the earthquake hit Kraljevo, a city in Serbia, in 2010, that information was published much sooner on Twitter than in traditional media such as TV. During the crisis in 2014, caused by devastating floods in Serbia, people and humanitarian organisations, but also many others were organising and sharing information about the state and needed help via social media more effectively than ever. There are many other examples that show us the importance of Internet in the modern society. Its impact is increasing with the growing number of its users and improvement of technologies.

If we compare the use of Internet from the beginning of 21st century to nowadays, we can undoubtedly say that the number of users has increased. Nowadays, around 40% of world population has Internet access through any device. The number of Internet users exceeded 3 billion in 2014 and it is evident that that number is increasing on a daily basis. Almost half of the users are located in Asia – 48, 4%, and the rest of them are located in other continents, in the following order: Americas (South and North) – 21, 8%, Europe – 19%, Africa – 9, 8% and Oceania.[10]

The gap between developed and undeveloped countries regarding the use of Internet is slowly closing, and the official statistics presented by Central Intelligence Agency are confirming that. The top 10 countries, when speaking of the number of Internet users, are countries located in Asia, South and North America, Europe and Africa.

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8 To find out more about phenomena "global village" seeMarshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man,* University of Toronto Press, Canada, 1962
9 Available at: http://www.internetlivestats.com/, downloaded: 23.03.2016.
10 Availableat:http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/, downloaded: 23.03.2016.

Since the late 1980s, Internet has become almost main mean of communication, with a constant growth of audience. As a medium, it is used for dissemination of propaganda. The advantage of Internet as a medium for transmitting messages was also recognised by terrorists. Their "propaganda generally takes the form of multimedia communications providing ideological or practical instruction, explanations, justifications or promotion of terrorist activities. These may include virtual messages, presentations, magazines, treatises, audio and video files and video games developed by terrorist organizations or sympathisers."[11] As every other phenomenon, the role of Internet in mobilisation for terrorist acts is relative, especially because 40% of world population is using it. Example for this relativity is Afghanistan, where most of the population is illiterate and have no electricity, but Taliban are still conducting terrorist activities. Terrorist activity expanded from south and east of Afghanistan, and now includes also areas further north.[12] It is due to the fact that the terrorists are using night letters – *shabnamah*, leaflets and handwritten communication.[13]

Psychology confirmed that exposure to violent and vicious acts; pictures and videos would not trigger someone to become violent without a present predisposition for such thing or pre-developed feelings of helplessness or anxiety. For example, Nizar Trabelsi was accused of plotting to bomb a military base in Belgium. During the trial, he claimed that he decided to carry on an attack after seeing a photo of a killed Palestinian baby. This picture was circulating on numerous media, but only Nizar was "radicalised" enough to try to commit this kind of an attack. Terrorist propaganda can also aim on terrorist network and society in changing the way of thinking about the consequences of the functioning of terrorist organisations.[14]

With the expansion of Internet users, terrorists embraced it and almost all terrorist organisations are present on the Internet.[15] First terrorist who recognised the

11 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes*, Vienna, September 2012, available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Use_of_Internet_for_ Terrorist_Purposes.pdf, downloaded on: 26.03.2016, pg. 3

12 United States Department of State Publication Bureau of Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2014*, US, 2015, available at: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239631. pdf, downloaded on: 27.03.2016, pg. 226

13 Archetti Cristina, "Terrorism, Communication and New Media: Explaining Radicalization in the Digital Age", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, available at: http://www. terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/401/html, downloaded on: 01.09.2015, pg. 54/5

14 ibid, pg. 55/56

15 Weimann Gabriel, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet*, United States Institute of Peace, US, 2004, available at: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr116.pdf, downloaded on:

importance of Internet and new media and started using it was Osama bin Laden. Current leader of Al Qaeda, Ayman al Zawahiri, stated *"...we are in a battle and more than half of this battle is in the media. In this media battle we are in the race for the hearts and minds of our Umma."*[16] Terrorists recognised and embraced Internet as a tool for propaganda and maximisation of its influence, among other things. On the other side policymakers, politicians and academics where for a long time focused only on cyber terrorism and ignored other uses and advantages that terrorist have from the Internet.[17]

It is evident that the purpose is to disseminate terrorist propaganda in different ways such as posting videos, photos, creating online magazines, but also to build relationship with current and potential supporters so they can be used for recruitment, etc.

