



ISSUE DESCRIPTION



COMMITTEE: Human Rights Council

ISSUE: Combating Neo-Nazism and Extremist Tendencies

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Introduction

Extremism (also known as fanaticism) has been a phenomenon in human history since as early as Ancient Rome. It tended to refer to both violent and non-violent forms of political expression. To be an extremist could mean anything from being a nationalist, a communist, to being an animal rights activist – as long as this ideology is regarded as extreme relative to the government's position.

This form of expression of opinion, however, is extremely harmful to human rights and people's lives.

Definition of Key Terms

Extremism: (also often referred to as “fanaticism”) the advocacy of extreme measures or views regarding religion or politics

Domestic extremism: the activity of individuals or groups conducting criminal acts of direct action to further their protest campaign. This term covers the conduct of groups involved including the extreme right wing and animal rights extremists.

Violent extremism: the activity of individuals or groups conducting acts by any means to express views which justify or glorify terrorist violence. This includes those that encourage others to commit terrorist acts or provoke others into terrorist related activity. It also includes those whom foster hatred which may lead to inter-community tensions and violence within a country.

Radicalisation: the process where a person changes their perception and beliefs due to exposure of an extremist influence (which may be online, publication or one to one direct contact) to become more extremist in nature which may result in extremist actions.

Nationalism: an ideology that emphasizes loyalty, devotion, or allegiance to a nation or nation-state and holds that such obligations outweigh other individual or group. It is often viewed as the core doctrine of extreme-right followers.

Hate speech: communications of animosity or disparagement of an individual or a group on account of a group characteristic such as race, colour, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation

Provocation (in regards of extremism): an attempt to induce the enemy to respond to terrorism with indiscriminate violence

General Overview

Although there are non-violent means of fanaticism, as well as left-wing fanaticism, the most threatening form is violent right-wing extremism. Because of right-wing extremist views, international movements formed such as the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan (shortened to the KKK or the Klan), after 1945, the revival of the National Socialist German Workers' Party called neo-Nazism and its sub-group, the hate movement known as "skinheads".

From above-mentioned groups, neo-Nazism is becoming the most threatening one. With the COVID-19 pandemic giving neo-Nazis more opportunity to target minorities, based on religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, disability and immigration status, the number of victims and human rights violations of the violent neo-Nazi movement's programme highly increased over the last year.

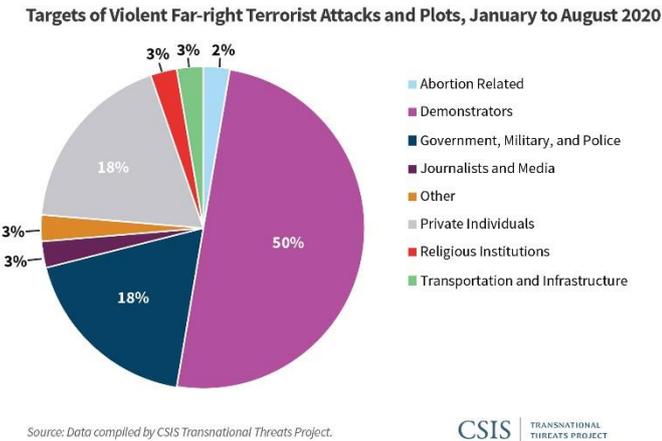
RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

There exists no commonly agreed upon legal definition of right-wing extremism (RWE) across European Union Member states and partner nations. A comparison study commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office in 2020 showed that six countries — Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) — all define "terrorism" in their national legislation, but often rely only on administrative practice or working definitions of "extremism" or "right-wing extremism".

This seems to be the case in most EU countries. Despite the frequent warnings from practitioners that the lack of a standing definition of RWE (or radicalism) might be an issue, there seems to be a high degree of consensus about the characteristics of RWE in practice.

This consensus advances a few general features to describe right-wing extremist ideology, which are: anti-democracy, authoritarianism, and nationalism. Furthermore, there are two important elements in which non-violent RWE is expressed, namely: hate speech and provocation.

