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HANGA HORVÁTH-SÁNTHA

**RETURNING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS, THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN**

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**Abstract**

The outdrawn war in Syria and the rise of the self-proclaimed Islamic State attracted foreign fighters from all across the globe to an extent not experienced before. According to estimates some 42,000 foreigners from more than 120 countries<sup>1</sup> – both men and women - may have travelled to Syria and Iraq in order to take part in the armed conflict or to give logistical support thereto. Out of these approximately 5,000 travelled from Europe.<sup>2</sup> An estimated 1,500 have returned – some traumatized, some disillusioned and some with continued malicious intent. The return of some of the foreign terrorist fighters from the battle fields in Syria and Iraq undoubtedly pose a serious threat to national security of the receiving state, while all of the persons returning pose a risk to a certain degree. The aim of this paper is to examine to what extent the returnees as well as their family members pose a threat to the selected focus countries Germany, United Kingdom, France, Sweden and the Netherlands. These are the countries most affected by foreign terrorist fighters in the European Union. The study also makes an attempt to outline common traits of character based on information available regarding the profiles of the foreign terrorist fighters.

*Keywords:* Foreign terrorist fighters, Salafi-Jihadism, Islamic State, Europe, reintegration

**1. INTRODUCTION**

As a direct effect of the increasing international military pressure on the Caliphate, along with important strategic losses (such as the one of Mosul and Raqqa), the seemingly steady flow of foreign fighters began to decrease to almost non-existing and instead the number of returnees began to rise. According to estimates several thousand IS fighters are on the run, while hundreds are currently held captive by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). At the end of 2018 the number of

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<sup>1</sup> DAVENPORT, Nicola (Ed.) et al: Responses to Returnees: Foreign Terrorist Fighters and their Families (RAN Manual). Amsterdam: Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran\\_br\\_a4\\_m10\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/ran_br_a4_m10_en.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Europol. Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2018. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2018-tesat-2018>.

European citizens still in the region appeared to be less than 2,000 with France and UK having the highest number.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the wives and children of the Jihadist fighters fled to the al-Hawl camp in northern Syria, their number is estimated to 40,000. According to not verified numbers several hundred children were brought to or born in the Caliphate. Some of these have reportedly undergone ideological indoctrination and military training. The mental health of these children remains a serious issue of concern as the Islamic State is almost entirely pushed back and its supporters increasingly fleeing the scene.

Returning foreign terrorist fighters from Syria and Iraq remain high on the priority list for several of the Western European security and intelligence services. With experiences from the battle field, including the use of arms and explosive devices, ideological and military training, a broadened international network, dehumanised from the armed conflict and prone to the use of violence, they present a great challenge not only for the actors responsible for national as well as public security, but also for the ones working within the field of social integration and societal cohesion. They may also be regarded as role models among peer groups upon return and further radicalise and recruit others.<sup>4</sup>

During the first (2013-2014) and second (early 2015) waves of returning foreign fighters the affected national authorities did not systematically prosecute them, partly based on the assessment that they would pose a relatively low threat, but in many cases also due to insufficient legal tools.<sup>5</sup> But more attention has been drawn to the threat posed by returning foreign terrorist fighters due to the several terrorist attacks in the past couple of years, involving a number of returnees. In May 2014 solo perpetrator Mehdi Nemmouche attacked the Jewish Museum in Brussels. This was the first attack in Europe carried out by a foreign fighter returning from Syria since the break out of the armed conflict in 2011.<sup>6</sup> The security threat was further underlined by the attempted mass shooting on the Thalys train between Paris and Brussels in August 2015 and culminated in the coordinated terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015 and in Brussels in March 2016.

Several studies have been conducted analysing the motivational factors of European Muslims traveling to conflict zones to receive military training and participate in operations directed by terrorist organisations (here: the Islamic State). The studies have offered a wide range of push and pull factors (as well as a combination of them all): poor integration and social alienation, adventure-seeking, the sense of duty towards what is perceived as suffering Muslims in Muslim countries, a legitimate act of self-defence, the power of a transnational identity as propagated through the Salafi-Jihadist narrative (and the claim that this identity is currently under

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<sup>3</sup> Europol. Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT) 2019. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2019-te-sat>

<sup>4</sup> Europol 2018. p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> RENARD, T. – COOLSAET, T. (eds.): How Should We Deal With Them? Assessing Policies on returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands; Egmont Paper 101. February 2018. Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations. p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

dire threat), the strong effect of social media in the radicalisation process and the role of networks and peer-to-peer-groups in the radicalisation and recruitment process. Examining the underlying causes to why individuals from West decide to volunteer in distant conflict is of pivotal importance for the preventative work and the conclusions so far contains the important message to governments still struggling with the issue not to focus on one sole theory but to rather see the radicalisation process from a holistic perspective and adjust their measures accordingly, often on a case-by-case basis.

With the Islamic State having suffered severe losses on the battlefields of both Iraq and Syria, what remains of it is held encircled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Kurdish liberation forces waiting to declare the total territorial defeat of the terrorist group. The fate of the somewhat 800 foreign terrorist fighters holding European citizenship currently being held captive by the SDF forces is heavily debated across the affected Member States, some claiming that the door should be completely closed, others claiming that they should be stripped of their European citizenship in case of dual citizenship, some claiming that they should be subjected to national investigation and prosecution, while others would rather see an international criminal tribunal dealing with the potential war crimes of the foreign terrorist fighters. The opinions differ even in relation to the measures following a potential prosecution: some Member States claim that these persons can be reintegrated into society, while this would be a mission impossible in the view of others. The issue is further complicated an Iraqi court started sentencing a number of French foreign fighters to death for having joined ISIS in the beginning of June.<sup>7</sup>

Another important question is the fate of the wives and children of the foreign terrorist fighters, as there is yet little experience and understanding in how to deal with them, although it remains clear that the children of the Caliphate will most certainly be in urgent need of proper mental health and social support mechanisms. In some cases the children lost both their parents, but in other cases one (or both) parents may still be alive. In terms of the latter scenario the question is whether these children can and should be separated from their parents – and how this would be compatible with governing perceptions on what is best for the child.

Some argue that including the word “terrorist” in the notion of foreign fighters already labels the individual prior to any form of legal procedure,<sup>8</sup> however, the article will not enter the debate on the most appropriate term to use in the context. Throughout the text the term ‘foreign terrorist fighter’ (FTF) will be used in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), identifying an FTF as anyone who “travels to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or

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<sup>7</sup> The Soufan Group: IntelBrief: French Foreign Fighters Sentenced to Death in Iraq; June 3, 2019. <http://www.soufangroup.com/intelbrief-french-foreign-fighters-sentenced-to-death-in-iraq/>.

<sup>8</sup> Such as for instance the European Parliamentary Research Service in its evaluation entitled: The return of foreign fighters to EU soil; from May 2018. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/621811/EPRS\\_STU\(2018\)621811\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/621811/EPRS_STU(2018)621811_EN.pdf), pp. 26-27.

participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training”.<sup>9</sup> Hence, with the regard to the male departees, the focus of the notion selected is the involvement in military training and combat operations and not on the ones not engaged in fighting.

## **2. RETURNING FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS - PERCEPTIONS AND THREAT ASSESSMENT**

Returning foreign fighters are perceived to pose a threat for two main reasons: firstly, the enhanced capability to carry out attacks and secondly, the intent to do so.<sup>10</sup> The following chapter aims to give an overview over the threat analysis related to returning foreign terrorist fighters made by Europol as well as the security and intelligence agencies of the most affected Member States of the European Union, along with a summary of the most relevant literature dealing with the issue. The chapter will also briefly analyse the issue of returning wives and children. In the case of the women it may be difficult to assess the degree of involvement in ISIL-related activities. However, as will be argued at the end of this chapter, it must be assumed that – apart from some rare cases – the women joining the organisation and traveling to either Syria or Iraq must have been well aware of what they were doing. This is also in line with the unfortunate development of terrorist plots in Europe involving more females. A study investigating the Islamist terrorist plots in Europe between 2014 and 2017 found that the involvement of females had risen from 13 percent in 2014 to 23 percent in 2017.<sup>11</sup>

Already in an article published 2013 Norwegian terrorist researcher Thomas Hegghammer made an attempt to assess the impact of returning foreign fighters on domestic terrorist activity.<sup>12</sup> Focusing on jihadists in North America, Western Europe and Australia between 1990 and 2010 the inquiry suggested that one of nine foreign fighters returned with the intent to commit attacks in the West.<sup>13</sup> This proportion seems to be in line with what The Soufan Group – providing strategic security intelligence to governments on Jihadist-inspired radicalisation and terrorism – described as the generally “stronger desire to join something new rather than destroy something old”.<sup>14</sup> The above cited study examining the Islamist terrorist plots in Europe between 2014 and 2017 came to a different conclusion: out of the 142 plots analysed the author found that 30 of them in fact had involved a person who had

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178. 24 september 2014. [https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SCR-2178\\_2014\\_EN.pdf](https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SCR-2178_2014_EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> REED, A. – Pohl, J.: Tackling the surge of returning foreign fighters; NATO Review. 14 July 2017. <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/Also-in-2017/daesh-tackling-surge-returning-foreign-fighters-prevention-denmark-rehabilitation-programmes/EN/index.htm>

<sup>11</sup> SIMCOX, R.: European Islamist Plots and Attacks Since 2014 – and How the U.S. Can Help to Prevent Them; The Heritage Foundation, No 3236. August 1, 2017. <https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2017-08/BG3236.pdf> p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> HEGGHAMMER, T: Should I stay or Should I go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists’ Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting; American Political Science Review 107, no. 1. February 2013, 1-157. [http://hegghammer.com/\\_files/Hegghammer\\_-\\_Should\\_I\\_stay\\_or\\_should\\_I\\_go.pdf](http://hegghammer.com/_files/Hegghammer_-_Should_I_stay_or_should_I_go.pdf). pp. 1–15.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> BARRETT, R.: Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees; The Soufan Group, October 2017. 14.

received terrorist training abroad or had combat experience.<sup>15</sup> This means that one in five attacks (approximately 21 percent) involved a foreign terrorist fighter. In his study Hegghammer also drew the important conclusion that the effectiveness of a terrorist attack would increase with the presence of a foreign fighter. As emphasised by several scholars, experiences from a war zone also changes the mindset of the person<sup>16</sup>; in the majority of the cases these persons have significantly lowered their threshold for violence. This violence potentially used upon return is not necessarily demonstrated through terrorist attacks, but experience show that it is prevalent primarily through continued criminal activity such as gross violent crimes, extortion, fraud and money laundering. A brief study examining the Swedish foreign terrorist fighters found that among the crimes committed by returnees on site in Sweden are gross extortion, gross abuse and ill-treatment, abuse, abuse of laws, money laundering crimes and a large number of gross frauds.<sup>17</sup>

Several studies – including Europol’s Terrorism Situation and Trend Report - describe how ISIL operatives have been taken advantage of the irregular flow of migrant entering Europe with the intent to carry of attacks on the continent. Two such operatives were part of the coordinated terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. However, this is far from the only way of carrying out attacks on European soil. In a 2017 study by the US-based Heritage Foundation the author also raises alert on the increased use of encrypted messaging applications to guide the recruited persons through the process of committing an attack.<sup>18</sup>

## **I. Europol**

By late 2018 it was estimated that out of the approximately 5,000 European foreign terrorist fighters some 1,500 had returned, while around 1,000 had been killed on the battlefields of Syria or Iraq.<sup>19</sup> In its Terrorism Situation and Trend Report from 2018 Europol highlights that those returning to Europe are “potentially increasing the risk of more organised spectacular-type attacks in Europe in the medium to long term”.<sup>20</sup> The intent to carry out attacks against the West may also increase as it becomes more difficult to travel to conflict zones such as Syria and Iraq.<sup>21</sup> Hence, one of the most significant threats is the one of conducting attacks, although Europol also adds in this context that the ability of such individuals may potentially be reduced due to “the increased military pressure, loss of cohesion, lack of infrastructure and reduced access to resources”.<sup>22</sup> After the military defeat the ability to direct external attacks against the West has seemingly been reduced greatly, however, the intent of conducting such attacks remain and Europol warns that IS may rely on sympathisers in Europe (e.g. former members or imprisoned sympathisers).<sup>23</sup> The number of

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<sup>15</sup> SIMCOX op. cit. p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> BYMAN, D.: Frustrated Foreign Fighters; Lawfare. 2017. 07. 12.  
<https://www.lawfareblog.com/frustrated-foreign-fighters>,

<sup>17</sup> OLSSON, D. – Sandelin, M.: Grova våldsbrott följer i IS- återvändarnas spår. Doku. 2019.03.11. <https://doku.nu/2019/03/11/grova-brott-foljer-i-is-atervandarnas-spar/>,

<sup>18</sup> SIMCOX op. cit. p. 1.

<sup>19</sup> Europol 2018. p. 26. and Europol 2019. p. 40.

<sup>20</sup> Europol 2018. p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 28.

<sup>22</sup> Europol 2018. p. 27.

<sup>23</sup> Europol 2019. p. 33.



persons returning to the EU remained in 2018 according to Europol “very low”, mainly due to the fact that several hundreds of them currently find themselves in detention in either Syria or Iraq.<sup>24</sup> However, in the case of the returnees, all men (and some women) are believed to have received weapons training with the men also having gained combat experience.<sup>25</sup> Parallel to – or as a direct consequence of - the decreasing number of persons travelling to Syria or Iraq, it is obvious that the remaining jihadist networks in EU Member States have shifted their focus to carrying out activities in the EU.<sup>26</sup> In some cases (such as in the Netherlands) the jihadist movement is many times larger than before the war in Syria.<sup>27</sup>

Europol also suggests that there is evidence that the returning foreign fighters use the flow of irregular migrants to get back into Europe, however, this is not deemed to be systematic.<sup>28</sup> This is an important fact also recognised by – among others – the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism, who in its terrorist threat assessment from February 2019 underlined that terrorist groups indeed have used the flow of refugees to send operatives to Europe.<sup>29</sup> Although security and border protection measures have been enhanced across Europe, there is a risk that the foreign terrorist fighters will use stolen or forged travel documents to return via third countries.<sup>30</sup>

## **II. Estimates, perceptions and threat assessment by national security and intelligence services**

### ***France***

According to information on the website of the French Government, the main threat – just like in the past years – still comes from jihadist networks embodied by “Daesh, al-Qaida and their affiliates”, whose aim is to “impose a totalitarian Islamist ideology through violence”.<sup>31</sup> Returning foreign fighters from the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq are listed as a particularly acute threat. Looking at absolute numbers, the highest number of persons from Europe traveling to join the Islamic State originated from France. In mid-2016 the French Ministry of Interior estimated that around 1,910 persons from France were “concerned by the jihad in Syria and Iraq”, of which 600 to 700 persons and 500 children were said to still be present in the conflict zone.<sup>32</sup> Comparing with global figures in relation to female departees France

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

<sup>28</sup> Europol 2018, p. 28.

<sup>29</sup> National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 49. February 2019.

[https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/Summary%20DTN49\\_tcm32-380575.pdf](https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/Summary%20DTN49_tcm32-380575.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Europol 2018, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> Gouvernement de la République Française: Comprendre le terrorisme; <https://www.gouvernement.fr/risques/comprendre-le-terrorisme>, (downloaded 13 June 2019)

<sup>32</sup> Collomb sur les Français de retour de Syrie et d'Irak: Nous en sommes à 217 majeurs et 54 mineurs; Le Journal de Dimanche, 2017.08.06. <https://www.lejdd.fr/Politique/collomb-sur-les-francais-de-retour-de-syrie-et-dirak-nous-en-sommes-a-217-majeurs-et-54->

presents the third highest numbers (after Russia and Tunisia) with 382 women who have travelled to the conflict zone.<sup>33</sup> Until February 2018 the number of returnees was 225 persons (56 percent men and 22 percent women) and 68 minors (21 percent).<sup>34</sup> 66 of the minors are under the age of 13 and only 2 above 13 years.<sup>35</sup> This relatively small number is explained by the Minister of Interior as a consequence of the difficulties with leaving the conflict zones. In the same interview, given to French newspaper *Le Journal de Dimanche*, Minister of Interior expressed that the terrorist threat remains very high in France. He mentioned the fact that the Champs-Élysées had been targeted twice and that French intelligence and security services had foiled several attempts to attack since the beginning of the year. According to Europol's TE-SAT report (mentioned above) France reported the highest number of verdict for jihadi terrorism for 2017 (114), the vast majority related to ISIL or its affiliated groups.<sup>36</sup> Albeit it may very well be considered to a large success from a law enforcement point of view, the risk remains that these persons will continue to radicalise and recruit others while being incarcerated. As of February 2018 there were 19,745 persons enlisted in the counter-terrorism surveillance record (*Fichier de traitement des Signalements pour la Prévention de la Radicalisation à caractère Terroriste, FSPRT*).<sup>37</sup>

### **Germany**

According to estimates by the German domestic intelligence service some 1,050 persons left the country since 2013 to join the Islamic State in either Syria or Iraq, more than a fifth of these are female.<sup>38</sup> The majority of the persons who have travelled are younger than 30 years. About one third has returned to Germany. The security and intelligence authorities have concrete information about 110 returnees who have actively participated in terrorist training and have been engaged in armed combat in Syria or Iraq. There is also concrete evidence stating that approximately half of all the persons travelled have participated in or otherwise supported combat operations on behalf of the Islamic State and al-Qaida (or their affiliates and other terrorist groups).<sup>39</sup> For the other half of the group this means that there still are no sufficient grounds for the initiation of investigations by the competent judicial

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mineurs-3404645; Gouvernement de la République Française. „Prévenir Pour Protéger: Plan national de prévention de la radicalisation”. Paris, 2018.

<https://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/contenu/piece-jointe/2018/02/2018-02-23-cipdr-radicalisation.pdf> p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> COOK, J. – VALE, G.: From Daesh to 'Diaspora: Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State; King's College, London; Institute for the Study of Radicalisation, ICSR. 2018. [https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Women-in-ISIS-report\\_20180719\\_web.pdf](https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Women-in-ISIS-report_20180719_web.pdf), p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Gouvernement de la République Française. „Prévenir Pour Protéger: Plan national de prévention de la radicalisation, 2018. p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Europol 2018. p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Gouvernement de la République Française, 2018. p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz: Islamistisch motivierte Reisebewegungen in Richtung Syrien/Irak. 2019. 03. 14. <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/de/arbeitsfelder/af-islamismus-und-islamistischer-terrorismus/zahlen-und-fakten-islamismus/zuf-is-reisebewegungen-in-richtung-syrien-irak>.

<sup>39</sup> Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz: Islamistisch motivierte Reisebewegungen in Richtung Syrien/Irak. 2019.

authorities. Evidence further suggests that approximately 200 of the persons travelling from Germany are dead. The BfV underlines that a stronger trend in relation to returns must be expected along with the territorial defeat of the Islamic State.<sup>40</sup>

### ***United Kingdom***

According to the website of security service MI5 “UK nationals travelling overseas to serve with extremist groups as ‘foreign fighters’ present a potential threat to the UK, both while they are overseas and when they return to the UK.”<sup>41</sup> Syria is the main attraction for British jihadist and so far around 900<sup>42</sup> persons have travelled, of which are 50<sup>43</sup> minors and 145<sup>44</sup> women. While being overseas these persons may connect terrorist groups with groups of extremists back home and thereby help in developing the ability to carry out attacks on British soil. Foreign fighters may also gain combat experience, participate in military training and broaden their international network of like-minded extremists, which make them an even greater threat upon return to the UK – even if they have not been tasked to carry out attacks. The MI5 underlines in this context that having fought overseas may very well also promote radicalisation and contribute to the further spreading of ISIS propaganda considering their English language skills. 425 persons had returned as of mid-2018<sup>45</sup> and of the 900 persons more than 100 have been deprived of their British citizenship.<sup>46</sup>

### ***Belgium***

According to estimates from both official and non-governmental sources the figures for individuals who have travelled to Syria or Iraq between 2011 and 2016 range between 420 and 516, which means that Belgium has the highest number of foreign terrorist fighters per capita in Western Europe.<sup>47</sup> Though the Belgian authorities have been straightforward with the problem already from an early stage, still there is little official information to be found regarding the persons behind the numbers. Information from 2016 claims that an estimate of 180–260 foreign fighters remain in the conflict zone, 60 to 70 have been killed, mostly in combat. Between 55

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> MI5. Foreign Fighters. <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/foreign-fighters>

<sup>42</sup> United Kingdom, Hansard Parliamentary Debates, 656, (2019), <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-03-18/debates/42259394-C90B-4670-BFC9-A5F91518A5FF/ISISMembersReturningToTheUK>

<sup>43</sup> BENOTMAN, N. – MALIK, N.: The Children of Islamic State, Quilliam Foundation London, 2016. <https://www.quilliaminternational.com/shop/e-publications/the-children-of-islamic-state/> p. 8.

<sup>44</sup> European Parliament: Radicalisations and violent extremism – focus on women: How women become radicalised, and how to empower them to prevent radicalisation; Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, December 2017. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596838/IPOL\\_STU\(2017\)596838\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/596838/IPOL_STU(2017)596838_EN.pdf) p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> United Kingdom. Hansard Parliamentary Debates. 2018.

<sup>46</sup> United Kingdom. Hansard Parliamentary Debates. 2019.

<sup>47</sup> GINKEL, B. – E. ENTENMANN (Eds.): The Foreign Fighters Phenomenon in the European Union. Profiles, Threats & Policies, The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism. The Hague 7 (2) (2016). [https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report\\_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU\\_1-April-2016\\_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf](https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICCT-Report_Foreign-Fighters-Phenomenon-in-the-EU_1-April-2016_including-AnnexesLinks.pdf), p. 25.

and 120 individuals have returned, and 50 tried to leave but were stopped (yet, these 50 are still included in some counts).<sup>48</sup>

After the attack on the Jewish Museum in Brussels in 2014 by the returning foreign terrorist fighter and lone perpetrator Mehdi Nemmouche the Belgian authorities raised the threat level to the highest (4 – very serious). The threat level has been lowered and raised ever since – but Belgium was the first (and only) Western country to lower the threat to a 2 in January 2018, implying that there still is a threat but attacks are less likely.<sup>49</sup>

### *Sweden*

Looking at the number of FTF per capita, the second highest numbers have been recorded in Sweden after Belgium. The phenomenon of foreign fighters is not new in Sweden, but already posed a challenge to security agencies in relation to Swedish residents traveling to Afghanistan/Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia and Yemen from 2006 and onwards.<sup>50</sup> Bearing these countries of destination in mind the Swedish Security Service made the assessment that it was realistic to assume that Swedish residents would continue to travel to areas with a high presence of Jihadist organisations, at that time Syria and Iraq being the main countries of destination.<sup>51</sup> The majority of the persons travelling to Syria were men between 18-30 years, but also women who wished to offer logistical support to the terrorist groups. In 2013 the Swedish Security Service assessed that the majority of the returnees would not have intent to carry out attacks in Sweden, however, they added that “some individuals may have such intent”.<sup>52</sup> One year later the security agency noted that the numbers traveling to the mentioned conflict zone had risen “exceptionally” and was now closer to several hundred rather than a couple of dozen.<sup>53</sup> The threat assessment related to returning foreign terrorist fighters was different from the previous year. Now they were deemed as a “potentially serious threat” in relation to the intent to carry out attacks,<sup>54</sup> especially in the light of the statement made by the now late ISIL spokesperson Abu Muhammad al-Adnani in September 2014 urging “soldiers of the Islamic State” to conduct lone-wolf attacks against the West.<sup>55</sup> This year several countries raised their

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> COOLSAET, R. – RENARD, T.: How Belgium Overcame the Threat from Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters. 2018. 03. 22. Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/how-belgium-overcame-the-threat-from-returning-foreign-terrorist-fighters/>

<sup>50</sup> GUSTAFSSON, L. – RANSTORP, M.: Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: An Analysis of Open-Source Intelligence and Statistical Data. Stockholm: Centre for Asymmetric Threat Studies (CATS), Swedish Defence University. 2017. <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:fhs:diva-6731>. pp. 23-24.

<sup>51</sup> Swedish Security Service. 2013. <https://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/download/18.4f0385ee143058a61a81143/1395667298400/Arsbok2013.pdf> p. 53.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 54.

<sup>53</sup> Swedish Security Service. 2014. <https://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/download/18.4c7cab6d1465fb27b01f1a/1426682274489/Arsbok2014.pdf> p. 6, 56.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 57

<sup>55</sup> Lewis MCFATE, J. – Gambhir, H. – Sterling, E.: ISIS’ Global Messaging Strategy Fact Sheet; December 2014. Institute for the Study of War.

threat level due to the mentioned statement (such as Norway, Australia and the United Kingdom). According to the latest available threat assessment the Swedish Security Service underlines that violence-promoting Islamist extremism and returning foreign fighters still pose the greatest threat to national security.<sup>56</sup>

### ***The Netherlands***

Due to – among others – the threat posed by jihadist networks active in the country as well as the perceived threat from returning foreign terrorist fighters, the threat level is still assessed to be high in the Netherlands (4 on a scale of 5), meaning that the threat of an attack is substantial and the chance of an attack in the country is real.<sup>57</sup> In its annual report for 2018 the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (*Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst, AIVD*) underlines that where terrorism is concerned, the area of main interest is jihadist terrorism.<sup>58</sup> AIVD describes the threat from foreign fighters as two-fold: on one hand those who remain in the conflict zones are likely to regularly be in touch with their “home base” in the West, contributing to the further spread of jihadist ideology – and on the other hand there are those returning. As of November 2018 more than 310 persons had travelled to the conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, of which approximately 85 have died and 55 returned.<sup>59</sup> Approximately one third of the returnees are women.<sup>60</sup> According to the Ditch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism there are at least 170 minors with links to the Netherlands currently in camps in northern Syria.<sup>61</sup> This is a significantly higher number than estimated only two years earlier by the AIVD, according to whose figures the number of Dutch children then amounted to 80.<sup>62</sup>

AIVD also describes the challenges with trying to assess the state of mind and the intent of the ones returning – whether the person is disillusioned or traumatised, whether they have the intent to continue the jihadist activity or whether they were

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<http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/GLOBAL%20ROLLUP%20Update.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Swedish Security Service. 2018 Yearbook. March 2019.

<https://sakerhetspolisen.se/download/18.6af3d1c916687131f1fae5/1552543607309/Arsbok-2018.pdf>, p. 59.

<sup>57</sup> National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 49. 2019.

<sup>58</sup> AIVD: Annual Report 2018. <https://english.aivd.nl/publications/annual-report/2019/05/14/aivd-annual-report-2018>, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> AIVD: Syria’s Legacy. Global jihadism remains a threat to Europe; November 2018. <https://english.aivd.nl/publications/publications/2018/11/09/the-legacy-of-syria-global-jihadism-remains-a-threat-to-europe>, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> AIVD: Jihadistische vrouwen: een niet te onderschatten dreiging; 17 November 2017. <https://www.aivd.nl/onderwerpen/terrorisme/documenten/publicaties/2017/11/17/jihadistische-vrouwen>

<sup>61</sup> National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 49. 2019. p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> National Coordinator of Security and Counterterrorism and the Netherlands/General Intelligence and Security Service. The Children of ISIS. The indoctrination of minors in ISIS-held territory”. 26 April 2017 [https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:DXunQj7SvcJ:https://english.aivd.nl/binaries/aivd-en/documents/publications/2017/04/26/the-children-of-isis.-the-indoctrination-of-minors-in-isis-held-territory/WEB\\_Minderjarigen\\_bij\\_ISIS\\_ENG.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=vn](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:DXunQj7SvcJ:https://english.aivd.nl/binaries/aivd-en/documents/publications/2017/04/26/the-children-of-isis.-the-indoctrination-of-minors-in-isis-held-territory/WEB_Minderjarigen_bij_ISIS_ENG.pdf+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=vn)

sent in order to carry out attacks.<sup>63</sup> According to the AIVD the jihadist movement in the country comprises approximately 500 persons, mainly pro-ISIS.

### 3. IS THERE A “TYPICAL” WESTERN EUROPEAN FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTER PROFILE?

Examining whether some commonalities may be found in either the background or in the motivational factors of foreign terrorist fighters is important not only to achieve a more targeted and group-specific prevention, but also from a rehabilitation point of view. The following chapter seeks to outline some of these characteristics outlined through national as well as international studies, however, without suggesting that there is one single profile for law enforcement agencies to solely focus on. The studies on the general characteristics conducted so far give a valuable insight to individuals and groups that may be more susceptible to the type of Salafi-Jihadist radicalisation than others, but much more importantly many of them underline the importance of social networks for the radicalisation and recruitment process. In several of the countries examined the radicalisation of individuals did not occur in a geographically highly diffused manner, but was rather concentrated to local groups of already pre-existing networks. Considering that these local networks generally already comprise like-minded individuals, where group thinking is encouraged and peer pressure used (often in combination with social status as reward for participation serving a radical cause), it is not difficult to see how they can become fertile breeding ground for bloc recruitment for purposes such as fighting abroad.

Compared to the other focus countries in the study, relatively little information seem to be available in open sources regarding the background of the French foreign fighters. However, a note from 2017 by the French Co-ordination Unit of the fight against terrorism (*Unité de coordination de la lutte antiterroriste, UCLAT*) outlined the background of 265 French jihadists killed in Syria.<sup>64</sup> The persons were mostly second and third generation immigrants and of a relatively low average age when killed (28 years). 48 percent had a criminal record and 56 percent came from so called “priority neighbourhoods”<sup>65</sup> (previously known as “sensitive urban zones”, a designation that currently covers more than 1,500 neighbourhoods and some 5 million people across the country), an area that has been identified as deprived (and as such received more support to achieve economic development, social cohesion and the life of the inhabitants). Another study examining the background of 137 persons (of which 131 were men and only 6 women) convicted of jihadist-related offences in France between 2004 and 2017 came to similar conclusions.<sup>66</sup> The study was based on original judicial sources from their trials and showed that the 40 percent of the persons convicted came from priority neighbourhoods, their average age at the time of the

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<sup>63</sup> AIVD: Annual Report 2018. p. 13.

<sup>64</sup> MOLINIÉ, W.: Quels sont les profils de 265 djihadistes français tués en Irak et en Syrie; LCI (September 2017) <https://www.lci.fr/international/info-lci-quels-sont-les-profils-de-265-djihadistes-francais-daech-tues-en-syrie2063073.html>

<sup>65</sup> Quartier prioritaire

<sup>66</sup> HECKER, M.: 137 Shades of Terrorism. French Jihadists Before the Courts; Focus stratégique, No. 79 bis, April 2018. Institut Francais des Relations Internationales. [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/hecker\\_137\\_shades\\_of\\_terrorism\\_2018.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/hecker_137_shades_of_terrorism_2018.pdf)

offence was 26 years, had a low level of education (significantly lower than the French average) and showed a low labour market integration.<sup>67</sup> 40 percent had a criminal record, the most common convictions included violence, theft or fraud, drug trafficking and traffic violations.<sup>68</sup> An examination of the nationalities of 130 of the total 137 persons in the study showed that 90 were French citizens, 29 held dual citizenship (14 French-Moroccans, 10 French-Algerians, and 5 French-Tunisians) and 11 were foreigners (3 Moroccans, 3 Algerians, 3 Tunisians, 1 Indian and 1 Pakistani).<sup>69</sup> This trend of home-grown radicalisation and terrorism is completely in line with the other focus countries of this study. A large majority of the convicted were born in France and grew up there, but the origin of the families of the persons reveals a significant dominance of the Maghreb-region. Also 74 percent were born in Muslim families. The author of the study therefore concludes that migration “is a factor that plays an important role in the jihadist phenomenon”.<sup>70</sup>

In an analysis from 2014 (supplemented in 2016) the German domestic intelligence service (*Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, BfV*) analysed the background of 784 persons from Germany who travelled to Syria and Iraq between 2011 and 2016.<sup>71</sup> 79 percent of them were men and 21 percent female. The average age at the date of departure was 25.8 years, the largest age group being the one of 22-25 year-olds.<sup>72</sup> The persons traveling came from a total of 162 German cities and municipalities with different characteristics (metropolitan areas, large as well as small towns and village). Although these cities and municipalities are distributed over the entire federal territory, the BfV underlined that regional hotspots are emerging, especially there were only 13 cities out of which a double-digit number of people had left (minimum 11 and maximum 107 persons).<sup>73</sup> 61 percent were born in Germany and 62 percent held a German citizenship at the time of travel. Those born abroad came from 38 countries with the main countries of origin being Turkey, Syria, Russian Federation, Morocco, Lebanon and Afghanistan. 27 percent held dual citizenship, the largest dual national groups being the German Turks (21 percent), German Moroccans (17 percent), German-Tunisians (13 percent), German-Afghans (11 percent) and German-Syrians (7 percent).<sup>74</sup> 72 percent had attended education, with 36 percent having graduated from high school. According to the information available 96 percent of the persons examined were known from the Salafi environment. Hence, a clear majority of the departed persons were already involved in local networks, which is important information not at least from both a preventative as well as a repressive point of view. 134 persons were converts to Islam – of these two thirds had converted

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid. pp. 18-19.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p. 19.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. pp. 22-23.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 24.