When discussing web sites created by terrorist organisations, several common features can be noticed. Each site has section about organisation, its history and activity. It can contain biographies of its founders, leaders, idols or heroes, as well as news and up-dates. Characteristic of these sites is that most of them do not have description of violent acts because they want to limit negative connotation regarding its struggle. Only Hezbollah and Hamas report their action as daily operations and tell the stories about "martyrs", "Israeli enemies" and "collaborators".[18] Sites, beside promotional character, can be used for tracking and collecting intelligence about visitors and for making the map of potential supporters or attack carriers. Recruiters can use chat rooms to attract mostly youngsters, but with the improvement of sites and new opportunities, recruiters now use different methods for mobilisation.

For online propaganda, they use online magazines, which can contain different information. Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is supposedly publishing *Inspire*. They say that the goal is to train Muslims for jihad. It contains material

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21.03.2016, pg. 2

16 Liang Schori Christina, *Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda*, GCSP Policy Paper 2015/2, Geneva, 2015, available at: http://www.gcsp.ch/download/2763/72138, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 2

17 Weimann Gabriel, *How Modern Terrorism Uses the Internet*, United States Institute of Peace, US, 2004, available at: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr116.pdf, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 2

18 ibid, pg. 4

associated with terrorism, ideology, interviews and other things. Islamic State is also publishing online magazine *Dabiq*, which will be further explained in detail.

As these examples showed, Internet is a great tool for terrorist organisations for several reasons. It enables dissemination of information and conversations in real time. By this means, information can reach global audience, much bigger than they could reach without using the Internet. It allows a certain degree of anonymity. Although we all leave traces when using Internet, terrorist are using some form of security software which enables them to make it harder for intelligence and law enforcement organisations to track it. Terrorists can conduct intelligence-gathering operations or establish training system online. This means that Internet is lowering the costs for organisations.[19]

3. SOCIAL MEDIA AND TERRORISM

Important distinctions of social media from other internet phenomena's are reflected in three crucial items: it supports cognition, communication, community building and collaborative work.[20] Definition of social media can be found at Webster Merriam Dictionary. It is defined as *" forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and blogging), through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos)."[21]*

Social media has transformed societies and the ways they interact, but it is not a modern phenomenon, despite the fact that it expanded in the last decade. Today, when we say social media, first on our mind is Facebook, but the community aspect of the web hasn't begun then. Virtual communities could be found in the 80s, for example The Well, but then Internet wasn't widely spread and opened for all.[22] Today, social media enables creating online communities with common

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19 Lachow Irving, Richardson Courtney, "Terrorist Use of the Internet The Real Story", *JFQ*, issue 45, US, 2007, available at: http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/jfq/terr_internet_2q07.pdf, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 100

20 Trottier Daniel, Fuchs Christian, *Social media, politics and the state. Protests, revolutions, riots, crime and policing in the age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.*, Routledge, US, 2014, available at: http://fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/introduction.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 5

21 available at: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media, downloaded on: 25.03.2016

22 Trottier Daniel, Fuchs Christian, *Social media, politics and the state. Protests, revolutions, riots, crime and policing in the age of Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.*, Routledge, US, 2014,

interest. They can be and are used as an effective tool for mass communication with a possibility of targeting key demographics.[23]

Nowadays, there are plenty social medias, and the most popular are Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing, Renren, Google+, Disqus, Pulse, Snapchat, Tumblr, Pinterest, Twoo, MyMFB, YouTube, Instagram, Vine, WhatsApp, vk.com, Meetup, Secret, Medium.[24]

Facebook and Twitter are pioneers at influence in societies. With more than 1.6 billion active users, Facebook is a social media with the greatest potential for transmission of messages. We have to bear in mind that Facebook registers steady growth. Twitter, on the other hand, has fewer users. In comparison to Facebook, it has just 300 million users, but it achieves greater impact because tweets need to be effective and concise.

Social media doesn't have a preordained outcome. It depends of posted material, aim, purpose and interpretation. Social media had a role in the Arab Spring in three ways: shaping political discussions, online dialogues that led to protests and expansion of democratic values and concepts. We should not be tricked and say that social media had a decisive role. It accelerated the process and served as an evidence of the power of rhetoric and sharing of information via social media.[25] It all started with self-immolation of Mohammed Bouaziz, street merchant in Tunisia. He set himself on fire in 2010. Considering demographic characteristics of the population and due to the fact that almost 60% of the Arabs are younger than 25, repercussion of this act was enormous. The Arab spring utilised social media to springboard changes. This use of social media had huge effect in world.[26]

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available at: http://fuchs.uti.at/wp-content/introduction.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 4