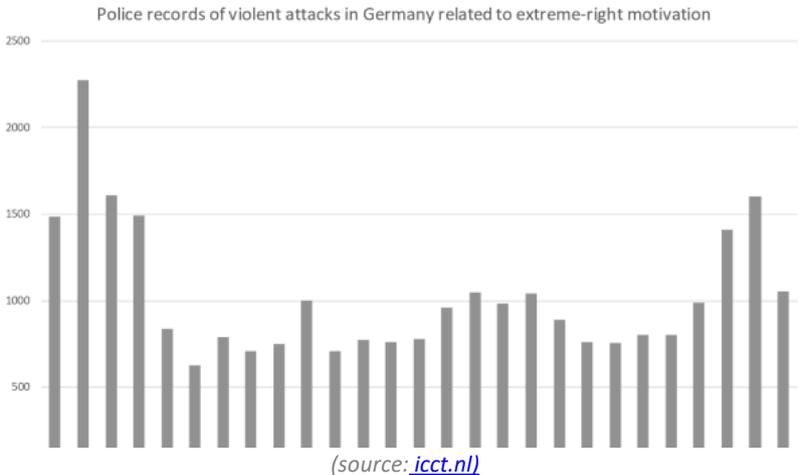
Domestic terrorism incidents have soared to new highs, driven chiefly by white-supremacist, anti-Muslim and anti-government extremists on the far right. In the United States, according to a Washington Post analysis of data compiled by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the threat from home-grown terrorism is growing and



(source: [csis.org](https://www.csis.org))

reaching highs not seen in a quarter-century, with right-wing extremist attacks and plots greatly eclipsing those from the far left and causing more deaths, the analysis shows.

This increase of domestic terrorism caused by RWE can also be seen in global data as well. Both far-left and far-right attacks hit ground-breaking levels in 2020, the database shows, with far-right incidents still the much larger group. Victims of all incidents in recent years



represent a broad cross-section of American society, including Blacks, Jews, immigrants, LGBTQ individuals, Asians and other people of colour who have been attacked by right-wing extremists wielding vehicles, guns, knives, and

fists. Dozens of religious institutions — including mosques, synagogues and Black churches — as well as abortion clinics and government buildings, have been threatened, burned, bombed and hit with gunfire over the past six years.

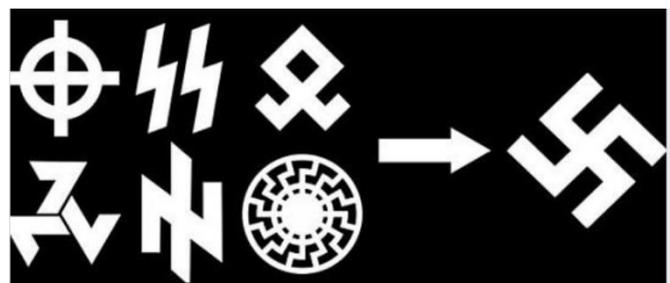
NEO-NAZISM

Neo-Nazism is a term referring to the revival of World War II's fascist political ideology, Nazism. The movement had taken greater forms in the 1930's Germany with Adolf Hitler's leadership of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*; or NSDAP). The party had started leading the government of Germany in 1933 and the regime ended in 1945.

The core dogma of the Nazi philosophy is the superiority of “Nordic” (Germanic) peoples over all other Europeans and all other races. Adolf Hitler promoted a nationalism that combined territorial expansion with claims of biological superiority—an “Aryan master race”—and virulent antisemitism.

Hitler identified Jewish people with both Bolshevism and a kind of cosmic evil. Jews were to be discriminated against not according to their religion but according to their “race.” Nazism declared Jews—whatever their educational and social achievements—to be forever fundamentally different from and inimical to Germans. Driven by a racist ideology legitimized by German scientists, the Nazis attempted to eliminate all of Europe's Jews, ultimately killing six million in the Holocaust. Many others also became victims of persecution and murder in the Nazis' campaign to cleanse German society of individuals viewed as threats to the “health” of the nation.

Nazism as a mass movement effectively ended on April 30, 1945, when Hitler committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of Soviet troops completing the occupation of Berlin. Out of the ruins of Nazism arose a Germany that was divided until 1990. Remnants of Nazi ideology remained in Germany after Hitler's suicide, and a small number of Nazi-oriented political parties and other groups were formed in West Germany from the late 1940s, though some were later banned.