<sup>71</sup> Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz: Analyse der den deutschen Sicherheitsbehörden vorliegenden Informationen über die Radikalisierungshintergründe und -verläufe der Personen, die aus islamistischer Motivation aus Deutschland in Richtung Syrien ausgereist sind; Oktober 2016. <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/embed/analyse-der-radikalisierungshintergruende-fortschreibung-2016.pdf>, pp. 1-61.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 15.

before the age of 22.<sup>75</sup> Approximately two thirds of the persons in the study had a criminal record.

Regarding the underlying places and processes of radicalization – followed by motivation to travel to conflict zones – the BfV found the following factors of importance: friends, regular visits at certain mosques, the internet, so called Islamic seminars, family and events where the Qur'an was distributed (such as for instance by the Salafi organization "*Lies!*").<sup>76</sup> The conclusion regarding the importance of friends and social networks in the BfV study was confirmed by Reynolds and Hafez in 2017.<sup>77</sup> Their study, analysing push and pull factors in the case of 99 German foreign fighters (who had travelled to or attempted to travel to Syria), found that interpersonal connections and peer-to-peer groups were the most significant mobilisation factor. Interestingly, the researchers also emphasized that there was little evidence to support the often cited theory claiming that radicalisation is mainly caused by integration deficit, among other factors contradicted by the large percentage of persons holding German citizenship. Nor did they find significant evidence to support that radicalisation mainly occurs through social media.<sup>78</sup> Reynolds and Hafez especially took note of the large number of converts to Islam among the German foreign fighters: overall 23 were converts to Islam (of which 13 were of native German origin - with both parents having German ancestry), a high percentage in comparison to the other countries affected by the foreign fighter phenomenon.<sup>79</sup> The statistically high number of native Germans also suggests that more research needs to be conducted regarding the theory of poor integration as a major factor behind radicalisation.

Creating their own database on Belgian foreign fighters, researchers Van Ostaeyen and Van Vlierden analyse the background of 716 individuals, focusing on ancestry and citizenship.<sup>80</sup> The dataset was limited to persons who at least had made an attempt to travel to the conflict zone, overall 85 percent managed to reach it.<sup>81</sup> The information available on the citizenship of these persons showed that the vast majority (slightly more than 76 percent) were Belgian citizens, followed by Morocco (6.5%), Russia (5.3%), France (4.2%), Algeria (2.4%), Italy (1.4%) and the Netherlands (1.2%). However, in the case of the ones enlisted as Belgian citizens it is important to note, that dual citizenships were not taken into account, but the researchers counted an individual living in Belgium holding dual citizenships as only Belgian.<sup>82</sup> The ancestry of the ones listed as Belgian citizens however give a better appreciation of the background of the individuals: the majority (more than 62 percent) – i.e. almost half of all the foreign terrorist fighters from Belgium - were of Moroccan origin.<sup>83</sup> The

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>77</sup> REYNOLDS, S. C. – HAFEZ, M. M.: Social Network Analysis of German Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq; 2017. Terrorism and Political Violence. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/81223714.pdf>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. pp. 21-22.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. pp. 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> VAN OYAESTEN, P. – VAN VLIERDEN, G.: Citizenship and Ancestry of Belgian Foreign Fighters; International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague. ICCT Policy Brief May 2018. <https://icct.nl/publication/citizenship-and-ancestry-of-belgian-foreign-fighters/>

<sup>81</sup> VAN OYAESTEN – VAN VLIERDEN op. cit. p. 4.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.



Moroccan dominance is in correlation with the fact that Moroccans represent the largest group among Belgium's Muslim population – but also with the figures showing that Moroccans are the largest component in the overall foreign population in Belgium with near half million residents born as Moroccan citizens.<sup>84</sup> In an attempt to search for answers with regard to the high number of persons of Moroccan descent among the foreign terrorist fighters from Belgium - in comparison with the Turkish diaspora, which counts for the second largest groups of Muslims in Belgium and yet only accounts for 10 percent of the foreign terrorist fighters - another study found that, despite a relatively similar socio-economic situation and experiences of discrimination and stigmatisation, Moroccans were more susceptible for rebellion and violence.<sup>85</sup>

Oyaesten and Vlierden identified three major networks as the main hubs of recruitment (Shariah4Belgium, the Zerkani network and one organised around the Brussels convert Jean-Louis Denis), partly overlapping each other and involving more than 83 percent of the persons in the database over Belgian foreign terrorist fighters. Almost half of the Moroccans in the database were living in the big city areas of the Brussels Capital Region and Antwerp. The average age for the entire dataset was 29 years.<sup>86</sup> Considering the total numbers these two areas represented two third of all cases.<sup>87</sup> When assessing the threat posed by Belgian foreign fighters, researchers found that the ones of Moroccan descent were responsible for most terrorist threats, both regarding attacks committed against the West as well as suicide attacks in Syria or Iraq.<sup>88</sup>

A study conducted in 2015 concluded that a wide range of motivational factors can be found among those who choose to leave Belgium and join the Islamic State. In many of the cases the feeling of joining a more welcoming environment was dominant, along with general feelings of not being able to cope with everyday difficulties, not seeing a future for themselves, the need of activism and search for heroes to look up to, as well as pure adventure seeking or simply a malicious intent.<sup>89</sup>

In a comprehensive study published by the Swedish Defence University the background of 267 foreign terrorist fighters from Sweden was analysed.<sup>90</sup> The study showed that the majority of them came from the big city regions across Sweden with

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<sup>84</sup> Data collected by Belgian sociologist Jan Hertogen. 2015. <http://www.npdata.be/BuG/282-Migratie-gewest/>

<sup>85</sup> PASCARELLI, P.: Identities 'Betwixt and between': analysing Belgian representation in 'home-grown' extremism; Behavioural Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression. 10 September 2017. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19434472.2017.1374988>

<sup>86</sup> VAN OYAESTEN – VAN VLIERDEN op. cit. p. 10.

<sup>87</sup> VAN OYAESTEN – VAN VLIERDEN op. cit. p. 8.

<sup>88</sup> VAN VLIERDEN, G. – LEWIS, J. – RASSLER, D.: Beyond the Caliphate: Islamic State Activity outside the Group's Defined Wilayat – Belgium; West Point: The Combating Terrorism Center, February 2018. <https://ctc.usma.edu/app/uploads/2018/02/CTC-Beyond-the-Caliphate-Belgium.pdf>, p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> COOLSAET, R.: What drives European to Syria and to IS? Insights from the Belgian case; Egmont Paper 75, March 2015. Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2015/03/75.pdf?type=pdf>, p. 17.

<sup>90</sup> GUSTAFSSON, L. – RANSTORP, M.: Swedish Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq: An Analysis of Open-Source Intelligence and Statistical Data. 2017.

very few people having an actual connection to Syria. Often they were born in Sweden (34 percent) but at least with one parent born abroad. 75 percent held Swedish citizenship. Many of them belonged to the same families or circle of friends – a trend in line with similar patterns from other European countries. More than 70 percent of them came from socially exposed neighbourhoods, defined as areas with high criminality, a majority of immigrant-born population and generally low socio-economic status. Two thirds of the Swedish foreign terrorist fighters had also been involved in criminal activity prior to their travel (i.e. they had been suspected of at least one crime).<sup>91</sup> This is a higher ratio compared to other countries. Several motivational factors may be found behind the traveling; among others the belief that traveling to ISIL was a religious duty, but it may very well be for pure adventure-seeking purposes.<sup>92</sup>

There is little information found publicly on the background of the Dutch foreign terrorist fighters. Early research from 2015 suggests that the majority is male and under the age of 25 and come from a lower or lower-middle class socio-economic background.<sup>93</sup> Most of them come from The Hague or the conglomeration of the city.<sup>94</sup> Apart from these initial similarities other factors show a wide spread: some of the persons are well educated, while others experienced difficulties at school, just like some have a criminal background, but far from all.<sup>95</sup> Some have reportedly experienced mental health issues, potentially making them more susceptible to radicalisation and recruitment.<sup>96</sup> The mental health issues discussed and experienced in the context of the Dutch foreign terrorist fighters does not equal a psychotic disorder, making them unable to function properly in society. Rather the theory of social defeat was used as a potential explanatory factor, implying that negative experiences of being excluded from the majority group may lead to certain feelings of stress and the disruption of the dopamine system – that in its turn may contribute to radicalisation.<sup>97</sup> The study mentioned further potential risk factors in this regard, such as ethnic minority status, urban upbringing, low IQ, childhood traumas and substance abuse, hereby specifically mentioning the Dutch-Moroccan community as the population facing most of these risks.<sup>98</sup> It may be fair to assume that this may be true also for the case of the Belgian-Moroccan individuals mentioned above.

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<sup>91</sup> ROSTAMI, A. – STURUP, J. – MONDANI, H. – THEVSELIUS, P. – SARNECKI, J. & EDLING, C.: *The Swedish Mujahideen: An Exploratory Study of 41 Swedish Foreign Fighters Deceased in Iraq and Syria*; Studies in Conflict & Terrorism. 2018. pp. 1-14.

<sup>92</sup> Swedish Security Service. 2014. p. 56.

<sup>93</sup> BAKKER, E. – GROL, P.: *Motives and Considerations of Potential Foreign Fighters from the Netherlands*; ICCT Policy Brief, July 2015. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/ICCT-Bakker-Grol-Motives-and-Considerations-of-Potential-Foreign-Fighters-from-the-Netherlands-July2015.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> VAN GINKEL, B. – MINKS, S.: *Addressing the Challenge of Returnees: Threat Perceptions, Policies and Practices in the Netherlands*; 2018. p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> PAULUSSEN, C. – NIJMAN, J. – LISMONT, K.: *Mental Health and the Foreign Fighter Phenomenon: A Case Study from the Netherlands*; ICCT Report, March 2017. The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague. <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ICCT-Paulussen-Nijman-Lismont-Mental-Health-and-the-Foreign-Fighter-Phenomenon-March-2017.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> PAULUSSEN – NIJMAN – LISMONT op. cit. p. 13.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

#### 4. THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE FOREIGN TERRORIST FIGHTERS

From 2015 there was a surge in the number of foreign women and children traveling to, or – in the case of children – being born on the territories controlled by the Islamic State.<sup>99</sup> In the case of the women it is difficult to assess their degree of commitment to IS or to predict whether they will remain active or passive supporters of the ideology. But – as emphasized by among other the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism in its most recent threat assessment from 2019, these women pose a real threat, considering their role as facilitators and their long exposure to the violent and brutal ideology of ISIS.<sup>100</sup> Hence, as pointed out by several researchers, as a general benchmark it must be assumed that the women joining the Islamic State knew what they were doing and what type of organization they were joining – and therefore be treated accordingly.<sup>101</sup> This is especially true in the case of the over 600 members of the infamous *Al Khansaa Brigade* (the all-female enforcement unit of ISIL) in Raqqa who have reportedly participated in torture in prisons (and in many cases enjoyed it).<sup>102</sup>

With regard to the children of Western foreign terrorist fighters it must be noted that they are primarily victims of the extreme violence and brutality caused by adults. However, it must also be taken into consideration that many of the minors have been exposed to indoctrination and military training on former IS territories and hence may pose a threat upon return.<sup>103</sup> The sensitive nature of the question of the children of the Islamic State require a case-by-case assessment, based on age, gender and the information available on how much time they spent on IS controlled territories and what type of activities they have been involved in. This in order not only to be able to do a proper risk assessment, but also to find the right form of disengagement and re-integration for the minors.

##### *I. The women*

Considering the fact that the Islamic State may well be held as one of the most anti-feminist militant organisations it still had the capacity to mobilise a significant number of women for its purposes. According to estimates every fifth European to join its ranks was a woman, thereby increasing the number of Europeans with nearly 20 percent.<sup>104</sup> Despite the fact that the deployment of women in carrying out attacks is disputed in jihadist circles, ISIL has promoted a more active role for them in combat since 2017.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> BARRETT, op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism. Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 49. 2019. 7.

<sup>101</sup> BARRETT, op. cit. p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> One of the most infamous female guards was the Swedish convert calling herself Umm Hamza (Ulrika Pape), grandmother of 7 children of which half were born in the Caliphate. The children in May 2019 been allowed to travel back to Sweden together with their grandfather, the former husband of Umm Hamza.

<sup>103</sup> Europol 2019. p. 9.

<sup>104</sup> GINKEL – ENTENMANN (Eds.). op. cit. p. 4.

<sup>105</sup> AIVD. „Syria’s Legacy. Global jihadism remains a threat to Europe”. 2018. 11.

Looking at women joining from a global perspective, there is no specific profile of a woman deciding to join the Islamic State, but rather a wide range of ages, family backgrounds and motives. Some were minors and travelled with friends, some were married and travelled with their husbands and children, while some left their children at home. Some travelled to join their husband while others departed to marry a foreign fighter. Considering their ideological conviction and devotion to the cause of the Islamic State, the role of the women may give a significant insight to the activities they were involved in while being in the conflict zone, as well as to future implications related to their support of the organisation's cause.<sup>106</sup> The role of women in the Islamic State is far more complex than the usual emphasised stereotype of a "jihadi bride". After the proclamation of the Caliphate in 2014 ISIS leaders immediately recognized the importance of PR strategies focusing on women's involvement. Wives and mothers were clearly needed in the efforts to build a new state structure, and a special advocacy network was set up that focused on women only. In its propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, special chapters have been dedicated to the role of women, emphasizing their importance in state-building and related recruitment activities. Experiences show that women have been active both in recruiting and radicalising other women regardless of geographical location (in their home communities, in the online sphere or on the territories controlled by ISIL), but they have also been active in the dissemination of propaganda and participated in fundraising activities.<sup>107</sup> An interesting field study conducted in the Middle East investigated the way women had been incorporated within the state apparatus of the Islamic State and suggested that through these the organisation had managed to combine a powerful message of religious duty with the modern concept of female emancipation.<sup>108</sup> Through the creation of 'gender-separated parallel institutions', i.e. all-female sections for almost every IS institutions addressing female affairs and entirely run by women successfully managed the inclusion of half of its society's population.<sup>109</sup> The all-female parallel institutions were also used as an effective tool of propaganda in order to recruit more women from the West, offering them a way of being "pious and righteous Muslim" women and be able to participate in state affair at the same time.<sup>110</sup> In a threat assessment published in 2017 specifically focusing on the "jihadi wives", the Dutch General Security and Intelligence Service clearly warned that the role of women in jihadist organisations should not be underestimated.<sup>111</sup> In many cases, these women are just as committed to the cause as their husbands. As essential parts of the jihadist movement they represent a real threat, not only considering their activities related to the spread of propaganda, recruit others and raise money for the group, but also as they may be indoctrinating their children with the violent jihadist ideology. This view is further reinforced by the author of the study examining the background of persons convicted of jihadist offences in France, noting that the low representation

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<sup>106</sup> COOK, J. – VALE, G.: From Daesh to 'Diaspora': Tracing the Women and Minors of Islamic State. 2018. p. 27.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> KHELGHAT-DOOST, H.: Women of the Caliphate: The Mechanism for Women's Incorporation into the Islamic State (IS); Perspectives on Terrorism. 11, no. 1, 2017. 17–25. 49. <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/574/1130>

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>110</sup> TARRAS-WAHLBERG, L.: Seven Promises of ISIS to its Female Recruits; International Centre for the Study of Violent Extremism. 2017. <https://www.icsve.org/seven-promises-of-isis-to-its-female-recruits/>

<sup>111</sup> AIVD. „Jihadistische vrouwen: een niet te onderschatten dreiging”. 2017. 3.

of women (totally 6 of 137) does not correspond to a low engagement in jihadism. Rather it reflects a “long-standing tendency” in the courts not to prosecute women active in jihadist networks.<sup>112</sup> The study showed that in some cases it had been the women radicalising their partners. The same gender inconsistency was true for the German case: until the end of December 2017 the men returning would automatically face criminal investigation, while in the case of the women prosecutors tended to be more slow (as they were searching for additional evidence adding to the fact of their departure).<sup>113</sup>

## *II. The children*

The children are of pivotal importance for the Islamic State as they represent the future. The following chapter will discuss the issue at large and focus on those children who immigrated with their families from Western Europe or who were presumably born by citizens of the focus countries in the study.

A questionnaire among the Member States initiated by the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator of the European Union underlined the diversity of the group children returning from – or somehow being connected to - IS-controlled territories.<sup>114</sup> In general, four categories were identified: 1) refugee children who have arrived in Europe; 2) young foreign terrorist fighters; 3) children born and raised by foreign terrorist fighters in Syria/Iraq and 4) children remaining in the EU, while parents and/or siblings have travelled to Syria or Iraq. The following chapter will mainly focus on the second and third categories. The chapter will in this context highlight some of the known elements used in the radicalization, recruitment and indoctrination of the children used on the territories formerly controlled by the Islamic State.

It is difficult to estimate exact number of children from Western Europe in the Islamic State. According to the Soufan Group (basing their numbers on available sources) the numbers are as follows: France (460), Belgium (118), the Netherlands (90), Germany (56), United Kingdom (50), Sweden (45) and Austria (40).<sup>115</sup> These figures were published in 2017; hence, the numbers are probably much higher today. Several studies have been conducted about these children in general, indicating a wide range of abuses committed against minors – starting from ideological indoctrination in religious schools (so called *madarasas*) and recruitment to military training to actually witness, participate in (and perform) executions - and in some cases even suicide attacks. The majority of the children have been over-exposed to violence and brutality as features of everyday life. The purpose of this “normalization” was –

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<sup>112</sup> HECKER op. cit. p. 17.

<sup>113</sup> HEINKE, D. H. – RAUDSZUS, J.: Germany’s Foreign Fighters and What To Do About Them;. In: COOLSAET, R. – RENARD, T. (eds.): Returnees: Who are They, Why are They (not) Coming Back, and How Should We Deal With Them. Egmont Paper 101. 2018. Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations. p. 50.  
[http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2018/02/egmont.papers.101\\_online\\_v1-3.pdf?type=pdf](http://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2018/02/egmont.papers.101_online_v1-3.pdf?type=pdf)

<sup>114</sup> Council of the European Union: Member States approaches to dealing with accompanying family members of Foreign Terrorist Fighter Returnees; 2017. 3, p. 6.  
<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6900-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>115</sup> BARRETT op. cit. p. 23.

among other – to emotionally reprogram the children into not only accepting, but fully believing that violence is a natural way of life, thereby making them more prone to conduct violence themselves.<sup>116</sup>

According to researchers Van der Heide and Geenen the role of the children in ISIL depended very much on their age and gender.<sup>117</sup> The school, starting at the age of 6, commenced the ideological teaching immediately and boys later also participated in military training from the age of 9.<sup>118</sup> These boys could later be separated from their families in order to undergo more hardcore training and to create stronger bonds to their peers than to their parents. The focus of the education for girls focused on how to best support the future husband and full veil covering in public was mandatory from the age of 9, sometimes even earlier.<sup>119</sup>

In their study about the children of the Islamic State researchers Benotman and Malik describe how schools are of central importance for the recruitment and the indoctrination as this is the place to “shape the hearts and minds of the future generations”.<sup>120</sup> School attendance was compulsory on the IS-controlled territories and all teachers had to comply with a strict curriculum following the ideology of the terrorist organization. Homeschooling was declared *haram* (forbidden) as it could not be monitored by IS authorities.<sup>121</sup> The children who previously had attended Western educational system were sent to separate schools as they were considered to so far have been raised on “a methodology of atheism”.<sup>122</sup> Before participating in military training – including hand-to-hand combat and weapons training - boys who came from immigrated families were given lessons on Arabic language, the Qur’an and *Hadith*.<sup>123</sup>

A unique experience regarding the rehabilitation of children of foreign terrorist fighters – most of them born on ISIL-controlled territories – is the one of the French child and adolescent psychiatrist Professor Thierry Baubet<sup>124</sup>. For nearly two years Professor Baubet has evaluated and monitored about forty children born in the Caliphate upon their return to France.<sup>125</sup> Upon arrival, 45 percent of these children in

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<sup>116</sup> VALE, G.: *Cubs in the Lions’ Den: Indoctrination and Recruitment of Children Within Islamic State Territory*; King’s College, London. Institute for the Study of Radicalisation, ICSR. 2018. <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Cubs-in-the-Lions-Den-Indoctrination-and-Recruitment-of-Children-Within-Islamic-State-Territory.pdf>, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> VAN DER HEIDE, L. – J. Geenen: *Children of the Caliphate: Young IS Returnees and the Reintegration Challenge*; The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague 8, no. 10 (2017). <https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ICCT-vanderHeide-Geenen-Children-of-the-Caliphate-2.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Council of the European Union: *Member States approaches to dealing with accompanying family members of Foreign Terrorist Fighter Returnees*; 2017. pp. 3-4.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p 4.

<sup>120</sup> BENOTMAN – MALIK op. cit. p. 29.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Race Towards Good*, Islamic State al-Hayat Media Center, 22 November 2014, [https://archive.org/details/fstbqo\\_alkeeraat](https://archive.org/details/fstbqo_alkeeraat), as referred to by Benotman and Malik. 2016. 31.

<sup>123</sup> BENOTMAN – MALIK op. cit. p. 32.

<sup>124</sup> Avicenne Hospital (APHP) in Seine-Saint-Denis, France.

<sup>125</sup> LECLAIR, A.: *Enfants du djihad; On ne peut pas prédire leur avenir ni leur assigner un destin*, Le Figaro. 2019. 03. 29. [http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2019/03/29/01016-](http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2019/03/29/01016-22)

care were under 2 years of age, while one-third were 6 years or older. According to Baubet the children suffer from a variety of disorders; anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), developmental delays, sleep disorders and eating disorders. Some children are overcome by fear because of the events they witnessed. They may also display attachment disorders, meaning that they cannot establish privileged links with any adult nor establish relationships with other people in general. Baubet also emphasized that these disorders evolve over time. Children who seem to be doing relatively well when they arrive may very well showing symptoms several months later. Many of them have experienced a wide range of issues: starting with the time spent in the war zone to being separated from their parents (usually the mother) and thereafter returning to a country they do not know and being placed in foster care. Since almost half of the children monitored are under the age of 2 many of them could not express what they had been exposed to. According to Baubet these children are more likely to pose a danger to themselves than to others, as all children who have experienced hard and violent events at an early age have scars that they may suffer from years later on. Therefore the most important conclusion is that these children will need to receive sustained attention over a long period of time.

A report published in early 2017 by the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) and the National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV) underlines the importance of information regarding the experiences of the children in the Caliphate in order to properly determine their needs upon return.<sup>126</sup> It is likely that some of these children will be convicted for crimes committed abroad, but it is also of utmost importance to assess what type of rehabilitation and reintegration efforts are needed in order to mitigate the risk they may pose and to minimize the chances of recidivism. In the case of the smallest children born on the IS-controlled territories there is also a risk of becoming stateless, should their birth registration (if any) not be recognized by the international community.<sup>127</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

After the collapse of the so-called Caliphate and the successful pushback of the Islamic State, Europe – as well as other parts of the world - may in some way sense a relief. However, researchers and security experts warn that this may be a false sense of security, as not only do the returning foreign terrorist fighters pose a serious threat to European societies, but this time of relative decrease in terrorist activity also implies that it should be used to consolidate already existing initiatives, measures and policies to continuously combat the aforementioned threat. There is also plenty of evidence indicating that the jihadist networks in Europe are currently in a phase of reorientation, focusing on keeping these groups alive, spreading their ideas and recruiting new members to join the cause. This increased activity is especially vivid

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<sup>126</sup> AIVD and NCTV: Minderjarigen bij ISIS; AIVD and NCTV: The Hague, 2017. <https://www.aivd.nl/publicaties/publicaties/2017/04/06/minderjarigen-bij-isis-van-nctv-en-aivd>

<sup>127</sup> HOURY, N.: Children of the Caliphate: What to Do About Kids Born Under ISIS; Human Rights Watch. 2016. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/23/children-caliphate>

after the military defeat of IS – and has in some cases resulted in an exceptional growth as they are many times bigger than before the war in Syria broke out.<sup>128</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that there is an obvious decline regarding the number of persons travelling to Syria it still should be underlined that IS and al-Qaida-affiliated groups continue to pose a major threat to the Western societies as they have an on-going intent and capability to carry out attacks.<sup>129</sup> Some studies<sup>130</sup> make an attempt to prove based on statistics available so far that it is unlikely that large numbers of foreign terrorist fighters will launch major attacks on European soil upon return. However, as attacks such as the 2015 November Paris attacks show – already the presence of one foreign terrorist fighter (in this case Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the alleged ringleader and “mastermind” behind the attacks) – can cause tremendous harm and sever casualties. The lone perpetrators also remain a source of concern who – inspired and perhaps even supported by IS – show willingness to carry out attacks with unconventional means in the West.

Although the Islamic State may have been defeated on the ground the dream of a utopian Caliphate and the ideology tightly connected to it continue to live. The organisation has been successful in slowly transforming back to an underground movement from where it is possible to prepare for resurgence. As AIVD points out – in its character of an underground movement it will most likely have a destabilising effect on countries across the Middle East and North Africa in the long run,<sup>131</sup> which will inevitably have an impact on Europe as well.

In many cases, politicians, decision-makers, stakeholders and even researchers tend to claim that there is no general profile of a foreign terrorist fighter, hence attempts to analyse common traits may lead to ill-advised and short-sighted conclusions. Nevertheless, examining the background and motivational factors of foreign terrorist fighters from Western Europe it becomes quite clear that there indeed are several significant commonalities, which would be a mistake not to take into account when it comes to the preventative work – not at least from a safeguarding and vulnerability perspective. This perspective is reinforced by several researchers examining – among others – the French jihadists, describing how they all share the common traits of being born in (often broken) immigrants families, having a criminal record and mostly a low education, living unstable lifestyles before embracing radical Islam.<sup>132</sup> The empirical data referred to in the chapters above outline a similar portrait of the person being susceptible to radicalisation and recruitment – and to eventually travel for terrorist purposes: a young man between 18-30 years, with one or both parents born abroad, living in a certain urban area with an immigrant-majority population characterised by low socio-economic status. However, despite these

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<sup>128</sup> Europol 2019. p. 40.

<sup>129</sup> Europol 2018. p. 26.

<sup>130</sup> For instance: J. de Roy van ZUIDEWIJN, *Fearing the Western Muslim Foreign Fighter: The Connection between Fighting the Defensive Jihad and Terrorist Activity in the West*, MA Thesis, Utrecht University, January 2014, pp. 40-49; A. QURESHI: *Blowback – Foreign Fighters and the Threat They Pose*. London: CAGE, 2014, p. 12; D. BYMAN – J. SHAPIRO: *Be Afraid, Be a Little Afraid: The Threat of Terrorism from Western Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria*, Washington DC, Brookings, 2015.

<sup>131</sup> AIVD: *Syria's Legacy. Global jihadism remains a threat to Europe*; 2018. p. 19.

<sup>132</sup> HECKER op. cit. p. 9.



similarities it is important to bear in mind that there is no general socio-economic or ethnic profile that may offer valuable clues to why certain individuals travel abroad to participate in armed conflict.<sup>133</sup> Some researchers refute the theory claiming that terrorism necessarily springs from poverty in the context of the foreign fighters. Instead, they point to the fact that the (Western) foreign fighters who have joined ISIS originate from highly prosperous countries with high levels of economic development and low income inequality, as well as well-functioning political institutions.<sup>134</sup> Rather they claim it is a matter of politics, ideology and the question of feeling excluded in an ethnically and linguistically homogenous country. One thing is sure, though: there is no one-size-fits-all model to explain why people join terrorist organisations such as ISIS, but rather it should be seen as interplay between several different underlying causes and motivational factors.

The average foreign fighter holds a citizenship of the country he is leaving behind. Holding a Western government-issued passport may also contribute to the foreign terrorist fighters being able to return largely unnoticed. It is also likely that he (or she) has joined together with - or due to - either family members or friends, which yet again proves the importance of networks and social peers in the radicalisation process and contains an important conclusion from a prevention perspective, namely that extra effort should be made to identify other persons from the same network who may also be at risk of either radicalising or being recruited to travel for terrorist purposes.<sup>135</sup> Reaffirming the importance of social networks as a significant pull factor for the mobilisation and recruitment of foreign fighters – in comparison to the theories about integration deficit, social deprivation and the power of social media in the radicalisation process - may also contain an important message to governments: from a prevention perspective it may be easier to map out and dismantle an individual's social network rather than for instance engaging in expensive so called counter-narrative campaigns in the rapidly evolving social media sphere.

But even with the almost entire military defeat of the terrorist organisation on Syrian and Iraqi soil the history is far from an end. The ideology will most probably remain and continue to inspire people to join the global jihadist movement. Hence, there is an urgent need to compile all the knowledge so far on not only threat assessment tools related to returning foreign fighters, but also measures to make sure they do not continue to pose a threat to the receiving society.

Also the issue of the women of the Islamic State should remain high on the agenda of Western societies and knowledge should be drawn from already existing multi-sector approach on the matter. As mentioned by several security and intelligence services, although the majority of the persons showing willingness to commit attacks against the West are men, there have also been a number of women showing intent to do so. In recent years young women have been involved in several plots failed by the authorities, such as the one targeting the Notre Dame in Paris in

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<sup>133</sup> REYNOLDS – HAFEZ op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>134</sup> BENMELECH, E. – KLOR, F. E.: What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?; The Kellogg School of Management Northwestern University and NBER  
[https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/faculty/benmelech/html/BenmelechPapers/ISIS\\_April\\_13\\_2016\\_Effi\\_final.pdf](https://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/faculty/benmelech/html/BenmelechPapers/ISIS_April_13_2016_Effi_final.pdf).

<sup>135</sup> ROSTAMI, A. – STURUP, J. – MONDANI, H. – THEVSELIUS, P. – SARNECKI, J. & EDLING op. cit.

November 2016 when a number of young women planned to detonate a car filled with gas cylinders outside the cathedral. The ISIS has also promoted a more active role for women and the threat stemming from these activities – along with the ideological commitment to the jihadist cause - should not be underestimated.

In the case of the children of the Caliphate it cannot be emphasised enough that they may be both security threats and victims at the same time. This fact will most likely pose a great challenge for those Member States bringing home children of foreign terrorist fighters, as their situation requires a multidisciplinary approach taking into account both the security as well as the child welfare aspects. Hence, information on their activities and experiences from the IS-controlled territories is pivotal in order to determinate whether they may be convicted for crimes committed abroad (particularly if they have reached the age of criminal responsibility) and what type of rehabilitation they need in order to minimise potential violent tendencies, to process traumas from the everyday brutalities and to minimise the risks of recidivism.

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**Abstract**

The author provides an overview of the militias in the Middle East and explores the specific roles played by them in the conflicts of the region. He starts off by explaining the current international circumstances, paying special attention to Iran and North Korea. Then the author discusses the main characteristics of the warfare waged by militias, and describes the primary threats and challenges represented by these organizations. In his case study, the author provides a detailed assessment on the capabilities of the Hezbollah and the Hamas from the viewpoint of Israel; furthermore, he analyses the situation in Syria, and surveys the militias and the terrorist organizations that are active in the country. The article also calculates the potential outcomes of the situation in the Middle East.

**Keywords:** militias, terrorist organizations, Middle East, Iran, North Korea, Syria, Iraq, Israel, Hezbollah, Hamas, ISIL/DAESH.