23 Dean Geoff, Bell Peter, Newman Jack, "The Dark Side of Social Media: Review of Online Terrorism", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2012, available at: http://www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/publications/2012_08_10_4110.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 108

24 See more at: http://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/2015-04-13/worlds-21-most-important-social-media-sites-and-apps-2015#sthash.yN38mkgb.dpuf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016

25 Cooley, S.C., Stokes, E., Gines, A., *Battle of the brand: How Twitter users in the Arab world challenge ISIL, Conference: Broadcast Education Association*, Las Vegas, Nevada , 11-15.04.2016, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275021343_ISIS_and_Recruitment_Using_Social_Media_Social_Media_vs_Legacy_Media_in_the_New_Multi-Gated_Media_Landscape, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 9

26 ibid, pg. 8

With the advent of social media, terrorist organisations have also gained a new way to spread their messages.[27] New technologies enabled terrorist organisations to control material that will be found on the Internet regarding their campaign, ideology, etc. They can create online magazines and distribute them to wider audience, make audio and video footage of violent acts which can be used for different causes, from disseminating fear to recruiting new members.

Twitter forbids publishing or posting direct, specific threats of violence against others and it suspends accounts in case of violation of terms of service. Terrorist organisations sporadically manage to create an account and use it for exaggerating their military accomplishments, spreading the message and disseminating the idea of radical jihadism. Press branch of Al-Shabaab is called HSMPress and they are using Twitter. Each time their account is suspended, they open a new one with the same purpose, but with just a little bit different name, like @HSMPRESS1, @HSM_PressOffice, @HSM_PROffice and @HSM_PR. Al-Shabaab, terrorist organisation from Somalia used Twitter to disseminate information during Westgate terrorist attack in Nairobi.[28] Al-Shabaab used Twitter to announce that the attack was revenge for Kenya sending troops in Somalia to fight terrorist organisations. In one tweet it was claimed "*For long we have waged war against the Kenyans in our land, now it's time to shift the battleground and take the war to their land*".[29] This account was suspended after they claimed responsibility for an attack due to "unlawful purposes or in furtherance of illegal activities."[30] The question is why social media, in this case Twitter, is useful for terrorist purpose. Twitter created the possibility to send out instant messages to large numbers of people, and allowed people to follow particular topics using hashtag (#).

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27 Dean Geoff, Bell Peter, Newman Jack, "The Dark Side of Social Media: Review of Online Terrorism", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2012, available at: http://www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/publications/2012_08_10_4110.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg.107

28 Ishengoma Romanus Fredrick, "Online Social Networks and Terrorism 2.0 in Developing Countries", *International journal of Computer Science & Network Solution*, Vol. 1, No. 4, available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fredrick_Ishengoma/publication/266396763_Online_Social_Networks_and_Terrorism_2.0_in_Developing_Countries/links/53d1f6a40cf228d363e8f637.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 5

29 available at: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2013/09/attack-nairobi-highlights-ongoing-conflict-east-africa/, downloaded on: 28.03.2016.

30 available at: http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/09/21/shebab-twitter-account-suspended-after-kenya-mall-attack-claims.html, downloaded on: 28.03.2016.

Terrorist organisations can use Twitter to keep up-to-date with new information in the public sphere.[31] Example of this is terrorist attack in Mumbai in 2008. Terrorists were using Twitter in this case as well. They were streaming public Twitter posts and communicating with the attackers. In this way, they had very important information about movement of Indian counter-terrorism units and were one step in front of them. The attack was successful.[32] This terrorist attack required large proportion of planning and logistic. The attack began on November 26 and ended on November 29, 2008. It included series of eight coordinated attacks in Mumbai. This operation was very complex for conducting and showed achieved level of sophistication of terrorist attacks.[33]

Facebook accounts can be used in a similar way. The difference is with YouTube. YouTube is a social media used for posting videos with the comment section below the video that can be locked or unlocked. Videos are much more effective means of communicating with audience and diverse goals can be achieved with one post. For example, Anwar Al Awlaki, planner and trainer of Al Qaeda and all of its franchises have posted over 5000 videos on YouTube. The effectiveness of the videos is reflected in visualisation of how people can take action. Different types of video material can be found on YouTube channels, such as videos in which tactical shooting is shown. These videos can be examples of training.[34] Although jihadi videos have a possibility of reaching large scale of audience, it doesn't have to be like that. Data shows that 6 billion hours of footage is being watched on YouTube per month.[35] One jihadi video could easily be missed among all others. Video posted by terrorist organisations is mostly viewed by users between ages of 18 to

