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**Valuating the principles of prevention and protection  
in the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy  
(Analytical study)**

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**After** the victory over the terrorist ISIS in 2017, Iraq has great experience in the field of combating terrorism, which depends on the nature of dealing with terrorist groups and aims to adopt new techniques and methodologies based on preventing terrorist acts and deterring terrorist operations. The Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy 2021-2025 was one of the most important strategies that relied on the principle of prevention and prevention in combating terrorism. Then came the combat doctrine that laid new scientific foundations in the field of the war on terrorism.

**Keywords: prevention, prevention, combating terrorism**





## **Introduction**

The victory of the Iraqi armed forces over the terrorist ISIS constituted a recalculation of the logic of strategic awareness regarding the methodology upon which the fight against terrorism can be based as a scope for the performance of security institutions, as thinking about terrorist threats no longer stems from the principle of the war on terrorism and raising security and military proficiency, but rather has taken a new direction. It is based on ensuring prevention requirements in a way that is based on preventing terrorist groups from reaching a level capable of imposing their control over certain areas.

The counter-terrorism strategy for the years 2021-2025 came to be more capable of containing risks and threats related to terrorist national security, foremost of which is developing the level of performance in the field of combating terrorism to be able to move from reaction to preventive action related to the elements of combat instead of waiting to confront terrorism.

The research assumes that the nature of the Iraqi strategy in the field of combating terrorism is moving from confrontation to prevention, and that this transition reduces the chances of terrorist groups to sustain their influence and makes them lose their effectiveness in initiating terrorist operations.

The methodological implications that have helped national security institutions in assessing terrorist threats assume that prevention and prevention will enhance the security effort in combating terrorism and reduce the areas of direct confrontation by weakening terrorist groups from establishing capabilities for themselves within a scope that ensures confrontation.





## **First: The foundational approaches to the counter-terrorism strategy**

The Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy is related to a number of foundations and inputs that helped in forming this strategy in terms of thinking, planning and means of implementation, which took a new style by virtue of the new foundations upon which it was based in formulating this strategy, as the counter-terrorism strategy for the years 2021-2025 was linked to a set of methodological inputs that The experience and professionalism that accompanied the operations led by the Counter-Terrorism Service accompanied the security performance in combating terrorism, as well as the development of methods for dealing with terrorist groups by integrating the professional expertise of the Counter-Terrorism Service with the theoretical and cognitive fields that helped develop security performance in this field.

### **- Professionalism and experience in recognizing terrorist risks**

The military operations conducted by the Iraqi Armed Forces against terrorist groups had an important role in increasing security awareness related to combating terrorism and understanding the way terrorist organizations recruit groups and individuals. The Armed Forces were able to achieve major victories over these groups since 2003 and were able, due to experience, to rely on accumulated foundations. It helped dismantle the operational plans carried out by terrorist groups. In addition, it was able to re-evaluate security risks according to logical foundations and calculations on the basis of which the counter-terrorism strategy for the years 2021-2024 was formed.

The growing elements of experience in the field of the war on terrorism, especially after the victory over the terrorist organization ISIS, has created a number of facts related to the strategy of combating terrorism, the most important of which are<sup>1</sup>:

- 1- Growing experience in the field of asymmetric warfare, which had an important role in the counter-terrorism strategy.
- 2- Realizing that intellectual security is a necessary basis for confronting and combating terrorist groups.





3- The necessity of building social awareness to combat terrorism, which is related to the methods and approaches of socialization and the role of relevant institutions in this aspect.

These data, which are related to the foundations based on experience, have an important place in the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy, as the formation of the elements of this experience was based on the long war that the armed forces fought and the practical experience that the counter-terrorism apparatus developed during the war against the terrorist organization ISIS and its reliance on strategies. Contemporary and modern war tactics based on different experiences and integrating multiple military plans in order to enhance victory in this war. In addition to the accumulation that occurred as a result of the assessment and management of risks by security institutions, especially the Counter-Terrorism Service<sup>2</sup>.

As far as the strategy of combating terrorism is concerned, it is difficult to think in the traditional way of confronting terrorist groups because of the way of thinking adopted by terrorist groups, as it was not easy for any military force to continue in the asymmetric confrontation without the presence of auxiliary factors in this aspect that work to provide moral support. For combat elements, especially since the agency is in an open and direct confrontation with terrorist groups. It is known that most of the special formations in the world allocate their duties to specific tasks, while it is noted that the role of the Counter-Terrorism Service was the main role in the battle, and due to its professionalism, it transferred many military and security tasks to be on the His responsibility, whether in the joint operations command or in the decision-making centers, as was the case with the selection of Defense Minister Irfan Al-Hayali, who held the position of Director of Training and Development in the Counter-Terrorism Service. Which means that the agency's professionalism in the field will move from the implementation level to the decision level through formulating strategies for security institutions<sup>3</sup>.