**1. The international environment**

Both in the narrower and the wider Middle East, militias are equally present, whose role has significantly changed in recent years. By now, mid- and great powers take them into consideration, either as enemies or as allies. The conflicts in Iraq and Syria represent several examples of this. With the active participation of Russia, a new situation has developed in the Syrian conflict as well. The leadership of the United States of America – which can be hardly labelled to be ‘consistent’ with regard to its viewpoint in the region – has faced a serious challenge due to the cooperation with the Shiite Muslim Iran and Turkey, which is becoming a more and more Islam state. The situation of the Baltic states, the dynamics in Eastern and Central Europe, the situation of Georgia and the developments in Central and South Asia undoubtedly have an effect on the Middle East, which is undergoing an accelerated transformation itself. From the decisions of the congress of the Communist Party of China, it is obvious that China counts on a “post-US” world order. China’s expansion, besides the economic field, spreads to the military field as well: recently, a military base was opened in Djibouti, only a few kilometres away from the U.S. base. In connection with the crisis in North Korea – which is becoming more and more complex –, China shows an uppish behaviour towards the USA, demonstrating that it is the exclusive mediator in connection with North Korea. China published a joint statement with Russia, declaring that the world is unambiguously progressing towards a multipolar system. In the economic field, China’s aim is to connect the Far East with Western Europe through the Middle East, with the help of the Belt and Road Initiative, which is a 150 billion USD investment, involving 68 countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The article was translated by Zsófia KASZAB.



With close Chinese cooperation, Pakistan seeks to assert its interests in the background, while India aspires to obtain security guarantees with help from the USA and Israel. Iran – through its increased defence budget – strengthens its military interests primarily in Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt jointly turned against Qatar, with the obvious aim of preventing it from supporting the Muslim Brotherhood – and thus, the Hamas – with the help of the more and more active Turkey. Another aim of the joint action against Qatar was to stop its rapprochement towards Iran in connection with the joint exploitation of the hydrocarbon resources in the shelf of the Persian Gulf. The Shiite front will soon surround the Sunni block both from the north and the south, from Iran through Iraq and Syria to Lebanon, and, in the south, to Yemen, and maybe even beyond those.

In connection with the Iranian missile program – which is based on North Korean military technology –, the two countries tightened their cooperation after 2015, which explains why the North Korean Nodong and the Iranian Emad ballistic missiles are so similar. The close cooperation between the two countries with regard to their missile programs represents a serious challenge for the Sunni Arab world, and, obviously, for Israel. Iran's joining to the North Korean BM-25 missile system can change the power relations in the Middle East. Out of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, only Qatar is not affected by the results of this, which – expressly to irritate Saudi Arabia – recently renewed its diplomatic ties with Iran.

Syria – about which the world presumed that it does not have mass destruction weapons – surprised the international community when it (again) employed its chemical weapons. In August 2017, two North Korean ships were impeded, which transported weapons – including chemical agents – into Syria.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the Palestinian militias, North Korean military advisors held paramilitary and terrorist training for the organizations of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>3</sup>

## **2. The role of militias in the region**

If we talk about the military security of the region under examination, we must take a look at the increasing role of militias and their effects on the regional security and the outcome of conflicts. There are several militias involved in the Syrian and the Iraqi conflicts. These include the Iranian and the Iraqi Shiite militias, the Hezbollah, the Al-Nusra Front, as well as the Kurd militias and the forces opposing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. At first glance, there is nothing new in this phenomenon. Militias have already existed also in the ancient times and played a significant role. In the Biblical times, the Israeli tribes did not have a regular army; their preparations for war took place locally and within the tribes. The forces led by Canaanite commander Sisera had 900 iron chariots and went on to fight against an army organized on a tribal

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<sup>2</sup> CIPRUT, Jose V.: All Quiet on the Middle Eastern Front. BESA Centre Perspectives Paper No. 586. September 13, 2017. <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/quiet-middle-eastern-front/>. (downloaded 23 Oct 2017.)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

basis. In tribal societies, regular armies were not widespread; and if we examine the current status, it can be stated that in today's tribal societies, regular armies are still not characteristic, or even if they exist, they only play a minor role. It is sufficient to think about Afghanistan or Libya.

The role of militias was important in the modern times as well. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Garibaldi – the hero of the Italian popular uprising – occupied Sicily with his militia that had only 1,000 members. All the members of his militia were volunteers. However, the situation is different in Syria today. While militias were previously employed in the absence of regular armies, such formations now have a determined purpose.

With regard to their establishing, militias have two important advantages in comparison to regular armies.<sup>4</sup> The first advantage is flexibility paired with quickness. The other one is their strong motivation manifesting itself in their mission, as opposed to the regular armies that are based on discipline, obedience and legal regulations.

In Syria, these advantages proved to be efficient. In the first months of the civil war, the regular army suffered defeats as a result of operational mistakes because they did not adapt to the transformed circumstances, and their morale was rather low. For the regime, the sole possibility was to turn to the popular, not organized, but loyal forces, which then carried out their activities with cruelty, getting out of any control. Later on, the Hezbollah forces also joined the fights. Despite the fact that they worked in a military organization, they also proved their enormous morale, rooted in their religious and ethnic motivation. They adapted to the new warfare conditions incredibly quickly. In the autumn of 2015, when Russia joined the fights, the local forces (the Syrian army, the rebels and the Hezbollah) had a positive effect on the Russian actions. Due to the local forces already fighting on the ground, Russia did not have to deploy its ground forces, which would have required a lot of time and special preparations, besides the imminent risks. The U.S. and its allies (including the Russians) were completely aware of the fact that deploying their own ground forces in the region would have been quite difficult. However, for the Russians, the deployment of their air force and the cooperation with the local (government) forces were self-evident.

The U.S. forces followed a similar logic in Northern Iraq in the fight against ISIS, during the liberation of Mosul. In spite of the differences of their war cultures and their doctrines, both great powers sought to avoid the employment of ground forces in Syria and Iraq. The reason for this is obvious: they aimed to avoid high losses of manpower. In such type of wars, the events can easily get out of control, even before the operations would achieve their aims. Among such circumstances – before the employment of military forces –, political leaders readily turn to militias, which, in fortunate conditions, can save them from uncertain and “undesirable” situations. From the viewpoint of the Russian interests, similarly to the logic of employing the separatists in Donetsk, the local forces – that is, the militias – offer themselves, which ensures the mysteriousness of the strategy in this region heavily burdened by tensions.

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<sup>4</sup> HACOHEN, Gershon: The Militia Option in Syria. BESA Centre Perspectives No. 616. October 16, 2017. <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/militias-option-syria/> (downloaded 23 Oct 2017)

Thus, Russia could avoid the domestic political inconveniences arising from the losses of its own forces by employing separatists in Ukraine and militia fighters in Syria. The Russian policy of Donetsk is clearly mirrored in the warfare waged by the Russians in Syria in the last three years. The ceasefire agreements also serve a double aim. While the Russian and the Syrian governments support the ceasefire, the militias – which are not subordinated to governments – oppose or simply do not comply with the agreement, and continue fighting. One can meet a similar logic in the Middle Eastern region as well. While President Mahmoud Abbas – as the President of the Palestinian National Authority – respects the relationship with the organizations concluding the Dayton Agreement, other forces, such as the Tanzim militias – which are not part of the command and control system – continue fighting; their structures are mixed, that is, they have both military and militia characteristics.

Militias can be fundamentally different from traditional organized armed forces, especially concerning their organizational structures, combat procedures, characteristics and roles. Their sizes are varying: an organization such as the Hezbollah or the Al-Nusra Front has a serious impact on the outcome of the fight as well. Their combat methods are usually fast; they seek to achieve results as soon as possible, but they do participate in the establishment of truces and sometimes even comply with them; however, if their interests require so, they violate such agreements.

### **3. The peculiarities of the warfare waged by militias**

The warfare waged by the militias of the Middle Eastern region has the following peculiarities<sup>5</sup>:

- *Lightning wars (“Blitzkriegs”)*. The reason behind these is that the size of the available forces is relatively small, which is accompanied by a low level of capabilities. Fights between militias often break out very quickly, without any transitional phase. The decision-making process of the warring sides is quick, which is a significant difference from the practice followed by traditional forces.
- *Politically unstable environment*. It can be stated that the stable state and the militia activity are incompatible with each other. Such forms of wars break out in politically unstable countries; these countries are burdened by domestic conflicts, which often lead to the collapse of the political system and the armed forces. The sole exemption is the situation when the war breaks out between two militias, and one of them is supported by the state or its armed forces, in order to achieve political aims.
- *Limited geographical area*. Militia wars often take place in a determined geographical area, which fact derives from the nature of the warring militias and their limited capabilities, compared to regular armed forces. It often happens that the weapons used by the militias and the territory itself do not enable them to extend their operational area geographically; moreover, they are afraid that they might lose the already obtained territories.

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<sup>5</sup> Future for Advanced Research and Studies, Issue No.281, 19 August 2017. <http://futureuae.com/>. (downloaded by the author 21 Aug 2017)

- *Small-scale clashes.* Due to the limited geographical area, the combat activities are usually small-scale, since the number of staff and the weaponry are not sufficient for engaging in larger-scale fights.
- *Employment of irregular tactics.* This, in practice, means mainly terrorist activities, including suicide attempts, taking into consideration that the majority of fights takes place on populated areas. As a result, militia fights resemble guerrilla wars more than traditional regular wars.
- *High number of civilian victims.* This is the most important peculiarity of militia fights, and the reason behind this is that the militias are not bound by international regulations and treaties on warfare, neither by moral and humanitarian principles. The relatively high number of civilian victims can be also attributed to the fact that militia fights mainly take place in populated areas.
- *Flexibility during negotiations.* This is not a characteristic of every militia war, especially not of those that break out for religious reasons. Militia wars are also different from regular ones in the respect that the state does not participate in them, which ensures larger room for political manoeuvring during negotiations. All this facilitates decision making and compromises.
- *The role of beneficiaries.* Rarely, but it sometimes happens that a militia wages a war against another one, for the sake of someone, with the support of a domestic or foreign entity. These wars often happen under inspiration by such a third party that wants to participate in the fight or on the contrary, wants to put an end to it. Sometimes these parties partake in the war, or are beneficiaries of it, in the period following the events.
- *Making use of the opportunities to take hostages.* In militia wars, hostages are generally taken to gain negotiating leverage. Although hostages are taken in regular wars as well, this is much more frequent in militia fights.
- *Integration and unification among groups.* This peculiarity is the most characteristic in the case of sectarian conflicts. It happened on several occasions that militias previously fighting against each other joined their forces on the basis of sectarian motifs.

Militia wars often contribute to increasing the instability of the given region, and can lead to such situations that make the further role of militias almost indispensable. Such a situation is when the militia acts as an alternative power factor in the life of the country, even against a given government. Obviously, this situation weakens the given government. The victory of a militia can create political influence for that organization on the regional or even on the international level. For a militia, a military victory can be a political success as well, such as in the case of the Peshmerga forces, who, however, could not materialize this success.

The activities of militias obviously prevail in the security field as well. The fight among several militias leads to instability within the given country, especially if they fight simultaneously to achieve similar aims. The fight of militias contributes to the strengthening of the – mainly illegal – arms trade. More modern weapons can lead to the better assertion of interests. In this field, the supporters of militias have a significant role. In the security field, the regional powers might have a role in the proliferation of weapons, but in a favourable situation, they might have a role in the

disarmament and disbanding of militias as well. Another method of managing militias can be their merging into the regular forces.

These considerations are important because in the period after ISIL/DAESH<sup>6</sup>, the militias operating on a sectarian basis might pose a threat in the region and beyond. Their activities extend beyond state borders, and it is not insignificant, who supplies them with what types of weapons. The militia wars of the region have long reached such a high level where the international community should be paying far greater attention to them.

#### **4. Case study: the capabilities of the Hamas and the Hezbollah**

If the capabilities and the activities of militias are discussed, it is worth examining two organizations in more detail: the Hamas and the Hezbollah.

Following the Second Lebanon War in 2006, Iran – with active support from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad – started to reorganize and rearm the Hezbollah. They mainly transported surface-to-surface missiles and hid them underground, with which they can reach Israeli targets. When the Israeli armed forces discovered the arrival of arms supplies, it sought to annihilate them by air strikes. This activity continued during the Syrian civil war, too. The Hezbollah participates in the civil war with approximately 7,000 fighters on the side of the Syrian government forces, and, simultaneously with this, the organization is continuously preparing for a war against Israel. Among the settlements in southern Lebanon, there are arms depots, missile launch sites and command posts at approximately 200 locations. There are supply and command posts in eastern Lebanon in the Beqaa Valley and in southern Beirut as well, primarily in heavily populated areas.<sup>7</sup> The leadership of Hezbollah made use of the Syrian civil war to replenish its depots as well. It is also of great importance that the Hezbollah fighters gained serious combat experience during the civil war.

To counterbalance this, Israel employed significant intelligence capabilities, to acquire information on the locations of weapons, with special attention to long-range GPS-guided missiles, air defence systems and those missiles of various purposes that, according to Uzi Rubin, the engineer of the Israeli air defence, “would change the skyline of Tel Aviv”.<sup>8</sup>

Israel regularly responded to the arms acquiring efforts of the Hezbollah; however, it seems that both sides seek to avoid escalation. Nevertheless, this situation is fragile; it can change easily, in the same way as other elements of the Syrian conflict, with special regard to the state and the non-state actors.

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<sup>6</sup> Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/Islamic State of Iraq and Sham. “DAESH” is the abbreviation of the Arab name of the organization.

<sup>7</sup> KERCHNER, Isabel: Israel says Hezbollah positions put Lebanese at risk. *New York Times*, May 12, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/13/world/middleeast/israel-says-hezbollah-positions-put-leanese-at-risk.html>. (downloaded by the author 22 Oct 2017)

<sup>8</sup> LAPPIN, Yakov: Missile defence expert warns of growing strategic threat. *The Jerusalem Post*, January 15, 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Precision-guided-rockets-missiles-becoming-strategic-threat-architect-of-missile-defense-system-warns-338299>. (downloaded 22 Oct 2017, accessed by the translator 23 Jun 2018)

After the Second Lebanese War, the military strength of the Hezbollah varies between 17,000 and 45,000 people, which numbers correspond to the strength of an army.

Following the Hezbollah-Israel war in 2006, the weaponry acquisition program of the Hezbollah includes four phases:

- Between 2006 and 2008, the organization acquired short- and medium-range missiles and placed them in its storages;
- between 2009 and 2012, long-range surface-to-surface and anti-ship missiles and drones were smuggled into Lebanon;
- between 2012 and 2016, it acquired precision guided ammunition and ballistic missiles, and trained special forces for deploying them in Israel;
- from 2016 on, it acquires precision guided missiles, and the non-guided ones are supplied with devices that make them guidable. Furthermore, the organization makes efforts to establish its own missile-warhead production capability in Lebanon and Syria, on the territories controlled by it.

The Hezbollah regularly receives weapons from Iran and Syrian arms factories by air transport. Weapons from Iran also frequently arrive in containers on board of commercial vessels.

The Hezbollah has 120,000-140,000 pieces of 45-km-range missiles, and a thousand medium-range and a few hundred longer-range missiles as well. The organization also has a few dozens of ballistic missiles and a few hundred cruise missiles. The ballistic missiles are of the Fateh-110 type – its Syrian name is M600 – and their range is 200-300 km.<sup>9</sup>

The Israeli military leadership is worried about the air defence capability of the Hezbollah, which, in case of an armed conflict, would significantly limit the future possibilities of the Israeli air force. According to intelligence information, the Hezbollah has SA-17 and SA-22 air defence missile systems; it received the latter ones from Iran.<sup>10</sup> From 2016, the organization has been using modern radars that are capable of detecting Israeli aircraft in the Lebanese airspace.<sup>11</sup> The Hezbollah has a few dozens of anti-ship missiles as well; these are Russian-produced Yakhont (SS-N-26 Strobile) type 300-km-range cruise missiles, and are able to reach coastal targets in Israel. Thus, the Iranian-produced C-802 anti-ship missiles – which have been available for a few years now – are complemented with this new type.<sup>12</sup>

According to Chief of the General Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces Lieutenant General Gadi Eizenkot, the Hezbollah lost 1,700 people in Syria between 2012 and

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<sup>9</sup> FATEH-110/M-600. <http://militaryedge.org/armaments/fateh-110m600/>. (downloaded 22 Oct 2017)

<sup>10</sup> GROSS, Judah Ari: If Hezbollah has the SA-17, it's a "big deal". The Times of Israel, 8 April 2016. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/if-hezbollah-has-the-sa-17-its-a-big-deal-expert-says/>. (downloaded 22 Oct 2017)

<sup>11</sup> LAPPIN op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

2017. This number is far greater than the loss of 600-700 people in the 2006 Lebanon War (Israel-Hezbollah War).<sup>13</sup>

The increase of the Hezbollah's military capabilities took place quickly and unexpectedly, in the most different fields. The appearance and the disappearance of new aims, and the tracking of changes required quick reactions by the other side.

The aforementioned examples prove that continuous intelligence activities and military technological developments are needed in connection with militias. If there is no close connection between military strategic intelligence and field reconnaissance, the reactions might be late. Reconnaissance flights of the air force serve mainly the purpose of detecting new military assets. Equipping aircraft with visual and electronic devices can result in a lot of useful information in connection with the smuggling and the storing of weapons. Accurate reconnaissance is complemented by precise air strikes. Today, serious results can only be achieved by merging intelligence data. The joint application of signal intelligence and satellite imagery provided by different sensors can ensure real-time reconnaissance. The computer-based automated data processing enables the quick handling of data, including the decoding of encrypted information. The Israeli Ofek-10 satellite provides great help to uncover arms delivery, which collects data on the important Middle Eastern targets independent of the weather conditions, in 24 hours a day.

Besides the air force, the submarines of the navy also have a significant role, which pursue visual and communications data collection without the arms-smuggling vessels being able of discovering them.<sup>14</sup> Among the branches of the armed forces, the ground forces also have an important part, since – by completely making use of the capabilities of the reconnaissance units – they not only collect data, but, in case of need, they participate in mopping up arms smuggling (for instance, with artillery strikes or by deploying the special forces). The aforementioned examples prove the importance of establishing a joint deterrent force, whose deployment – occasionally – is definitely needed.

The Hezbollah joined the Syrian-Iranian axis, with which Russia also associated in 2015. As a result, the role of the Hezbollah increased; furthermore, it gained such capabilities that only regular armies have. An attack against the Shiite-Russian axis became even more difficult with Russia's joining, since Israel does not wish to get mixed up in a situation of attacking the Russian forces. Even in the case of targeted strikes, this might still happen, since distinguishing the forces from each other is not a simple task.

In Syria, Russian military presence is focused on the Khmeimim Air Base (on the sea shore) and in the naval base in Tartus. 40-50 aircraft are stationed on the air base, which execute regular attacks against the rebels. The radars of the Russian S-

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<sup>13</sup> BRILLIANT, Joshua: Analysis: Hezbollah's recovery timetable. UPI, Sept 7, 2006. [https://www.upi.com/Business\\_News/Security-Industry/2006/09/07/Analysis-Hezbollahs-recovery-timetable-UPI-85321157638244/](https://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2006/09/07/Analysis-Hezbollahs-recovery-timetable-UPI-85321157638244/). (downloaded 17 Oct 2017)

<sup>14</sup> WEINTHAL, Benjamin: Former Navy Chief: Israel in a "secret war" to stop Iranian weapon smuggling to terrorists. The Jerusalem Post, April 6, 2014. <http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Former-Navy-chief-Israel-in-a-secret-war-to-stop-Iranian-weapons-smuggling-to-terrorists-347682>. (downloaded 22 Oct 2017)

300 and S-400 long-range air defence missile systems are able to monitor the whole territory of Israel, thus they can follow any Israeli air activity.<sup>15</sup> Besides, the Russian reconnaissance ships can continue a complete electronic reconnaissance with regard to the territory of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>16</sup>

From the regional viewpoint, the increase in the military capabilities of the Hezbollah is dangerous because if it launches an attack – even with a limited purpose – against Israel, the Israeli reaction might affect, besides Lebanon, Syria as well, which involves the possibility of a regional war, endangering the Russian-backed Assad regime, too. President Assad has long been unable to have an effect on the development of the Iranian-Hezbollah relations. Iran and the Hezbollah are able to form their relations as they wish. The Assad-regime supplies the Hezbollah with such weapons that the militant organization wants, since the Hezbollah supports the Syrian regime with military force as well.

An Israeli-Russian conflict could have unforeseeable risks: it is not a coincidence that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has been to Moscow several times to negotiate. The Israeli steps are largely influenced by how many weapons Iran delivers to the Hezbollah and in what way.

From the above, I think, it seems clearly what role a militant force can play in a conflict or may become a serious factor or even an army. The Hezbollah has become an important actor of the Shiite axis, which represents the largest threat to the security of Israel.

Nowadays, Israeli security analysts often discuss which militia represents the main threat to the country. There are opinions that the main danger is not the Hezbollah or the Shiite militias deployed on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, nor the Iranian nuclear capability, but the Palestinian State – to be established based on the Clinton Parameters – that would divide Jerusalem and force Israel to withdraw behind the 1967 borders.

The frequent changes of the Syrian military situation signal uncertainty. The establishment of a Palestinian state – where the power would be exerted by militias – would have unforeseeable consequences to the security of the country. The new challenges of the Hezbollah and the Hamas, supplemented by the Shiite militias, without the security warranties of foreign powers, again raise the risk of the establishment of a Palestinian state. If Israel cannot control the Jordan Valley, militias may appear in the West Bank and they could easily reach Israeli settlements. According to the Israeli strategy, if they withdraw from the occupied territories, which is interpreted by the international community as the end of the invasion of the Palestinian territories, then, in case of an attack by militias, no one can object to the armed forces' taking action against them. In such a case, victory would be easy and quick to achieve, due to the operational and technological advantage.

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<sup>15</sup> HAREL, Amos: Without effort, Russia restricted the strongest air force in the Middle East. Ha'aretz, Oct 23, 2016. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.748549>. (downloaded 22 Oct 2017)

<sup>16</sup> TIBON, Noam: The road from Jerusalem to Moscow runs through Damascus. The Times of Israel, December 12, 2016. <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-road-from-jerusalem-to-moscow-runs-through-damascus/> (downloaded 22 Oct 2017)



Since the Oslo Accords, dramatic changes have taken place in the international theatre as well. When the Oslo Accords were signed (in 1993 and in 1995), the USA was a superpower. The Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union disintegrated; the Cold War ended in Europe. With U.S. hegemony, the world set off on the road towards stability. In those years, the Arab states were in a period of crisis. The USA defeated Iraq in 1991. The U.S. technological advantage was unambiguous; besides, it was able to lead a coalition in which Arab states (Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia) also fought against Iraq. The realization of the weakness and the unfitness of the Palestinian National Authority for leadership opened the road towards the Oslo Accords.<sup>17</sup>

In the years that have passed since, U.S. hegemony gradually decreased, and Russia started to play an active and very influential role in the region. This phenomenon started to gain ground in the form of prolonging small wars, alongside a new logic. From Afghanistan to Yemen, from Syria to Libya radical forces appeared, which make the countries and, as a result, the West, unstable. Significant changes took place in the Israeli-Palestinian field as well; the times of mutual goodwill have passed, instead, the spirit of distrust and confrontation started to prevail.

The situation and the role of militias have changed; they make efforts to obtain effective precision-guided weapons, to establish an offensive cyber capability, and to have weapons that were earlier possessed only by state armed forces. Major General Herzl Halevi, the chief of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate, said about this situation – very aptly – that it is similar to one where “great military power is falling into irresponsible hands.”<sup>18</sup>

If – during the analysis of militias in the Middle East – we examine the situation of the Hamas, the organization can be assessed differently based on the different approaches. Some people unambiguously label it as a terrorist organization. However, if we want to be correct, it is worthy of attention that the Hamas has both a political and a military wing, and the political wing does not carry out attempts, and controls the Gaza Strip as the winner of the 2006 elections. The military wing (the al-Qassam Brigades), at the same time, can undoubtedly be labelled as a terrorist organization, leaving behind an extremely high number of fatal victims. The “adversary” of the Hamas, the Palestinian National Authority controls the West Bank; the relations between the two organizations ceased in 2006. In 2017, there were some steps at rapprochement, but a concrete result of this still could not be seen in the end of 2017. It can be stated about both organizations that they have some militia-like qualities, but their power is larger than that of an average militia; furthermore, the Palestinian National Authority functions quasi as a state organization as well, even if it cannot be named an independent state.

The Palestinian security sector has several weak points, which hinder every organization from giving a feeling of safety to the population living in the area. In other words: the Palestinian security forces are not capable of guaranteeing their own

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<sup>17</sup> HACOHEN, Gershon Maj. Gen. (ret.): Between the Iranian threat and the Palestinian threat. BESA Centre Perspectives No. 621. October 20, 2017. <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/iran-threat-palestinian-state/>. (downloaded by the author 23 Oct 2017)

<sup>18</sup> LAPPIN, Yakov: The IDF's priority: War readiness. BESA Centre Perspectives Paper No. 542. July 27, 2017. <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/idf-war-readiness/>. (downloaded by the author 22 Oct 2017, downloaded by the translator 2 Jul 2018)

security. The weakness of the Palestinian security forces is inherent in the fact that security depends on the political affiliation and not on the national interests. This runs counter also to the Oslo Accords, which excludes armed resistance. A further weakness of the Palestinian security forces is that the members themselves contribute to deteriorating security, with political backing. There are no organizations that would control the security forces, and this is due to the fact that human rights are often violated. Uncertainty is further increased also by the fact that Israel – with its political, economic and military power – contributes to the deepening of differences within the Palestinian security services.<sup>19</sup> The financial support – especially the distribution of foreign support – of the security services presents a challenge, too. During this, those requirements also have to be complied with that are laid down in the Israeli-Palestinian agreements. With the above examples, I aim to show that in the case of militias, even among relatively organized frameworks, several difficulties emerge.

In the Middle East, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Syria built up traditional military capabilities; however, they are unable to adequately take actions against asymmetric challenges, when on the “other” side, non-state factors play an increasing role and try to establish asymmetric capabilities, or sometimes aspire to fill the role of regular armed forces. While states attempt to establish the power relations among each other by conventional military capabilities, the role of non-state actors in domestic fights can be perceived more and more sharply.<sup>20</sup> Civil wars (civil conflicts) and popular protests undermined the traditional military balance of power. The military capabilities of Syria and Iraq have significantly weakened. Militarily, Syria is not competitive against any countries of the region today. However, militant organizations have strengthened, depending on their foreign support. However, their threat has to be assessed with a certain amount of criticism: no one can think it seriously that the Hezbollah or the Hamas would be able to defeat Israel. Non-state actors rather mean a risk than a threat to the security of the region and to the Arab-Israeli peace process. However, this does not mean that we do not need to pay attention to these forces.

The Syrian situation is a classic example of the roles of state and non-state actors, as well as of the intervention by foreign powers in accordance with their aims, during which they use the militias as they wish, or limit their spheres of action.

## 5. Syria and the militias

Syria had already represented a difficulty for the international community even before the Arab changes; however, the current situation is unprecedented. Since 2013, the United States of America both openly and covertly – but in a limited way – transported weapons to Syria, primarily to counterbalance Iran. However, covert shipments involve the risk that the weapons get into the hands of extremists. Open

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<sup>19</sup> IBHAIS, Hasan Mohammad: The performance of the Palestinian Authority Security Forces. <https://eng.alzaytouna.net/2017/07/13/academic-study-performance-palestinian-authority-security-forces/>. (downloaded by the author 23 Oct 2017)

<sup>20</sup> NERGUIZIAM, Aram: The Military Balance in a Shattered Levant: Conventional Forces, Asymmetric Warfare & the Struggle for Syria. CSIS, June 15, 2015. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/military-balance-shattered-levant>. (downloaded by the author 23 Oct 2017)

shipments of weaponry can only take place if the political situation is settled and conflicts are ended.

Several fiscal problems also appeared in the country, since the crude oil fields and other possibilities of income got under the control of ISIL/DAESH, the Al-Nusra Front and other militias. Russia looked on Syria as a shield against the West, and handled the country as a remnant of the Russian sphere of influence. On the other hand, for Iran, its old desire was fulfilled, since with its presence in Syria, it can support the Shiite militant organizations – primarily the Hezbollah – much more easily. Despite the permanent militarization of the opposition forces and their successes against Assad, the USA did not have and may not even currently have a proposition for solving the instability in Syria. Differences grow among the great powers, since China, Russia and the members of the UN Security Council do not want the repetition of the Libyan situation in Syria. The USA would also like to avoid a domino effect because of Syria, thus it wishes to keep the instability within the borders of the country. The potential regional extension of the Syrian situation could cause serious problems in Lebanon that struggles with a sectarian crisis; it could threaten the security of Israel and the stability of Jordan, trigger new tensions at the southern borders of Turkey, and cause the intensification of the Kurd question in Syria and Iraq. The U.S. support provided to some militant groups in Syria can only complicate the situation even further, and does not ensure a guarantee at all that Syria would become more stable or conclude peace with its neighbours.

In spite of the increasing pressure, no intention could be perceived in the USA, Europe or the Arab world to carry out a military intervention in Syria. It has to be acknowledged that Syria is not Libya. President Assad's Syria received strong political, economic and military support from Russia and China, while in the case of Libya, there was no serious "sponsor". An eventually controlled or uncontrollable Syrian collapse would cut the Iranian cord towards the Levant, would have an effect on the USA and its allies and cause uncertainty for several years. Therefore, the USA makes its best to help finding a peaceful solution.

Today, it does not seem possible that a new leadership would agree with Israel regarding the future of the Golan Heights; conclude a peace treaty with Israel, and, in the frameworks of this, could prevent Palestinian radicals from carrying out attempts on the occupied territories and beyond. From 2014 on, the Al-Quds forces of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps provide serious training support to the Alawite and other Shiite irregular forces, which help the activities of the Syrian regular forces as well. If the Syrian state structures weaken further, militias and warlords will determine the life of Syria in the future. In recent years, the Syrian army has gone through a process, during which the pro-regime Alawite line has strengthened. If the Syrian armed forces strengthen from the institutional side as well, the role of militias in the life of the country will gradually decrease. The Syrian rebel groups – whose role is larger than the external and the local opposition forces – are not real subjects of the pluralism or the political stability desired by the West. Among the members of the rebel groups, there are a large number of soldiers who deserted from the army. Neither these groups nor the guerrilla organizations – established from civilians – are capable of implementing the Syrian transition. All these make it more difficult to end the hostilities and establish a stable and well-functioning government that protects the rights of minorities.

In Syria, a serious challenge is represented by the Jihadist terrorist organizations inspired by the Al-Qaeda and ISIL/DAESH. The organizations of the Syrian resistance fighters are isolated from each other, while the Jihadist organizations could easily obtain weapons, and recruitment became easier for them, since they practically attracted young people without perspectives. The radical organizations could not defeat their internal differences; however, they relatively easily obtained weapons. The Al-Qaeda groups, Assad's Syria, Iran and the Hezbollah threaten the USA and Saudi Arabia; however, the well-known proverb "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" is not applicable here. Instead of this, one could say that "the enemy of my enemy is my enemy as well" is valid.

Neither the Assad regime nor Iran are members to the 2014 Jeddah Declaration, in which the parties committed themselves to fight against ISIL/DAESH. Separately from each other, the USA, Iran, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Turkey all decided that they would fight against the Islamic State and other similar organizations. It could be perceived that the commitment of the external actors to solve the Syrian crisis increased in parallel with the escalation of the situation. Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey have become the supporters of the armed uprising against Assad. The USA and the European countries implemented external pressure and organized a coalition against Assad. Russia, China and Iran joined in order to preserve something from the Assad regime, but primarily from the regional status quo.<sup>21</sup>

According to the worst scenario, Syria would collapse or remain an unstable country for a long time and get into regional sectarian conflicts, with which it might pull Iraq and Lebanon into regional proxy warfare. One thing is for sure: the regional role of Syria has significantly weakened. If the civil war continues, Syria will weaken further economically as well.

### **Conclusion**

All in all, it can be stated that the period of the apparent stability of the region – which means the period between the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Cold War and the Arab changes that have started in Tunisia – has ended, and the current situation is going to continue approximately for a decade. The sectarianism that extends from North Africa through the Levant to Afghanistan cannot be left out of consideration. Iran has made several attempts at making use of the sectarian phenomenon, and at taking action against the USA and its regional allies. The allies of the USA (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Qatar) also made efforts to exploit the Shiite-Sunni division in order to influence Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and, in a broader sense, Iran.