31 Dean Geoff, Bell Peter, Newman Jack, "The Dark Side of Social Media: Review of Online Terrorism", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2012, available at: http://www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/publications/2012_08_10_4110.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 110

32 ibid, pg.111

33 Bockstette Dr. Carsten, *Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques*, The George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Germany, 2008, available at: https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/14536/uploads, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 15

34 Dean Geoff, Bell Peter, Newman Jack, "The Dark Side of Social Media: Review of Online Terrorism", *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2012, available at: http://www.pakistansocietyofcriminology.com/publications/2012_08_10_4110.pdf, downloaded on: 25.03.2016, pg. 111-112

35 Archetti Cristina, "Terrorism, Communication and New Media: Explaining Radicalization in the Digital Age", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, Issue 1, available at: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/401/html, downloaded on: 01.09.2015, pg. 50

24. Half of posted video praised martyrdom, 30% were about suicide bombings and the rest have educational content about Islam.[36]

4. ISLAMIC STATE'S PROPAGANDA MACHINERY

Islamic State proclaimed itself a Caliphate in June 2014, and has gained extreme media coverage since then. It is globally known since then, but this terrorist organisation has long history of which the public is less aware. It is due to the fact that Islamic State brought many phenomena, like state organisation and bureaucracy to the next level. Propaganda machinery is an integral part of the Islamic State. Sophisticated propaganda and visual spread of fear contributed to the promotion of three goals: territory control in Syria and Iraq, recruiting young people and attraction of foreign fighters, and obedience of those under their control.[37]

IS communication strategy is well and thoughtfully planned. It could be said that IS is using the strategic communication management techniques. Strategic communication management is defined as "systematic planning and realisation of information flow, communication, media development and image care in a long-term horizon." Islamic State carefully plans media appearance to maximise its benefits.[38]

They are using different tools on the Internet in order to achieve media goals. Highly productive media departments are in charge of producing a wide range of materials with the aim of promoting the image of organisation, attract potential recruits, raise money, etc.[39] Reports about fights, videos of executions, destruction of pagan architectural structures, and appeal for *Hijrah* are designed to allow strategy for expansion. Their strategy is to present IS operation as fulfilment of

36 Liang Schori Christina, *Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda*, GCSP Policy Paper 2015/2, Geneva, 2015, available at: http://www.gcsp.ch/download/2763/72138, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 6

37 Ganor Boaz, "Four Questions on ISIS: A "Trend" Analysis of the Islamic State", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, available at: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/436/html, downloaded on: 01.09.2015, pg. 59

38 Đorić Marija," Modern Communication and Terrorism in International Relations", *Государственное управление. Электронный вестник Выпуск* No 36. Февраль 2013 г., available at: http://e-journal.spa.msu.ru/uploads/vestnik/2013/vipusk__36._fevral_2013_g./kommunikazionnii_menedjment_i_strategitcheskaja_kommunikazija_v_gosudarstvennom_upravlenii/36_2013djoric.pdf, downloaded on: 26.03.2016., pg. 17

39 Barrett Richard, *The Islamic State*, The Soufan Group, US, 2014, available at: http://soufangroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/TSG-The-Islamic-State-Nov14.pdf, downloaded on: 11.10.2016, pg. 53

the prophet destiny in that way, and they count on gathering support and attracting fanatics. Their propaganda leads to recruitment of many foreign fighters.[40]

They branded themselves and made themselves widely known. IS's flag is extremely recognisable. It is a black flag with white inscription – *shahada* – There is no other God but Allah. Beneath inscription is a white circle, Seal of the Prophet Muhammad, with black inscription – Muhammad Rasul Allah; which is read bottom up.[41]

IS media include Al-Furqan Institute for Media Production, the Al-I'tisam Media Foundation, the Alhayat Media Center and the Ajnad Media Foundation. The oldest media for producing propaganda, especially videos, is Al-Furqan. It is established together with the Islamic State of Iraq in 2006, and The Al-Hayat Media Centre is targeting western audience. Islamic State launched also a forum in Arabic – *Al-Minbar Al-'Ilami Al-Jihadi*, as well as two online magazines: Dabiq and Islamic State News. Dabiq is in English language. That means it is intended for western audience, and Islamic State News targets audience out of Iraq and Syria.[42]