In comparison with experience, the professionalism in the performance of the Counter-Terrorism Service and the armed forces participating in the liberation operations doubled the level of social acceptance in this regard, as the nature of the correlation between the victories achieved by the Counter-Terrorism Service over the





terrorist organization ISIS and popular acceptance in all regions of Iraq in general and the regions The edited document, in particular, will contribute to raising the importance of the agency at the level of security decision-making, as it will increase the professionalism in making decisions related to this aspect, and this professionalism will increase after completing the agency's basic requirements to enable it to combat terrorism and eliminate the sleeper cells that create it<sup>4</sup>.

### **- Building new strategies To combat terrorism**

One of the foundations on which the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy was based was the re-modelling of confrontation strategies, in accordance with the principle of combat doctrine, which was based on aspects related to the quality of dealing with terrorist groups, which, in addition to experience, created modern techniques, contemporary with the logic of combating terrorism. In the war on groups Terrorism It is noted that Iraq was not faced with the challenge of terrorist groups as much as it had to be balanced in managing all parties participating in this war. The multiplicity of parties and the contradiction of interests in Syria and Iraq between most of these parties constituted complications and contradictions that Iraq had to bear since the beginning of the war. Hence came Iraq's strategy in the field of blitzkrieg( lightning war), or as the Germans call it, lightning war, in order to organize the various resources of the combat force, despite the multiplicity and contradiction of its approaches. The agency's scientific efforts contributed to issuing the combat doctrine for the Counter-Terrorism Service, which contributed to qualitative thinking in the field of military operations.

The operations were divided between what could be secured by the international coalition through air strikes or through the airdrops it carried out, and what could be carried out through the armed forces and the Popular Mobilization Forces through different axes, which gave Iraq a professional image in its management method. It is noted that most of the operations carried out by Iraq against ISIS were not at the level of the strategic mentality that accompanied the operations to liberate Mosul, especially after the Syrian forces announced the start of operations in Raqqa, where the





project of military depth for the terrorist ISIS organization disintegrated by resorting to the Syrian border areas, especially after the mobilization took hold. Within the Mosul-Raqqa road at the Adaya intersection, perhaps what National Security Advisor Faleh Al-Fayyad mentioned about protecting the borders and the possibility of fighting in some areas of Syria after coordination with the Syrian government constituted an incentive for the decline in coordination levels within the ranks of ISIS, which explains Al-Baghdadi's recent speech about moving to new areas. Or carry out suicide operations<sup>5</sup>.

On the basis of this, the Counter-Terrorism Service adopted the combat doctrine as a cognitive and basic effort to deal with the challenges facing the agency's tasks at the level of operations and combat, as well as the prevention and prevention techniques on which the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy was based<sup>6</sup>. The basic principle on which the strategy was based is based on the special fields of knowledge that it is not easy for armed groups to expand without working to develop feelings in the minds of some individuals, as this criterion is largely linked to the extremist approach from an intellectual standpoint, which works to control the orientation of individuals. Members of these groups, and thus the increased level of recruitment and the ability to carry out infiltration operations and spread terror among citizens.

The method of confronting violent extremism according to a strategic logic based on intellectual confrontation will help the state overcome the challenges of the expansion of terrorist groups and weaken the extremist enemy. This is primarily based on an important method that relies on containment and confinement. Controlling the liberated areas and other areas that ISIS was unable to control. Penetrating it and developing a sense of citizenship and civilization will strengthen the principle of moderation versus extremism, in addition to helping decision-makers weaken the influence of random groups.

#### **- Adopting modern methodologies**

The method of thinking about relevant strategies in combating terrorism assumes that there is an intellectual and cognitive level for the purpose of dealing with problems related to the strategies of terrorist groups, especially those related to the intellectual and





cognitive fields and the interpretation of local and regional events. The cognitive and intellectual content has significance related to the approaches that are among the most efficient methods. In the fight against terrorism. The counter-terrorism strategy, in addition to seeking the help of experts in the field of strategy design, included a set of scientific steps that included consultation, re-thinking methodologies, and implementing scientific programs<sup>7</sup>.