Non-governed or not efficiently governed countries provide a hotbed for Salafist-Jihadist groups, such as ISIL/DAESH, the Al-Nusra Front or the Egyptian Ansar Bait al-Maqdis. Simultaneously with the rivalry of the Gulf States, the Levant

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<sup>21</sup> NERGUIZIAM, Aram: The Military Balance in a Shattered Levant: Conventional Forces, Asymmetric Warfare & the Struggle for Syria. CSIS, June 15, 2015. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/military-balance-shattered-levant>. (downloaded 23 Oct 2017)

also provides a large space to Salafist-Jihadist groups, which have made efforts to increase their influence in the region since 2011.

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TAMÁS KISVÁRI

**ANALYTICAL INQUIRY OF THE LEADERSHIP CHANGES WITHIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA AND THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY**

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**Abstract**

The international media can report the internal political affairs of the People's Republic of China only in a limited extent and quite biasedly with a negative tone, mostly owing to the fact that the internal political issues of China are not transparent at all, and the increasing economic and political influence of the country induces fear. The year 2017-18 was the period of personnel changes, but contrary to expectations, the new generation of leaders has not become members of the top leaders' group yet. The reason for this is rooted within the confusing struggle against corruption. As a result, the generational change will be probably postponed to 2027. The party congress in October 2017, as well as the sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held in March 2018 showed us that there isn't any kind of threat to the supremacy of the Communist Party of China, and the legislation has confirmed and reinforced all the decisions of the Party Congress. The Chinese Communist Party's control over the armed forces is obvious; however, military leaders can exert a huge influence over the decisions of the Party, due to the heavy military presence within its leadership.

**Keywords:** Xi Jinping, People's Republic of China, Communist Party of China, People's Liberation Army of China, leadership change, generation change.

As the world's most populated country and the second biggest economy in the world, China has been acquiring an increasingly important role within the international political and security environment. Aside from international factors, the domestic events also have a huge effect on China's development. One of the most prominent events is the leading personnel change, held every five years. Outside of China, only a limited amount of analyses is published on the subject, due to the fact that the country has a unique one-party-based political system, which does not allow much insight into its functioning. The internal political events can only be understood through analytical work and by uncovering interlinked factors, as the country's leaders are not politically obliged to explain the motivations behind governmental decisions to the Chinese and the international public.

Every fifth year, the Communist Party of China (CCP)<sup>1</sup> holds a Party Congress for leadership change, during which the Party's new Central Committee is elected. Then, the Committee elects the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, as well as

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<sup>1</sup> 中国共产党

its Standing Committee – which currently counts seven members –, the General Secretary as well as the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China (CMCCPC<sup>2</sup>). A few months later, the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China (NPC)<sup>3</sup> and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)<sup>4</sup> hold simultaneous sessions, during which the Communist Party’s decisions are codified. In addition, the two organizations elect their own leaders, the state leadership of the People’s Republic of China, the President and the Deputy President, as well as the members of the Central Military Commission of the People’s Republic of China.<sup>5</sup>

The international media regularly portrays the current domestic events in China in a biased fashion, using a negative tone. In relation to the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress, the bulk of the major Western European news agencies reported mostly on the postponed generation change and Xi Jinping’s (习近平) efforts to expand the sphere of his authority to such an extent that was in the case with Former General Secretary of the Communist Party Mao Zedong (毛泽东). Before the joint session of the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the majority of the related western headlines discussed the plans for the constitution’s amendment, which was aimed at abolishing the article prescribing that the president can only remain in office for two, five year-long cycles. Thus, the change allowed President Xi to stay in power until the end of his days. In one of his private speeches, Donald Trump, the President of the United States of America has sneeringly congratulated Xi on this change.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the international media’s reports, it cannot be clearly stated from full conviction how China will look like after the 20<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2022, and whether General Secretary and President Xi Jinping will remain in office till 2022, 2027 or later, (until his death), as most likely, not even the Chinese leadership has any knowledge about these questions yet. For that matter, it hugely decreases the possibility of Xi’s a life-long leadership that it contradicts the party constitution had been adopted at the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress, which clearly forbids state leaders from remaining in office until the end of their lives.<sup>7</sup>

In order to understand the personnel-related decisions, it is necessary to revise the realistic expectations that preceded them; the factors that influenced the decisions that diverged from anticipations; the background of certain decisions and the environment in which they had been made; and also their consequences. Aside from

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<sup>2</sup> 中国共产党中央军事委员会

<sup>3</sup> 中华人民共和国全国人民代表大会

<sup>4</sup> 中国人民政治协商会议

<sup>5</sup> 中华人民共和国中央军事委员会

<sup>6</sup> Tom PHILLIP: Maybe we'll give that a shot: Donald Trump praises Xi Jinping's power grab, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/mar/04/donald-trump-praises-xi-jinping-power-grab-give-that-a-shot-china> 2018. 03. 04. (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>7</sup> Constitution of the Communist Party of China, Xinhua, 28 pages, 38. §, p. 23. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf) (downloaded 21 March 2018)



studying the political leadership, one ought to analyse the changes within the country's military leadership as well, since – according to the Chinese Constitution – the People's Liberation Army<sup>8</sup> is controlled by the Communist Party of China.<sup>9</sup>

The experience I obtained during my diplomatic service in China has led me to the conclusion that one cannot analyse Chinese decisions by using Western democratic analogy, due to the country's different political system and leadership culture. Governmental decisions in China ought to be interpreted after they have been made, considering how they can come up to earlier expectations. In addition – based on my experiences –, one must also accept the fact that the hugely centralized Chinese political system easily adapts to the changing environment, and the domestic decisions cannot be significantly influenced from the outside. Moreover, one can never learn the entire truth, as Chinese policy makers decide behind closed doors, usually in a rather non-transparent manner.

### **China's international role is increasing, yet its non-transparent politics remains**

Before I could discuss the decisions made on the simultaneous sessions of the National Congress and the legislation, I must examine a few factors which are crucial in understanding the dynamics in the People's Republic of China.

In my experience, compared to its counterparts in Western democracies, the possibilities of the media in China are rather restricted, making it extremely difficult for the European and North American readers with an interest in the subject – not to mention the Chinese citizens themselves – to form a realistic image of China, as well as the operation of the state and the Communist Party. The Chinese political leaders – contrary to their Western “colleagues” – do not directly appear in the local and international media, and they do not react to international events in Twitter and Facebook entries. They can only be seen making communiqués on TV, but they do not give any interviews or appear on live broadcasts. All channels of the China Central Television (CCTV) simultaneously screen the very same set of news, in the same format. The viewers are informed about what the top leaders of the Communist Party and the state have done and with whom they have met on that day through the bulletins running through the screen, which is later followed by a summary of the events, accompanied by video recordings. The country's leaders almost never give any interviews, and when they do so, they only answer those questions that they have previously agreed upon with the interviewer, and which are suited to their interests. They never analyse domestic events or the inner proceedings of the Party. Unlike in Western democracies, the Chinese media does not have the opportunity to unexpectedly ask Chinese politicians about a current event when they arrive at a programme or hold a break amidst one. In China, the local and the international media can only get an image of the leaders' intentions and deeds by listening to their

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<sup>8</sup> 中国人民解放军

<sup>9</sup> Constitution of the Communist Party of China, Xinhua, 28 pages, General part – p. 7. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

speeches held at important events, such as the congresses of the Party or the sessions of the National People's Congress or other meetings. But even in those cases, the local media can only report in a way that is completely aligned with the ideas of the Chinese censorship organizations and the policy of the Communist Party. The only issues the media can report on are the decisions themselves, but the media are never able to analyse the process leading up to them, due to the different decision-making mechanisms in the country.

According to its constitution,<sup>10</sup> China is building a centralized socialist system, which means that the parties are not competing against each other. As a result, there are no political campaigns preceding the congresses of the Chinese Communist Party (which are organized every fifth year), or the simultaneous sessions of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress a few months later; and the citizens cannot learn about the affected leaders' opinion or political programme. The elections are held in silence, and the media report only on its results. Even though sometimes the Chinese leaders would write editorials in the Communist Party's official newspaper, but these articles only discuss general topics and ideas described in broad terms. They never aim to inform the public, but rather to test its reaction to the subject.

All of this renders it extremely difficult for the international media – which operate according to western norms in North American and European democratic systems – to report in a way that captures the attention of its audience, which is used to reading tabloid-style gossips and scandals. We must concede that news confirming that everything had gone according to plans during the Communist Party's National Congress would not attract too many readers in democratic systems.

Moreover – in a very biased way –, media reports on China fit well into the notion that Samuel P. Huntington has predicted in his work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, back in 1996. Huntington prognosticated that after the Cold War had ended, civilizations would engage in clashes with one another, and a conflict between the West, China and the Islamic world would be unavoidable.<sup>11</sup> According to the current power relations, this would mean a series of conflict between the United States of America and China, which – considering that these two countries provide 40% of the world's GDP – would have a catastrophic effect on every country's economy.

As for the political system, the state leadership and the leadership of the Communist Party have completely fused together. Between 2002 and 2017, the Chinese state leaders have all been elected from the 7-9 members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China, which means that the president, the prime minister, the heads of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress have also happened to

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<sup>10</sup> Constitution of the Communist Party of China, Xinhua, 28 pages, 38§, Website of the National People's Congress, Chapter 1, § 1 and § 3 [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content\\_1372963.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372963.htm), (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>11</sup> Samuel P. HUNTINGTON: A civilizációk összecsapása és a világrend átalakulása, <http://docplayer.hu/12196019-Samuel-p-huntington-a-civilizaciok-osszecsapasa-es-a-vilagrend-atalakulasa.html> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

be the four most influential leaders of the Communist Party of China. The only possible exception from this is the period between the leadership change in the party and the session of the National People's Congress, since during that time, the Party's leadership and the state leadership are not identical, therefore it is temporarily unclear who governs the country. In this period, no significant decisions are made in China, which also well-demonstrates the fact that the Montesquieu principle about the division of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of power – which applies to Western democracies – does not hold true in China. In the country, all three branches are under the direct control of the Communist Party of China, and as such the heads of the legislative, executive and jurisdictional branches are the same people who control the Party.

One also should not forget about China's economic development, which determines the country's importance in the international system; therefore, it affects also the international role of its president. At the same time, all of this renders comparing the options and possibilities of the current and former leaders impossible. If we take a look at the development of the Chinese GDP, back in 1992, the amount was around one-fifteenth of the American GDP at that time. However, in 2016, the difference between the Chinese and the American GDP has decreased to 60%. Back in 1992, the GDP per capita in the United States of America had been seventy times higher than in China; however, by 2016, it was only seven times higher. Considering the fact that every Chinese citizen benefits from this huge economic development (even if not to the same extent) – is well represented by the data that the GDP per capita had been 366 USD in 1992 and 8,123 USD in 2016, which is a twenty-two fold increase –, it has provided the Communist Party a serious legitimacy.<sup>12</sup> The negative consequence of the development is the ever-increasing gap between the poor and the rich, the urban and the agrarian rural population, as well as the developed eastern and the more backwards western territories. The country's leaders are seeking ways to solve these problems, which pose the biggest threat to China's long-term stability. As a consequence of the economic development, by 2016, China has already had 568 dollar-billionaires, exceeding in number the billionaires in the United States of America (535 persons<sup>13</sup>), as well as significantly surpassing the number of Indian billionaires (131). If we examine tendencies, the most recent HURUN report<sup>14</sup> writes about 819 Chinese and 571 American billionaires. However, China is the only country among those included in the billionaires-list that identifies itself as a socialist state – more accurately, it maintains a socialist system with Chinese characteristics, having a state-controlled, centralized market economy. It is a special feature of the system that billionaires are also indirectly involved in politics. At the moment, as many as 153 billionaires (whose accumulated fortune accounts to 646 billion American dollars) have been elected to the two "houses" of the Chinese parliament; the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference –

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<sup>12</sup> GDP by Country – Statistics from the World Bank, <https://knoema.com/mhrzolg/gdp-by-country-statistics-from-the-world-bank-1960-2016?country=China>, Accessed on 21 March 2018

<sup>13</sup> Robert FRANK: China has more billionaires than US: Report; CNBC 24 February 2016 <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/02/24/china-has-more-billionaires-than-us-report.html> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>14</sup> HURUN Global Rich List 2018, <http://www.hurun.net/EN/Article/Details?num=2B1B8F33F9C0> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

albeit this tendency has been becoming less prevalent. The number of Chinese billionaires involved in politics has decreased from the earlier 209 persons; however, their cumulated capital has increased by 20%, compared to the riches of those elected in 2012.<sup>15</sup>

It also might be important to mention that China is the biggest exporter of goods in the world, and within a few years' time, it could become the biggest importer as well.<sup>16</sup> As a result, it is in the interest of all countries of the world – including China's greatest rival, the United States of America – that China continues its steady development, even if it means that in the long term, it will have the world's biggest economy as a result. For that matter, China's population of 1.4 billion people – which is three times larger than the population of the entire European Union and four times larger than that of the United States of America, which currently owns the world's biggest economy – offers a good basis for such a development.

### **Decisions made on the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China**

Between 18 and 24 October, the Communist Party of China held its congress for leadership change, during which the Central Committee of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, the Political Bureau, as well as the Standing Committee of the former organization have been elected. The Party has also added some new ideas of General Secretary Xi Jinping to the constitution, such as “Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a New Era” and “The Chinese Dream.”<sup>17</sup> Following the Party Congress, the international and domestic media emphasized the facts that the expected personnel change within the Communist Party of China has not taken place; the new high leadership of the Party is comprised of people in their sixties; and re-elected General Secretary Xi Jinping has gained so much power within the Party that his influence matches that of the former Mao Zedong.

Some of the statements can be verified; however, the conclusions drawn from them are excessive. By using more thorough analytical-evaluative approach, the following can be concluded:

Paragraph 20 of the Party's Constitution determines the National Congress' duties for the following five-year period, which includes hearing and approving the reports of the Central Committee and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection; reviewing the most important issues affecting the Communist Party; amending its constitution if necessary and electing the Central Committee and the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection. Paragraph 21 of the Constitution

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<sup>15</sup> Kelvin CHAN: China has fewer rich lawmakers but their fortunes have grown; <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/sns-bc-as--china-political-fortunes-20180302-story.html>, (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>16</sup> China Likely to Overtake U.S. as Largest Importer Within 5 Years, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-12-04/china-likely-to-overtake-u-s-as-largest-importer-within-5-years> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>17</sup> Constitution of the Communist Party of China, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

specifies that at most only one-fifth of the Central Commission's permanent and alternate members can be replaced during each National Congress, which ensures continuity within the Party. In addition, its Political Bureau, its Standing Committee, the General Secretary, as well as the members of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China are to be elected by the newly elected Central Committee.

The first question is whether it is necessary to hold a generational change within the Communist Party of China every 10 years. If we take a look at the leadership system that has been in effect till now, we can conclude that Xi Jinping is the leader of the fifth generation of the Communist Party, since the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, back in 1 October 1949. However, the period between 2012 and 2013 was the first time in the history of the Party and the People's Republic of China when the two party leaders and two high-ranking state leaders – the General Secretary, the Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China, the President and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China – have been replaced at the same time, after 10 years. Of course, there has been a few month-long-difference between the National Congress and the National People's Congress. Under Mao Zedong (毛泽东, 1893-1976), there were not even any notions of a regular personnel change, while Deng Xiaoping (邓小平, 1904-1997) have fulfilled the position of China's highest-ranking leader, despite the fact that he had never been the President of China or a General Secretary of the Communist Party of China before; instead, he had been the Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China for more than eight years, and also fulfilled the position of the Chairman of the Military Commission of the People's Republic of China for less than seven years. His successor, Jiang Zemin (江泽民, 1926-) had been General Secretary for 13 years and president for 10 years, but he also had been the President of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China and the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China, too. Moreover, the international media considered him to be the only "threat" to Xi Jinping during the leadership change in 2012-2013. Hu Jintao (胡锦涛, 1942-), the fourth generation leader of China had been secretary-general and president for 10 years, but only fulfilled during two terms the position of the Central Military Commission's Chairman for only eight years.<sup>18</sup> *Based on the above facts, saying that Xi Jinping has broken a decade-long tradition seems a little far-fetched. It is also worth examining at what age the leaders decided to retire. Mao Zedong stayed in power till the end of his life, while Deng Xiaoping has resigned from his position as the Chairman of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China at the age of 85. Jiang Zemin was 79 years old when he handed over the same post to then-President Hu Jintao. Chairman Hu was 69 when – for the first time in history – resigned from both of his high-ranking positions at the very same time to General Secretary Xi Jinping; and a few months later, resigned from his leadership position as the President of China and the 1<sup>st</sup>-ranking member of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China as well.*

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<sup>18</sup> <https://baike.baidu.com/> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

*The other crucial factor in relation to the generational change is the identity of the potential successors. In connection with the personnel change that began in 2007, it is important to note that current President Xi Jinping and current Prime Minister Li Keqiang (李克强) have joined the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China – which had been expanded to have 25 members and its Standing Committee to have nine members from seven at that time - at the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of China. Xi Jinping became the Deputy President of the People’s Republic of China in 2008, while Li Keqiang has acquired the position of Deputy Prime Minister in the same year. If we examine the age distribution within the 25-member Political Bureau, in 2012, almost all of its members (with the exception of two persons) were born between 1945 and 1955. The aforementioned two persons, Sun Zhengcai (孙政才) and Hu Chunhua (胡春华) were born a decade later, in 1963. According to expectations, they were the ones that might have replaced Xi Jinping as the General Secretary and Li Keqiang as the Prime Minister and the second highest-ranking member of the Communist Party in 2022.*

A few weeks before the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress, in September 2017, the Political Bureau has expelled Sun Zhengcai from the Party for grave disciplinary offences – a term usually used for the suspicion of corruption-related crimes.<sup>19</sup> The decision – in addition to the expulsion of 11 other Central Committee members – has been approved by the Central Committee’s seventh congress as well.<sup>20</sup> As a result, only one person from the 25-member Political Bureau – Hu Chunhua – remained as the only candidate for the generational change.

By reviewing the political career of Sun Zhengcai, it can be concluded that in 2012 autumn, following the National Congress, he had been nominated as the Party Secretary of Chongqing (重庆) city. Chongqing was the city where the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress’ anti-corruption fight had begun. This is related to the events in February 2012, when a scandal broke out in the city, when its police chief – and also vice mayor of the city – Wang Lijun (王立军) accused the Chongqing’s Party Secretary Bo Xilai (薄熙来) of corruption, and charged his wife, Gu Kailai (谷开来) with murdering an English businessman. The most interesting aspect of the case is that in February 2012, Wang Lijun escaped to the General Consulate of the United States of America to ask for asylum (which he did not receive). It was at the consulate where he has first spoken about the above charges.<sup>21</sup> Wang had been sentenced to 15 years of prison on charge of treason; Bo, who was member of the Political Bureau, had received life imprisonment for engaging in corruption and abusing power, while his wife had been sentenced to two years of suspended death penalty, with a two-year-trial on charge of homicide; but her sentence had been later changed into life imprisonment after the two years have passed. To sum it up, Sun Zhengcai has become one of the 120 “tigers” – province-level or even higher-ranking officials – who had been put on trial on the

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-09/29/c\\_1121747644.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/2017-09/29/c_1121747644.htm) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>20</sup> <http://xhpfmapi.zhongguowangshi.com/share/index.html?docid=2408755> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>21</sup> Steven Lee MYERS – Mark LANDLER, Frenzied Hours for U.S. on Fate of a China Insider, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/18/world/asia/details-emerge-on-us-decisions-in-china-scandal.html> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

suspicion of committing corruption following the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress in 2012. Thus, removing a potential leader from power due to corruption-related reasons is not a unique case.

As for the election of the new party leadership in 2017, and the potential re-election of former leaders, the age distribution of the current set of party leaders must be thoroughly examined, as the practice of the last 15 years has proved that no person above the age of 67 had been elected to the Political Bureau. In such a way, it could be ensured that after their mandate of 5 years comes to an end, each leader retires before they turn 72. The party's constitution does not determine an exact age limit; instead, its paragraph 38 says the following: *'Party members in leadership positions at every level, whether elected through democratic procedures or appointed by a leading body, do not hold posts for life and can be transferred from or relieved of their posts. Officials whose age and health make them unfit to continue working should retire according to state regulations.'*<sup>22</sup>

In accordance with the above rule, it was clear that out of the seven members of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee, only two persons – Xi Jinping, born in 1953 and Li Keqiang, born in 1955 – could be re-elected, as the remaining five people were born between 1945-1948. If 67 years would have remained as the age limit of re-election, Xi Jinping could not have been re-elected in 2022, but Li Keqiang – based on his age – could have received another five year-long mandate. However, the age limit has been changed to 70 years.

Regarding the state leaders, the National People's Congress has modified its age limit in 2015, so now the maximum age for state leaders at the time of their election is 70 years, and a given state leader can remain in his position until he turns 75.<sup>23</sup> This measure will most likely be introduced at the National Congress of 2022, which means that – according to the law – Xi Jinping can remain General Secretary for an additional five years. By the way, the increasing age limit corresponds to the 2018 law which significantly raised the age limit of old age pension for regular Chinese citizens as well. Up until now, women in China could have retired at the age of 55, and men could retire at 60, which ages will be uniformly and gradually increased to 65. Retirement at this age will be introduced in 2030 for men and 2045 for women.<sup>24</sup>

During the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress, in accordance with expectations, the new Political Bureau and its Standing Committee have been elected. Based on the above, the most important question is the age of the elected members. Baidu, the biggest Chinese search engine – the Chinese equivalent of Google<sup>25</sup> – proves useful in answering these questions:

The Standing Committee's members are Xi Jinping (born in June 1953), Li Keqiang (born in July 1955), Li Zhanshu (栗战书, (born in August 1950), Wang Yang

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<sup>22</sup> Constitution of the Communist Party of China, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>23</sup> <https://baike.baidu.com/> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.66law.cn/special/txnl/> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>25</sup> <https://baike.baidu.com/> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

(汪洋, born in March 1955), Wang Huning (王沪宁, born in October 1955), Zhao Leji (赵乐际, born in March 1957), and Han Zheng (韩正, born in April 1954).

As for the positions filled by these persons within the party, Xi Jinping is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, Wang Huning is the Secretary of the Central Committee and Zhao Leji is the President of the Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party. At the time of the 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress, Li Keqiang was still the Prime Minister of the government approved by the National People's Congress. Each of the elected members of the Standing Committee has been part of the Political Bureau of the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress' Central Committee. Regarding the high-ranking state leadership positions held by the persons elected during the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, the 13<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress was expected to elect Li Zhanshu as its President, Li Keqiang as the Prime Minister and Han Zheng as the Deputy Prime Minister of China. All of these actually happened in March 2018.

The ages of the elected persons show that all members – with the exception of Li Zhanshu – can remain in their positions within the top leadership of the Party for 5 years from 2022, until the delayed leadership change in 2027.

The remaining 18 members of the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of China are the following:

Ding Xuexiang (丁薛祥, born in September 1962), Wang Chen (王晨, born in December 1950), Liu He (刘鹤, born in January 1952), Xu Qiliang (许其亮, born in March 1950), Sun Chunlan (孙春兰, born in May 1950), Li Xi (李希, born in October 1956), Li Qiang (李强, born in July 1959), Li Hongzhong (李鸿忠, born in August 1956), Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪, born in May 1950), Yang Xiaodu (杨晓渡, born in October 1953), Zhang Youxia (张又侠, born in July 1950), Chen Xi (陈希, born in September 1953), Chen Quanguo (陈全国, born in November 1955), Chen Min'er (陈敏尔, born in September 1960), Hu Chunhua (胡春华, born in April 1963) Guo Shengkun (郭声琨, born in October 1954), Huang Kunmin (黄坤明, born in November 1956), Cai Ji (蔡奇, born in December 1955).

Out of the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, only Xu Qiliang and Hu Chunhua were members of the Political Bureau of the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress, which means that 16 new persons have been added to the body. Beijing Party Secretary Cai Ji has not been a member of the Central Committee of the 18th Congress either, while Ding Xuexiang, Li Xi, Li Qiang and Huang Kunmin were only alternate members of the former Central Committee, while 11 new members have been elected from the members of the above-mentioned body. Sun Chunlan is the only woman within the 25-member Political Bureau. General Xi Qiliang and General Zhang Youxia, two generals of the People's Liberation Army are the vice-chairmen of the Central Military Committee.

Based on the above, if the Communist Party of China sticks to its tradition – that it observed this year as well –, and only elects people to the Standing Committee who



had been members of the former Political Bureau, then – based on their age – only Hu Chunhua and Ding Xuexiang are the only possible candidates for the position of the Communist Party’s next generation leadership – presuming that in 2027, Xi Jinping – who will be 74 years old at that time – will hand over the power to the next generation. However, in connection to the election of the members of the Political Bureau’s Standing Committee, we must also take into consideration that in 2007, both Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang have become Standing Committee members, at the same time when they were admitted to the Political Bureau as well. Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility that in 2022, new leaders – who could comprise the next generation of the leadership – will be elected to the Political Bureau’s Standing Committee directly from the members of the Central Committee.

By examining the age distribution of the Political Bureau members elected in 2017, we can conclude that in 2022, the body will have at least six members over the age of 70, which means they will have to be replaced. Regarding the two potential candidates for the personnel change, it is important to note that Ding Xuexiang was the Party Secretary of Shanghai between 2007 and 2013, and from 2013, he has been the deputy leader of the Central Committee’s Party Secretariat and the head of the Presidential Office, which means that he can be considered President Xi’s confidant. Hu Chunhua had been the Party Secretary of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region between 2009 and 2012, and filled the same position in Guangdong Province from 2012 to 2017. In March 2018, the National People’s Congress elected him as Deputy Prime Minister. Based on the above facts, we can conclude that Ding Xuexiang is the potential successor of Xi Jinping, while Hu Chunhua will most likely replace Li Keqiang.

To sum it up, at the 2022 National Congress, the members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau – with the exception of one person – will be able to remain in their seats for an additional five years. The two new leaders of the next generation – who will most likely be Ding Xuexiang and Hu Chunhua – can possibly join the organization. As a result, the generational change can happen in accordance with the scenario that started in 2007, but – contrary to expectations – it would take place five years later, which means it would begin in 2022 and end in 2027. At least six persons within the Political Bureau will have to be replaced, as they will reach the upper age limit by that time. Based on the above, in 2022, no changes are expected to take place within the Communist Party’s leadership with the exception of that the Standing Committee will be expanded from seven to nine members.

### **The Party Congress’ decisions regarding the Chinese armed forces**

The Communist Party’s decisions are always crucial from the aspect of the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) operation, as the new Central Committee – elected at the Congress – elects the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China (CMCCPC). In the past two decades, it has been a generally established practice that the session of the National People’s Congress automatically elects the CMCCPC members into the Central Military Commission of the People’s Republic of China (CPPCC) as well.

An entire paragraph within the preamble of the Party's constitution deals with the party leadership of the People's Liberation Army, and makes it clear that both the armed forces and the People's Armed Police (中国人民武装警察部队) are under the direct control of the Communist Party. The leadership and personnel of the People's Liberation Army must follow President Xi Jinping's orders, especially those regarding the modernization of the armed forces. The most important duties of the armed forces and each armed organization are to protect the state and participate in building and developing the socialist system. The party constitution determines that a basic party body must be formed within every subunit, unit and higher unit above company-level within the armed forces.

The 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress – held in 2018 – has a great importance for another reason, too: in 2013, during its third session, the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress' Central Committee has announced military reforms aimed at creating a combat-ready joint armed force which is able to conduct successful military activity within the framework of the modern, information-based combat environment. The actual measures of the reform have begun in January 2015, which transformed the leadership of the different services within the armed forces, introduced new elements, such as the land forces' command and the strategic support command, and renamed the Second Artillery Corps to strategic and tactical Rocket Force. By deploying three navy fleets (the northern, eastern and southern fleets subordinated to the three /northern, eastern and southern/ regional commands) and the strategic-level assault forces of the tactical missile troops to the bases of five new regional commands of the ground forces and the air force – which already had been deployed to the same area –, the Chinese leadership has built combined-arms regional commands. In addition, they have also reformed the four chief departments (General Staff Department, Political Work, Logistic Support and General Armaments) operating under the Central Military Commission, and set up 15 separate organizational elements at their bases. The restructuring of the Central Military Commission was the only reform that could not begin before the Party Congress, as its members can only be elected during the congress for a five year-long period, which is parallel with the mandate of Central Committee's members.

The Military Commission of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress is comprised of the Commission's Chairman, two vice-chairmen and eight additional members. The first member is the defence minister, followed by the leaders of the four chief directorates (General Staff Department, Political Work, Logistic Support and General Armaments)) and the commanders of the three independent services (Navy, Air Force, Second Artillery).

Considering the measures introduced within the framework of the military reforms, there were expectations that the commanders of the two new services – the ground forces and the strategic support forces – will join the Central Military Commission.

Before reviewing the transformation of the Central Military Commission, it is worth taking a closer look at the age distribution within the Central Military Commission of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party. Within the armed forces, the military officers and commanders follow a strict set of rules, according to which they leave the organization when they have reached the age of retirement. However, the relevant

rules do not prescribe an exact age limit for the members of the Central Military Commission. The commanders of the regional commands are the leaders directly subordinated to the Central Military Commission. These people – who are performing military service as generals, or temporarily as lieutenant generals until they are promoted – have to retire at the age of 65. In the past few years, the members of the Central Military Commission usually remained in their positions until they turned 72. In the knowledge of the above, let us examine the members of the former leadership, based on their age and position, in the correct protocol order:

General Fan Changlong (范长龙), born in May 1947 Vice-Chairman of the Committee, former Commander of Jinan Military District), Xu Qiliang (许其亮), born in March 1950. Vice-Chairman of the Committee, former Air Force Commander), Chang Wanquan (常万全), born in January 1949. Defense Minister, former Director of the General Armaments Department), Fang Fenghui (房峰辉), born in April 1951. Chief of General Staff, former Commander of Beijing Military District), Zhang Yang (张阳), born in August 1951. Director of the Political Work Department, former Political Commissar of Guangdong Military District), Zhao Keshi (赵克石), born in November 1947. Director of the Logistic Support Department, former Commander of Nanjing Military District), Zhang Youxia (张又侠), born in July 1950. Director of the General Armaments Department, former Commander of Shenyang Military District), Wu Shengli (吴胜利), born in August 1945. Navy Commander since 2006), Ma Xiaotian (马晓天), born in August 1949. Air Force Commander, former Deputy Chief of General Staff, Wei Fenghe (魏凤) April 1954. Commander of the Second Artillery Corps, former Deputy Chief of General Staff, former Chief of Staff of the Second Artillery.

Based on their age, out of the military leaders of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, Generals Xu Qiliang, Fang Fenghui, Zhang Yang, Zhang Youxia and Wei Fenghe are potential candidates to become the members of the Military Commission of the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress. However, in July 2017, first General Zhang Yang, and then in August 2017, General Fang Fenghui have been removed from their positions.<sup>26</sup> After that, the list of delegates nominated for the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress has been published, which included 253 persons from the armed forces and 50 persons from the People's Armed Police, but it has not contained the names of Generals Fang and Zhang.<sup>27</sup>

After that, in October 2017, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party has announced that a criminal proceeding linked to corruption had been opened against Generals Zhang and Fang. As a result, the number of the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress' Central Committee members against whom a disciplinary

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<sup>26</sup> Li JINGTAO és Tian LIANG: Fang Fenghui fell from Horse; China Windows, [http://zgsc.china.com.cn/2018-01/17/content\\_40191250.html](http://zgsc.china.com.cn/2018-01/17/content_40191250.html) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

<sup>27</sup> [http://news.ifeng.com/a/20170906/51898120\\_0.shtml](http://news.ifeng.com/a/20170906/51898120_0.shtml) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

procedure had been started has risen to 44.<sup>28</sup> Following the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party, on 23 November, General Zhang has hanged himself, putting the Central Military Commission in a difficult position, as – according to the rules – the members of the Central Military Commission of the People’s Republic of China can only be elected in the course of the leadership change in March 2018, held during the session of the National People’s Congress. As a result, in spite of his suicide, General Zhang has officially remained a member of the Commission until that date.