Hate Symbols (source: cjr.org)

Neo-Nazism is a global phenomenon, with organized representation in many countries and international networks. It borrows elements from Nazi doctrine, including antisemitism, ultranationalism, racism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, anti-Romanyism, anti-communism, and creating a "Fourth Reich". Holocaust denial is common in neo-Nazi circles.

In the 1990s gangs of neo-Nazi youths in eastern Germany staged attacks against immigrants, desecrated Jewish cemeteries, and engaged in violent confrontations with leftists and police. In the early 21st century, small neo-Nazi parties were to be found in most European countries as well as in the United States, Canada, and several Central and South American countries.

A sub-group of neo-Nazism started forming in the United Kingdom, the people following it call themselves "Skinheads".

The Skinhead movement is active in 33 countries on six continents. It numbers some 70,000 youths worldwide, of whom half are hard-core activists and the rest supporters. The countries where Skinheads are found in the greatest numbers are Germany (5,000), Hungary and the Czech Republic (more than 4,000 each), the United States (3,500), Poland (2,000), the United Kingdom and Brazil (1,500 each), Italy (1,000 to 1,500), and Sweden (more than 1,000). France, Spain, Canada, and the Netherlands each have at least 500 Skinheads.

The Skinhead movements in these various countries are extensively linked with each other. This "Skinhead International" is maintained through the travels abroad of popular Skinhead rock bands and their fans; the worldwide marketing of Skinhead paraphernalia and recordings; the sale and trading of publications; the exchange of propaganda; and the use of electronic communications. In all the countries where they exist Skinheads engage in violence and criminal assaults on racial minorities, immigrants, homosexuals, and Jews

On average, global movements connected to neo-Nazism violate 11 out of the 30 basic human rights defined by the UN. The main points harmed are the 1st (*All human beings are free and equal*), the 2nd (*No discrimination*), the 3rd (*Right to life*), the 5th (*No torture and inhuman treatment*) and the 18th (*Freedom of thought and religion*).

THE KLU KLUX KLAN

Founded in Pulaski, Tennessee, on December 24, 1865, by six former officers of the Southern Army of the American Civil War, the KKK's groups are most commonly placed in the United States of America. Their programme focuses on racial discrimination and keeping the ideas of the Confederate Army alive. Though Congress passed legislation designed to curb Klan terrorism, the organization saw its primary goal—the reestablishment of white supremacy—fulfilled through Democratic victories in state legislatures across the South in the 1870s.

In 1915, white Protestant nativists organized a revival of the Ku Klux Klan near Atlanta, Georgia, inspired by their romantic view of the Old South as well as Thomas Dixon's 1905 book "The Clansman" and D.W. Griffith's 1915 film "Birth of a Nation."

This second generation of the Klan was not only anti-Black but also took a stand against Roman Catholics, Jews, foreigners and organized labour. It was fuelled by growing hostility to the surge in immigration that America experienced in the early 20th century along with fears of communist revolution akin to the Bolshevik triumph in Russia in 1917. The organization took as its symbol a burning cross and held rallies, parades and marches around the country. At its peak in the 1920s, Klan membership exceeded 4 million people nationwide.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson delivered a speech publicly condemning the Klan and announcing the arrest of four Klansmen in connection with the murder of a white female civil rights worker in Alabama. The cases of Klan-related violence became more isolated in the decades to come, though fragmented groups became aligned with neo-Nazi or other right-wing extremist organizations from the 1970s onward.

As of 2016, the Anti-Defamation League estimated Klan membership to be around 3,000, while the Southern Poverty Law Center said there were 6,000 members total.

The KKK is still active in 22 member states of the US.



An active KKK protest in 2017, with the distinctive symbols, costumes and burning torches of the Klan (source: [usnews.com](https://www.usnews.com))

HATE SPEECH

The ideas and beliefs of such groups are extended globally, and they are involving more and more people as their followers from one day to another. A common tool of extremist groups to spread and emphasise their ideas is hate speech.

Under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 2018, everyone has the right to freedom of expression and information. This includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas “without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers”. However, this is subject to certain restrictions in “accordance with the law” that are “necessary in a democratic society”.

