

# REPORT

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## "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and the Bangladeshi Diaspora"

Saturday, 11 July 2017

Venue: Press Club Brussels Europe  
Rue Froissart 95 - 1040 Brussels, Belgium



## Executive Summary & Recommendations:

The Brussels Conference organised by European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) underscored the need for finding out a common strategy in order to uphold secularism to counter violent terrorism and rise of Islamism across the globe including Bangladesh. The conference observed that efforts should be made to help religious and community leaders to reach out to vulnerable youngsters. It further said, countering violent extremism requires a framework that views Muslims as a source of strength rather than suspicion.

Expressing satisfaction over the Bangladesh government's effort to counter terrorism and defusing political Islam, some speakers said, radicalisation is a global issue and unfortunately Bangladesh's feet has been gradually dragged into the terror network map. They underscored the need for an active role of the diaspora communities and the civil society as well to counter extremism and terrorism in Europe as well as home countries in the global South. They focused on social inclusion and integration of the young generation against radicalisation and terrorism. *(Photo below from left Van Oden Geoffrey, MEP, Saleem Samad, Prof Chetan Bhatt, Julie Pernet & Major General Abdur Rashid Retd)*



The conference was divided into two sessions. Each session had separate Questions and Answers Sessions. The first Session was chaired by Professor Chetan Bhatt, Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics while the Second session was chaired by EBF UK, President Ansar Ahmed Ullah. Speakers in the first session were: Van Oden Geoffrey, MEP, Conservative Party, UK, Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid, Executive Director, Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS), Dhaka, Julie Pernet, European Humanist Federation, Brussels and Saleem Samad, Special Correspondent, The Asian Age, Dhaka.

The Second Session was addressed by Brando Benifei, Member of the European Parliament, Social Democratic Party, Italy, Harry van Bommel, former Member of Parliament, Socialist Party, Netherlands, Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament, Labour Party, Netherlands, Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels, Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium and Emma Achilli, head of EU office, Front Line Defenders, Brussels.

In total 84 participants from different stakeholders took part in the conference. They were members of the European Parliament, members of the Dutch parliament, senior officials from European rights

based organisations, researchers, academics, university teachers, students, activists, inter faiths activists, journalists, members of the mainstream and Bangladeshi diaspora communities and representatives of different organisations from across Europe including Switzerland, France, Denmark, U.K., Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and Bangladesh.

Organisations which were represented in the conference among others were: European Humanist Federation, Brussels, European Foundation for Democracy, Brussels, Royal Institute for International Relations, Centre for Study of Human Rights of London School of Economics, Brussels-Dhaka Peace Committee, Brussels, Front Line Defenders, South Asian Democratic Forum (SADF), European External Action Service (EEAS) Bangladesh Desk EU, Managium Belgium, Ergmond Institute Belgium, Active Citizen Europe, Vrij Universiteit Brussels (VUB), House of Integration Germany, Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS) Dhaka, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Netherlands and Belgium, Brussels Press Club, Bangabandhu Foundation Germany, Belgium Jubo League and Secular Forum (Nirmul Committee) UK.



*(Photo: Member of European Parliament Brando Benifei speaking at the conference. On the podium are from right Thomas Renard, former Dutch MP Amma Asante, former Dutch MP Harry van Bommel, Emma Achilli & Roberta Bonazzi)* The **British Member of the European Parliament, Geoffrey Van Orden** in his presentation titled ‘Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult’ in the context of de-radicalisation said, Britain's relationship with South Asia is ancient and his relationship with the South Asian region has also deepened after he became an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on South Asia in European Parliament. He said that in the recent series of terror incidents in the UK, including Manchester, Westminster & London Bridge attacks, fortunately none of the militants were from the Bangladeshi diaspora but many British-born Muslims and Muslim converts have been radicalized and have joined the ISIS holy war in Syria and Iraq.

**The Italian Member of the European Parliament, Brando Benifei** said, this is a challenge for all societies obviously in different degrees and in different forms. But I think – that this is especially important to have the organized communities to be engaged because you are the ones that can speak more directly with your community, people all over, both back in Bangladesh and in the various countries

According to the **leading Dutch politician Harry van Bommel of Socialist Party**, religious and community leaders are essential in mentoring vulnerable young citizens in their communities. Having a poor education and almost no religious knowledge makes the youngsters vulnerable to



indoctrination. Membership of a group, either engaging in criminal activities or in violent extremism, gives them a sense of belonging. Efforts should be made to help religious and community leaders to reach out to vulnerable youngsters. Communities should feel comfortable sharing information when suspect criminal activity rather than pressured to detect unproven markers of radicalisation. Mutual trust can only be generated if government agencies are able to reset their engagement efforts with Muslims to cover a broad range of issues rather than focusing on contemptuous counterterrorism programs. Remark must be made about schools and teachers.



The former **Dutch lawmaker Amma Asante** lamented that the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe are victims of discrimination and identity crisis. The woman politician said, the leaders of Bangladeshi diaspora have a role to play in making aware of its community of radicalization, extremism and Islamism.

**Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid, Director of Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS)** in his keynote paper 'Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis' said the secular fabric and multicultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to political Islam. He blamed the Islamist political parties focused on political strategy based on Jihadi Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moududism.

**Saleem Samad, senior journalist, an Ashoka fellow** and Special Correspondent of The Asian Age, Bangladesh in his keynote paper on 'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh' said while the Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state, ISIS never made it a secret that its 'warriors' are targeting three groups of people in the country, foreigners, who are described as 'crusaders' or 'allies of the crusaders', non-Sunni Muslims including the Shias and the Ahmadis, who are described as 'Rafida' and 'apostate sects', and Hindus, Buddhists and Christians who are described as pagans, idolaters, 'cow-worshippers' and apostates.

According to **Thomas Renard, Senior Research fellow, Europe in the World, Egmond Institute**, homegrown terrorism is considered as a key threat, then more efforts should be invested in prevention

work. While the fall of the caliphate has affected the attractive power of the jihadi adventure (the main “pull factor”), the root causes of radicalisation (the so-called “push factors”) remain largely unaddressed in Western societies. (Photo below: Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President EBF UK speaking at the conference)



President of the European Foundation for Democracy, Roberta Bonazzi opined that ‘when we talk about the work and the role civil society can play in this overall challenge, there are many aspects that need to be taken into account and on which decision makers, all institutions, bodies, governments that fund efforts to prevent radicalisation have to focus. First of all, the question is, how to select civil society organisations, how to select alternative partners that can on one hand prevent radicalisation, but on the other, most importantly, empower the many voices within relevant communities that can represent positive examples and represent

individuals and groups who are totally engaged within their own respective countries and societies.

**Front Line Defenders Emma Achilli** raised the issue of insecurity of the bloggers, online activists and secular activists in Bangladesh and demanded the scrapping of ICT Act which restricts freedom of expression that has caused widespread harassment and intimidation of journalists and online activists in Bangladesh.

## Bangladesh & the global context

1. Bangladesh with majority Muslim population has been nurturing secular and multi-cultural values and became an example of religiously tolerant state. Politics based on religion was banned from its birth and social harmony was maintained by reducing social cleavages and divisions. But persuasion of state’s fundamental values was interrupted by the radical parties when came in power (Major Gen Retd Abdur Rashid).
2. Secular and multi-cultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to the political Islam. Islam based political parties focused on political strategy based on Jihadi Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moududism (Maj Gen Retd Abdur Rashid).
3. Terrorism in Bangladesh is not a pure extension of global terrorist phenomena. It is a complexion of domestic politics, local and foreign patronage, and regional geo politics and inspired by a mixture of Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIS ideology. It is driven by the jihadi Islam theocracy. Terrorism is breed in the radicalized societies often aided by the perceived deprivation (Maj Gen Retd Abdur Rashid).
4. The sensational brutality of Bangladesh’s worst terrorist outrage, the horrific Black Friday attack at Dhaka’s Holey Artisan cafe on July 1, 2016 where 20 hostages, including 18 foreign nationals and two police officers were killed, when the six terrorists, said to be an Islamic State-affiliated group, took them hostage (Saleem Samad).
5. An unknown number of militants have escaped police dragnets from Bangladesh to join IS in Syria and Iraq. The Counter Terrorism unit does not know the exact number. It does not know how many may have travelled to the terror hotspots to join IS. It does not know how many have returned either. Just as it doesn’t know how many attackers like the Black Friday are waiting to strike again (Saleem Samad).

6. ISIS is losing ground. Possibilities exist for the group to survive and even re-emerge in some parts of Syria and Iraq, perhaps under a new name. Senior leaders could alternatively decide to migrate to other, more permissive jihadi theatres to rebuild what has been lost. More fundamentally, however, the jihadi threat in Europe will not vanish miraculously following the fall of the caliphate, or the death of its leaders (Thomas Renard).
7. The jihadi movement will survive ISIS anyway. A *virtual caliphate* is already emerging on the ruins of the caliphate in the Levant. It is virtual in the sense that it does not require any physical territory. The jihadi ideology focuses on the conquest of vulnerable minds, not lands. It is also virtual for it relies on the internet and social media to propagate its ideas, recruit new militants, connect them together, and encourage or even guide violent actions (Thomas Renard)
8. Returnees are likely to play a key role in the recruiting and training of the next jihadi wave. It is therefore imperative to monitor them very closely, and seek to limit their influence as much as possible (Thomas Renard).
9. Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon without a clear definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief. Two years ago, the United Nations presented a Plan of Action to prevent violent extremism acknowledging the fact that terrorist groups such as Islamic State have defined our image of violent extremism (Harry van Bommel).
10. The political overreaction to contemporary terrorist acts is a threat to human rights and not effective in the prevention of terrorism. Today we are faced by new laws that are discriminatory and stigmatizing for Muslims. This could very well be counterproductive in the approach to reduce violent extremism. Amongst second generation Muslims there is a disconnection with their countries of origin and failure to integrate into Western societies. Many live in an identity vacuum in which violent extremism thrives (Harry van Bommel).