'Dabiq' is periodical magazine focused on unity – *tawhid*, truth-seeking – *manhaj*, migration – *hijrah*, holy war – *jihad* and community – *jama'ah*. Till January 2016, 13 editions of this magazine were issued. First issue of Dabiq was dedicated on declared caliphate in 2014 and the ideology of the group. The magazine is following the development of IS and the trends they are trying to set. Sporadically, magazine is calling on and confirming pledges of loyalty (*bay'ah*) of other terrorist organisations from Sinai, Libya, Algeria, Arabian Peninsula and Nigeria. With stories like that, they are trying to persuade others in their expansion and steady growth of influence. Back story is evidently encouraging Muslims to migrate to Iraq and Syria – *hijrah*. In Dabiq, they are also taking responsibility for terrorist attacks worldwide and calling for IS's supporters to carry out similar attacks whenever they can. Of course, as a terrorist organisation which justifies acts based upon religion, the magazine is paying attention on religion issues. These examples are showing that IS is trying to tangle almost every topic that they find important

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40 Celso N.Anthony, "How to Defeat the Islamic State: Crafting a Rational War Strategy", *Small Wars Journal*, 2015, available at: http://smallwarsjournal.com/printpdf/30763, downloaded on: 11.10.2015, pg. 5-7

41 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organization*, Israel, 2014, available at: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/articles/Art_20733/101_14_Ef_1329270214.pdf, downloaded on: 22.09.2015, pg. 51

42 ibid, pg. 203-207

to the propaganda cause. Special attention should be focused on this magazine. Writing about everything, western countries and their intelligence agencies can find plenty useful information which can be used in counter terrorism, in this case particularly the Islamic State.[43]

They are also using social media as communication channels, primarily Twitter and Facebook, and when their accounts on these networks are banned, they expand their campaign on VK – social network launched in 2006; with more than 100 million users, which is primarily popular in Russia and diaspora*, social network launched in 2010 and as of March 2014 it has more than one million accounts.[44]

5. ISLAMIC STATE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

"Social media platforms are designed for broadcasting content, enabling group conversations, and sharing information, in the form of pictures, audio, video and links to articles."[45] Unlike Internet in general, social media is making focused communities much faster and with more accuracy. They have tools such as "recommended for" or "people you may know" based on someone's interests. With those tools, social media is linking people with similar interests, and due to the fact that most of people prefer multiple things, social media is linking enormous number of people that maybe would have never meet in person. This advantage of social media was recognised by terrorist organisations and is maximally exploited by them. Creating a false sense of anonymity and invisibility of searches made on the Internet, individuals are exploring radical and extremist ideas in a much safer environment, as they perceive it. People who are vulnerable or inclining toward those kinds of beliefs will easily find individuals with similar thinking, easy to understand and connect with, some of whom are recruiters. Researches have shown that people would most likely become extremists if they have friends or family who are violent extremists.[46]

43 available at: https://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq#, downloaded on: 04.04.2016

44 The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *ISIS: Portrait of a Jihadi Terrorist Organization*, Israel, 2014, available at: http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/Data/articles/Art_20733/101_14_Ef_1329270214.pdf, downloaded on: 22.09.2015, pg. 209

45 Berger J.M., "The Metronome of Apocalyptic Time: Social Media as Carrier Wave for Millenarian Contagion", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, Issue 4, available at: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/444/html, downloaded on: 01.09.2016, pg. 65

46 ibid, pg. 65-66

Abu Amr al Shami oversees the media efforts of IS. He has an army of bloggers under his wing. Social media most used by the Islamic State is Twitter, where they have individuals who tweet approximately 200 times a day. They use it to organise, disseminate propaganda, debate and provoke. As a well organised department, they have several categories of accounts: official news accounts, unofficial news accounts, regional accounts and individuals.[47]

The following example best reflects the importance of social media and Twitter. Pictures of declaring the Caliphate were first posted on Twitter. Video of Abu Bakr speech was uploaded on YouTube much later.[48]

J.M. Berger and Jonathon Morgan conducted research about Islamic State's supporters on Twitter. They found a few interesting facts and patterns. This kind of research is important because the use of Internet and social media for terrorist purpose is a new topic with little quantitative data which could provide insight on different characteristics of IS supporters. These findings contribute to counter terrorism and suppression of radicalisation of the population.