In May 2019, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech was launched highlighting that a disturbing groundswell of xenophobia, racism and intolerance is being observed around the world. Social media and other forms of communication are being exploited as platforms for bigotry. Public discourse is being weaponized for political gain with incendiary rhetoric that stigmatizes and dehumanizes minorities, migrants, refugees, women and any so-called “other”.

Hate speech is a menace to democratic values, social stability, and peace. As a matter of principle, hate speech must be confronted at every turn and be tackled in order to prevent armed conflict, atrocity crimes and terrorism, end violence against women and other serious violations of human rights, and promote peaceful, inclusive and just societies.

Incidents involving hate speech, negative stereotyping, and advocacy of religious or national hatred have resulted in killings of innocent people, attacks on places of worship and calls for reprisals. Such violence also disproportionately targets religious dissidents, members of religious minorities, converts or non-believers.

The ratio of the increase of hate speech and more social media users is proportional to one another. The social media phenomenon is a principal driver of increased regulation of speech (not only hate speech but defamatory speech and incitement to violence generally), in the sense of the sheer quantity and unfiltered initial dissemination of comments online.

International law protects freedom of expression, in particular under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), but the right is subject to limitations. In practice this means that where measures less onerous than restricting freedom of expression exist, they should be used. Furthermore, any statement must be examined to determine if there is an overriding public interest in its expression.

CHILDREN RECRUITED AND EXPLOITED BY TERRORIST AND VIOLENT EXTREMIST GROUPS

Recruitment of children by terrorist and violent extremist groups is taking place in countries throughout the world, in situations of armed conflict and in the absence of armed conflict. Regardless of the conditions in which it takes place, the recruitment usually leads to exploitation and victimization of children. While the recruitment of children by armed groups has a long history, the recruitment of children by terrorist and violent extremist groups is a more recent phenomenon and has undergone notable developments in the past decade. The section below presents an analysis of the reasons for and methods of child recruitment.

The involvement of terrorist and violent extremist groups entails numerous new challenges for States.

First, prevention has become particularly complex, as evidenced by the innovative methods of propaganda and recruitment employed specifically by such groups. This is a primary concern to efforts to effectively tackle a security threat while, at the same time, limiting the victimization of such children.

Secondly, because of their association with terrorism-related activities, which are classified in international and national law as serious offences, an increasing number of children come into contact with national authorities, in particular with justice authorities. In this context, the questions range from the applicable international legal framework to the legal status of the children and the competent authorities and procedures to deal with them. Such children are commonly regarded as a security risk and subsequently exposed to further violations of their rights.

Finally, there is a lack of understanding regarding the rehabilitation and reintegration measures that can be effective in addressing the particular stigma associated with terrorism, while taking into account the extreme violence that has always characterized recruitment and exploitation of children. Also in this context, a key challenge is how to build upon the lessons learned from the reintegration of children who have been used in conflict situations and also address the specific issues related to terrorism.

The underlying concern, which is at the core of the present publication, is how States can preserve public safety and, at the same time, effectively protect the rights of the child.

Major Parties Involved

Austria: The main threat is from extremists linked to Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL).

There is also a threat from individuals with an extreme right wing terrorist ideology. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers.

Germany: Since the end of World War II, against the backdrop of the Nazi regime's crimes, the country has battled far-right extremism in a vast array of ways: using the security apparatus, democracy promotion, educational campaigns and even bans on extremist parties and organizations, among other measures.

Greece: In 2021, a year after the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn was banned, other nationalist groups were cropping up across Greece. Extremist attacks have become more frequent in September of 2021.

Lebanon: Hezbollah is based in Lebanon and functions as a Shia Islamist political party and a militant group, which has formed alliances with Iran and Syria. Security experts have warned Hezbollah's international network is expanding in size and influence but prefers covert operations rather than direct conflict.

Poland: In February 2018, new laws were passed that would forbid the mentioning of Poland's complicity during the Holocaust. During World War Two, Poland was conquered by the Germans and 6 million people died. However, many Polish people were still complicit in the Nazi regime and helped aid the death of 3 million Jews. The new law would ban terms like "Polish Death Camps" and aims to make Poland seen as having only been a victim in World War Two. The law is meant to appeal to far-right support in Poland, who have helped put the current ruling party, the Law and Justice Party, into power.