## **Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do?**

1. Terrorism has no boundary thereby bilateral, regional and global cooperation is of paramount importance. Internet has brought the world jihadis close to each other. Threat originating from one country imploding in other has become common phenomenon. Radicalization is a future threat that we all fight together (Maj Gen Retd Abdur Rashid).
2. While terrorism and radicalisation must, first and foremost, be addressed domestically, we should not entirely close our eyes on the international dimension of this challenge. On the one hand, more cooperation is required at the European and global levels to address a phenomenon that is indeed transnational. More exchanges of good practices should therefore be encouraged and facilitated. On the other hand, we should keep in mind that the jihadi movement will likely seek to upgrade itself again from the virtual caliphate into a physical one. Preventing this, should also be a priority (Thomas Renard).
3. Religious and other leaders in the Diaspora community could play a key role in mentoring vulnerable youngsters. Countering violent extremism requires a framework that views Muslims as a source of strength instead of suspicion. Government policy should be aimed at improving socioeconomic opportunities, especially for young people. Better education and decent jobs are essential. Violent extremist groups successfully reach out to young men and women through social media (Harry van Bommel).
4. The digital space these groups use needs to be reclaimed for messages promoting values such as respect and inclusiveness. Education is one of the major goals in the post 2015 agenda of the UN. Investment in education is investment in the prevention of violent extremism. Not just

in developing countries but also in Europe. In the end, this is far more cost-effective than allocating resources to deal with the consequences of violent extremism (Harry van Bommel).

5. An effective counter-terrorism response should focus on all prevention aspects: primary prevention (focusing on the whole population), secondary prevention (focusing on vulnerable individuals and communities), and tertiary prevention (focusing on individuals already in the process of radicalisation) (Thomas Renard).
6. Since the internet is playing a growing role in the virtual caliphate, counter-terrorism response should also increasingly be focused online. While a lot of efforts have been developed to take online jihadi contents down, more can still be done in partnership with internet companies. Counter-messaging and alternative messaging campaigns should also be promoted. If radicalisation, recruitment and training increasingly take place on the web, intelligence services must also significantly strengthen their online presence (Thomas Renard).
7. An effective secular political system is an essential backdrop for the prevention of human rights violations because it is a framework where people are seen as human rights agents and not defined primarily by their beliefs. That is the only way to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Julie Pernet).
8. The role of the diaspora, that the diaspora from Bangladesh, but also from many other countries across Europe or in the West can play a very important role in preventing the radical and extremist interpretation of religion, in portraying and in speaking up on how communities are being radicalised (Bonazzi).
9. Investment in education is investment in the prevention of violent extremism. Definitely not just in developing countries but also closer at home in Europe. When it comes to violent extremism, the investment in prevention is far more cost effective than allocating resources to deal with the consequences (Bommel).



### Networking

1. The Bangladeshi community like other Muslim communities must do more to integrate. And instead of all people constantly looking what is going on back home, I think they should be asking themselves "What more can I do to become a full member of the society in which I now live?" (Van Orden).
2. It's crucially important for all, for youth coming from all backgrounds – the importance of the social networks is important and are an issue of discussion in in terms of what kind of responsibility the platform have. This is a big debate, here in Europe. But in this case, I meant society groups, associations, family. And I think that this development of the organized and present civil society is always crucial to prevent radicalisation (Benifei).
3. This is a challenge for all societies obviously in different degrees and in different forms. But I think – that this is especially important to have the organized communities to be engaged because you are the ones that can speak more directly with your community, people all over, both back in Bangladesh and in the various countries (Benifei).



4. I hope we can further develop this network with the European Parliament, with the organisations with all the actors which are present and which are participating. I am convinced, this a fundamental work, this is fundamental not just for your community or Bangladesh, but for the all of our society (Benifei).

## **Background of the Conference:**

### **Follow-up Event**

The 11 July Brussels conference "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and the Bangladeshi Diaspora" was a follow up event from the previous conference held on 18 October 2016 at the Press Club in Brussels, addressing Islamist attacks in Dhaka and Brussels.

That conference identified source of violent narratives and acknowledged that militants take up Islam as political ideology and a way of life. They have an orthodox interpretation of Islam, are antithetically disposed to the secular nature and the social fabric of society, maintain external connections and views militancy as a legitimate means to attain their goals. No government can fight terrorism alone, terrorism that is generated in the name of a global religion. To protect humanity civil society actors should come forward to find out a de-radicalization strategy for respective governments and policy makers. Policymakers, politicians, journalists and researchers should focus on life stories, narratives and domestic (European) issues when it comes down to the radicalisation and extremism. Discrimination in the labour market, structuralism and the racial profiling, notions of belonging are the key issues to focus to halt the flow of western fighters.

### **Themes**

This conference specifically revisited Bangladesh & the global context since the last event. The conference more importantly looked at the impact of terrorism and its affect on both victims & defenders. And finally, the conference explored ways as to how the European Bengali diaspora can assist in countering the rise of extremism.

### **What the Conference aimed to archive**

The Brussels Conference on 11 July 2017 provided a platform for South Asians and Europeans activists/policy makers to come together to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists.