Following the session of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the freshly formed Central Committee has elected the following persons as members of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China:

General Xu Qiliang (许其亮, born in March 1950, Deputy President of the Commission, used to fill this role previously as well); General Zhang Youxia (张又侠, born in July 1950, Deputy President of the Commission, former Director-General of the General Armaments Department); General Wei Fenghe (魏凤和, born in April 1954, 1<sup>st</sup>-ranked member of the Commission, Commander of the Rocket Forces/Second Artillery Missile Corps); General Li Zuocheng (李作成, born in October 1953, Chief of the Joint Staff Department, served as the Commander of the PLA Ground Force from 2015, former Commander of the Chengdu Military Region); General Miao Hua (苗华, born in November 1955, Head of the Political Work Department, served as the political commissar of the Navy from 2015, former political commissar of the Lanzhou Military Region); Lieutenant General Zhang Shengmin, who had been promoted to General simultaneously with his election to the Commission (张升民, born in August 1958, has been serving as deputy head of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection from 1 January, formerly – from 2015 – served as the head of Rocket Forces’ Political Department, the political commissar of the Logistic Support Department and then filled the same position within the Training Management Department). Naturally, all these persons have been elected into the Central Committee of the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress as well.

The first member of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China is General Wei Fenghe, who – after the Party Congress – has not filled any concrete military positions. As a result, it was expected that he would be elected as the next defense minister. According to preliminary expectations, his appointment had been approved by the National People’s Congress, during its session on March 2018. The commanders of the service branches, as well as the heads of the Logistic Support Department and the Joint Staff Department – two from the four departments’ leaders – have not been elected to members of the Commission. This is a consistent step, considering that all service branch commands, as well as the Logistic and Joint Staff Departments were at the same level as the military regions, which means that its political commissars and deputy department chiefs were at the same level with the military regions’ political commissars and the deputy commanders. Only within the Joint Staff Department and the Political Work Department, the deputies of the Chief

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<sup>28</sup> Fang Fenghui and Zhang Yang and other six similar persons; Sina News <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/nd/2018-01-10/doc-ifyqptqv6580490.shtml> (downloaded 21 March 2018)

of the General Staff and the Head of the Political Work Department were military region-level leaders, meaning that only these two organizations were at a higher level than the military regions within the People's Liberation Army. There were no problems regarding the position of the political commissars, as the Joint Staff Department does not have such a position, while the Political Work Department has only one leader, who can be considered as the political commissar of the entire Chinese armed forces. Otherwise, commanders and political commissars are same-level leaders within all organizations of the armed forces, and they make their decisions together, creating a commission including their deputies as well. Every subunit, unit and larger unit within the Chinese armed forces has its own political commissar.

The composition of the new Military Commission unequivocally shows that the organization created to fight corruption has gained a very significant role within the inner structure of the armed forces, as – contrary to the earlier practice – the head of the Commission for Discipline Inspection has been elected to the highest-level military decision-making body, the Central Military Commission. Before, the position of its leader – a lieutenant general directly subordinated to the Central Military Commission – was at the same level as the deputy commander of a military region.

The other important military aspect of the National Congress is that in his speech, Party Secretary Xi Jinping has defined the main objectives of the armed forces' reform. This includes finishing the first section of the reforms by 2020, which is aimed at the complete armament and mechanization of the armed forces. Its implementation, however, is expected to take more time. The final goal of the reforms is to transform the People's Liberation Army into a modern, equipped to a state-of-the-art level armed force by 2035. At the same time, the leading position of the Communist Party of China must be strengthened, and the military professions must gain a higher level prestige within the Chinese society. The system of mobilization has to be improved, too, and the border- and coastal defense systems, as well as the air defense systems must become more efficient. According to the General Secretary's report, approved by the National Congress, a new organization will be formed to represent the interests of veterans, and the People's Armed Police forces will be modernized as well.<sup>29</sup>

To sum it up, in 2022, it will be necessary to elect two new vice-chairmen for the Central Military Commission, who will most likely become members of the Communist Party's Political Bureau, too. Regarding the potential applicants, General Wei Fenghe – born in 1954 – will most likely be promoted to Vice-Chairman, as he is the most experienced member of the body. In the course of the past five years, he participated in the Commission as the Commander of the Rocket Force, while in the five year-period starting from now, he has been filling the post of the Military Commission's first member, as the Defense Minister. Based on his age, he might serve for an additional five years. The most important decision of the Party Congress from the armed forces' point of view is that the Communist Party of China will continue to maintain full control over the People's Liberation Army. In fact, more than 300

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<sup>29</sup> Xi Jinping's Speech on the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xinhua News Agency [http://xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c\\_16725942.htm](http://xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_16725942.htm) (downloaded 21 March 2018)

persons from the nearly 3,000-member- Congress represented the armed forces, which means that – aside from the fact that the Party controls the armed forces – the leaders of the PLA have a similarly huge influence over the functioning of the party and all the political proceedings.

### **The decisions of the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference**

In the People’s Republic of China, the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference represent the legislative branch. However, the former organization – which counts around 3,000 members – and the latter one – which has approximately 2,000 members – holds only a two week-long session each year. Between the annual sessions, the – respectively – 200 and 300-member standing committees, as well as the special committees are responsible for legislation and the supervision of legitimacy. Both organizations have a five year-mandate, which period starts a few months after the party congress. The representatives of the two bodies are nominated and elected according to the procedure detailed in the constitution.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the constitution prescribes the following duties for the National People’s Congress: approving the Constitution, electing the president and the deputy president, electing the prime minister and the government members, based on the president’s suggestion, electing the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, electing the members of the Central Military Commission, based on its chairman’s suggestion, enacting and amending laws, approving the budget and supervising its utilization, electing the Procurator-General of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, the President of the Supreme People’s Court and the president of the National Bank; proclaiming the state of war, deciding on general and partial mobilization, granting special pardons and appointing ambassadors.<sup>30</sup> The National People’s Congress holds one session per year; in the period between the two sessions, its Standing Committee fulfils its duties. Aside from the Standing Committee, the National People’s Congress has set up the following special committees for supervising certain areas: the Constitution and Law Committee, the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee, the Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee. The representatives of the National People’s Congress are granted the right of immunity; and criminal proceedings can be initiated against them only with the permit of the Standing Committee.

The formation of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is prescribed within the preamble of the Constitution, while its duties are determined by the relevant basic rules. In addition to the national body, similar consultative organizations must be set up on provincial and sub-county levels as well. Its duties include issuing official statements in major political questions relating to domestic and foreign policy, economy, culture and society, in order to support the decision-

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<sup>30</sup> The National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. [http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content\\_1372965.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/2007-11/15/content_1372965.htm) (downloaded 1 April 2018)

makers, as well as exercising democratic supervision over the decision-making bodies of the state.<sup>31</sup> Aside from the representatives of the Communist Party of China, some members of eight further state-approved political parties, the representatives of eight social alliances, 15 persons from the economic and social field, as well as the representatives of Macau and Hong Kong participate in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.<sup>32</sup>

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference has held its congress for generational change – an event organized every fifth year – between 3 and 15 March 2018. According to the information published about the occasion, as many as 2,158 elected representatives have attended the congress, out of whom 39.8% represented political parties – most of them were members of the Communist Party of China. The general age of the attendants was 59,5 years. Each of China's 56 ethnicities was represented at the congress.<sup>33</sup>

The National People's Congress has held its 13<sup>th</sup> Generational Change/Electoral Congress between 5 and 20 March 2018. As many as 2,980 deputies attended the event, 75% of whom have won a five-year mandate in the National People's Congress for the first time. The representatives of the Communist Party of China and the government made up 33.93% of the Congress' members.<sup>34</sup>

In connection with the personnel-related decisions made in the course of the congresses of the two organizations, – according to expectations –, the two bodies have unanimously elected Xi Jinping as the President of the People's Republic of China, Li Zhanshu as the President of the National People's Congress, Wang Yang as the President of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and Li Keqiang as the Prime Minister of China, which – in accordance with previous plans – has given a position within the state leadership to the four leaders of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China.

The greatest international attention was focused on amending the constitution, which was actually achieved on the basis of the Communist Party's proposal, as a result of which President Xi Jinping's ideas have been included in the document. In addition, the part restricting the mandate of the president and his deputy to ten years (five years for two cycles) has been removed from the constitution as well. However, it is interesting to note that the constitution's amendment did not affect the mandate of the prime minister, and the restriction that applies to his time in office has remained in the official document. This means that – unless the constitution is amended again in the meantime – Prime Minister Li Keqiang can remain in position only until 2022.

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<sup>31</sup> Charter of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, <http://www.cppcc.gov.cn/zxww/2012/07/03/ART11341300912828101.shtml> (downloaded 1 April 2018)

<sup>32</sup> National People's Congress Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/chuangye/55437.htm> (downloaded 1 April 2018)

<sup>33</sup> CPPCC National Committee members by the numbers, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1091524.shtml> (downloaded 1 April 2018)

<sup>34</sup> NPC deputies by the numbers, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1091525.shtml> (downloaded 1 April 2018)

Aside from the aforementioned nominations, the National People's Congress has elected the new Deputy President, the Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the President of the Supreme People's Court and the president of the National Bank. The Congress has appointed the following persons for these offices:

Wang Qishan (王岐山, born in July 1948, used to be a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party's Political Bureau from 2012 to 2017, former president of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection) has become Deputy President of the People's Republic of China. Zhang Jun (张军, born in October 1956, member of the Central Committee, Minister of Justice between 2017 and 2018, Deputy President of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection from 2012 to 2017, Deputy President of the Supreme People's Court from 2008 to 2012) was elected as the Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate. The National People's Congress has elected Zhou Qiang (周强, born in April 1960, member of the Central Committee, party secretary of Hunan Province between 2007 and 2013) as the President of the Supreme People's Court. Yi Gang (易纲, born in March 1958, member of the Central Committee, party secretary and Deputy President of the National Bank from 2009, head of the Economic Work Group of the Central Committee) was elected as the president of the National Bank.

The National People's Congress has adopted a law that – based on the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection within the Communist Party of China – a new, nation-wide disciplinary body will be formed under the name National Supervisory Commission. Yang Xiaodu (杨晓渡, born in October 1953, member of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, Party Secretary of Shanghai between 2006 and 2014, Deputy President of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection from 2014) was elected as the head of the new organization.

Under the leadership of Li Keqiang, the National People's Congress has elected the members of the new State Council, the government of the People's Republic of China, and also introduced significant changes within the structure of the latter to put an end to the parallel operation of the two governmental organizations. Within the new structure, the State Council will have 26 subordinated bodies, which means that eight minister-led and seven deputy minister-led organizations will cease to function; or rather they will be merged with other ministries. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Development have been merged, while the Ministry of National Resources has been formed from a number of former ministries. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism have been merged as well. As the One Child Policy – introduced in 1979 – has been cancelled, the National People's Congress decided that the National Health and Family Planning Commission has to stop operating, too.

Regarding the leadership of the new government, Prime Minister Li Keqiang and Deputy Prime Minister Han Zheng are members of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee. The remaining three deputy Prime Ministers – Sun Chun-ian, Hu Chun-hua and Liu Ho are also members of the Political Committee. The five state councilors – Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, Wang Yong (王勇, born in December 1955), the Party Secretary of the State Council and the head of the Administrative and



Supervision Committee; Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi (王毅, born in October 1953), Minister of Finance Xiao Jie (肖捷, born in June 1957) and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi (赵克志, born in December 1953) – are all members of the Central Committee.

The National People's Congress has also elected the members of the Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China, who were the same people as those who had been elected by the Communist Party of China into the Party's Central Military Committee. The legislation has appointed the first member of the Central Military Commission, General Wei Fenghe as the Defense Minister of the People's Republic of China, and – at the same time – the state councilor of the government. The National People's Congress has also approved the state budget, including the defense budget, which accounts to 1.1069 trillion yuan (174.52 billion dollars), which represents an 8,1% increase, compared to the previous year's relevant data. However, the Congress has published neither the planned allocation of the budget, nor the related development plans for this year either.

Aside from the personnel-related decisions, the National People's Congress has adopted the Chinese government's plans for 2018, according to which the main objective is to maintain 3% inflation level and ensure 6.5% economic growth. The plans also include creating 11.5 million new urban jobs and raising 10 million people from deep poverty. In 2018, China is planning to spend 117 million dollars on railway development and 288 million dollars on developing the public road system in the country.<sup>35</sup>

To sum it up, it can be stated that the March 2018 sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference have reinforced the decisions of the Communist Party of China in all fields. The persons appointed by the Party have been elected to fill different positions within the state leadership and the government, and the two bodies have also approved the constitutional amendments suggested by the Party. Electing Wang Qishan as Deputy President can be important from two aspects. On the one hand, one of the former leaders of the Party, the main confidant of General Secretary Xi Jinping and one of the main figures of the fight against corruption has been elected as Deputy President, to whom the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress could not grant a function, due to his age. On the other hand, the election of the politician – who is almost 70 years of age – foreshadows the re-election of Xi Jinping as president in 2023, when the current president will be 70 years old. At the same time, it is interesting to note what will happen to current Prime Minister Li Keqiang in 2022-2023, who has risen to power together with Xi Jinping, and is two years younger than the president and – according to the current constitution – cannot be re-elected as prime minister for a third cycle. If President Xi Jinping got rid of the second most important political leader of the Communist Party in 2022, it would reinforce the standpoint of the western media, according to which President Xi wants to replace the decision-making mechanism of the committees – which has been in practice for decades now – with an autocratic ruling system. The current decision-making mechanism is connected to the reform policy introduced by

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<sup>35</sup> Key figures: China's major targets in 2018, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1091912.shtml> (downloaded 1 April 2018)

Deng Xiao-ping, in order to avoid the formation of a cult of personality, similar to that in the Mao Ze-dong era.

### **Conclusion**

During the generational change in the Communist Party in 2017, the much-awaited first steps to prepare for the generational change in 2022 have not taken place. This is probably due to the fact that one of the two aspirants for the state's top leading positions – the office of the president and the prime minister –, Sun Zhengcai (who is also ten years younger than the current leaders) has fallen victim to the fight against corruption. As a result, a decision must have been made to postpone the generation change for another five years, which means that the successors of Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang will be included in the state's top leadership, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau in 2022, and the successors are expected to become the leaders of the Communist Party of China in 2027. They will probably acquire the relevant state functions in 2028, when they will become the new president and the prime minister of China.

The composition of the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China is different from the previous expectations, due to the anti-corruption fight. Probably that is the reason why General Fang Fenghui, former Chief of Joint Staff and General Zhang Yang, former Director of the Political Work Department have not been elected as members of the Commission. This was most likely due to the absence of potential candidates that the number of the Committee's members has drastically decreased, despite the fact that – in the course of the military reforms – new commands have been added to the armed forces' command structure. As the anti-corruption fight and the related proceedings are not executed in a transparent way, there is a constant suspicion that the leadership of the Communist Party of China might use the fight against corruption to remove its political rivals. However, in a country where the economic growth of the last twenty years has transformed the financial status of the society – including that of the Party's elite – to a great extent, and where the political leadership is greatly involved in business, it is but natural that there are a huge number of corruption-related criminal proceedings. This is especially true, considering that the corruption proceedings have even affected such persons like the former leader of the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress and Public Security Minister Zhou Yongkang (周永康), a member of the Political Bureau's Standing Committee. Two members of the former Central Military Commission, Xu Caihou (徐才厚) and Guo Boxiong (郭伯雄) have been affected by the anti-corruption fight as well. They have admitted their crimes in detail, and – during the criminal proceedings – they have most likely given account of their participation in corruption and misuse of power. For these reasons, one cannot state in full conviction that the current party leaders have initiated corruption-related criminal proceedings against innocent people, in order to make some personnel-related decisions. However, we cannot exclude that possibility either.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the decisions made during the sessions of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is that the leading role of the Communist Party cannot be questioned in China, as the persons delegated by the Party can be placed into leading positions without any complications inside the important organizations. The country's

constitution was amended on the request of the Party, and General Secretary Xi Jinping was unequivocally granted another five-year mandate, as the country's president.

The generation change has also shown that when it comes to just domestic affairs in China, foreign factors do not have any influence. No matter how often the western media repeat and repeat that China is headed in a wrong direction, it has no effect on Chinese domestic processes. China continues its increasingly influential foreign policy, independently of international opinions and disagreements, while attempting to attain its concrete economic aim – doubling its GDP in the period between 2010 and 2020.

The long-term, all-inclusive reforms are continuing within the Chinese armed forces; however, the exclusive leading position of the Communist Party of China remained unquestionable, even amidst the difficulties caused by the reorganizations. At the same time, this is not a one-sided process, as the representation of the military is around 10% in both the Party Congress and the legislation's sessions. This means that the opinions of the military elite are represented in every important decision, which ensures to the armed forces' key role in the all-round direction of the country.

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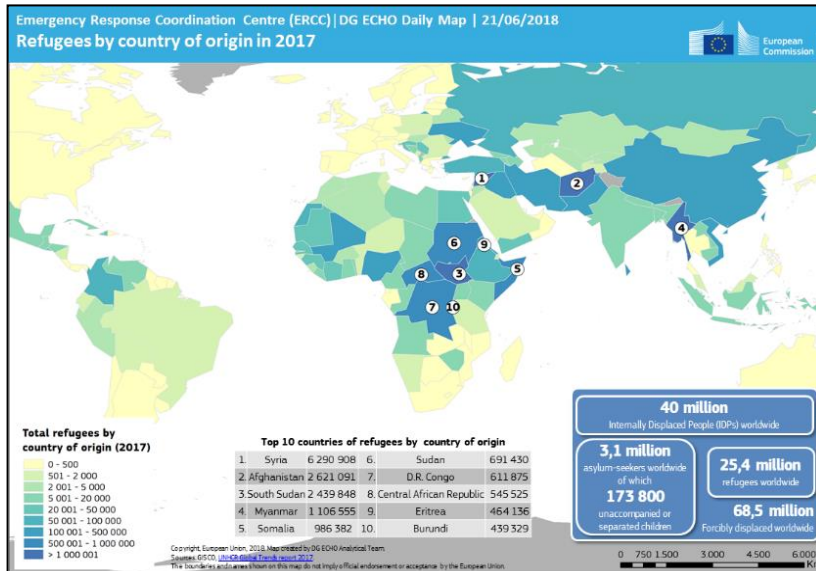
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**REFUGEE CAMPS IN AFRICA**

**Abstract**

The migration crisis is one of the biggest problems of the European Union. However, it is not only Europe that suffers from the migration wave, but less developed regions also get their share from the crisis. The East-African region is particularly affected, since there are more countries in the region which have become destination countries in the last decades, due to the conflicts in the Horn of Africa, Central-Africa and in the Maghreb. How does the influx of refugees affect the host country and the basic conditions of immigrants? Can the lesser developed East African countries continue to support the incoming refugee flows?

**Keywords:** migration, refugee camps, Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, critical infrastructure, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework



**Map 1.: Refugees by Country of Origin in 2017**  
([http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180618\\_DailyMap\\_21062018.png](http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180618_DailyMap_21062018.png))

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Migration became one of the most pressing challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which affects not only prosperous western countries, but less developed states as well. We can find some of these countries on the African continent. According to UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)<sup>2</sup> data, while the Sub-Saharan region is a traditional region of origin, Africa also hosts 30% of the refugees worldwide.<sup>3</sup>

The biggest refugee camps in the continent can be found in the East-African region, in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. These four countries are hosting approximately 4 million refugees, out of the 7.6 million in East-Africa.<sup>4</sup> The wider region also hosts more than 10 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)<sup>5,6</sup> We have to interpret this tremendous effort in the context of development, because Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda belong to the list of the least developed countries (LDPs)<sup>7,8</sup>; and even Kenya was capable to elevate itself only into the group of the lower middle income countries.<sup>9</sup> We have to analyse these four countries with taking in account this information. How are they capable to upkeep those enormous refugee camps in their territories? One part of the answer is the international support. The United Nations (UN)<sup>10</sup> launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)<sup>11</sup> to help these countries.

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees

<sup>3</sup> Figures at a Glance. <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>4</sup> East Africa. [https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017&cm49=231&m=2](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017&cm49=231&m=2) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>5</sup> IDPs – Internally Displaced Persons

<sup>6</sup> Eastern Africa. Food insecurity and forced displacements. [http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180622\\_DailyMap\\_Eastern\\_Africa\\_FoodInsec\\_Displacupdated.png](http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180622_DailyMap_Eastern_Africa_FoodInsec_Displacupdated.png) (downloaded: 22 06 2018)

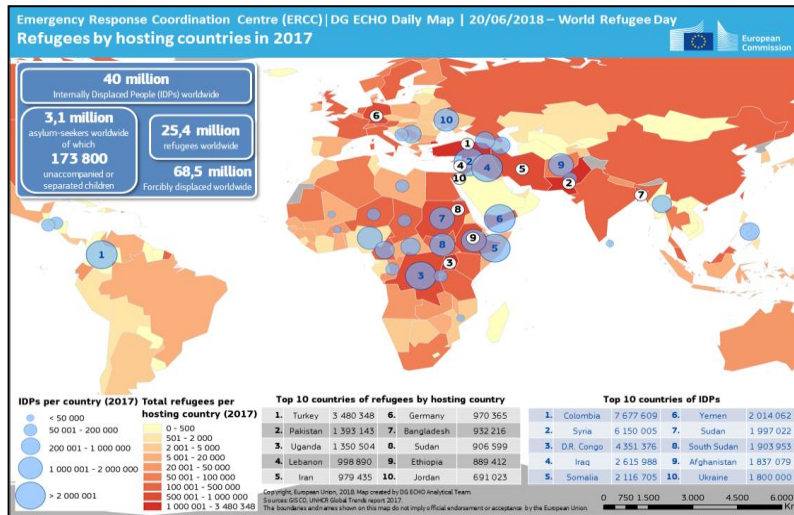
<sup>7</sup> LDPs – least developed countries

<sup>8</sup> List of Least Developed Countries (as of March 2018). [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/lcd\\_list.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/lcd_list.pdf) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>9</sup> WB Update Says 10 Countries Move Up in Income Bracket. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/07/01/new-world-bank-update-shows-bangladesh-kenya-myanmar-and-tajikistan-as-middle-income-while-south-sudan-falls-back-to-low-income> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>10</sup> UN – United Nations

<sup>11</sup> CRRF – Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework



**Map 2.: Refugees by Hosting Countries in 2017**  
 ([http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180618\\_DailyMap20062018%20.png](http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ERCMAPS/Thumbs/20180618_DailyMap20062018%20.png))

## COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework is part of the historic New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. In 2016, all 193 member states of the UN agreed on protecting the refugees, those who were forced to flee, and to help the hosting countries as well.<sup>12</sup> The New York Declaration contains commitments to address challenges both in the present and the future. Among the 11 commitments, like the prevention of violence against refugees, protection of human rights, help of resettlement, there was the need for implementing a comprehensive refugee response. This program is based on a new framework, which defines the responsibility of the member states, civilian actors and the UN system itself. In case of a large refugee influx.<sup>13</sup> The UN used a role model to build its framework. This role model was Uganda, one of the biggest refugee host country in East-Africa. The country, despite its hardships, maintains the most progressive refugee protection policy, which applies comprehensive responses to refugee crises, and an inclusive approach. Owning these principles, Uganda could become the role model for the UN in the process to create the CRRF.<sup>14</sup>

The CRRF is a program which aims to make the future of the migrants more predictable, and also calls for a comprehensive crisis management in the most affected regions, including greater support for the hosting countries. The program has four key points:

<sup>12</sup> Towards a global compact on refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org/towards-a-global-compact-on-refugees.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>13</sup> New York Declaration. <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/declaration> (downloaded 07. 08. 2018)

<sup>14</sup> Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Uganda. [http://www.globalcrrf.org/crrf\\_country/uga/](http://www.globalcrrf.org/crrf_country/uga/) (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

- „Ease the pressures on host countries;
- Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- Expand access to third-country solutions;
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.”<sup>15</sup>

The basis of the program is the image of the self-supporting, integrated individual, who might be a refugee or IDP. The main idea behind it is to help the people in need to gain skills, with which they can form their own future, and become less dependent on humanitarian aid. This policy removes a lot of pressure from the hosting countries, which in this way gain workforce and contributors to the local economy. In this way the refugees would not be seen as a burden on a community, but the engine of development. This scheme is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>16</sup> The 2030 Agenda was launched in 2015, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is a comprehensive and ambitious plan of actions to shift the world to a sustainable and resilient path. Its main goals are to eliminate extreme poverty, reduce inequality and protect the planet.<sup>17</sup>

The New York Declaration sees refugee camps as temporary, which should be used only in case of emergency. Instead, the countries must apply open door asylum policies, which let the refugees live among host communities. The UN called the UNHCR to develop and initiate a comprehensive response, which is the CRRF. Seven African countries agreed to apply the comprehensive framework. These were Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. Its regional approach is used in Somalia as well, with the contribution of the Somali government and the neighbouring countries. (Besides Africa, Central-America is also taking part in the initiative, namely Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Panama.)<sup>18</sup>

Out of these countries we have to take a closer look on three East-African states, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda plus one, Sudan which is not a partaker of the CRRF. These countries are hosting the majority of refugees in the East-African region.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Towards a global compact on refugees. (unhcr.org)

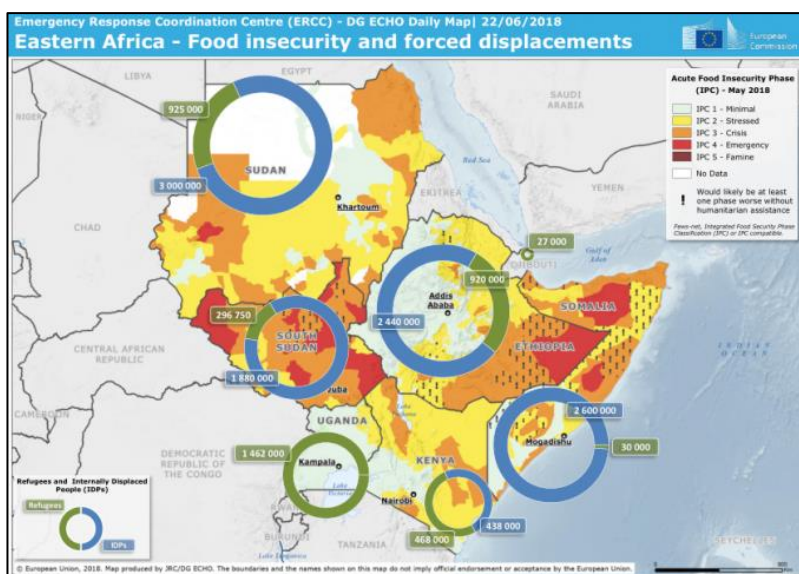
<sup>16</sup> Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Delivering more comprehensive and predictable responses for refugees. <http://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>17</sup> The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. [https://www.unssc.org/sites/unssc.org/files/2030\\_agenda\\_for\\_sustainable\\_development\\_kcsd\\_primer\\_en.pdf](https://www.unssc.org/sites/unssc.org/files/2030_agenda_for_sustainable_development_kcsd_primer_en.pdf) (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>18</sup> Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, Delivering more comprehensive and predictable responses for refugees.

<sup>19</sup> Migration Data Portal. [https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)





Map 3.: Eastern Africa - Food Insecurity and Forced Displacements  
 ([http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/emaiddailymap/title/ECHO Daily Map of 22 June 2018](http://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/emaiddailymap/title/ECHO%20Daily%20Map%20of%2022%20June%202018))

## ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia is one of the seven African countries which take part in the CRRF.<sup>20</sup> The country needs the support of the program, since it hosts 1.2 million refugees and IDPs in addition to its total population of 105 million.<sup>21</sup> The main countries of origin are Eritrea, Somalia, South-Sudan and Sudan.<sup>22</sup>

The three largest immigrant groups by country of origin**						
Year	Country	Number of migrants*	Country	Number of migrants*	Country	Number of migrants*
2017	Somalia	467.5	South Sudan	417.2	Eritrea	217.5
2015	Somalia	442.9	South Sudan	395.2	Eritrea	206
2010	Somalia	361.6	South Sudan	122	Sudan	17.1

\* Thousand

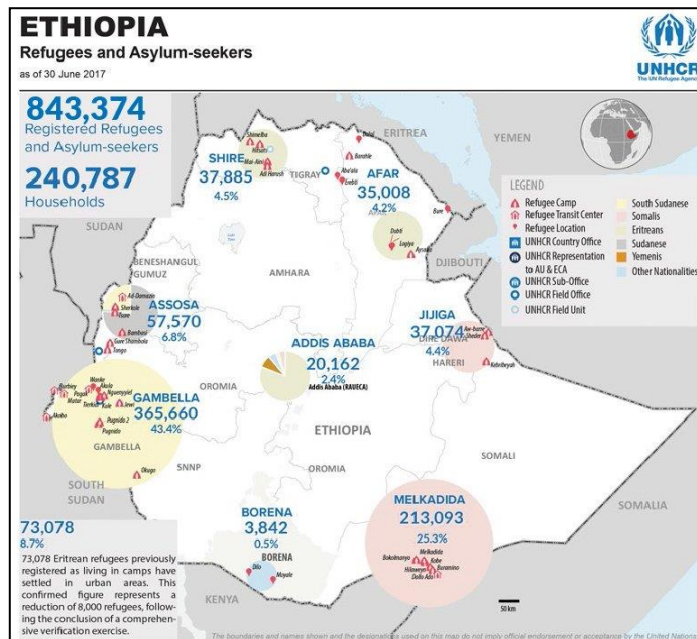
\*\*Data collected from [migrationdataportal.org](http://migrationdataportal.org)

Table 1.: The three largest immigrant groups in Ethiopia by country of origin

<sup>20</sup> Ethiopia. <http://www.unhcr.org/ethiopia.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>21</sup> Ethiopia. [https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017&cm49=231](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017&cm49=231) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>22</sup> Ethiopia (unhcr.org)



**Map 4.: Refugee Camps in Ethiopia**  
(<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DElyqQ5WAAAhVXR.jpg>)

Ethiopia is a significant destination country in East-Africa. The country has a long history of hosting refugees and has an open-door asylum policy, which gives protection everyone who seeks refuge, despite its own internal crisis. The East-African country can only finance its 26 refugee camps with the help of international humanitarian aid.<sup>23</sup> The current UN budget for the country is 328 million USD.<sup>24</sup>

The refugee camps at the northern and eastern borders of Ethiopia are located in the least developed regions of the country, where poverty is deep, and the infrastructure is underdeveloped. Therefore, the camps have limited services and opportunities.<sup>25</sup> Half of the rural Ethiopian population does not have access to an improved drinking water source, which makes the situation graver. The food security is also a major problem in the country, since around 24% of the children under age of 5 are underweight. The physician density is also low in the country; it is much lower than the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO)<sup>26</sup>, which estimates that at least 2.3 health workers per 1,000 inhabitants are only sufficient. This number in Ethiopia remains 0.03 health workers. It is an even more serious issue if we look at the list of major infectious diseases in the country, and the degree of risk to get them, which was labelled as very high. This picture is completed with a significantly low number of hospital beds, which is 0.3 per 1,000 inhabitants.

<sup>23</sup> Ethiopia (unhcr.org)

<sup>24</sup> Ethiopia <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/5738> (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>25</sup> Ethiopia, Applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). <http://www.unhcr.org/ethiopia-592fd4854.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>26</sup> WHO – World Health Organization

According to this data, the Ethiopian health system faces vast deficiencies in providing effective health provision to its own population, not to mention the additional international migrants and refugees.<sup>27</sup>

The electricity access in the country is generally poor, mainly confined to urban areas, thus, the electricity access in the rural regions, where the refugee camps are located, is limited. Electricity access in rural areas is provided to about 26% of the population, and approximately 60 million people do not have access to electricity at all.<sup>28</sup> The mobile cellular telephone subscription owners compose around 50% of the population, while internet access is the privilege of 15.4% of the Ethiopians.<sup>29</sup>

As the international climate becomes less and less favourable to keep the level of the humanitarian and development aids, Ethiopia would face challenges in the upkeep of the refugee camps. As a side effect, other states can also lose interest to take in refugees, mainly because of the lack of international help, which makes it more difficult for Ethiopia to follow an open-door asylum policy.<sup>30</sup> Besides this, the Ethiopian political crisis also influences the dynamics of migration in the East-African region. The country can easily shift from one of the biggest host countries to a significant country of origin in the region. This is the most feared scheme for Kenya and Uganda, which countries would step into Ethiopia's place as destination countries.<sup>31</sup>

## **KENYA**

Kenya also takes part in the UN CRRF.<sup>32</sup> The country, with its total population around 46 million, hosts 1.1 million refugees and IDPs.<sup>33</sup> Most of the refugees came from Somalia, Uganda and South Sudan.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ethiopia. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/et.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>28</sup> Access to electricity. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.ELC.ACCS.ZS?locations=KE-UG-ET-SD> (downloaded: 30 07 2018)

<sup>29</sup> Ethiopia (cia.gov.)