The importance of this foundation and thinking about its implications is coupled with reasons related to the nature of the strategies adopted by the terrorist organization ISIS on the one hand and other terrorist armed groups. Returning to the intellectual meaning of savagery, we see that savagery is a word used by Abu Bakr Naji to express the state of chaos that will spread throughout the state. If a specific region or region is no longer under the control of the ruling authorities, the author believes that this state of chaos will be "savage" and the local population will suffer from it. Therefore, Al-Qaeda - which will replace the ruling authorities in preparation for the establishment of the Islamic State - must improve the "management of savagery" to For things to stabilize<sup>8</sup>.

The author of the book (Managing Savagery) points out that the process of selecting regions to enter the "Main Regions Circle"; That is, passing through the stage of "management of brutality" relied on studies and research "related to current events," and therefore he confirms that "after the events of (September 11) and the subsequent developments, the leadership announced some amendments, excluding some regions from the group of main regions, with the condition that they be included to work in The system of the rest of the countries, and two countries were introduced, namely the Land of the Two Holy Mosques and Nigeria, and then the countries initially nominated to enter the group of main regions were the regions of the following countries: Jordan, the Maghreb, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Land of the Two Holy Mosques, and Yemen.<sup>9</sup>" According to this methodology, adopting a scientific methodology in dealing with terrorist groups will have a positive impact on the state's effectiveness in confronting these groups, and







this is what made it one of the pillars of the Iraqi strategy in combating terrorism.

The nature of the foundations on which the counter-terrorism strategy was based came for the purpose of enhancing the level of performance and raising the readiness of institutions in dealing with terrorist challenges after the victory over ISIS, which made it distinguished by a set of its own standards in terms of diagnosis and performance in this aspect.

### **Second: Prevention and protection measures**

Evaluating prevention and prevention measures can be of a high degree of complexity and difficulty. In practical terms, prevention is among the measures carried out by the security forces, while prevention may be within the fight against extremism because it needs to provide additional elements and pillars that fall within the scope of persuasion to prevent a terrorist act. The counter-terrorism strategy, along with government general policies, included a set of measures in this field.

### **Measures to prevent the financing of terrorist operations**

The weakness of the state's measures in the field of preventing the financing of terrorist operations has a major impact on terrorist groups securing financing issues, which provides an important incubator for these groups in financial terms in order to empower themselves to confront terrorism. However, the nature of this aspect has changed due to the public policies that accompanied the government's measures. After 2020, especially with regard to money laundering and the procedures of the SWIFT platform, which places procedures on the movement of the dollar in Iraq<sup>10</sup>.

The nature of the local environment in terms of dealing with combating terrorism did not adopt new tools except in the late stages, as the law on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism was only approved in 2015 to establish legal provisions targeting the process of financing terrorist operations, and despite the shortcomings in implementing this law due to... The lack of clear databases and policies, but it represents the basic starting point in this field, and from a practical standpoint, the Central Bank of Iraq has identified a set of procedures that are related to the policy of the Central Bank and the financing of terrorism for the purpose of





gradually tracking the movement of funds. Especially after the formation of the Office for Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism, whose law stipulates the formulation of policies and programs to combat money laundering, the financing of terrorism, and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and their development and follow-up on their implementation<sup>11</sup>.

The current procedures, especially after cooperation with the United States of America, have begun to take new approaches due to the governance of financial statements, and this will help the Iraqi government in further assessing the terrorist financing process.

### **Measures to prevent extremism**

Among the strategies that come close to combating terrorism is the prevention of extremism, which was not associated with the political and security performance of Iraq until the issuance of the strategy to combat violent extremism. The importance of this factor is linked to the fact that the geographical description of Iraq falls within the scope of what is known as the soft security zone, which can be understood and realized from Interpretation of the actions that extremists deal with in this aspect <sup>12</sup>. In addition, government performance in combating terrorism cannot be successful except by adopting related strategies that deal with violent extremism, as it is considered one of the most important resources that terrorists deal with to develop sources of support for terrorist operations <sup>13</sup>.

Policies for preventing extremism, which precede the prevention of extremism from a practical standpoint, are among the fundamental aspects of the issue of combating terrorism, which enhances the government's actions and the counter-terrorism strategy to deal with the issue of combating with the methodology it relates to instead of moving to confronting terrorism, and hence the weakness of national procedures. In Iraq to confront violent extremism, especially those that are directly related to analyzing the extremist environment of the geographical area to which Iraq belongs from a regional perspective, in addition to the lack of harmony in the strategic operations environment in terms of procedures, which reduces the chances of dealing with violent extremism in this aspect<sup>14</sup>.