The conference should also have provided opportunity to form network of Bangladeshi migrant organisations in Europe, European policy makers, elected representatives, human rights organisations and European NGOs working in Bangladesh.



## PROGRAM

14:00	<b>Registration &amp; Tea/Coffee</b>
14:30	<b><u>First session: Bangladesh &amp; global context</u></b>  <b>Chair: Prof Chetan Bhatt</b> – Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, UK  Keynote: <b>Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid</b> , Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS), Dhaka – <i>“Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis”</i>  <b>Ms. Julie Pernet</b> , European Humanist Federation, Brussels – <i>“The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh and beyond”</i>  <b>Mr. Saleem Samad</b> , senior journalist, an Ashoka fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special correspondent, the Asian Age, Dhaka  <b>Guest of Honours: Mr. Geoffrey Van Orden MBE MEP</b> , Conservative Party, UK - <i>“Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult”</i> in the context of de-radicalisation.
15:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>
16:00 – 16:15	<b>Break</b>
16:15	<b><u>Second Session: Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do</u></b>  <b>Chair: Mr. Ansar Ahmed Ullah</b> , President, European Bangladesh Forum, UK  <b>Ms. Roberta Bonazzi</b> , Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels & Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy  <b>Ms. Emma Achilli</b> , Front Line Defenders, Head of EU Office, Brussels – <i>“Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk”</i>  <b>Mr. Thomas Renard</b> , Senior Research Fellow, Europe in the World, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium - <i>“Key trends of terrorism in Belgium and Europe”</i>  <b>Ms. Amma Asante, former MP</b> , Labour Party, The Netherlands  <b>Mr. Harry van Bommel, former MP</b> , Socialistische Partij, The Netherlands – <i>“Violent extremism: Islam or Crime”</i>  <b>Guest of Honour - Mr. Brando Benifei MEP</b> , Social-Democratic Party, Italy
17:15	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>
17:45	<b>Summing up &amp; Concluding Remarks</b>  <b>Vote of thanks: Mr. M. M Murshed</b> , Coordinator, Brussels Dhaka Solidarity for Peace Committee
18:00	<b>Reception-Dinner/Networking</b>

## SPEAKERS PROFILE

### Mr Geoffrey Van Orden (MEP UK, MBE)



Geoffrey van Orden has been a British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the Conservative Party since 1999. Previously, he served many years in the British army and in various security related top positions, for example as the Chief of Staff of the British Army in the British sector of Berlin or as the Executive Secretary of International Military Staff at the NATO headquarters in Brussels. Due to his expertise, he was appointed as a senior official in the European Commission for foreign and security issues in 1999, a post he held until his election as a MEP. Geoffrey Van Orden is an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence in the European Parliament and has a strong interest in South Asia. Aged just 27 he was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE).

### Mr Brando Benifei (MEP Italy)



Brando Benifei, 31, European Federalist, is one of the youngest MEPs and is from La Spezia, Italy. His main fields of legislative work in the EP are Employment and social affairs and Foreign affairs. He is co-chair of the Youth Intergroup and vice-chair of the Disability Intergroup. He was responsible for key legislative and non-legislative reports on the social inclusion and integration of refugees into the EU labour market; on youth employment policy such as the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative.

### Mr Harry van Bommel (former MP, The Netherlands)



Harry van Bommel was a Member of Dutch Parliament (House of Representatives) for Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij) from 1998 to 2017. During his term, he focused on matters of foreign policy, European Union and educational policy. He showed great interest in Bangladesh on a meeting at the Dutch Parliament on the trial of 1971 war criminals and minority rights issues in Bangladesh. Before entering politics, he worked as a teacher of Dutch and English and studied political science at the University of Amsterdam.

### Amma Asante (former MP, The Netherlands)



Amma Asante, the former Member of Parliament (MP) was born in Ghana and grew up in the multicultural district Amsterdam Southeast. After the secondary school she studied Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. She graduated in 1997 with a Masters degree. She wrote her thesis on the impact of economic reforms on the most vulnerable citizens in Latin America. For this she conducted a research about street and working children in Cochabamba Bolivia. Amma has held several professional positions in the public sector ranging from social worker to policy maker and researcher on the national and international level. Besides her professional career Amma also developed a political career. In 1998 she was elected as a member of the Municipality of Amsterdam, being

spokesperson on Youth Affairs. In 2016 she became a member of Parliament in the Netherlands and was the spokesperson on Higher Education on behalf of her party. After the elections of 2017 she was not re-elected. Amma now works as a Consultant in social development for the public sector.

**Major General (Retd) Abdur Rashid, Executive Director, ICLDS, Bangladesh**



Major General (Retd) Abdur Rashid was commissioned in Bangladesh Army in 1978 in the Corp of Artillery. He has served in many important commands, staff and instructional positions, for example as Directing Staff in Defence Services Command and Staff College Mirpur or as UN military observer in former Yugoslavia. He retired in December 2007. Since then he has been focusing i.a. on studies on terrorism in South Asia and is now the Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS) in Dhaka. Due to his analytical skills, he is a frequent guest on Bangladeshi TV channels, whose analyses are published in the print media as well.