<sup>30</sup> Ethiopia, Applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

<sup>31</sup> Kenya staring at another potential refugee crisis as unrest hits Ethiopia. <https://www.nation.co.ke/video/news/4146788-4341872-fx6rhrz/index.html>. (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>32</sup> Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. <http://www.unhcr.org/comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-crrf.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>33</sup> Kenya. [https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017&cm49=404](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017&cm49=404) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

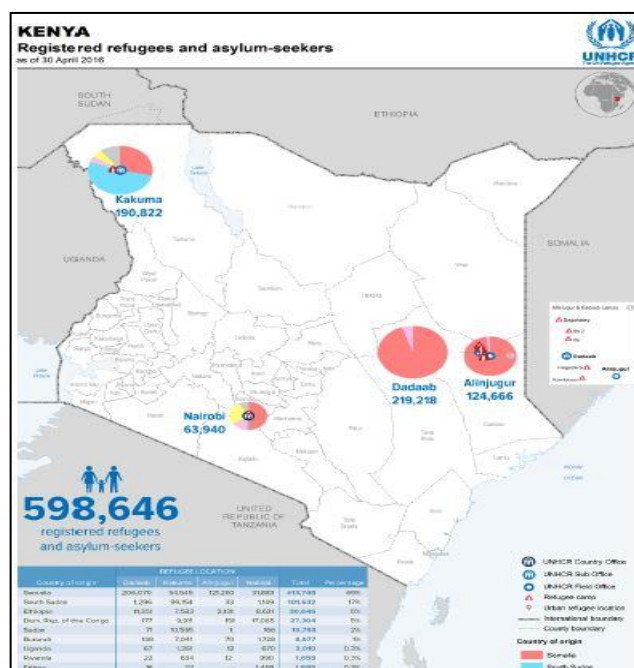
<sup>34</sup> Refugee Law and Policy: Kenya. <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/kenya.php> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

The three largest immigrant groups by country of origin**						
Year	Country	Number of migrants*	Country	Number of migrants*	Country	Number of migrants*
2017	Somalia	485.9	Uganda	332.0	South Sudan	81.9
2015	Somalia	488.5	Uganda	333.8	South Sudan	92.4
2010	Somalia	398.8	Uganda	327.0	Sudan	53.2

\* Thousand

\*\*Data collected from *migrationdataportal.org*

**Table 2.: The three largest immigrant groups in Kenya by country of origin**  
(Edited by the author)



**Map 5.: Refugee camps in Kenya 2016.**

([http://www.3rdworldtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Kenya-Refugee-Factsheet\\_2.jpg](http://www.3rdworldtv.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Kenya-Refugee-Factsheet_2.jpg))

Kenya's asylum policy was influenced by the recent terrorist attacks in the country. In consequence, the refugees were obliged to move to refugee camps and the government limited their opportunities to have access to jobs. The encampment policy requires all refugees to move into camps and leave the urban areas. These designated camps are mainly Dadaab or Kakuma, the largest camps in Kenya. The UN took part in Kenya's asylum policy reform, to ensure its integrity with international law.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Refugee Law and Policy: Kenya. (loc.gov)

Though Kenya is no longer a part of the LDCs list, the country still has problems providing access to improved drinking water source for the entire population. In parallel with this, food security is also a question, since 11% of the children under the age of 5 are underweight. We can see that this is a much better proportion than in Ethiopia, but the phenomenon is still affecting almost 700,000 Kenyan children. The physician density is better than in Ethiopia and Uganda, with 0.2 health workers per 1,000 people. The number of hospital beds is relatively high; 1.4 beds per 1,000 people, but the risk of infectious diseases is also very high.<sup>36</sup>

56% of the population have access to electricity, of which the share of the rural areas is 39%.<sup>37</sup> It is a better proportion than in Ethiopia, but we still have to count with the presence of the refugee camps in the rural regions, in addition to the local population.

In case of communication devices, Kenya still performs better than Ethiopia, because 83 people out of 100 have a mobile device, and 26% of the inhabitants have internet access as well.<sup>38</sup>

Kenya also has to face with the challenge of declining amount of UNHCR and international aid. The budget for Kenya decreases since 2014, resulting that the current budget for 2018 is only 191 million USD.<sup>39</sup>

## SUDAN

Sudan is the only country from the four main African refugee hosting countries which is not taking part in the UN CRRF, despite its long history as a host country. But the country of 37 million is not just famous for its hospitality towards refugees, but for its consecutive military regimes and bloody history as well.<sup>40</sup> The secession of South Sudan in 2011 was not a peaceful procedure either, causing one of the biggest refugee flows in the region. In consequence, Sudan is one of the major hosting countries for the South Sudanese refugees, but the country also hosts refugees from Chad, Eritrea, Syria, Yemen and other countries.<sup>41</sup> Sudan hosts altogether 3 million IDPs and nearly 1 million refugees.<sup>42</sup> We can see from the figures that the IDPs signify a bigger concern to Khartoum than the refugees, despite the high numbers of the latter.

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<sup>36</sup> Kenya. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>37</sup> Access to electricity. ([data.worldbank.org](http://data.worldbank.org))

<sup>38</sup> Kenya. ([cia.gov](http://cia.gov).)

<sup>39</sup> Kenya. <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2537> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>40</sup> Sudan. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/su.html> (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>41</sup> Sudan. <http://www.unhcr.org/sudan.html> (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>42</sup> Sudan Faïtes et Chiffres. [https://ec.europa.eu/echo/printpdf/where/africa/sudan\\_fr](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/printpdf/where/africa/sudan_fr) (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<b>The three largest immigrant groups by country of origin**</b>						
<i>Year</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>
2017	South Sudan	301.9	Eritrea	188.4	Chad	87.9
2015	South Sudan	256.0	Eritrea	159.7	Chad	74.5
2010	South Sudan	202.9	Eritrea	132.2	Chad	71.2

\* Thousand

\*\*Data collected from *migrationdataportal.org*

**Table 3.: The three largest immigrant groups in Sudan by country of origin**  
(Edited by the author)

The refugees typically arrive in the border areas, which means that the most affected regions of Sudan are South Darfur, East Darfur, West Kordofan and White Nile states on the southern borderline. These regions are the most affected by food insecurity as well.<sup>43</sup> The percentage of the underweight children under age 5 is very striking; it is 33%, by far the worst among the analysed four countries. Besides this, 34% of the entire population does not have access to a safe water source. There is a low number of hospital beds and very high risk of infectious diseases in the country. These devastating figures are counterbalanced with a very high physician density, 3.06 per 1,000 persons.<sup>44</sup> The electricity access of the rural population is very low, just 22%.<sup>45</sup>

According to this data, we can assess that Sudan needs significant international help to provide for the refugees and IDPs in the country. So, the UN budget for Sudan has been in a constant increase since 2013, started then on 117 million USD, to reach 256 million USD in 2018.<sup>46</sup>

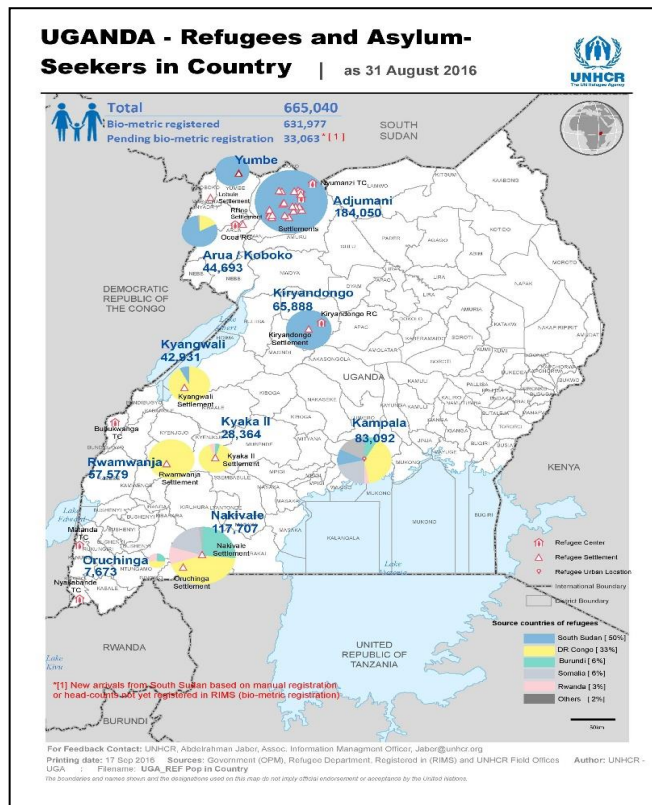
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<sup>43</sup> Sudan Food Security Outlook. [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sudan\\_FSO\\_06\\_2018.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Sudan_FSO_06_2018.pdf) (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>44</sup> Sudan. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/su.html> (downloaded: 07 08 2018)

<sup>45</sup> Access to electricity. (data.worldbank.org)

<sup>46</sup> Global Focus Sudan. <http://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2535> (downloaded: 07 08 2018)



**Map 6.: Refugee Camps and Settlements in Uganda**  
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/51286>

## UGANDA

Uganda is also partaking in the CRRF. The country, with the population around 40 million, hosts 1.7 million refugees<sup>47</sup> mainly from South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Ugandan authorities typically do not lock up the refugees in camps after the registration process, but provide them plots, about the size 900 m<sup>2</sup>, in the scarcely populated northern regions of the country, to live and do farming on it. After they settled down, Uganda tries to integrate them into the society.<sup>48</sup> However, this is not the best solution for everyone. The refugees who cross the border in the south-west from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are mainly women and children. They are generally transferred to reception centres in the south-western regions of Uganda.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Uganda. [https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017&cm49=800](https://migrationdataportal.org/?i=stock_abs_&t=2017&cm49=800) (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>48</sup> POLGÁR, György: A szegény befogadó ("The poor recipient"; in Hungarian). In weekly HVG, 2018. February 01. Issue 5. pp. 30-32.

<sup>49</sup> Refugees multiply Uganda woes. <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/refugees-multiply-uganda-woes> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

The dramatic increase in the number of incoming refugees puts a significant pressure on Kampala. The supply of the refugees with drinkable water becomes harder and harder, and it is only 10 litres/person/day.<sup>50</sup> (In comparison, the average daily water consumption per person in Hungary is 90-100 litres.<sup>51</sup>) In addition, the access to improved drinking water source is a general problem in the country. 21% of the population does not have access to a safe water source.<sup>52</sup>

<b>The three largest immigrant groups by country of origin**</b>						
<i>Year</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of migrants*</i>
2017	South Sudan	903.2	Democratic Republic of the Congo	398.7	Rwanda	108.6
2015	South Sudan	639.0	Democratic Republic of the Congo	211.4	Rwanda	76.9
2010	Democratic Republic of the Congo	166.9	Sudan	166.1	Rwanda	76.8

\* Thousand

\*\*Data collected from *migrationdataportal.org*

**Table 4.: The three largest immigrant groups in Uganda by country of origin**  
(Edited by the author)

Besides the water supply, nutrition is also problematic in the refugee camps. Even though 40 non-governmental organisations (NGO)<sup>53</sup> are working in the country, since the end of 2017 only reduced food provisions can be distributed among the refugees.<sup>54</sup> Taking in account that 12% of the children under the age of 5 are underweight, it is a serious sacrifice of Uganda.<sup>55</sup>

Besides the problems with the basic supplement, the Ugandan health sector is also overwhelmed by the high number of refugees. The originally low number of health workers in Uganda is not even enough to deal with the fundamental tasks among the local populace, not to mention the refugees. The physician density remains well below the WHO recommendation. Only 0.09 doctors, nurses and midwives fall onto 1,000 people, accompanied by low numbers of hospital beds. And as in almost every African country, the risk of infectious diseases is very high.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Refugees multiply Uganda woes. ([reliefweb.int](http://reliefweb.int))

<sup>51</sup> The Hungarian Water Utility Sector. <https://www.budapestwatersummit.hu/knowledge-and-technology/the-hungarian-water-sector/the-hungarian-water-utility-sector-551/> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>52</sup> Uganda. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ug.html> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>53</sup> NGO – non-governmental organization

<sup>54</sup> POLGÁR op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Uganda. ([cia.gov](http://cia.gov).)

<sup>56</sup> Uganda. ([cia.gov](http://cia.gov).)



Besides the inadequate health support, the education also suffers from the large scale migration. It is not rare to see classes as big as 200 students, since the number of teachers is very low too.<sup>57</sup>

The population's access to electricity is also low, only 27%, of which the share of the rural areas is only 18%.<sup>58</sup> The situation is better in the fields of telecommunications. 60 out of 100 people have a subscription and 22% of the whole population has access to internet.<sup>59</sup>

Besides these problems, Uganda must spend a large portion of its budget on the refugees. In consequence, the country has reached the limit of its economic potential. The country became incapable to provide for its own population, which led to conflicts between the originally very receptive locals and the refugees. The cause of the problem was that most of the refugees get food and water supplies, but a longer drought can lead to famine among locals, because they do not enjoy advantages of the regular food packages.<sup>60</sup>

Uganda, utilising the principles of the UN CRRF well before the New York Declaration, is not capable to make provision for the refugees without international help. On the UN summit in June 2017, Uganda requested for 2 billion USD worth of aid, of which only 352 million USD was collected until the end of 2017. This could make the continuation of Uganda's asylum policy uncertain.<sup>61</sup> However, according to some sources, the amount of the requested aid is exaggerated, since Kampala regularly withhold proportions of the incoming money.<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

After analysing the four East-African migration host countries, we can see that these countries have a large share of the world's migration stock. Each of these countries is hosting around one million refugees, whilst neither of them belongs to the group of developed countries. Two of these states, Ethiopia and Kenya formed their asylum policies according to UN recommendations. Uganda served as a role model for the UN CRRF. Sudan, despite being one of the biggest refugee host countries, is so busy with its internal conflict and the unresolved border dispute with South Sudan that it does not have any significant achievement in the field of asylum policy. In addition, Sudan is the only country out of the four ones in which the IDPs represent the most important question. However, Sudan is not the only refugee hosting country which faces internal problems. All these countries are just a little bit more stable than the destination countries, suffering from severe economic problems because of the

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<sup>57</sup> GOUBY, Melanie: What Uganda's Struggling Policy Means for Future of Refugee Response. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2017/11/22/what-ugandas-struggling-policy-means-for-future-of-refugee-response> (downloaded: 07 04 2018)

<sup>58</sup> Access to electricity. (data.worldbank.org)

<sup>59</sup> Uganda. (cia.gov.)

<sup>60</sup> GOUBY, Melanie: What Uganda's Struggling Policy Means for Future of Refugee Response.

<sup>61</sup> GOUBY, Melanie: What Uganda's Struggling Policy Means for Future of Refugee Response.

<sup>62</sup> POLGÁR op. cit.

overwhelming number of refugees. Therefore, they are all depending on international humanitarian aid. Some of the countries are experiencing budget cuts, whilst others get increasing international assistance. The UN and other international actors, mainly the European Union (EU)<sup>63</sup> must synchronise their acts in the region. The EU came out with its new Global Strategy in 2016, in which Africa was named among the five most important regions to deal with. The strategy also identifies that the need of synergy between the development and aid policies, which have important roles in the EU relations with the African countries.<sup>64</sup>

These international contributions are very much needed in the countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda. These aids make it possible to maintain the fragile situation in these countries, which almost reached the limit of their economic potential. If one of the countries becomes incapable to maintain the current situation, that could lead to a domino effect in the region. In that case, the European Union will experience an even greater migration flow, not to mention the side effects of such an event in East-Africa, which would mean further conflicts in the otherwise not too peaceful region.

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<sup>63</sup> EU – European Union

<sup>64</sup> MOLNÁR, Anna: Az EU globális kül- és biztonságpolitikai stratégiája. (EU's global foreign and security policy - in Hungarian) <https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/svkk-elemzesek-2016-9-az-eu-globalis-strategiaja-molnar-a.original.pdf> (downloaded: 22 12 2017)

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**CHALLENGES OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: THE CYPRIOT EXAMPLE**

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**Abstract**

The Greek and Turkish Cypriots cannot find the way out from the labyrinth of their crisis, probably because they handled the treatment of the problem *wrong*. Maintaining this conflict is an induced process since *the* solution does not depend on Greek and Turkish Cypriots' apprehension, but on politics *made* by the superpowers. As known, the prevention of crises analyzed and surveyed in time *will* prevent its further spread. In our present, one thing seems certain: the expansion of Islam became a significant factor on a rapid scale, which is equal to Islamic invasion attempts in the disguise of the migration crisis.

**Keywords:** Cyprus, armed conflict, crisis management, peacekeeping, migration, migration crisis, islamization

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union the cold war period came to an end. The until-then-widespread rigidity of security political thinking was reflected by newly appeared attempts, the main focus of which was the identification of the new poles. The two best known and widest spread theories are the theses of Francis Fukuyama and Samuel P. Huntington. According to Fukuyama *The end of history* is liberal democracy, which becomes a political and social system enmeshing the world within a period of time. Huntington was, however, more cynical, when he wrote his work *The clash of civilizations*. According to his theory, conflicts between alliances of nation-states will be substituted by clashes between cultures, religions and civilizations. Huntington's theory is apparently verified by the fact that while in the cold war period the main threat came from The Soviet-Union and its allies, whom with their sheer existence were not frightened of the possibility of launching even the third world war, in the 1990's it came mainly from terrorism, ethnic conflicts, mass migration, weapons of mass destruction and the spreading of relevant competences, the spread of organized crime, conflicts for resources and information warfare.<sup>1</sup> Up until our present days these challenges have escalated, international terrorism, present days' and the hybrid warfare<sup>2</sup> equally affect the renewal of security political thinking,

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<sup>1</sup> GORKA Sebestyén: A nemzetbiztonság halála? A demokrácia védelme a hidegháború utáni világban (The death of national security? Protecting democracy in post-Cold War world in Hungarian In: Külügyi Szemle. 2004/3.-4., Teleki László Intézet. Budapest, 2004. pp. 117-129.

<sup>2</sup> PORKOLÁB Imre: Hibrid hadviselés: új hadviselési forma, vagy régi ismerős? (Hybrid warfare: is it a new kind of waging war of and old acquaintance? in Hungarian in Hadtudomány. 2015/3-4. pp. 36-48., [http://real.mtak.hu/29824/1/2015\\_3\\_4\\_5.pdf](http://real.mtak.hu/29824/1/2015_3_4_5.pdf)

including of course the planning and applying of new strategies in crisis management, since it is important to give the proper answer for new challenges<sup>3</sup>.

### **Briefly about Crisis management**

By the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it became regular that the *"preventive feature of security prioritizes prevention over direct protection"*. The prevention of crises analysed and surveyed in time will prevent its further escalation. Prevention has double meaning. On the one hand, it obliges national and international characters to establish and maintain a system of inside and outside proves for the sake of a no-risk-condition. The other element of prevention is intervention applied in the right time during the crisis. They have *"an aim to preserve international peace and order and to block any security danger activity, which violates wider interests"*. The biggest challenge of our times regarding security is the expanding crisis focuses. What became more and more important among the power relations established after the cold war is the compensation by *"the mission of international armed forces or civil troops, in which the liquidation of reactionist "evil" dictatorial, or crisis-maker resilient power or groups with increased helping the non-fighting civil population"*.<sup>4</sup> The most conspicuous in the last 25 years was the change of tasks of UN-missions and NATO. The UN considered its new task to conditions in crisis zones, which are essential for the normal work of one or more states, to supervise democratic elections and to help establishing the democratic institutional system needed for operating a state.<sup>5</sup> Earlier, however, with peace-missions and peacekeeping actions the success was fundamentally not guaranteed, at the same time in the 1990's bad results and experiences appeared as well, for instance it is worth noting in connection with that the Srebrenica massacre and Ruanda genocide, as the two most widely known affairs.

Based on the praxis and experiences formed by the 21<sup>st</sup> century the primary aspect in case of analysis of crises is the more and more subtle distinction, based on which *"security-featured"* and *"non-security-featured"*<sup>6</sup> crisis situations can be distinguished. The characteristics security-featured crisis situations are that they directly affect a state, a region they are threatening its citizens' life, which include international terrorism, armed conflicts. In case of non-security-featured crisis situations the crisis affects indirectly, collaterally, which include natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes and storms. Based on that different types require different handling, controlling and procedural ways.<sup>7</sup> Hereinafter I briefly discuss our homeland's crisis management methods and challenges, then, through the Cypriot

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<sup>3</sup> SIMICSKÓ István: A hibrid hadviselés előzményei és aktualitásai (The antecedents of hybrid warfare and its actualities; in Hungarian in *Hadtudomány*) 2017/3–4. pp. 3-16.; [http://real-j.mtak.hu/9493/7/Hadtudomany\\_2017\\_3-4\\_WEB-re.pdf](http://real-j.mtak.hu/9493/7/Hadtudomany_2017_3-4_WEB-re.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> DEÁK Péter: *Biztonságpolitika a hétköznapokban* (Security policy in the everyday, in Hungarian) Zrínyi Publishing House. Budapest, 2009. pp. 203-204.

<sup>5</sup> *Biztonságpolitika* (Security policy; in Hungarian). edited by Ferenc Gazdag; SVKH. Budapest, 2001. p. 181.

<sup>6</sup> Idézi: RESPERGER István: *A válságkezelés kicsit másképp* (cit. by István Resperger in *Crisis management slightly differently*; in Hungarian) In: *Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle MMXVI/III. Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem* (University of Public Service) Budapest, 2016. p. 35

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

example I describe the phases of crises, the solution attempts until now, finally, my own conclusion and thoughts about the Cypriot crisis.



*Picture 1: UN-controlled area in Nicosia (own recording – 2003)*

### **Crisis management in Hungary**

Our country joined NATO in 1999, which changed fundamentally the security-political situation of Hungary. Based on that, it requires recognizances, at the same time proves, among others it changed the basic philosophy related to the application of armed forces, and the defence system needed to be rearranged as well. According to the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, in case of offence the entire organization stepped into action in military protection of Hungary, so the leadership of our homeland do not need to consider any risk of either an unleashing war conflict jeopardizes sovereignty or territorial integrity, or the possibility that in such case Hungary had to protect itself without allies.<sup>8</sup> It belongs to said recognizances that Hungary has to take its share of mutual charges, acceptance of new strategic conceptions, conformance to these conceptions (e.g.: Smart Defence<sup>9</sup>; NATO 2020<sup>10</sup>), Hungary also have to pledge to develop the army and make it NATO-compatible, and aside these, Hungary takes its part in peacekeeping as well<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> DR. SZABÓ János: A védelmi szektor stratégiai felülvizsgálata (János Szabó PhD: Strategic review of the defence sector; in Hungarian) in Új Honvédelmi Szemle 2000/9. Honvédelmi Minisztérium (Ministry of Defence). Bp. 2000. pp. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics\\_84268.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics_84268.htm) (downloaded 2018. 05. 22.)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_63654.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm) (downloaded 2018. 05. 22.)

<sup>11</sup> See more at: Zoltán Kiss: Magyarok a békefenntartásban (Hungarians in peacekeeping) Zrínyi Publishing House Budapest, 2011.

As a member of the EU, our country takes part in the common security and defence policy of the European Council as well, however, based on the experiences of recent times (Georgia-2008, Libya-2011, Siria-2012, Ukraine-2013), we can state that due to lack of political will and consensus the Union did not react to the crises listed above, and as a consequence this shows the incapacity of the common security and defense policy. Based on that, handling migration crisis and Islamic terrorism<sup>12</sup> as priority, it would be important to bring a common will and thinking into being within the EU, even by cooperating NATO.<sup>13</sup>

Present days, Hungary, despite its territory is not menaced by war conflicts, can be threatened by the modern challenges of asymmetric or hybrid warfare. The migration crisis evolved in 2015 is concerning our country as well, since this region became a crucial point of migration pathway ranging along the Balkans. The danger of assaults by international terrorism might threaten Hungary as well, especially if we consider that, in parallel with the shrinkage of Islamic State's territory the risk of terrorist actions in Europe has increased, according to last months' warnings by several military and state-defense experts of NATO and EU. Of course, paying attention to IT threats is essential as another capital menace of our times. Further threats, such as conflicts of ethnic origin, the problem of radicalization do not represent so high danger for our homeland with the Ukrainian situation in the region being a possible exception, but we should not draw extensive consequences concerning the far future from the events of the neighboring country.

### **Crisis management in Cyprus**

After the long British colonial rule the isle of Cyprus, which lies in the eastern basin of Mediterranean with its 9251 km<sup>2</sup> area, gained independence in 1959. Even before that there had been minor incidents, but between 1955 and 1959 major ethnic conflicts broke out. A trilateral treaty of British, Greek and Turkish participants was born about the preservation of Cyprus' independence and security, but it was troublesome from the beginning that the 80% Greek and 20% Turkish (by 1960 Turkish minority decreased to only 18,8%) communities had different ideas of the island's future. The root of the problem was that while the Greek community wanted to join Greece, the Turkish minority wished to join Turkey, the 80-year British governance, however, showed clearly that a Cypriot nation with respective national consciousness had never evolved.<sup>14</sup> To a certain degree they played the two

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<sup>12</sup> See more at: [https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/SVKK\\_Elemz%C3%A9sek\\_2018\\_11\\_A%20%C3%B6mege%20migr%C3%A1ci%C3%B3%20%C3%A9s%20az%20iszlamista%20terrorizmus%20k%C3%B6zti%20kapcsolat%20az%20Eur%C3%B3pai%20Uni%C3%B3ban\\_\(Ambrus%20A.\).pdf](https://svkk.uni-nke.hu/document/svkk-uni-nke-hu-1506332684763/SVKK_Elemz%C3%A9sek_2018_11_A%20%C3%B6mege%20migr%C3%A1ci%C3%B3%20%C3%A9s%20az%20iszlamista%20terrorizmus%20k%C3%B6zti%20kapcsolat%20az%20Eur%C3%B3pai%20Uni%C3%B3ban_(Ambrus%20A.).pdf) (downloaded: 2018.05.22.)

<sup>13</sup> Tamás CSIKI: Az Európai Tanács közös biztonság-és védelempolitikai csúcstalálkozójának háttere és eredményének értékelése (Evaluation and background of the EU Security and defence policy summit; in Hungarian in *Nemzet és Biztonság* 2014/1.) Nemzeti Közszerológati Egyetem (University of Public Service) Budapest, 2014. pp. 48-63.

<sup>14</sup> Ferenc MEZŐ: Ciprus, Aphrodité felosztott szigete (Cyprus, the divided island of Aphrodite; in Hungarian in *Honvédségi Szemle*, 2000/9.) by Honvédelmi Minisztérium (Ministry of Defence) Budapest, 2000. pp. 43-44.



communities off against each other using their ethnic, language and cultural differences.<sup>15</sup> In 1960 as a straight consequence of independence they ratified the constitution and concluded the association pact between Great Britain, Greece and Turkey, at the same time they ruled out the annexation of Cyprus to either Greece or Turkey. The constitution emphasized that 70% of the representatives have to come from Greek Cypriots, and 30% from Turkish Cypriots. By 1963 the state became inoperative, since the Greeks urged joining the motherland, while the Turkish representatives initiated disunion. There were attempts to decrease the rights of the Turks, whom as a consequence rebelled against it; the subsequent civil war lasted until 1964. To settle the confrontation UN ordered a peacekeeper contingent to Cyprus.<sup>16</sup> The crisis did not settle by that, the negotiations were interrupted by a Greek Military coup, which was followed by a Turkish military intervention; the Turkish Army occupied 73% of the island, forcing 30% of the Greek population to leave their homes by this. The UN peacekeepers had to face a serious task, and, despite the continuous negotiations Cyprus remained divided. In the area supervised by the Turks, the *Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus*<sup>17</sup>, a polity recognized merely by Turkey was established.

Crises based on their phases can be divided into four groups; initial and evolving phases, the climax of crisis and concluding phase. In the initial period a conflict of interests can develop due to a shorter or longer time interval, which, inspecting the Cypriot example goes back several centuries in the past, exactly to the beginnings of the Greek-Turk antagonism, however, originated by the island's constant "colonial state" the conflict remained unrevealed up until the 1950's. During the initial period prevention gains a greater emphasis, in my researched topic, however, there were not a real chance for prevention. The evolving phase in case of Cyprus lasted from the time of independence and drawing up the constitution to the crisis of the new state, this more or less means the period between 1959 and 1963. At the climax of crisis pressure reaches a critical level and ends up in the dimension of armed struggle (war). In Cyprus this period ranges roughly between 1963 and 1974. In the phase of concluding the crisis the political decision-makers, who might have solutions to end up the conflict, endeavor to provide means of establishing a peaceful situation of agreement and bon-accord. This period requires a longer time (regarding the researched region this time is further exponentiated). The time needed to reconstruct the order depends on the intensity of the crisis, the time interval that covers the crisis and mainly on the approach of crisis management.<sup>18</sup>

#### **The manifold nature of the conflict, and the possible reasons of the protraction of the Cypriot crisis**

- The fundamental historical Turkish-Greek opposition. It is worth mentioning that during World War I the Entente Powers promised that they would hand over Cyprus to Greece on condition they join the war on their side.

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<sup>15</sup> HITCHENS, Christopher: Cyprus; Quartet. New York, 1984. p. 151.

<sup>16</sup> MEZŐ op. cit. pp. 44-45.

<sup>17</sup> GAZDAG op. cit. p. 190.

<sup>18</sup> RESPERGER op. cit. pp. 13-16.

- The Cypriot division poses a challenge from two regards: Cyprus has been divided into Turkish and Greek entities, and this division cuts through cultural and national boundaries. The Cypriot separation is aimed at solving the problem of diversity within the country. This split proves to be permanent within the separated entities<sup>19</sup>, usually in accordance with the plans of the major powers.
- The Republic of Cyprus lost 36% of its territory in 1974, rendering 220 000 people homeless in the process; the lost wealth of Greek Cypriots in the Turkish-occupied territories may add up to over 60 billion Euros (calculated on 2012 rates); the country lost 82% of its tourist accommodations, resulting in the destabilization of the country's economy in 1974<sup>20</sup>. As a result, the Cypriot crisis is a hard one to handle, not only because of the numerous past decades, but also of the consequences of the crisis.
- Turkey and Greece are both members of NATO. Both countries joined the alliance in 1952; furthermore, Turkey is in possession of NATO's second largest armed forces.
- Turkey is a long-time candidate country to the EU, but is still not accepted because of two reasons: violation of human rights, and the Cypriot conflict. (Meanwhile the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU in 2004.) To make the handling of the conflict even more difficult, the international community now recognises the Republic of Cyprus spread over the entirety of the island according to international law, therefore making Turkey not only an unlawful occupant of a part of Cyprus, but an invading power against a part of the European Union. This status could only be sustained as a result of continued talks between the European Union (mostly Germany) and Istanbul on the question of the migrant crisis, which – in my opinion – has not turned for the worse only because of Turkey's decisive actions.
- The situation in Syria and Iraq has enhanced the geopolitical value of the island. Great Britain has many bases<sup>21</sup> located in Cyprus, from where its strikes against ISIS and the Assad regime started.

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<sup>19</sup> See the example of India/Pakistan or Israel/Palestine

<sup>20</sup> Balázs BOTOS: A ciprusi gazdasági összeomlás természetrajza (The history of the economic collapse of Cyprus; in Hungarian in *Külügyi Szemle*, 2013/4. Magyar Külügyi Intézet (Hungarian Institute of Foreign Policy), Budapest, 2013. p. 133.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.raf.mod.uk/our-organisation/stations/raf-akrotiri/> (downloaded: 2018.05.22.)