Russia: The country with highest number of neo-Nazis - about 80-100 000 - is Russia. The followers are not very well-contained, they can march on the streets with flags, and they occasionally kill immigrants, usually from the former Soviet Republics and Asia - but one of the most famous cases was execution of 2 Spanish males.

United States of America: The United States remains in a heightened threat environment fuelled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or

misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of mis- dis- and mal-information (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence. Mass casualty attacks and other acts of targeted violence conducted by lone offenders and small groups acting in furtherance of ideological beliefs and/or personal grievances pose an ongoing threat to the nation.

United Kingdom: The UK government currently defines extremism as, “vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs”. But this definition and its emphasis on “fundamental British values” allows the far right to lean further into nationalism and distance themselves from allegations of extremism.

Timeline of Events

1865 – foundation of the Ku Klux Klan

1915 – revival of the KKK

1933-45 – Nazi regime in Germany

1960s – revival of Nazi ideologies; the beginning of the activeness of neo-Nazism

22 September 2014 – the [Counter Extremism Project](#) was formally launched

15 January 2016 – the UN Secretary General presented the Plan of Preventing Violent Extremism

12 February 2016 – the General Assembly adopted a resolution that welcome the Plan of Preventing Violent Extremism

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PLAN OF ACTION TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM

In the [Plan](#), the UN Secretary-General calls for a comprehensive approach encompassing not only essential security-based counter-terrorism measures but also systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups.

The Plan is an appeal for concerted action by the international community. It provides more than 70 recommendations to Member States and the United Nations System to prevent the further spread of violent extremism.

The Plan is accompanied by a Letter of the Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly ([A/70/675](#)), where the Secretary-General puts forward an “All-of-UN” approach both at Headquarters and in the field to support national, regional and global efforts to prevent violent extremism and assist Member States in developing National Plans of Action.

The Plan was developed through an extensive United Nations inter-agency process and is based on the outcomes of high-level meetings of the UN General Assembly and Security Council, interactive briefings to Member States and outcomes of international and regional meetings.

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

Since 2012, the General Assembly has mandated the Special Rapporteur to submit annual reports, to both the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, on the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The reports address the manifestation in many parts of the world of various extremist political parties, movements, ideologies, and groups of a racist or xenophobic character, including neo-Nazis and skinhead groups and examine the implementation of discriminatory measures and policies at the local or national levels, triggered by this trend.

Furthermore, the reports present recommendation for Member States to continue to take adequate steps, including through national legislation, aimed at preventing and countering incitement to violence against racial, ethnic, religious minorities and ideas based on racial superiority or hatred.

RESOLUTION 55/82

In 2001, on the 55th session of the General Assembly [Resolution 55/82](#) has been adopted on the measures to be taken against political platforms and activities based on doctrines of superiority which are based on racial discrimination or ethnic exclusiveness and xenophobia, including, in particular, neo-Nazism.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

As mentioned before, one of the most common and everyday tool of extremism is social media. A Counter Extremism Project report, seen by the Independent, revealed that pages operated by international white supremacist organisations – including the far right Combat 18, the Misanthropic Division and the British Movement – were not removed by Facebook. Instead, administrators told researchers from the project to “unfollow” pages that they found offensive. This contributes to not only the fear of individuals discriminated against but also the fuelling of the hatred and the acceptance of such.

Many symbols and protests, hate speeches are becoming more and more common. These also help the spread of extremist ideologies and for those who do not follow them, do not become aware of the fact how discriminatory and dangerous this phenomenon is.

The United Nations had put an emphasis onto eliminating the glorification of extremism via urging nations to pay close attention to and possibly ban all forms of self-organizations of extremist groups. It is important to ensure that targets of such hate movements feel safe and guaranteed of their basic human rights.

It is not enough to counter extremism – prevention is the utmost priority.

Useful Documents and Websites

List of Ne-Nazi Organizations

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_neo-Nazi_organizations#Norway

Hate Speech

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/IssueInFocusHateSpeech.aspx>

Recruitment of Children by Extremist Groups

https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/HB%20Children/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf

List of Terrorist Organizations

<https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

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