**Prof Chetan Bhatt – LSE, UK**



Prof Chetan Bhatt is a Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at London School of Economics (LSE). His research interest does not only include human rights, discrimination and social justice – areas he has been working extensively on – but also religious right and religious conflicts as well as the geopolitical sociology of South Asia. Currently he is working on a project concerning the sociology of religious para-militia groups. In line with his previous Leverhulme Trust major Research Fellowship he focused on the geo-sociology of religious violence. Previous areas of PhD supervision have included the transformation of

political Islam.

**Ms. Julie Pernet, Policy Officer, European Humanist Federation, Brussels**



Julie Pernet works to develop EHF policies and advocacy in the fields of women's rights, freedom of religion and belief, rule of law, stem cells research and LGBTI+ rights. She also works as liaison officer for EHF member organisations.

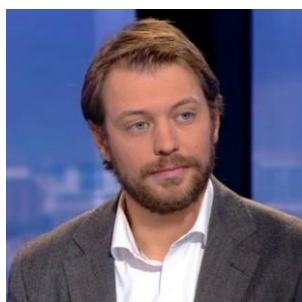
Julie holds a double Master degree in political sciences from Sciences Po Aix-en-Provence (France) and in European Affairs from the Institute of European Studies (IEE-ULB). Julie is also lecturer at the Institute for Higher Social Communication Studies (IHECS) and volunteer in a program to fight homophobia at school.

### **Mr Saleem Samad, Senior Journalist, Bangladesh**



Saleem Samad, an Ashoka Fellow (USA), a Bangladesh based award winning investigative journalist. He is special correspondent for The Asian Age and correspondent for Paris based media rights group Reporters Without Borders (RSF). His detention and torture in custody in November 2002 caused global outcry. Two foreign journalists from British TV channel 4 were also arrested for documenting on Islamic extremism and expatriate Jihadists. After 55 days, the Bangladesh High Court cancelled the sedition charges and he was released. After his release from prison, a security agency kept on intimidating him, he fled to Canada in 2004. After six years in exile in Canada, he returned to Dhaka. For his excellent work and outstanding courage, Samad was recognized by Amnesty International as a “Defender of Human Rights” and awarded by New York based Human Right Watch with a Hellman-Hammett Grant, a recognition offered to victims of political persecutions.

### **Mr Thomas Renard, Sr. Research Fellow, Egmont Royal Institute, Belgium**



Thomas Renard is a Senior Research Fellow from Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations in Belgium. One of his focus is on terrorism and counter-terrorism. Previously, he worked as a correspondent journalist and as an analyst in Washington DC, with Jamestown Foundation, an American think tank, and with the Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation as the head of Brussels office. He is member of the King Baudouin Foundation supported Friday Group, a group of young Belgians with different areas of expertise reflecting on societal issues. Thomas Renard is also Adjunct Professor at Vesalius College and lectures regularly in various universities as a guest lecturer.

### **Ms Roberta Bonazzi, Founder, Eruopean Foundation for Democracy, Belgium**



Roberta Bonazzi is the Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy, a policy centre based in Brussels focusing on counter-radicalisation, security and the promotion of the European values of democracy and individual freedoms. Besides, she works with the Counter Extremism Project (CEP) as head of Brussels chapter. One of her recent projects includes a global campaign to raise awareness of how extremist organisations exploit social media to recruit and radicalise vulnerable people. Roberta Bonazzi holds a degree in Political Sciences and International Relations from the University of Milan and a post graduate degree from the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI).

### **Ms Emma Achilli- Head, Front Line Defenders, Belgium**



Emma Achilli is Head of of Front Line Defenders' Brussels office to the European Union. She is a British/Italian national, and has worked for the last 15 years on human rights issues in the EU institutions (Europeaid, External Relations, Council and European Parliament) and before that in development cooperation. Front Line Defenders' EU office works to inform and promote



action by the EU on individual cases of human rights defenders at risk worldwide, and to ensure the EU's commitment to its Guidelines on HRDs is always at the forefront of its action. We are active members of the Human Rights and Democracy Network.

**Mr Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President EBF**



parliamentarians.

Ansar Ahmed Ullah is co-President of EBF and a community leader who has lived and worked in the UK since late 1970s. He has worked as a youth, social and community worker and has been an active anti-racist campaigner. Ansar Ahmed Ullah has worked in local government, social services and in regeneration department in London in conjunction with various communities, engaging in consultation processes, gaining experience within deprived areas. Country coordinator of BASUG UK, Ansar Ahmed Ullah has organised a number of workshops and seminars for BASUG on Migration and Development, Remittances and Democracy in Bangladesh. He also maintains BASUG's contacts with the British mainstream politicians and British Euro

**Mr. M. M. Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Peace Committee**



A community leader of Bangladeshis in Belgium. Work on Bangladesh issues including violent extremism. Recently organised a similar program in Brussels following an attack at Holy Artisan Bakery in Dhaka and in metro station in Brussels