*Picture 2: Turkish warship in Famagusta (own recording – 2014)*

### **Possibilities for a solution**

In terms of handling religious and ethnic disagreements, we may look at the positive examples of the constitutions of either Libanon or Syria (before 2011), where the basic rights were given and respected by all parties, resulting in the peaceful coexistence of Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions. The concept of a federative state has also been around for some time, the most prominent example being Bosnia and Herzegovina, a state which includes the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Republic of Serbia, spreading over the eastern and northern parts of the country. An important attribute of a federative state is the shared power between the central and regional authorities. It is worth noting that the governing power is also shared by central and regional governments in such federative states.<sup>22</sup> A federative state needs to be based on cooperation, and must also have a driving force behind the federation. Considering these aspects and possibilities, one of the most rational plans to solve the Cypriot crisis was that of Kofi Annan, General-Secretary of the UN, which he first presented in November 2002, and completed by 2003.<sup>23</sup> This plan featured a United Republic of Cyprus (based on the Swiss model) with two constituent states:

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<sup>22</sup> PALLEY, Claire: *Constitutional Law and Minorities*. Minority Rights Group. London, 1978. p. 13.

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/Annan\\_Plan\\_Text.html](http://www.hri.org/docs/annan/Annan_Plan_Text.html) (downloaded: 2018.05.22.)

the Greek Cypriot State and the Turkish Cypriot State. As Cyprus declared its independence in 1960, the existence of a united Cypriot state was already given from the constitutional point of view, and in 1960 the agreement of Greece, Turkey and Great Britain could have remained in effect. Turkey supported this possibility, as they hoped that their help in the creation of a federative state could pave the way toward the country's EU-membership. The constitution of this proposed state would have included separate clauses on human rights and rights of freedom, and would not discriminate religious or ethnic groups. Not only UN peacekeeping forces would have ensured harmony, but 6000 Greek and Turkish soldiers could have remained on the island as well. As the conditional sentences suggest, Annan's plan was not implemented despite the fact that taking all the means and possibilities into consideration, it seemed to be the most feasible solution to end a 60-year long crisis. The political elite of Turkey and Greece did not care that the lives of people, the inhabitants of the island were at stake, they only followed their own interests and resentments. The chances of Turkey becoming a member of the EU seem to be dwindling, Great Britain still wants to maintain its military bases on Cyprus, while the various international organizations such as the UN and the EU (and, as both states are among its members, NATO) are unable to reconcile the differences and bring the crisis to an end. Greek and Turkish Cypriots are still watching each other cautiously from the opposite sides of the island while the reigning political elite of Athens and Istanbul exploit the situation for their own political purposes.

### **Actuality of the crisis**

It is a well-known fact that following the 1974 Turkish occupation, recolonization began on the depopulated northern territories. Turkish settlers took the place of the expelled Greek Cypriots. The transformation of the island's ethnic map is still in progress, with a help of an artificial and supported migration, which can be an obstacle in the path of a long-awaited solution. In my previous analyses, I came to the conclusion that "this conflict and the continuation of the disagreements is an artificially generated process, since the solution does not depend upon the discretion of Greek or Turkish Cypriots, but on high politics. For example, exploiting religious differences in a time when the expansion of Islam has rapidly become a major factor. We could also mention an artificially induced crisis of our time: the Islamic attempts of expansion, disguised as migration crisis. We could also quote the oeuvre of Oriana Fallaci,<sup>24</sup> whose works were often criticised in the Islamic world, since she dared to write about the expansion of Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Fallaci, all of us can experience the contrast, or rather incompatibility between the Islamic and the Western world, the worldwide reality of the *Jihad* and the lack of adequate responses on our behalf, together with the negligence of the West, while we all suffer from the consequences of our humane laws when we accept our enemies into the European hinterland, using double standards. Many European leaders (most prominently, chancellor Angela Merkel) ask us to close our eyes and consider everyone as refugees, even those who demand western prosperity while brandishing sticks and throwing stones on our borders. Fallaci stated her charges with raw sincerity and straightforwardness and coined the word 'Eurabia' in an interview to Wall Street

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<sup>24</sup> Oriana Fallaci (1929-2006) Italian writer, publicist, journalist and war correspondent

Journal in 2005.<sup>25</sup> For this reason (among many), we might as well say out loud that the Islamization of Europe has already begun. Did it begin in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or maybe at the time of the clearly symbolic invasion of the northern part of Cyprus? Alternatively, should we consider the invasion of the ancient territories of Armenia or the attempted genocide of the Armenians in 1915 as imminent signs? While I do not wish to answer these politically sensitive questions, which are internationally regarded as difficult, the so-called ‘religious tolerance’ seems to be lost in people’s heads. Many wars were fought throughout history based on religious differences. The fact that Islam is constantly fighting itself is not new either, its different branches are up against each other e.g. Sunnis vs. Shiites. It is also appreciable what the insufficiently repeated, yet acquirable old wisdom says: the “patience” shown towards others and against ourselves seldom plays a relevant role in solving undecided conflicts.”<sup>26</sup>



*Picture 3: Conflicting Religious Cultures?*  
(own recording – 2014)

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB111948571453267105> (downloaded: 2018.05.29.)

<sup>26</sup> [http://archiv.uni-nke.hu/downloads/kutatas/folyoiratok/hadtudomanyi\\_szemle/szamok/2016/2016\\_1/16\\_1\\_bp\\_saska.pdf](http://archiv.uni-nke.hu/downloads/kutatas/folyoiratok/hadtudomanyi_szemle/szamok/2016/2016_1/16_1_bp_saska.pdf) (downloaded: 2018.05.29.)

Is it a drama, or a tragedy? The two concepts can be mixed up in people's minds. The leading news in our days are provided by the migration crisis, which is followed by the aggressive manifestations of Islam in the form of terror attacks. Islam terrorism and Muslim migrants go hand in hand. According to Chantal Delsol,<sup>27</sup> the good and the bad sides, sometimes posing as role players in a Merkel-style drama in which we know who is good and bad, want to conceal the identities of the nations and the tragedy that comes with them. She states that the migration crisis that Angela Merkel keeps calling a 'drama' is rather a tragedy.<sup>28</sup> Following her line of thought about the migration crisis, we might as well call it the tragedy of Europe. To quote Delsol: "*Here we have not a drama but a tragedy where the solidarity towards migrants clash with the identity of the nations.*" I believe that this is the real crisis and it is not enough to treat it merely well.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20180525-a-migracio-nem-drama-hanem-tragedia-interju-chantal-delsollal.html> (downloaded: 2018.05.29.)

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JÓZSEF HORVÁTH, PhD

**ELECTRONIC WARFARE CAPABILITY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

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**Abstract**

Electronic warfare is playing an important role in recent conflicts. There are several different articles about the electronic warfare capability of Russia and the USA; however, there is less focus on the electronic warfare capability of the People's Republic of China.

In this article, the author introduces the improving electronic warfare capability of the People's Republic of China.

**Keywords:** electronic warfare, EW, the People's Republic of China

**INTRODUCTION**

During various conflicts, it is possible to collect information about new military equipment of different countries, e.g. Russia, the USA and China. There are several Hungarian researchers<sup>1,2,3</sup> who deal with this field, in order to have an overall picture, and to show the ongoing projects and developments. It needs to be emphasised that the arms race is present in electronic warfare as well, and that various conflicts are used as test-fields for the new electronic warfare capabilities and assets.

Majority of the relevant articles deal with the EW capability of the USA and Russia, however, in my opinion, we have to take China into consideration, as well.

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<sup>1</sup> László KOVÁCS: Az elektronikai hadviselés jelene és lehetséges jövője (Present and the possible future of electronic warfare; in Hungarian). In Hadmérnök, 2017/I. pp. 213-232. [http://www.hadmernok.hu/171\\_17\\_kovacs.pdf](http://www.hadmernok.hu/171_17_kovacs.pdf), (downloaded 10 February 2018)

<sup>2</sup> László VÁNYA: Helikopterek elektronikai hadviselési alkalmazása a 90-es évekig. (Employment of helicopters for EW purposes till the '90s, in Hungarian) In Repüléstudományi közlemények, 2017/2. pp. 65-72. [http://www.repulestudomany.hu/folyoirat/2017\\_2/2017-2-05-0371\\_Vanya\\_Laszlo.pdf](http://www.repulestudomany.hu/folyoirat/2017_2/2017-2-05-0371_Vanya_Laszlo.pdf), (downloaded 10 February 2018)

<sup>3</sup> Zsolt HAIG: Információ Társadalom Biztonság (Information, Society, Security, in Hungarian). By Nemzeti Közszerződési Egyetem Szolgáltató Ltd., Budapest, 2015. ISBN: 978-615-5527-08-1



## THE ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The economic situation of China is a controversial topic among experts. *“Since the initiation of economic reforms and trade liberalization 30 years ago, China has been one of the world’s fastest-growing economies and has emerged as a major economic and trade power.”*<sup>4</sup> However, despite this increase – based on the opinion of some experts – *“China’s economic presence on world markets is actually much smaller than that of the United States of America”*<sup>5</sup>. *“As China’s economy has matured, its real GDP growth has slowed significantly, from 14.2% in 2007 to 6.9% in 2017, and that growth is projected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to fall to 5.8% by 2022.”*<sup>6</sup>

The most important goal of China is to become a reliable and dominant manufacturer in all areas of the economy, and to be independent from foreign technology. Based on the opinion of Chinese economic experts, China’s economy must be competitive, based on its ambitious plans.<sup>7</sup>

In connection with the reliability, recently, there have been some concerns. As an example, we can mention the HUAWEI issue. Based on the report of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE)<sup>8</sup>, it is really hard to evaluate the situation. There are some facts, e.g. the difference between the approaches of the individual rights of China and the Western World<sup>9</sup>, or the Chinese state ownership in the involved companies. One of the conclusions of this report is that the countries have to decide on the application or limitation of these technical assets based on their own security aspects. Another important issue is that not only HUAWEI can be involved in this espionage problem, but there are other companies as well, e.g. ZTE, but also Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision, and Dahua Technology.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Wayne M. MORRISON: China’s Economic Conditions. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. December 11, 2009. <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a511980.pdf> (downloaded 10 February 2018)

<sup>5</sup> Peter ROBERTSON: China’s economic power is actually a lot smaller than you think. <http://theconversation.com/chinas-economic-power-is-actually-a-lot-smaller-than-you-think-88307> (downloaded 15 February 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Wayne M. MORRISON: China’s Economic Rise: History, Trends, Challenges, and Implications for the United States. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. February 05, 2018. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL33534.pdf> (downloaded 10 February 2018)

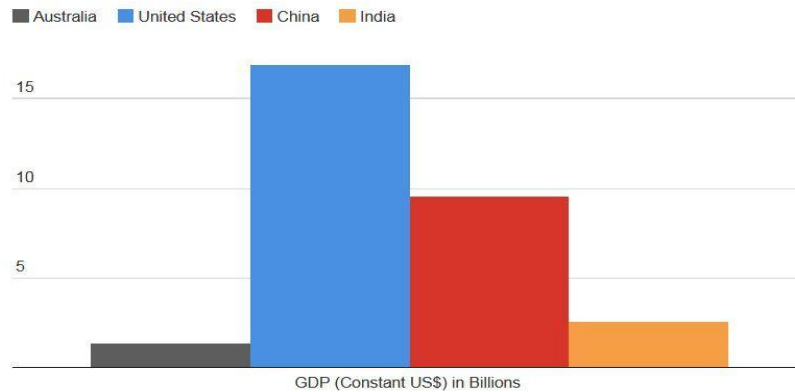
<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), in Tallinn, is a NATO-accredited cyber defence organisation, focusing on research, training and exercises.

<sup>9</sup> *“The EU takes a strict stand on protecting individual privacy and restricts mass surveillance (as evident through the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and in recent landmark judgments by the European Court of Justice), and both the EU and United States have solid intellectual property protection regimes, Chinese national policy – and the consequent legal environment – clearly favours state interests over private ones.”* Kadri KASKA – Henrik BECKVARD – Tomáš MINÁRIK: Huawei, 5G and China as a Security Threat. <https://ccdcoe.org/uploads/2019/03/CCDCOE-Huawei-2019-03-28-FINAL.pdf>, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

The following diagram shows the market exchange rates. It needs to be emphasised, as it was mentioned earlier, that the Chinese market rate is only half of the United States'. Based on analyses by economic experts, the reasons for the growth of the Chinese economy are the large-scale capital investments and the rapid productivity growth. *“Economic reforms led to higher efficiency in the economy, which boosted output and increased resources for additional investment in the economy.”*<sup>11</sup> It should also be mentioned that the success of the Chinese economy is based on its ability to implement innovations. The objective of China’s government is to carry out a so-called “smart” economic growth, *“which seeks to reduce reliance on energy-intensive and high-polluting industries and rely more on high technology, green energy, and services.”*<sup>12</sup>



**Diagram 1. GDP measured in market exchange rates**<sup>13</sup>

Another issue to be mentioned is that the increasing Chinese economic potential is associated with increasing military power, as it is responsible for enforcing the country’s economic interests. This process has triggered uncertainty in many states.

China has been exerting its influence in the South China Sea, using its massive Belt and Road Initiative<sup>14</sup>. *“Many analysts contend that China could use the initiative to boost its industries facing overcapacity (such as steel), gain new overseas markets, influence other countries to adopt China’s economic model, and expand China’s “soft power” in the numerous countries that may participate in the initiative.”*<sup>15</sup> According to other opinions, *„China uses the Belt and Road Initiative to develop strong economic ties with other countries to shape their interests to align with China’s and deter confrontation or criticism of China’s approach to sensitive issues”.*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> MORRISON op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> ROBERTSON op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, former name the One Belt One Road /OBOR/) program is a Chinese, state-funded development strategy, involving infrastructure developments and investments.

<sup>15</sup> MORRISON op. cit. Summary

<sup>16</sup> No author: Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2018. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. May 16, 2018. <http://www.ustaiwandefense.com/tdnswp/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-Military->

China has territorial and maritime disputes, and – in order to strengthen its position – has constructed some outposts in the Spratly Islands<sup>17,18</sup>, has maintained a coast guard presence in the Senkakus and has also continued to reach out to the South China Sea.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, it should be emphasised that „*China seeks to secure its objectives without jeopardizing the regional stability that remains critical to the economic development that has helped the Chinese Communist Party maintain its monopoly on power. However, China is also willing to employ coercive measures – both military and non-military – to advance its interests and mitigate opposition from other countries.*”<sup>20</sup>

Naturally, a detailed, cross-sectional, economic analysis is not part of this article, as my intention was only to let the reader gain some insight into this issue.

## THE MILITARY POWER OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

At the beginning of this paragraph, I would like to highlight that it is difficult to assess the current situation of the military power of China, based on available open sources.



**Picture 1. Military Parade Marks the 90th Birthday Of Chinese People's Liberation Army**<sup>21</sup>

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and-Security-Developments-Involving-the-People%E2%80%99s-Republic-of-China.pdf (downloaded 10 February 2018)

<sup>17</sup> ROBERTSON op. cit. Executive Summary.

<sup>18</sup> The Spratly Islands can be found in the South China Sea region. This region, believed to be rich in fish, oil and gas reserves, it is important not only for China, but the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan as well.

<sup>19</sup> ROBERTSON op. cit. Executive Summary.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> No author: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-flag-guard-formation-holding-the-flag-of-the-communist-news-photo/824422876> (downloaded 10 February 2018)

It is clear from the analyses that the Chinese leadership is expecting the support of China's economic aspirations from the Chinese army, in every part of the world. As a result, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is currently in the process of a complex reorganisation, with the aim of being able to react to any conflict, using the most advanced technology.

China's main goal is to have a well-equipped, prepared and trained military at its disposal by 2049, which is expected to be capable of employing various types of warfare methods, including nuclear deterrence, anti-access/area denial (A2/AD), cyberspace-, space- and electronic warfare (EW) operations, in every domain known today, such as in air-, maritime-, space-, electromagnetic- and information domains. As milestones, the following three developmental benchmarks were set for the PLA by Xi Jinping<sup>22</sup>, *“becoming a mechanized force with increased informatized and strategic capabilities by 2020, a fully modernized force by 2035, and a worldwide first-class military by mid-century.”*<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, it needs to be mentioned that *“China has a robust and redundant Integrated Air Defence System architecture over land areas and within 300 nm (556 km) of its coast that relies on an extensive early warning radar network, fighter aircraft and a variety of SAM systems. China is also placing radars and air defence weapons on outposts in the South China Sea, further extending its Integrated Air Defence System.”*<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these military forces, the paramilitary forces need to be taken into consideration, as well, namely the China Coast Guard and the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia. The China Coast Guard *“is responsible for a wide range of missions, including enforcement of China's sovereignty claims, surveillance, protection of fisheries, anti-smuggling, and general law enforcement.”*<sup>25</sup> The People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia is a *„subset of China's national militia, an armed reserve force of civilians available for mobilization.”*<sup>26</sup>

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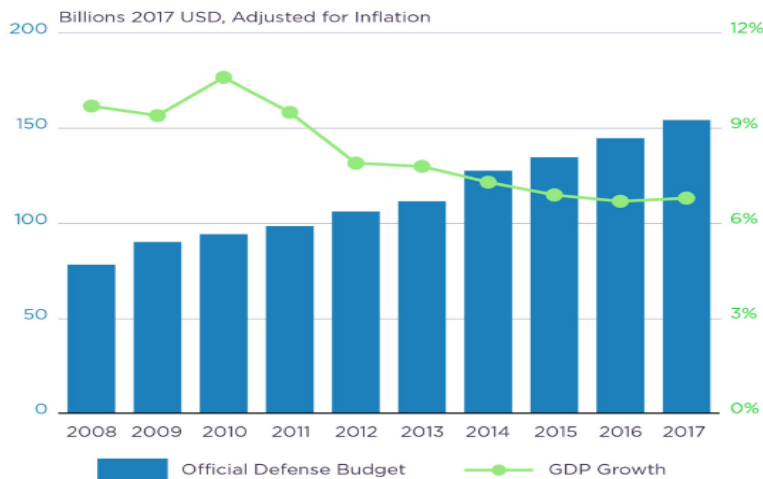
<sup>22</sup> General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP; 2012– ), and president of China (2013– ).

<sup>23</sup> Defense Intelligence Agency: China Military Power, Modernizing a Force to Fight and Win. 2019. [https://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China\\_Military\\_Power\\_FINAL\\_5MB\\_20190103.pdf](https://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/China_Military_Power_FINAL_5MB_20190103.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2018. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 79.



**Diagram 2. Defence budget of China<sup>27</sup>**

In order to make effective use of its financial budget, China has started pursuing Research & Development activities, as well as purchasing foreign weapon systems. It has to be noted that China has been suspected of cybercrime and espionage several times so far, resulting in a large amount of stolen data. In 2009, China was suspected of stealing design data for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter from Lockheed Martin. In 2014, a Chinese national was indicted for theft of sensitive trade secrets, related to the Boeing’s C-17 military transport aircraft.<sup>28</sup>

### **THE ELECTRONIC WARFARE CAPABILITY OF THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY**

In my earlier article<sup>29</sup> I briefly introduced the situation of electronic warfare in Russia, the USA and China. My aim this time is to carry out a deeper analysis, in connection with China.

Firstly, I would like to discuss the Chinese warfare concept, called “Unrestricted Warfare”. It combines “*elements of information operations, cyberspace operations, irregular warfare, illegal activities in foreign relations, carried out in peacetime, as well as in conflict.*”<sup>30</sup> Based on their Cyber Warfare Doctrine, China’s plan is to have achieved global electronic dominance by 2050.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 16. p. 82.

<sup>28</sup> Catherine A. THEOHARY: Information Warfare: Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. March 5, 2018. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R45142.pdf> (downloaded 10 June 2018)

<sup>29</sup> Lt. Col. József HORVÁTH: The Battle of Wizards: The Future of Electronic Warfare. Defence Review. 2016/L., pp. 171-177.

<sup>30</sup> THEOHARY op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin COLEMAN: China’s Cyber Forces. <http://defensetech.org/2008/05/08/chinas-cyber-forces/> (downloaded 24 August 2018.)

In order to achieve these goals, the most important key player is the newest, additional formation to the People's Liberation Army (PLA), called Strategic Support Force (SSF). *"The SSF demonstrates the evolution of Chinese thought on information as a strategic resource in warfare, reflecting the paramount need to harness space, cyber, and the electromagnetic spectrum for military superiority while denying their use to adversaries."*<sup>32</sup> The SSF is based on the SSF Staff Department, Equipment Department, Political Work Department, Logistics Department, Space Systems Department and Network Systems Department.<sup>33</sup>

The Network Systems Department and its subordinate units are responsible for information warfare with a mission set, that includes cyber warfare, electronic warfare, and potential psychological warfare.<sup>34</sup> The PLA has a formal information warfare strategy, called Integrated Network Electronic Warfare.<sup>35</sup> The aim of the coordinated and combined use of cyber operations, electronic warfare, space control and kinetic activities is to *"create blind spots in adversary C4ISR systems"*.<sup>36</sup> Regarding this issue, we have to mention the A2/AD environment as well.

The A2/AD environment is a method to deny the adversary's freedom of movement in the battlefield. For this aim, attack aircraft, submarines, warships, specialized ballistic and cruise missiles and electronic warfare assets can be used. China has employed A2/AD in *"the South China Sea to disrupt freedom of navigation for the United States and the international community"*. It is an important issue that *"anti-satellite weapons are also believed to be employed by China to maintain A2/AD in the Asia-Pacific and would be used to disrupt or even completely deny U.S. satellite communication and GPS capabilities."*<sup>37</sup> Based on analysis, the electronic warfare capability is one of the important elements of the A2/AD environment. *"Everything about forming an A2/AD environment is about being able to access the electromagnetic spectrum."*<sup>38</sup>

In connection with the EW activity, I would like to highlight the cooperation between the PLA and the Science and Engineering University. This University provides not only trainings, but it is the base of the scientific, technological and military equipment researches.<sup>39</sup>

As for electronic warfare, China has procured state-of-the-art technology *"to improve its intercept, direction finding, and jamming capabilities. It also may be*

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<sup>32</sup> John COSTELLO: China's Strategic Support Force: A Force for a New Era. [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Costello\\_Written%20Testimony.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Costello_Written%20Testimony.pdf) (downloaded 15 August 2018)

<sup>33</sup> COSTELLO op. cit. p. 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Deepak SHARMA: Integrated Network Electronic Warfare: China's New Concept of Information Warfare. [https://idsa.in/system/files/jds\\_4\\_2\\_dsharma.pdf](https://idsa.in/system/files/jds_4_2_dsharma.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Tate NURKIN: China's Advanced Weapons Systems. [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Jane%27s%20by%20IHS%20Markit\\_C hina%27s%20Advanced%20Weapons%20Systems.pdf](https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Jane%27s%20by%20IHS%20Markit_C hina%27s%20Advanced%20Weapons%20Systems.pdf) (downloaded 31 March 2019)

<sup>37</sup> No author: China's Anti-Access Area Denial. <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-threat-and-proliferation/todays-missile-threat/china-anti-access-area-denial-coming-soon/>

<sup>38</sup> NURKIN op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p. 37.

*developing jammers, which could be used against Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers.*<sup>40</sup>

As I have mentioned earlier, the SSF is focusing on the electronic warfare. Based on the annual report of 2016 of the U.S. Department of Defence, *"the PLA's EW units have conducted jamming and anti-jamming operations, testing the military's understanding of EW weapons, equipment, and performance."* According to this report, China has *"jamming equipment against multiple communication and radar systems and GPS satellite systems."*<sup>41</sup>

According to various sources, the PLA has started to test its electronic warfare capability. In July 2018 – based on the open sources – they carried out an exercise with more than 50 combat units, involving about 2,100 officers at five locations, and tested reconnaissance, electronic communication, cybersecurity, air strikes and other battle skills. The personnel employed were from the Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern and Central command theatres.<sup>42</sup> The testing of electronic warfare devices installed in the Spratly Islands was also a part of the exercise.

Currently, based on available open sources, the PLA Air Force is in the main focus, regarding the electronic warfare, and is undergoing a difficult transformation. There are several new types of aircraft and new capabilities. Some examples regarding the PLA Air Force's new assets: it has different versions of Shaanxi Y-8 for electronic intelligence, electronic jamming, information operations or psychological operations, as well as the types of H-6G, JH-7 and J-16 electronic warfare aircraft.

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<sup>40</sup> No author: The Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2002. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. 2002. p. 37. <https://china.usc.edu/sites/default/files/legacy/AppImages/2002-defense-report-china.pdf> (downloaded 15. August 2018)

<sup>41</sup> Mark POMERLEAU: Breaking down China's electronic warfare tactics. <https://www.c4isrnet.com/c2-comms/2017/03/22/breaking-down-chinas-electronic-warfare-tactics/> (downloaded 10 October 2018)

<sup>42</sup> Minnie CHAN: Welcome to the modern military: China's new combat units prepare for electronic warfare. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2154550/welcome-modern-military-chinas-new-combat-units-prepare> (downloaded 24. August 2018)



*Picture 2. Y-8G ECM<sup>43</sup> aircraft<sup>44</sup>*

*“The H-6G electronic warfare aircraft boasts of high electronic jamming power and can cover relatively bigger combat areas such as the South China Sea and East China Sea.”<sup>45</sup>*



*Picture 3. Modified H-6G bomber<sup>46</sup>*

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<sup>43</sup> Electronic counter measure, ECM

<sup>44</sup> Rick JOE: J-16D electronic warfare/strike aircraft. <https://plarealtalk.com/j-16d-electronic-warfare-strike-aircraft-146a0cbb74> (downloaded 15. August 2018)

<sup>45</sup> No author Chinese Navy gets new electronic warfare aircraft. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/chinese-navy-gets-new-electronic-warfare-aircraft-report/articleshow/62602763.cms> (downloaded 24. August 2018)

<sup>46</sup> Amreen KHAN: China Modifies H-6G Bomber into Electronic Warfare Aircraft. [http://www.defenseworld.net/news/21806/China\\_Modifies\\_H\\_6G\\_Bomber\\_into\\_Electronic\\_Warfare\\_Aircraft](http://www.defenseworld.net/news/21806/China_Modifies_H_6G_Bomber_into_Electronic_Warfare_Aircraft) (downloaded 24. August 2018)



China is currently building its own version of the Wild Weasel, using the type J-10B combat aircraft<sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup>, and has its own EA-18G Growler<sup>49</sup>, the type J-16D. The modified J-16 type has advanced AESA radar, and the electronic-warfare pods are mounted on the wingtips.<sup>50</sup> “China has fielded several types of UAVs with EW payloads, and showcased several of these during the PLA’s 90th Anniversary parade in July 2017.”<sup>51</sup>



*Picture 4. J-16D*<sup>52</sup>

The PLA Air Force has the EW attack variant of the J-20 "Black Eagle", as well, “the combination of advanced stealth capabilities and a heavy high performance airframe make it ideal for penetrating heavily defended enemy airspace and launching attacks on enemy naval strike-groups”.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Jeffrey LIN – P.W. SINGER: China Builds Its Own 'Wild Weasel' To Suppress Air Defenses. <http://www.popsci.com/china-builds-its-own-wild-weasel-to-suppress-air-defenses> (downloaded 24. August 2018)

<sup>48</sup> Wild Weasel is a concept at the USAF, for an aircraft, equipped with radar-seeking missiles against radars (air traffic, SAM sites, etc.). Earlier the F-4 variants, currently the F-16 is used for this aim. Probably F-35 Lightning-II will replace this type.

<sup>49</sup> The EA-18G Growler is an American carrier-based electronic warfare aircraft, a specialized version of the two-seat F/A-18F Super Hornet.

<sup>50</sup> Sebastien ROBLIN: Why America Should Fear China's Electronic Warfare Plane. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/why-america-should-fear-chinas-electronic-warfare-plane-20402> (downloaded 24. August 2018)

<sup>51</sup> Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2018. Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. p. 74.

<sup>52</sup> No author: J-16D to Suppress Air Defenses Role. [http://errymath.blogspot.com/2015/12/j-16d-to-suppress-air-defenses-role.html#.XLLxcMRS\\_IU](http://errymath.blogspot.com/2015/12/j-16d-to-suppress-air-defenses-role.html#.XLLxcMRS_IU) (downloaded 10 February 2018)

<sup>53</sup> Abraham AIT: What’s Next for China’s Fifth Generation Fighter Jet? <https://thediplomat.com/2019/02/whats-next-for-chinas-fifth-generation-fighter-jet/>



Picture 5. J-20 Chengdu (AVIC) J-20 (Black Eagle)<sup>54</sup>

Besides the two services mentioned above, the air and land forces, we have to mention the Chinese carrier fleet as well. Using more and more advanced carriers, China will be able to extend its effective range. It is important in connection with the Liaoning, the J-15 Flying Shark, because based on open sources, China tries to develop an electronic attack platform based on the Flying Shark carrier-based fighter.<sup>55</sup>

## CONCLUSION

It is important to consider the various aspects of electronic warfare capabilities of the different states. About the electronic warfare capability of the USA and Russia we can find several reports, comments, photos, from the different deployment areas, with dates and exact locations. As information warfare, they keep us informed; they keep this kind of capability more open to the public. By contrast, China's electronic warfare capacity is less public; as it is not currently involved in any armed conflicts. However, based on different analysis, *"China's efforts in the Pacific theatre can be viewed under similar pretences as Russia's projection of power and use of jamming capability."*<sup>56</sup> The aim of this secretiveness is to create doubts in the opposing side,

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<sup>54</sup> Military Factory: Chengdu J-20 (Black Eagle)  
[https://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft\\_id=860](https://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraft/detail.asp?aircraft_id=860) (downloaded 10 October 2018)

<sup>55</sup> The Diplomat: China's Navy to Deploy New Carrier Based Electronic Warfare Aircraft; J-15D/ J-17 Attack Fighter Revealed. <https://militarywatchmagazine.com/article/china-s-navy-to-deploy-new-carrier-based-electronic-warfare-aircraft-j-15d-j-17-attack-fighter-revealed> (downloaded 10 October 2018)

<sup>56</sup> Mark POMERLEAU: Army looking for software, not hardware for electronic warfare. <https://www.c4ismnet.com/electronic-warfare/2018/10/15/army-looking-for-software-not-hardware-for-electronic-warfare/> (downloaded 24. October 2018)

and it has proved to be a successful method. “*Nations such as China are masters of changing their signals*”<sup>57</sup>. Based on similar statements and activities, the nations will keep the arms race alive. The interesting issue is whether China will remain inside its own territory or it has any reason for acting somewhere else, far from its own territory as a military power.

I would like to highlight that capability does not only mean the available assets, but the knowledge as well. In my opinion, the knowledge means, beside the operation of the assets at high level, the development of our own military devices, the training of our staff and the analysis of the capability of other countries as well.

Each nation has different military and electronic warfare capabilities. In some cases, it is rather difficult to assess the current situation, because the armed forces do not display their exact capabilities in depth. Because of this, it is difficult to evaluate their real performance, based only on open sources. The problem with the accurate evaluation of the electronic warfare performance is that without advanced tools, which can be used for the analysis on the scene, it is almost impossible to get a clear picture. With an analyst team, we can collect information, and after a time, like a puzzle, we are able to build up our situational awareness.

We have to take into consideration that in recent decades, people use more and more electronic devices in civilian life, as well. Therefore, it is necessary to highlight that we need to monitor also the results of civil development projects, and the use of electronic warfare can influence not only the military targets, but the civilian population, as well.

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<sup>57</sup> The Diplomat op. cit.

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**ELEMENTS OF AIR TRANSIT IN HUNGARY, SENSITIVITY AND RESILIENCE OF ELEMENTS AGAINST DISASTER EFFECT**

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**Abstract**

Perhaps it can be said that aviation is the most dynamically developing transport sub-sector of our time, which is becoming increasingly important in transit as well. The elements of this system, like the other carriers, the human resources and the technical elements of aviation (track, aircraft, other technical elements), are examined in this article, in terms of their sensitivity to the effects of disasters.

**Keywords:** air transport, air transport technical elements, air transit, disaster, resilience.

**Introduction**

Air transport is primarily expedient to be used when small quantities of goods are to be transported urgently over long distances. Examples include rapidly perishable goods (e.g. fresh fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, etc.), live animals, urgently needed spare parts, medicines, jewellery, etc.