Research showed that at the best, around 46.000 of accounts supports IS, and the maximum number reaches 90.000. Users are mostly from Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. None of the users who enabled location were based in the US, and only a few of them were from other Western countries, such as France, UK, Australia, Belgium.[49] Comparing this data with official statistics from CIA web site regarding the percentage of Internet users by country in global, this number of IS supporters on Twitter is quite low, almost insignificant. But, their strategy has a great impact on virtual community. They use different "twitter bombs" – tactics for redirecting trending hashtags to material related to IS and hashtags such as #AllEyesOnISIS or #CalamityWillBefallUs; they also hijack trending topics using hashtags related to attractive events to reach to new audience, like "#Brazil_2014". Behind this hashtag was IS propaganda.[50] IS hijacked hashtags in English and Arabic in order

47 Liang Schori Christina, *Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda*, GCSP Policy Paper 2015/2, Geneva, 2015, available at: http://www.gcsp.ch/download/2763/72138, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 6

48 ibid, pg. 51

49 Berger J.M., Morgan Jonathon, *The ISIS Twitter Census Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter*, The Brookings Institution, US, 2015, available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 9-11

50 Liang Schori Christina, *Cyber Jihad: Understanding and Countering Islamic State Propaganda*, GCSP Policy Paper 2015/2, Geneva, 2015, available at: http://www.gcsp.ch/

to share pro-ISIS content. With those kind of actions, IS is leaving impression of a highly organised and well-equipped organisation, which is successfully combining quantity and quality of information flow. [51]

Twitter has its Term of service and rules of use. If some account is engaging in abusive behaviour it "may be temporarily locked and/or subject to permanent suspension" and under this fall "Violent threats (direct or indirect): You may not make threats of violence or promote violence, including threatening or promoting terrorism."[52] Due to the fact that IS accounts are suspended when detected, Islamic State made strong privacy settings on 79 its official accounts. Only small number of supporters can see tweets that contain mostly news releases, videos and photos. Those trusted supporters' accounts then retweet and disseminate information using hashtags.[53] Majority of IS supporters on Twitter had less than 500 followers each, and followed less than 1.000 accounts. But when discussing the quantity of their tweets, typical account tweeted 7, 3 times per day. That means that average daily output of tweets is 133.422.[54] If some account is following a small number of IS supporters, that person can receive thousands of messages per day regarding different topics significant for IS, such as latest accomplishments. Posting tweets accelerates when it comes to some important developments. Anyhow, the average IS supporter on Twitter is far more active than other platform users. That means that they can spotlight and intensify viewing experience on some on-going themes.[55]

download/2763/72138, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 5

51 available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/10923046/How-Isis-used-Twitter-and-the-World-Cup-to-spread-its-terror.html, downloaded on: 02.04.2016

52 available at: https://support.twitter.com/articles/18311#, downloaded on: 02.04.2016

53 Berger J.M., Morgan Jonathon, *The ISIS Twitter Census Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter*, The Brookings Institution, US, 2015, available at: http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-berger-morgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf, downloaded on: 21.03.2016, pg. 23

54 ibid, pg. 28-32

55 Berger J.M., "The Metronome of Apocalyptic Time: Social Media as Carrier Wave for Millenarian Contagion", *Perspectives on Terrorism*, Vol. 9, Issue 4, available at: http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/444/html, downloaded on: 01.09.2016, pg. 63

6. COUNTER TERRORISM AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Enormous impact of Internet and social media as communication channels set challenges for regulations of this field. With any form of freedom and rights comes a great responsibility to preserve it and not violate it. Human rights declared so far have made immeasurable step forward in the development of societies. Many adverse powers challenge our strength to maintain guaranteed rights and freedoms while combatting negative phenomena, such as violent extremism and terrorism.

Having in mind that young generation grows up, lives and socialises online, older population should be up to the task of protecting them from negative stuff on the Internet. The main question that occurs is where is our responsibility in the increasing acceptability of violent behaviour and ideology among youth, and how can we reverse this trend.

Talking about laws on counter terrorism, we must bear in mind the impossibility of incrimination as terrorist any act that would be one broad understanding of the term and negative effect of too much interfering in private citizen's sphere, under the guise of combating terrorism. It is well known that fight against terrorism cannot be achieved only by criminal law. Effective counterterrorism strategy must include also influencing the roots and causes of terrorism.[56]

Terrorism counts on destruction of human rights and the rule of law. With vicious acts, it attacks values proclaimed by the Charter of the UN and other documents of international organisations, such as respect for human rights, rules governing armed conflict and the protection of civilians, peaceful resolution of conflict, etc. Adopted human rights laws on international, regional and state level require states to protect individuals under their jurisdiction. Taken measures for combatting terrorism must be in accordance with commitments made under the international law.[57] This means that there is a delicate line which cannot be crossed in counter terrorism. If it deviates from the guaranteed human rights, it must be in a precise and lawful way. This also applies to relation between freedom of expression and the prohibition of incitement to terrorism. This topic is especially important in

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56 Stojanović Zoran, Kolarić Dragana, *Krivičnopravno reagovanje na teške oblike kriminaliteta*, Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 2010, pg. 72

57 United Nations, *Human Rights, Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, 2008, available at: http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Factsheet32EN.pdf, downloaded on: 28.03.2016, pg. 7-9

the modern society, and with the development of means of communication and its availability.