## DETAILED REPORT

### FIRST SESSION

**Ansar:** Good afternoon and welcome to this half-day conference on countering extremism. I must thank all of you who have come especially from Bangladesh, the UK, Denmark, Holland, Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark. This is third in this series of the conference we have organized so far. The first being in London in 2015 and in fact, we were here last year in October 2016 at this venue, which was our second event. One of the sessions was chaired by Dr Charles Tannock, MEP, and he had expressed his concern, his fear about Jihadi returning from the warzone, from Syria, from Iraq. Unfortunately, his fear did come true in London. Most of you know in May this year we had an attack in Manchester at a concert. And the young man who carried out the attack had travelled to Libya and Turkey a week before he carried out this attack in London. And of course, London has witnessed a number of attacks in the last two, three months. We had the Westminster attack on 22 March and then we had London Borough Market on 8 June. And the last one was the Finsbury Park



attack on 19 June. This was obviously - other way round: it was a white perpetrator who drove into Muslims coming out of prayer which I guess is a backlash. And every time there is an attack carried out by an Islamist terrorist, there is obviously a backlash against the entire Muslim community. This is why we obviously very much concern about the European, Asian, Bengali, Muslim diaspora.

*(Photo: At the Registration Marco Schmidberger and Susana Stravato of EBF)*

Without any delay, I'm going to hand over to the Chair of the first session, Prof Chetan Bhatt. He is from the UK. He is the director of the Centre for the Study of Human rights at the London School of Economics.

**Chetan Bhat:** I'd like to warmly welcome everyone to this important event, extremely important event on countering violent extremism in relationship to Bangladesh. And this is an event that considers not only what is occurring in Bangladesh today with regard to systematic violence by political Islamist, by Salafi Jihadis, but also looks on the impact globally. And within the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe and elsewhere. And in the second session you'll hear more about what more could be done within the diaspora itself. During the first session, which I'll be chairing and which begins very shortly after I've finished speaking, we'll consider the impact of Islamist violence, terror and intimidation in Bangladesh. And how these have impacted on some fundamental universal rights including of course, the expression and right to life. Following a brief brake at 4 o'clock, we'll begin the second session chaired by Ansar. And this examines closely the impact of terrorism and extremism in the Bangladeshi diaspora and the sort of practical steps that can be undertaken. And considers quite seriously and focuses on those in the diaspora who have been attacked or are facing quite severe threats from political Islam and Salafi Jihadism.

I would just like to go ahead and begin an invite to Major Rashid to talk to us and his talk is going to be about the Islamic terrorism in Bangladesh looking at questions of progression and prognoses.

**Major Rashid:** I do consider this is a very important issue at this moment of the world where Bangladeshi diaspora living in the European Union areas as well as what is happening in Bangladesh.



So that is important and must be quite integrated to fight and preventing violent extremism. I also thank – I see the members of the European Parliament here and other distinguished personalities from ministerial organisations and their support for this occasion as well as in the future fighting to develop any strategies is very important. The first I would like to say is: How do you see, how do you conceive the threat of terrorism and its origin? I do find there are numbers of different thoughts and ideas, like the way we

think about Bangladesh terrorism. Maybe Bangladeshi diaspora are thinking otherwise. So we have to come to a conclusion about the real threat, its origin and we have to develop a common perception to work out for a common strategy. Bangladesh terrorism, it has similarities and dissimilarities with global terrorism, but I must say that it has its own characteristics and it is typically different from the global terrorism. As we have studied its history, we have seen that characteristically our terrorism is more orientated to the domestic politics. Our terrorism is financed and patronized by the local and the foreign patronisers. It has state and non-state actors, foreign and local. So that why its shape is



completely different from the global terrorism. Our terrorism started with the first terrorist outfit in 1992 and the most horrent attack that Bangladesh has experienced in 2016 which is on Holey Artisan Bakery where 17 foreigners were killed. If we consider in terms of the causalities and fatalities, the attack in 2004 on 21 August on a political gathering. The current Prime Minister was a chief guest

speaking. There was an attack and about 8-10 grenades were launched on these people. The number of causalities was 24 and more than 200 people were wounded. So that was the highest causality that Bangladesh ever experienced. So, in terms of causalities, the Holey Artisan is not the big one.

If we look at the terrorism in Bangladesh from 1992 that Harkatiul Jihad Al Islami Al Bangladesh popularly known as Huji Bangladesh and first they attacked in 1999 on a platform of professors to the secular ideas. And then on we have seen that about 15 attacks they conducted, the same organisation, causing the death of close to 100 people. Their targets were mostly the ethnic culture, the secular personalities and political elements. Those who are proceeding the secular ideas. Then we have seen another generation that is the second generation that is called Jamatul Mujahideen Al Bangladesh. The first one following mostly the Taliban ideology, they were mostly the Afghan Mujahideen, returned from Afghanistan. The second one, the Jamatul Mujahidin Bangladesh, popularly known as JMB, they followed the Taliban ideology and conducted a number of attacks. And then also it disintegrated and certainly we saw a new organisation came up which is popularly known as new JMB and it started causing, attacking since 2013. And it continued till we are facing that organisation.