Key benefits:

- In case of long transport distances, the time of delivering the commodity is relatively short;
- Relatively low intensity of the load on goods, compared to other transport subsectors, so the cost of packaging is relatively small;
- Compliance with delivery deadlines can only be disturbed by extreme weather conditions.

Main drawbacks:

- It can be used only for a particular range of goods;<sup>1</sup>
- Transporting goods to and from the airport, loading and unloading is time-consuming, which is why frequent re-shipment and temporary storage is required, which can greatly increase the delivery time of the goods<sup>2</sup>;
- Energy demand for transport is the highest compared to the other transport subsectors, therefore the freight rates are relatively high.

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<sup>1</sup> A relatively wide range of goods is excluded from air transport, such as flammable substances, explosives, firearms and ammunition, radioactive materials, compressed gases, poisons and toxic substances, and oxidizing or corrosive substances. (Authors' note)

<sup>2</sup> According to some data, only 10% of the total delivery time of goods is made up of actual air transport flight time. (Authors' note).

Added values can be the following:

- Air transport is coordinated at the place of dispatch;
- Contracted partner offices at major airports and ports (in case of reloading);
- Availability of transport coordinators in 7/24 time intervals;
- Members of international world network organizations (C5C, MIFFA, 24-7, Cargo Alliance, Neptune, PPL, etc.);
- Fast information flow according to the customer's needs;
- Effecting export-import customs clearance;
- Complete administration of cargo insurance.



*Picture 1: Loading a CARGO aircraft<sup>3</sup>*

### **The first element of air freight transport is human resources**

In terms of its system features, aviation largely differs from other transport sub-sectors. Air transport is carried out jointly by service providing companies (airlines), traffic control services (air traffic control) and airport operating companies (technical operation, maintenance).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.google.hu/szallitmanyozas-fuvarozas.hu/legiszallitas.html>. (downloaded 12 October 2018)



*Picture 2: Checking the load list<sup>4</sup>*

Airlines employ workers in two large areas, such as ground crew and air (flight) crew.



*Picture 3: Air traffic control center<sup>5</sup>*

The *ground crew* includes aviation engineering staff, responsible for technical service of aircraft owned or leased by the airline, their preparation for flight, and minor maintenance tasks. Ground-handling personnel are involved in the ground handling of aircraft, the loading and unloading of goods, and the execution of temporary storage tasks. Since their work is not organically related to the subject of the article, their activity will not be further discussed.

The *aviation (flight) crew* of cargo aircraft consists of 2 pilots, plus 2-4 flight service crew members. The flight crew can be supplemented by overseas carriers (in accordance with the airline's internal policies) with a pilot or an on-board engineer, a navigation officer and even 2-3 other flight service crew members.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.hu.dsv.com/air-freight](http://www.hu.dsv.com/air-freight). (downloaded 10 October 2018)

<sup>5</sup> <https://pestisracok.hu/masodszor-tuntek-el-polgari-gepek-a-legi-iranyitas-radarjairol/>. (downloaded 10 October 2018)



Pilots play a key role in the safety of aviation; therefore their selection, preparation and continuous monitoring are carried out according to a specific protocol. In their selection, medical and psychological fitness and professional qualifications are of utmost importance. Their preparation takes place in a twelve-stage modular training course, the first step of which is the acquisition of a single-engine airplane (small aircraft) pilot licence (PPL), while the last type examination includes the qualification for the given type of aircraft. The training takes a relatively long time, because for the completion of each module, the candidates have to accumulate a specified amount of flight hours (practice).



*Picture 4: Cockpit of a Boeing 747-8 cargo aircraft<sup>6</sup>*

The mission of flight engineers and navigation officers is to assist the pilots' activities. Their selection is made by from a pool of applicants with a tertiary level qualification who, during their special training, acquire more skills related to flying cargo aircraft and a special knowledge of flying the particular types of cargo aircraft. Their good performance greatly influences the safety of the flight, as they can draw the pilot's attention to the effects of dangerous atmospheric events and the consequences of possible aircraft failures.

Air cargo handlers are primarily trained in in-house courses of the air carriers to perform their prospective duties, and their compliance with regulations also has an impact on flight safety, as they are responsible for the proper fixing of goods, the check-up of fixing equipment, the maintenance in proper order of the loading space and the proper placement of the delivered goods.

In spite of proper selection and training systems in place, the majority of the aviation-related accidents are still caused by human error, as evidenced by the

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.boeing.com/commercial/747/>. (downloaded 10 October 2018)

statistical data of civil aviation incidents between 1950 and 2010. According to this, the causes of accidents are the following<sup>7</sup>:

- 59% - human errors (90% of these are pilot errors);
- 20% mechanical/technical failures;
- 12% effects of weather conditions;
- 8% terrorist acts;
- 1% other reasons.

The most typical pilot errors include mistaken situational awareness and poor decision making, loss of control over the aircraft, loss of flight orientation<sup>8</sup>, and ignoring air traffic control (ATC) instructions. Of course, we might discuss these at length, but since there is no way to prepare for the prevention of these emergencies, we will not deal with this issue any further.

The work of *air traffic control* plays at least as an important role in the development of the aviation sub-sector's sensitivity to disasters as the activities of the flight crews. The selection and training of air traffic control staff are at least as well-regulated and complex as those of the pilots. This is evidenced by the fact that a four-stage selection process is in place even before the training itself begins. It is during this selection process that cognitive skills, English language skills and important personality traits for the job are measured. The medical fitness test should not be omitted, and social competencies need to be mapped as well. The training lasts for two years, and instruction takes place five days a week.

The function of air traffic control is extremely complex. It includes the activities of the airport air traffic control service (Tower), the introduction of Approach and the area air control centre (ACC). It is necessary to know about their activities that during taxiing, and for a few moments after the take-off from the runway, the pilots are directed by the airport air traffic control. Subsequently, control is taken over by the Approach Control Service, more popularly known as Approach (APP), and then, at a further distance from the airport, at higher altitudes, control is already performed by the ACC (Area Control Centre).

Air traffic control is a very complex system, with the human element, that is, the air traffic controllers, at its centre. The work of the controllers is supported by a huge apparatus, a serious technical background, planning, continuous research, development and training system. This system ensures for the flight crew to be provided with the relevant information (including aviation meteorology /MET/ observation and forecast data). It maintains aviation order, assists the safe flight and the exit of aircraft in distress out of the danger area. Accordingly, by virtue of its basic mission, it contributes significantly to the safety of the aviation system and reduces its sensitivity to several dangers.

As a positive aspect of this area, it should also be noted that there are very few cases of aircraft accidents, due to a failure of air traffic control services. In the majority

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<sup>7</sup> Judit NYAKAS TÁTRAI: Shipping, Vol. II. – István Széchenyi University, Győr, 2011.  
Published by: UNIVERSITAS-GYŐR NON-PROFIT Plc., p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Briefly: appropriate angle of attack (Authors' note.)

of cases, the failures occurred not in the human resources component, but in the computerised control systems.

The companies operating the airports carry out the technical operation and maintenance of the airports. This activity involves a number of tasks, of which we only mention those that are related to the topic of this article. First and foremost, this is the maintenance and repair of the surface of runways, taxiways, aprons, operating lanes and parking places at airports. Also important is the maintenance and repair of the airport's electrical network and power supply and fire alarm system.

### **The second element of air transport – the track and the related facilities**

The term "*track*" is somewhat strange in aviation, as it is in the air that movement takes place here. Of course, the airspace cannot be used unlimitedly; its use depends on many factors (flight route, air traffic control, purpose of use<sup>9</sup>, etc.). Here, the "*track*" is primarily examined based on the effects of weather conditions, which - as mentioned above - are responsible for 12% of air accidents. Extreme weather conditions influence flight (aviation) from several aspects, such as:

- turbulence,
- aircraft icing,
- runway surface wetting and/or icing,
- storms,
- volcanic eruptions,
- atmospheric electric phenomena.

As we know from our studies in physics, *turbulence* is nothing more than a flow when the physical characteristics of the flowing medium<sup>10</sup> are changing very quickly and chaotically<sup>11</sup>. Unfortunately, the number of accidents under "*clear sky*" conditions, i.e. the number of turbulences in the clear sky, is increasing. For the time being, we cannot predict their occurrence, so their effects cannot be consciously prevented. According to some literature, these are caused by suddenly attacking airflows. Based on the literature we studied, it was proved that the air at high altitudes (10 to 12 kilometres) of large passenger and cargo aircraft is warmed up by the greenhouse gases, so that the various layers of air move faster relative to each other, which can cause turbulence in the clear sky.

*Ice-formation or icing* can cause complex problems for the aircraft flying equipment, which can be characterized by changes in aerodynamic effects and the effects of the appearance of excess weight. Icing will worsen the aerodynamic properties of the aircraft as it changes the shape of the aircraft, because an ice coating on the external parts of the aircraft exposed to the air flow, the leading edges of the wings, the front edges of the stabilizers, etc. making them heavier (and thus inoperable).

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<sup>9</sup> Military, civilian, rescue, etc.

<sup>10</sup> Water or air. (Authors' note).

<sup>11</sup> There are several types of turbulence. In the case of aviation, the air passenger may experience a slight push from the slightest turbulence, the aircraft is shaking slightly. This happens during almost every flight. Moderate turbulence requires a pilot's intervention, and strong turbulence can be dangerous. (Authors' note).

Excess weight affects aircraft flying in an icing zone for a considerable time. This excess weight is mainly a problem for small aircraft with low-performance engines, because the high-performance engines have enough reserve thrust to compensate the excess weight. The excess weight affects the decrease in stability, the operation of the propellers and the damage to the airplane elements that may be caused by mechanical impact of ice particles, breaking off from the propeller(s).

*Atmospheric electric phenomena* affecting flight safety include thunderstorms, lightning strikes and hailstorms. Thunderstorms are an atmospheric electric phenomenon that entails lightning activity, which often involves heavy rainfall, and has a negative impact on the visibility for the pilots; which, during landing, in particular, poses a significant threat to flight safety.

*Lightning strikes* are high-energy natural atmospheric electric discharges that occur between the clouds or between the ground and the clouds. In most cases they do not cause damage to the aircraft, but with a stronger lightning effect, the articulated parts of the airplane's controlling axles can be welded together as if done with an arc welding apparatus, so the control mechanisms will get stuck in the last position of the pilot's controlling manoeuvre and will no longer move. Since the aircraft' tanks contain flammable fuel, and due to the sloshing caused by gusts of wind there is also a vaporized fuel in the fuel tanks above the liquid fuel, a strong lightning can ignite it, turning the aircraft into a fireball.

Due to the vertical structure of the thunderstorm cloud, the air flowing in it rises to a high altitude of up to 8 to 10 km, where the water in the air falls in the form of hail. This ice can damage the stabilisers of the airplane and the fast-rotating propeller can break the cockpit's windows.

For aeronautical purposes, the term "other technical elements" refers to the airports (air strips). In addition to the usual (departure, landing, marshalling/organising) activities, they include almost every part of the ground operations of the aviation industry and also provide the venue for a number of auxiliary and complementary activities. In addition, there are technical bases (hangars), where the aircraft are stored, checked, maintained and repaired. Of course, some of the aviation management activities are also performed here.

From the viewpoint of landings and take-offs, as well as of the ground operations, the number and the layout of landing runways, their length and width are very important factors. The number of landing and take-off runways and their technical parameters are important indicators, as they also ensure the safe departure and landing of the aircraft.

In addition to examining the causes of aviation incidents, we have to examine also the location of accidents, which, according to data for 2013, are the following sections:<sup>12</sup>:

- 17% during ground operations (towing, taxiing, movement to technical bases, etc.; the occurrence of accidents can primarily be attributed to human error;

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<sup>12</sup> NYAKAS TÁTRAI op. cit. pp. 24-25.

- 12% during the take-off, the accidents can be caused by the condition of the take-off runway, weather conditions, technical failure, collision with birds and by even pilot error;
- 10% during ascent and during flight at cruising altitude; these events are caused by effects discussed in the section on the „track”;
- 18% during descent and initial approach; the cause of these accidents may be attributed to inappropriate air speed (loss of lift), changes in weather conditions, technical failure, collision with birds, and also to pilot error;
- 43% during final approach and landing; the occurrence may be a consequence of any effect discussed above.

### **The third element of air transport - the aircraft**

Aircraft (including cargo aircraft) are far less pronounced in this article than the "track", since they are designed for a specific function and purpose.<sup>13</sup>

In civil aviation, aircraft may include passenger and cargo airplanes. It is also customary to differentiate between aircraft according to their intended use and range (radius of action). As cargo planes have a number of special equipment, they have a huge mass and a relatively low cruising speed, so they are less sensitive to changes in weather conditions and their unwanted effects, but this does not mean that they are insensitive to the effects of disasters. These negative effects may be:

- resulting from human error; in this case the aircraft is not the victim but the cause of the disaster;
- resulting from technical failure; the aircraft, in all probability, will cause the disaster;
- the effects of changes in weather and atmospheric conditions along the „track” (in the air); the aircraft is the victim of the disaster effects;
- resulting from changes in other technical elements (primarily the take-off and landing runways); as a result of extreme weather conditions, the aircraft may be both the victim and the cause of disaster situations<sup>14</sup>.

Although we are investigating disasters affecting the aircraft in this part of our article, we should remember that "according to statistical data, 800-1000 deaths per year are reported worldwide for aviation disasters, which is roughly the same as the number of people annually killed in road accidents in Hungary."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See more at: <http://ko.sze.hu/catdoc/list/cat/7086/id/7091/m/4974>. (downloaded 17 09 2017)

<sup>14</sup> The fact whether an aircraft is the victim or the cause of a disaster determines how the resilience of this element of aviation can be enhanced. (Authors' note.)

<sup>15</sup> Statement by László BÁTORI: Head of Civil Aviation Department, National Transport Authority. [http://borsa.hu/20090701/katasztrofak\\_a\\_levegoben/a\\_legi\\_katasztrofak\\_okai\\_es\\_a\\_legi\\_kozlekedes\\_biztonsaga/](http://borsa.hu/20090701/katasztrofak_a_levegoben/a_legi_katasztrofak_okai_es_a_legi_kozlekedes_biztonsaga/). (downloaded 22 08 2017)

## Conclusion

According to an expert, aviation is the most supported transport sub-sector with IT infrastructure and services, where IT developments have always been pioneers at all times. In air transport, the flow of information is distinguished by the travel process, the subject of transport (cargo), the operating organization (airport, airline, service staff or navigation service provider), by location of service (ground handling and air traffic systems).

Systems that are physically and functionally separate are interconnected to ensure the smooth running of air transport and share the data on a regular basis, which are intended to guarantee, inter alia, aviation safety, including protection against disaster situations.

Let us not forget that the safest year for commercial aviation was 2017, according to the Dutch Aviation Safety Network (ASN).<sup>16</sup> According to the organization's report, there was not a single accident involving a commercial passenger jet that would have killed anyone.

The statistics are reassuring, but it should be known that the above data do not include propeller-driven and cargo, and military aircraft - and such aircraft have suffered tragic accidents. Last year, a total of 44 fatalities were witnessed in the air, and 35 were killed on the ground. The last accident in 2017 took place on New Year's Eve. 12 people were killed when a Cessna Caravan crashed in Costa Rica right after its take-off.

However, we can conclude that aviation is not primarily a victim, but rather a cause of disasters, which fact does not affect transportation of goods.

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<sup>16</sup> See more at: <http://biztonsagos.repulok/azutazo.hu/2017-volt-repules-legbiztonsagosabb-eve/>. (downloaded 12. January 2018)

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**THE ELEMENTS OF COMBINED FORWARDING IN HUNGARY, THE SENSITIVITY AND RESILIENCE OF THE ELEMENTS AGAINST THE IMPACTS OF DISASTERS**

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**Abstract**

In combined forwarding, goods are delivered under one forwarding contract, using the services of several forwarding branches, during which the goods remain in/on the same means of transport or container, until they are delivered to the recipient. Much of the transport distance is covered by environmentally friendly water or rail transport vehicles, and shorter sections of pre- or post-forwarding are performed by road vehicles.

Combined transportation has become one of the symbols of modern forwarding methods in recent decades, as the modernization of freight transportation technologies and the enhancement of safety and security are essential during the forwarding process.

In this article, the authors examine how combined forwarding affects the safety and security of forwarding.

**Keywords:** combined forwarding, its elements, disaster, and resilience.

**Introduction**

In the case of *combined (or multimodal)* forwarding, two or more transportation subsectors are involved in solving a particular forwarding task within the framework of one contract, but the goods are delivered from the sender to the recipient in an intermodal forwarding unit. The purpose of combined forwarding is the implementation of the cooperation of different transportation subsectors, which enables the consolidation of the advantages of the individual transportation subsectors, in the establishment of forwarding chains, eliminating the possible disadvantages at the same time<sup>1</sup>.

This forwarding method is suitable for satisfying the needs of the clients; thus, the less environmentally friendly road forwarding is used for short distances, while the environmentally friendly, higher capacity railway and water transportation subsectors forward bulky goods on long distances. In this form, opposite to traditional transport systems, not the goods are directly reloaded at the local or district and long-distance transportation hubs, but the closed containers containing the goods or the transport vehicles themselves.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It should not be neglected that combined forwarding - in price competition with road transport - can only be advantageous for transport distances greater than approx. 500-700 km.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance “Ro-Ro” motor boats. (Comment by the authors)



Accordingly, combined forwarding systems can be classified into two main groups (see Figure 1)<sup>3</sup>:

- 1.) Container forwarding systems, in which case the container traffic between the consignor and the consignee is performed with the cooperation of two or more transportation sectors.
- 2.) “Huckepack<sup>4</sup>” forwarding systems, when the transport vehicles of the other transportation subsector are forwarded on the transport vehicles of one of the transport subsectors.

In the Western European countries, basic forms of combined forwarding had already developed by the late sixties, and have been developing dynamically ever since. In recent years, the development has received a new impetus by the fact that in the environmental aspects have also come to the fore in the European Union's transport and traffic policy and by the fact that the existing road network is becoming more and more burdened.

### **Elements of the combined forwarding system**

Traffic and transportation have been a part of human development since ancient times. Nowadays, when due to urbanization, the continents and the countries have changed their features, when the small settlements have become depopulated, the number of large cities increases, and there is a need for delivering large quantities of goods safely, the traffic and the forwarding process are becoming increasingly important.

Due to the overpopulation of the Earth, the increased demands of consumer societies, the cross-continent trade, the traffic and transportation have become more and more complex and diverse, and this has become one of the most important factors in the lives of societies and individuals.

With the development of traffic and forwarding, safety has also become an increasingly important factor of implementation. While initially the objective was only to protect the shipped goods, later, the contractors strove to secure the entire process. Due to the increased distances between the starting point and the destination, they had to plan the entire transportation and place the safety in the focus of implementation.

The development of road traffic and mass goods forwarding has raised new security concerns, the impacts of which could only be mitigated by costly investments (e.g., construction of roads, bridges, transport hubs, logistics centers, the development of traffic rules, the operation of traffic systems, etc.).

The pursuit of safety and security in this area is still diverse today. In addition to human and technical failures, the contractors have to consider many environmental factors (floods, earthquakes, wind damages, extreme weather), as well as the transport

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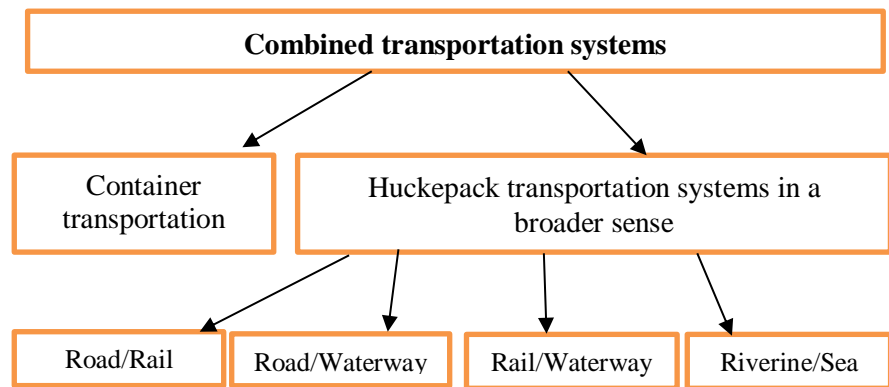
<sup>3</sup> Of course, regarding the method of transport, the type of transport vehicles, and so on, there are many other classifications and approaches. (Comment by the authors.)

<sup>4</sup> Word of German origin meaning “carrying on the back”.

of hazardous materials. All this may have an impact on the safety and security of individual transportation subsectors. So, perhaps in the entire, complex (combined) forwarding system, we need to think in terms of increasing safety and security of forwarding. We believe this is the combined (multimodal) transportation form.

The main advantage of combined forwarding is that it uses uniform means of transport and loading equipment, in addition to an optimal division of work in transportation, and that it uses a "*unified, comprehensive information forwarding and communication system*", which has made it possible to develop an integrated logistics chain.

In Hungary, combined forwarding methods came to the fore due to association agreement concluded with the EU in 1990. Developing combined forwarding is one of the main goals of the transportation policy in Hungary today, in line with international development trends.



*Figure 1: The conceptual division of combined transportation systems*

Since combined forwarding is only economical for relatively long distances, it plays a role primarily in the transit and export-import goods traffic in Hungary. That is why the Hungarian transportation policy has set the objective of harmonizing its transportation system with the international norms, by further developing the Hungarian railway and water network linked to the Western and Central Eastern European combined traffic and transport network. This is important for the reasons that:

- Environmental and noise pollution be reduced,
- Road congestion be diminished,
- Road safety be increased,
- The degree of road wear be lower,
- The use of energy and raw materials be more affordable,
- The utilization of free capacity of railways and waterways be more optimal.

## Combined forwarding system

*Sensitivity and vulnerability of transport and traffic systems, their place in environmental systems:*

The global terrestrial system is very complex, because it includes the living and inanimate (the natural and built) environment and the human society. This global environment also includes the transport and traffic system, which also responds to changes, as a result of (predictable or unexpected) incidents occurring, due to the changes in the global system. Most of the impacts that trigger changes are external effects in most cases. The way the system responds to these impacts (influencing the operation of the system) is called the *sensitivity of the system*.

Figure 2 shows that the transportation systems belong to man-made systems, which means that (apart from the fact that each system basically strives for equilibrium), it is himself the human being who creates and maintains the equilibrium, that is, to prevent undesirable changes, he must also restore the original situation. These undesirable changes mentioned above are triggered by the so-called "disturbing impacts".

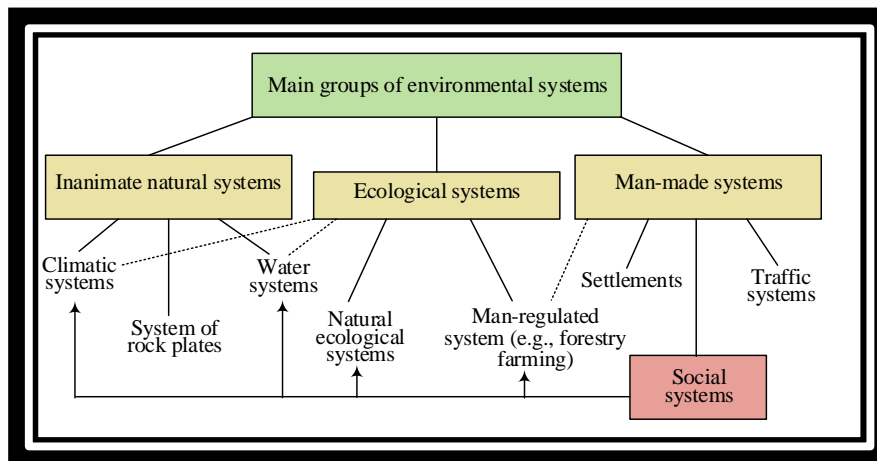


Figure 2: Main groups of environmental systems<sup>5</sup>

In order to maintain traffic, including forwarding, and in parallel to overcome the disturbing affects (or at least mitigate them)<sup>6</sup>, we must operate suitable traffic and transportation systems and subsystems.

<sup>5</sup> Attila KERÉNYI PHD – Tímea KISS PHD – György SZABÓ PHD: Környezeti rendszerek (Environmental systems; in Hungarian), by Debrecen University, 2013, p. 18

<sup>6</sup> In detail, this will be the topic of a following article. (Comment by the authors)

### ***The system elements of combined goods forwarding:***

The system elements of combined goods forwarding may be classified as follows:

- human resources;
- tracks;
- vehicles;
- miscellaneous infrastructure (terminals, telecommunication, transportation modules, etc.).

We do not mention the *human resources, tracks and vehicles* of combined forwarding individually, as their characteristics (even if combined) are the same as those of the individual transportation subsectors; therefore, only the terminals of combined forwarding, the essential characteristics of container and Huckepack transportation and their disaster sensitivity are studied.

### ***Terminals of combined traffic:***

The terminals of combined transport and traffic are the interfaces (hubs) of the transport subsectors (e.g., railway-road, railway-water) transporting goods. The design and technology of the terminals are primarily determined by the version of the combined traffic and transport, i.e., by the main functions of the terminal.

The main functions of the terminals can be as follows.

#### 1.) Loading and unloading:

- Loading, unloading and reloading transportation units (containers, exchangeable crates) between transportation vehicles;
- Emptying and loading containers, exchangeable crates, barges, etc.;
- Transportation of transport units to and from the local and regional traffic and transportation hubs.

#### 2.) Storage:

- Temporary storage during local and district transportation and long-distance transportation;
- Longer-term rental storage on behalf of carriers;
- Customs clearance, customs yard services.

#### 3.) Other service functions:

- Accommodation and recreation sites;
- Canteens and buffets;
- Fuel stations;
- etc.

As can be seen from the previous list, the terminals of combined transportation (except for the damages caused to buildings) are basically not sensitive to disasters. Moreover, if the former occur, the terminals can help the drivers and staff of vehicles incapable to continue their trip with food and warming places. In addition, the

terminals can ensure that vehicles are properly filled up with fuel to continue their trip, or to avoid direct hazards. The loading and material handling equipment there may facilitate the forwarding of important goods by reloading them to other vehicles suitable for the given circumstances.

*Container forwarding:*

Container forwarding can be performed by using all transportation subsectors. In this transportation chain, local (district) transportation (back and forth forwarding) is usually carried out by road, while long-distance transportation takes place by rail or waterway. In Hungary, road-railway and road-waterway transport combinations take place<sup>7</sup>. That is why disaster sensitivity is most responsive to the impacts demonstrated at railway and waterway transport, as road transport here only takes place at local level.

*Huckepack forwarding systems:*

This forwarding system is only interesting from the aspect of my subject, because of the characteristics of the transport vehicles used here and the characteristics of the forwarding activities carried out with them.



*Figure 3: Planned "Őrmező" intermodal hub<sup>8</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> The reason for this is that the containers used for ground transportation are generally not suitable for airfreight transport, so goods need to be reloaded, while road-rail-marine combined transportation is not typical of Hungary, due to its geography. (Comment by authors).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.portfolio.hu/ingatlan/retail/ujabb-latvanytervek-a-kelenfoldi-gigaprojektekrol.302254.html>. (downloaded 10 October 2018)

The essence of the Ro-La system is that the truck drives over to the low-load railroad carriages. At the destination, the road vehicles roll off the railway carriage on their own wheels.



*Figure 4: Ro-La train in Switzerland<sup>9</sup>*

The advantage of this system is that it does not require the special design of road vehicles. It is easy and quick to drive up and down on railway carriages. Most of the transport distance is covered by road vehicles on a railway carriage, so the advantages listed at the railway transport, but also the disadvantages of this form of forwarding, include the sensitivity of the railway transport system to disasters.

*Bimodal systems:*

The bimodal systems of road semi-trailers allow rail transport without the need for special railway carriages. Rail freight wagons are replaced by special railway bogies. From the bimodal systems in Europe, the "Kombirail system" was developed.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kombinált\\_fuvarozás#/media/File:RoLa\\_Loetschberg.jpg](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kombinált_fuvarozás#/media/File:RoLa_Loetschberg.jpg).  
(downloaded 10 October 2018)



*Figure 5: Kombirail transportation method<sup>10</sup>*

The semi-trailers of this system meet all international road traffic regulations, but they can also run on railway tracks.

The main advantages of bimodal systems (compared to road-rail combined systems) are:

- More favorable overall weight/usable weight utilization;
- Several road vehicle units can be transported on a train;
- The demand for terminal infrastructure is low.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, it should be noted that the purchase price of such a trailer is by 10 to 20% higher than that of a normal trailer, but it will pay off on the railway transport side, due to significant cost savings. In addition, it must be seen that both the loading and unloading stations have to be equipped with road tractors that promote the road movement of trailers.

This forwarding form, like the Huckepack forwarding, shows the characteristics of the sensitivity of the railway transport system to disaster, which will be discussed in detail in a following article.

#### *Road and water combined forwarding:*

The essence of Ro-Ro road-to-water combined transportation is that road vehicles – on properly constructed loaders – roll on, on their own wheels, to the load platforms of watercraft (ferries, barges, boats) and roll off the same way at the waterway destination.

The advantage of this system is that any road vehicle can be transported this way and that the up and down drive can be a simple and quick operation. Ferries and ferryboats are primarily used for waterway crossing traffic. They can carry both

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fototak/8595880239>. (downloaded 16 September 2017)

<sup>11</sup> Only a 50-meter-long concrete railway track section is needed for loading and unloading. (Comment by the authors).

passengers and freight road vehicles, but there are also sea ferries that can be used to carry set of trains.

The main benefits of waterway Ro-Ro transport over conventional waterway forwarding:

- The port standstill is only a fraction of that of conventional waterway forwarding;
- Low loading costs (no need for reloading of goods);
- Watercraft can be operated in low water-level periods (their draft is only 40-60% compared to conventional vessels);
- There is no need for a separate port, as the ferry access drives ensure loading and unloading by themselves.

A disadvantage is that the cost of purchasing Ro-Ro ships is high and that the actual utilization of the ship's capacity remains under the one of traditional vessels (high dead weight). The sensitivity of this form of forwarding to disasters depends on whether we are talking about ferry or vessel traffic. If ferry traffic Ro-Ro forwarding is performed, then the sensitivity of forwarding to disasters is primarily influenced by the impacts discussed at road transport (see our previous article), while the factors discussed at shipping are valid for waterway Ro-Ro forwarding as well.

As can be seen from the above, in the case of combined forwarding, the transportation subsectors are the most vulnerable to the impacts of disasters, which, within that, covers the greatest distances with the goods to be forwarded. In addition, it should be mentioned as positive notion that, due to the characteristics of combined forwarding, in the event of the occurrence or threat of disasters, it is possible to change or replace the means of transport, which significantly reduces the sensitivity of this form of forwarding to their impacts.

### **Conclusion**

With the development of traffic and forwarding, it has also become increasingly important to ensure its safe implementation. One solution to this can be a combined (multimodal) forwarding method.

As can be seen from the above, combined forwarding - due to its characteristics - is the safest forwarding way and the most resistant to the impacts of disasters.

Its main advantage is that it uses uniform means of transport and loading equipment, in addition to an optimal division of labour, and that it uses a "*uniform, comprehensive information transportation and communication system*" that has made it possible to develop an integrated logistics chain.

Its disadvantage is that it is only economical in the case of relatively large transportation distances, and that it plays a role primarily in the transit of goods and the export-import of goods in Hungary. Therefore, Hungarian transportation policy has set the objective of harmonizing its transportation system with the international norms, by further developing the Hungarian railway and water network linked to the Western and Central Eastern European combined traffic and transport network.



The various combined forwarding systems (container, Huckepack, bimodal, Ro-Ro) are resistant to the impacts of disasters, mainly due to the combined freight terminals, their infrastructure features, the "interchangeability" of the forwarding subsectors, and the short duration of the reloading times.

We hope that in our article we could prove that, in the case of combined forwarding, the transportation subsectors are the most vulnerable to the impacts of disaster that cover the greatest distances with the goods forwarded.

In addition, it should be noted that, due to the characteristics of the combined forwarding, during the occurrence or threat of disasters, it is possible to change or replace the means of transportation, which significantly reduces the sensitivity of this form of transportation to their impacts.

Based on the above, we can conclude that in the future, due to its resilience against the impacts of disasters, it is advisable to develop combined forwarding in Hungary as well.

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