Incitement to terrorism challenges the freedom of expression, especially when national security is at stake. Unlike other rights, the exercise of freedom of expression can be restricted in cases of "*…the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary*" or in the times of emergency, as stipulated in the Article 15 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.[58] Hence, the necessity arises for establishing boundaries between incitement to commit terrorist offense and legitimate criticism. Freedom of expression applies "*…not only to ideas and information that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive but also to those that "offend, shock or disturb."[59]* Freedom of expression as a foundation of democratic society is inseparably connected with other rights, including the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, belief and opinion. It is important to make and recognise distinction between material intended to incitement to terrorism and mere propaganda.

Adopted Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism by The Council of Europe requires State parties to criminalise the unlawful and intentional public provocation to commit a terrorist offence, defining it as *"...the distribution, or otherwise making available, of a message to the public, with the intent to incite the commission of a terrorist offence, where such conduct, whether or not directly advocating terrorist offences, causes a danger that one or more such offences may be committed."[60]* In Article 5, a generic formula is used for prescribing the necessity of criminalisation of distribution such messages, implying that it is irrelevant whether it is done indirectly or directly. Direct provocation is incriminated in the most legal system, so it doesn't raise additional difficulties. It is a different

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58 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, article 10, 2, available at: http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf, downloaded on: 05.04.2016

59 Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism - Explanatory Report CETS No. 196, Council of Europe, available at: http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/COETSER/2005/2.html, downloaded on: 05.04.2016

60 Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism CETS No. 196, article 5, Council of Europe, available at: http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008371c, downloaded on: 05.04.2016

thing with indirect provocation, because it allows a certain amount of discretion regarding the definition of offence. Some states require intent and a direct causal link between propaganda and plot of carrying out a terrorist act. Standpoint of a French expert is that the violation of the law by the dissemination of the materials about explosives is only when it is accompanied by information that the materials will be used for terrorist purposes.[61] Application requires two conditions to be met: *specific intent to incite the commission of a terrorist offence* and *the result of such act must be to cause a danger that such an offence might be committed.[62]*

Incitement to terrorism is addressed to indefinite number of persons. In the Explanatory Report to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism CETS No. 196[63] states that incitement must be public and ideas might be sent to audience of a different type. The term "distribution" implies active dissemination of a message advocating terrorism. Message could be sent publically using variety of means, such as printed publications or speeches, the use of mass media, Internet and its different features, such as e-mail, chat rooms, newsgroups, forums, etc.[64]

Hand in hand with the efforts of states to incriminate terrorist offense and develop meaningful counterterrorism strategy while respecting human rights and freedoms goes responsibility of the most influential social media to contribute to this fight without causing damage to its customers' privacy. It is evident that all social networks have their Terms of Service in which is claimed that violent content will be removed and accounts will be suspended if they do not respect established rules, but terrorists find a way to abuse social media. With expansion of abuse, social networks are changing their formal policies. For example, Twitter now bans indirect threats of violence together with direct. On the other side, YouTube has expanded a "Trusted Flagger" program, allowing in that way different groups, from a British anti-terror police unit to a human rights organization, to flag videos as problematic as a call for action. Cooperation between these companies and governments can legitimately stimulate suspicion among consumers about their

61 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes, Vienna, September 2012, available at: https://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Use_of_Internet_for_ Terrorist_Purposes.pdf, downloaded on: 26.03.2016, pg. 6

62 Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism - Explanatory Report CETS No. 196, Council of Europe, available at: http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/COETSER/2005/2.html, downloaded on: 05.04.2016

63 ibid

64 ibid

privacy while using social networks.[65] From the end of the 2015, there were a few meetings among the officials of the US government and technology companies, as well as representatives of social media networks. Senior of the White House said that it is clearly important that government and industry work together in counter terrorism. Talking about the extent of this cooperation, companies such as Facebook, Twitter and Google expressed concerns about talking publicly about this, fearing it would lead to "endless demands for similar action form countries around the world."[66] A company which does not use social network as a part of its business might be scared by encryption, and demands having a back door. Apple went publicly on February 16 with US government's desire for "*…a new version of the iPhone operating system, circumventing several important security features*."[67]

Given the fact that this is an on-going issue, we can't tell for sure how will it end. But, the debate is important, having in mind the stakes. Fighting violent extremism and terrorism online is definitely one of the biggest challenges of the modern societies, where each stakeholder has different interests.