The good news is that all these three generations of terrorist outfit somehow got disintegrated in the process of time due to nice counter-terrorist strategy, due to our intelligence capacity of the country

and security forces' ability. The last one, the new JMB, which attacked the Holey Artisan, it is to me, as I have studied, they are able active terrorists, most of them were killed by the police, approximately police has rated it will be about 20 operations where 70 terrorists were killed. That includes their top leadership, that includes their mid-level leadership and also the soldiers, means active terrorists. So, with that philosophy we have seen that this terrorist outfit has a tremendous connection with some of the political elements of Bangladesh and the political uprising or outcome. To cause political outcome, these terrorists organisation were rampantly used. So, we cannot isolate these terrorist outfits and the local Islamic politics- we cannot separate. That is the big question in Bangladesh, we have to separate it.

Another one is connections to the diaspora. The new JMB leadership, was a member of Canadian diaspora. He came from Canada and went to Bangladesh, he has never been in Bangladesh and ultimately, he took the leadership of new JMB and caused that attack on Holey Artisan. So, what is the happening outside with the Bangladeshi diaspora? So, we see a movement of the terror across the globe. So, *we have to create a strategy and we have to work together so that threat developing in one part of the world cannot create an impact on the other part of the world. So that is a new challenge. With that challenge, I see this programme certainly contributes to integrate the Bangladeshi diaspora*



*in Europe and Bangladesh itself.* Similarly, if we compare the last attack in London, it has a similarity.

These terrorist outfits are not taking deep root in the people. If we study the organisation has appeared to me – there is something like a corporate body. So, they hire a house, isolated from the people, they try to hide with them as

normal people and ultimately, they train somewhere, they do go outside and establish a training centre – is like a corporate body. It's not a typical political party. So, with that big isolated with the people, how long they can sustain. So, in Bangladesh it has been clearly revealed that people and the terrorist outfit has a big separation. And once any attack which was conducted in Bangladesh, we have seen a tremendous condemnation and the participation of the people against terrorism. That is good news for Bangladesh. At this moment, we are not much threatened by the active terrorist attack. The challenge that Bangladesh in future is going to face is radicalisation. If we can radicalise the total society being a Muslim one with a Salafi or Wahibi Islam which is known as Jihadi Islam, automatically tomorrow that radicalisation would be a matter of danger to the global peace as well as the peace of Bangladesh. We have to devise a strategy to stop free movement of the terrorists from one part of the world to the others. We have to create a strategy so that Salafi Islam must not take a place in the mind of the Muslim community all over the world including Bangladesh. And if we can take this challenge and devise some of the strategy to separate Jihadi Islam from the peaceful Islam, so we will win the battle. And for this, I think, it is not an individual country, individual organisation, or in regions or the global, we have all to unit together to fight this menace. So, this is important, communication and Integration of the whole globe and all countries to fight this deadly terrorism and that would make the world safer.

**Dr Chetan Bhat:** I understand one of our panellists, Geoffrey van Orden, is here. And if I could invite him to come and just join us before we move on to our next speaker. He is coming here, I'll just introduce him. He has been a British Member in the European Parliament for the Conservative Party since 1999. Previously he served many years in the British army and in various security related



positions, for example as Chief of Staff of the British Army in the British sector of Berlin and the Executive Secretary of International Military Staff at NATO headquarters in Brussels. He is an active member of the Committee on foreign affairs and the sub-Committee on security and defence in the European Parliament. And he has a strong interest in South Asia what we'll be hearing from him later on.

May I move on to introduce our next speaker: Julie Parnet. She will be talking about the role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh and beyond.

**Julie Parnet:** My organisation is a federation uniting secularist and humanist organisations here in Europe. We promote advocacy work at the level of European institutions, to promote a secular Europe, to promote freedom of religion or belief, to promote freedom of expression. But also, to fight conservative religious lobbying and religious privileges in Europe at the EU-level. Humanist is also organized at international – I don't know if you heard about this, but I'm sure you've heard about the International Humanist European Union. My presentation will be more about the importance of secularism for democracy. And of course, for Bangladesh, but also elsewhere in the world.

So, what we understand in my organisation as secularism is the separation of the state from the institution of religion and of any other beliefs. So, it means that the state should be neutral or at least impartial regarding religious beliefs or any other beliefs. But secularism should be distinguished from atheism and it should be distinguished from the concept of a secular society which suggests that it is a society where you have a high level, a high number of non-religious people. It should also be distinguished from a state that should be hostile to religious beliefs. As so, it has also to be distinguished with imposed irreligion, the absence of religion.

These distinctions are really important, especially in the case of Bangladesh, where the discussion on secularism can actually lead to very strong violence as we have seen in the past and still today. First, I would say that secularism is important in the construction of a stable democracy because this is one prerequisite for equality and human dignity. And upon, secularism is equality of all under the law of state, regardless of beliefs, religious or not. It also rests upon the principle of human dignity meaning that secularism as a political system identified in the laws are as human rights agents and not merely as members of a religious or non-religious group. So it is really like seeing people entitled to have rights. Because it protects and guarantees equality and human dignity for all, we believe that it is needed to avoid discrimination and violence. Especially when this violence is perpetrated in the name of religion.



