

## **Editorial**

# **Conflicts, Fragmentation, and the Coming Wave of Extremism: Are We Ready?**

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The global political and security landscape is characterized by ongoing and recurring conflicts, shifting alliances, and increasing competition among major powers in regions like the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Asia Pacific, South Asia, the Sahel, and Latin America.

In this context, crises are no longer isolated or rapid and decisive; instead, they are increasingly interconnected and overlapping, leading to chain reactions that cross regional borders. This trend challenges established norms for managing global crises, including the UN Charter, international law, and the value systems guiding multilateral efforts. Consequently, these norms have already been weakened or may face further erosion.

While strategic analyses often focus on military strength and diplomatic strategies, an important yet less discussed outcome is how the ongoing resurgence and transformation of violent extremism cause a loss of meaning.

Over the last fifty years, history reveals that enduring conflicts lead to destruction and drive ideological mobilization. Crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria illustrate how instability, poor governance, and deep-seated grievances can trigger new waves of

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extremism. Currently, this wave appears more complex-less centralized, more flexible, and increasingly influenced by technological and socio-cultural shifts.

One of the key features of this new phase is the diversification of ideological references. Extremism is no longer organized around a single narrative or specific doctrinal axis but is instead shaped by intersecting fault lines encompassing differences within Islamic, Christian, and Jewish traditions; within the political spectrum of national chauvinism; and, more recently, within Sunni-Shia tensions, identity-based mobilizations, national grievances, and forms of transnational ideological solidarity. These interwoven dynamics allow extremist actors to reframe their discourse, adapting it to local contexts while maintaining their connection to broader global narratives.

Current conflicts often draw on images and clichés rooted in deep historical memories and long-standing symbols of rivalry, often using them to shape tense narratives in civilizational or sectarian terms or to rally support. In the age of widespread digital connectivity, these discussions are intensified across online platforms, speeding up the process of identity formation and radicalization. The virtual space has become a key arena where extremism develops, spreads, and gradually becomes normalized within everyday social circles.

### **Are we ready for this new wave?**

Despite notable progress in counterterrorism and countering violent extremism over the past two decades, many strategies remain reactive instead of proactive. Moreover, the growing interconnectedness of geopolitical conflicts, digital systems, and identity fragmentation is still not sufficiently integrated into public policies. Additionally, current interventions often prioritize short-term security gains without fully understanding their long-term social and political impacts, which could unintentionally reinforce the conditions that promote extremism.

In this context, the latest issue of MENAVEX provides a multidisciplinary contribution aimed at unraveling these complex dynamics.

The issue begins with a study on countering radicalization pathways in the digital age of social media and virtual learning, examining how digital environments are transforming identity development and socialization, creating both risks and opportunities for preventing extremism. This is followed by an article on Generation Z's ambitions amid hybrid modernity and conservative religious values, analyzing the identity conflicts that influence young people's paths within a rapidly evolving socio-cultural landscape.

The article «Socio-Political Factors Fueling Violent Extremism in North Africa: A Multidimensional Analytical Approach» offers a detailed framework for understanding the deep roots of extremism, emphasizing the connection between governance issues, marginalization, and ideological narratives. In this context, the article «Economic Vulnerability and Violent Extremism in Morocco» stresses the significance of socio-economic vulnerability as a key element in radicalization pathways.

The issue also explores nuclear security, including its development and the challenges it faces within the modern international system. It highlights the risks at the intersection of technological advances and global instability. Additionally, it provides analytical insights, such as a study of communication during terrorist attacks, using the Imlil attack as a case example. This analysis examines how communication affects crisis management and community resilience. The issue wraps up with an article discussing the challenges faced by former extremists when disengaging, especially focusing on Moroccan returnees from Syria, and analyzing the complexities of their reintegration and ideological changes.

The issue ends with a review of «The Comprehensive Guide to Terrorism in Africa,» highlighting the importance of local field research in gaining a more nuanced understanding of extremism across the continent.

These points collectively highlight the evolving and complex landscape of extremism amid ongoing conflicts worldwide. Today, extremism is more than just a result of instability; it is increasingly rooted in fragmentation, digital trends, and identity politics. The main challenge goes beyond fighting extremism to predicting its future direction. This requires shifting from isolated, reactive actions toward comprehensive strategies that include security, good governance, socio-economic development, and intercultural understanding.

As conflicts develop, the main question is whether we are prepared for the next rise of extremism or if we are witnessing another one emerge.