7. CONCLUSION

As a form of political violence, terrorism is destructive for societies. It can be defined in different ways, depending on the highlighted element. As a complex phenomenon, it also includes a communicative portion in its definition. Terrorism counts on media exploitation for its cause. Through violence they are sending messages and spreading fear, that's why terrorist attacks are vicious. With development of Internet and social media, achievement of this objective is significantly made easier. By using social media for posting videos, pictures, debating and provoking, they certainly know that the message will be received by a wider audience. More than 3 billion users of Internet are their potential target, even though reach is quite lower. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube are social media most used by terrorist organisations. Managing accounts in different ways regarding the features that can be effective for propaganda cause, terrorist organisations find a back door to avoid Term of service proclaimed by these social media. All social media forbid posting and promoting violent acts, harassment, direct and indirect

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65 available at: http://www.reuters.com/article/us-california-shooting-socialmedia-insig-idUSK BN0TO0OS20151206#jA1Gv4x10kTxglp1.97, downloaded at: 06.04.2016

66 ibid.

67 available at: http://www.apple.com/customer-letter/, downloaded on: 07.04.2016

threats. Fine for violation of rules is restricting and shutting down the account. Terrorist organisations are persistent, and when one account is closed, they make another one with a similar name. Even though all terrorist organisations have realised the relevance and impact of social media in modern society, Islamic State definitely stands out from others. Islamic State has developed and well prepared propaganda machinery which follows all military achievements. Especially focused on Twitter, with online supporters and their followers, IS is managing to disseminate message much further that it would be possible without Internet and social media. Media department is in charge for production and promotion of online magazines, videos, pictures and other online content. With that much media exposure intelligence agencies should be able to conduct their work much easier. Knowing the enemy, their way of thinking and acting makes it easier to combat. Using Internet, we all leave traces and information about our behaviour, habits, things in which we are interested. This is extremely valuable both for terrorist organisations and intelligence agencies. Each one of them can and uses this information in accordance with their goal. But the problem for states and intelligence agencies is the fact that terrorist attack human rights in attempt to destroy them. In contrast to terrorist organisations, states are obligated to protect and preserve human rights. This means that their strategy for counterterrorism in general, but also in digital sphere must line between guaranteed rights and the possibility to restrict them in cases of threats to national security. The line between freedom of expression and incitement to terrorism is especially delicate. States and international, as well as regional organisations are debating on this issue, attempting to find the best solution. But in order to fight violent extremism and terrorism, many others actors should be involved. From the end of 2015, US Administration started organising meetings with technology companies and representatives of social media networks in an attempt to find common solution. Having in mind development of technologies and features presented by social networks, stakeholders must be aware that this is an on-going issue, and counterterrorism strategy should be farsighted and open to improvement.

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TERORIZAM U DIGITALNOJ ERI: UPOTREBA INTERNETA I DRUŠTVENIH MREŽA OD STRANE TERORISTIČKIH ORGANIZACIJA

Apstrakt

Razvoj sredstava za komunikaciju doprineo je da različiti akteri prilagođavaju svoje komunikacione strategije. Terorističke organizacije prigrile su internet i društvene medije i koriste ih maksimalno pri slanju poruka publici. Laka dostupnost interneta, dovela je do toga da šire svoje ideje dalje nego ikada pre. Internet je pogodan za različite medijske kampanje, s obzirom da je broj korinika premašio 3 milijarde prosle godine. Ipak, domet kampanja terorističkih organizacija je daleko manji. Teroristi koriste najuticajnije društvene mreže, poput Twittera, Facebooka i YouTube-a, za različite ciljeve od propagande do regrutovanja i obuke. Zloupotreba društvenih medija je problem modernog sveta, te je evidentno da strategija za borbu protiv terorizma na ovom polju mora biti dobro pripremljena i osmišljena. Naročito ako imamo na umu tanku liniju između zaštite ljudskih prava i dozvoljenih mera njihovog ograničavanja u slučajevima ugrožavanja nacionalne bezbednost. Doprinos društvenih medija borbi protiv terorizma je važan, ali oni moraju i da očuvaju privatnosti korisnika. Sučeljavanje interesa različitih aktera intenzivno je počeo da se manifestuje krajem 2015. godine, a rešenje tek treba pronaći za ovaj problem.

Ključne reči: terorizam, internet, društvene mreže, komunikacija, Islamska država, sloboda govora