### **Social justice policies and poverty rates**

The policy of social justice helps in building the nation's civilized image and transcending sub-affiliations that may be influential in the field of state building, as this association may be related to a political, governmental, economic or social achievement capable of ridding individuals of individual self-loyalties or challenges related to their existence. Any image that cannot go beyond sub-loyalties will not establish the culture of a unified national nation capable of transcending stereotypes of the status of affiliations<sup>15</sup>.

### **Evaluating the strategy according to the research areas**

The evaluation of the counter-terrorism strategy depends on the nature of the security conditions. It is noted from the security situation that there is great stability in the field of controlling terrorist attacks for several reasons, including:

There is a high capacity in the intelligence field, and this has contributed to providing the ability to prevent terrorism on the one hand and the ability to direct pre-emptive strikes.

The Iraqi Armed Forces were able to achieve a high level of deterrence and control over the movement of terrorist groups, in addition to a high level of ability to direct pre-emptive strikes that contributed to reducing terrorist activity in Iraq since 2017.

There are financial restrictions on the movement of funds entering Iraq, and this has helped cut off terrorist financing. In the near future, the movement of funds may be fully supervised by the Iraqi government, which will help weaken terrorism and expand terrorist groups.

### **research results**

After studying the areas related to combating terrorism, evaluating the principle of protection and prevention in accordance with the Iraqi strategy to combat terrorism, and evaluating the policies related to this strategy in terms of support or implementation process, the research reached the following results:

- The Iraqi Armed Forces succeeded in maintaining the victory achieved after 2017.





- The new strategy in the field of combating terrorism was the result of the professionalism that the Iraqi armed forces were able to achieve and experience in the field of operations.
- The method of prevention and prevention has helped contain and deter terrorist operations.
- Development and capacity building can reduce terrorist attacks and encourage citizen participation in protecting security.

<sup>1</sup> It can be seen in the design method adopted by the counter-terrorism strategy, which addressed all of these contents within its paragraphs.

<sup>2</sup> Suhad Ismail Khalil, Ali Faris Hameed, The Blitzkrieg, Egtrab Journal of Studies, Beladi Center for Strategic Studies, Baghdad, third issue, 2017, p. 51

<sup>3</sup> Ali Faris Hameed, The Art of War and National Security Management: The Counter-Terrorism Service as a Model, a study published on the website of the Future Center for Strategic Studies, through the link:

<https://www.annabaa.org/arabic/referenceshirazi/12075>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ali Faris Hamid, Strategic Assessment: Iraq and the management of the war against the terrorist organization ISIS, Future Center for Strategic Studies, through the link:

<https://www.annabaa.org/arabic/referenceshirazi/8791>

<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant General Abdul Wahab Al-Saadi in his interview held at the Counter-Terrorism Service conference held at Al-Nahrain University.

<sup>7</sup> This aspect is based on the cognitive and scientific effort that accompanied the formulation of the strategy and its writing procedures, which relied on experts and academics and then followed up on it for the purpose of having scientific and methodological foundations capable of confrontation. The researcher is one of the members of the scientific committees in the field of designing the Iraqi counter-terrorism strategy 2021-2025.

<sup>8</sup> For more, see: Abu Bakr Naji, Management of Savagery, Without a House, Without History, p. 15

<sup>9</sup> For more, see: Ali Faris Hameed, Managing Savagery: Managing the Moment or the Future, Future Center for Strategic Studies, through the link:

<https://www.annabaa.org/arabic/referenceshirazi/8791>

<sup>10</sup> Compliance with the SWIFT platform in Iraq, a study published at the electronic link:

<https://www.alhurra.com/iraq/2023/01/15/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9>

<sup>11</sup> Iraqi Law No. 39 of 2015. And for more:

The official website of the Central Bank of Iraq, through the link:

[https://aml.iq/?page\\_id=2150](https://aml.iq/?page_id=2150)

<sup>12</sup> The official website of the Central Bank of Iraq, through the link:

[https://aml.iq/?page\\_id=2150](https://aml.iq/?page_id=2150)

<sup>13</sup> Suhad Ismail Khalil, Ali Faris Hameed, Extremism, p. 105

<sup>14</sup> Hazem Jari Munikhir, Violent Extremism and Prevention Measures, Political Issues Journal, Issue 69, College of Political Science, Al-Nahrain University, 2022, p. 619

<sup>15</sup> Ali Faris Hameed, Building the Nation in Iraq: A Vision for Rationalizing Policy and the Challenges of the Citizen's State, within the work of the Nation Conference in Iraq, Cultural Chancellery of the Prime Minister, Baghdad, 2023, p. 13.