Second, I do think that secularism is really important to democracy because you can't have the protection of freedom of expression and freedom of belief without having a secular system. Freedom of religion or belief requires equal and just-treatment of all people irrespective of their beliefs. Only a secular system can guarantee this. Only a secular system can actually guarantee the right to practice and to manifest your belief, your religion. As long, of course, as this practice and manifestation do not undermine the rights of other people. Crucially, a secular state gives no privilege to any religion or belief. Because when you start having an official preference for one religious belief, as it is the case for Bangladesh, you can have very harmful consequences. First because of course, it inherently undermines the rights of minorities that are the people who do not share the dominant belief. But also, because you actually prevent people who have the dominant belief to question, to challenge, to criticise, to leave the dominant belief. And so, once a state starts to define citizens not by their humanity, but by their membership to a religious group, we really think that discrimination automatically follows.

And we also do think that the protection of the right to the freedom of religion and belief involves of course the right to manifest, to practice your religion or belief which means that secularism has to offer you a space for open speech which has to include criticism of ideas and of course criticism of religious ideas and beliefs. Bangladesh government must stop giving in pressures from Islamic parties. It has to clearly apply secularism in the country in order to protect its people. So, our federation and the international Humanist and Ethic Union really have repeatedly called on this change to happen.

**Dr. Chetan Bhat:** Thank you, Julie. And already in Major Rashid's and Julie's paper and their talk an enormously rich number of complex themes obviously changing themes have emerged. Can I invite Saleem Samad to speak?

**Saleem Samad:** Unfortunately, most people don't trust the reporters. They don't trust the journalists. I would definitely start from where Julie has finished her discussion. I'm also looking at the issue of the media, you mentioned LGBT, you talked about the bloggers. First of all, most of you are aware that in Bangladesh, journalists are also victims of the terrorism that General



Rashid has mentioned several times. That is a very important issue that most people have possibly ignored. Of course, the bloggers have also been a victim. But I'm talking about the journalists.

First, they (*members of extremist groups*) had sent an email to all the media, print and electronic, asking to stop writing about the deaths of atheists. I mean bloggers or free thinkers. So that has to be banned on publication. Second, they did not forget to mention all the women. They said the women should not be in the media – that means as a reporter or a journalist or whatever, or cameraman. Nothing. And what is most important: women should not be on the picture, like on advertisement, or publicity or even a cultural function. That has been banned by the organisation called Ansarullah Islam which is sometimes mentioned as ABT which is a Bangladesh chapter. Importantly, they blame anybody who is secular, anybody who is advocating for secularism, any media that is talking about secularism. Any journalist who is talking about free thinkers. Any person who is talking or writing in a newspaper or a television talk show about something that has to do with democracy. They are directly in the front line with the corporate bodies, the terrorist organisations. Similar is with the bloggers. You know about most of the bloggers that Julie has already mentioned. I would rather use the word in the

media. The letter in which ABT has asked the magazines, politicians to fire all the women journalist. Let me tell you one thing. Women journalists are now scared. Their bosses, like the newsroom editor are afraid of having the women coming to the newsrooms. So, most of the television channels have a separated office in a different location so that they can go to that place and make their news, or stories or broadcasts. So, this is another issue. These places are often somewhere in the commercial area, because it's downtown, so there are a lot of people, a lot of security, police are there. So, this is on the issue of women in the media.

Let's talk about the LGBT.... If you look at ISIS, the Islamic State, they have published a magazine which you can find in PDF online which directly causes the struggle of the Hindus, Christians, Shia Muslims, Ahmadiyya Muslims and foreigners. And that is what is happening. Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state. Their target are these people who are pro-secular, so anybody who is pro-secular is on their hit list.

In 1980, 8000 Bangladeshi youths went to Palestine to fight the Jews, to liberate Palestine from the occupation of Israel. So, the hate issue among the youths is not the first time. It goes back to 1980. There are documents that prove that. Some people have published the photographs in black and white even in Facebook about 1980 stories. Many of them, I wouldn't say that they have joined another Jihad, but they were initial in trying to defend. "Yes, we have to right to fight Israel, we have the right to fight the Jews. And if the Jews are not in Bangladesh, so let's fight them somewhere else."

To end my long story in short. In Bangladesh, the counter terrorism and the national crime unit don't recognize that Bangladeshi militants are going abroad. Thank you.

**Dr Chetan Bhat:** Thank you very much indeed, Saleem. May I invite Geoffrey van Orden to speak next and I believe he'll be discussing some issues about why counterterrorism can be difficult and some difficulties within it.

**Geoffrey van Orden:** I'm a British conservative MEP, I do have close links with South Asia, I've been going to South Asia for the last 40 years, I suppose. I now chair the delegation for relations with India, I'm chairman of the Friends of Sri Lanka. And I'm, as all about three days ago, I'm co-chairman of the Asia-Europe Political Forum which involves some 20 Asian countries. We've just met. I've literally just come back from Seoul in South Korea, where we were meeting. I want to talk about: Bangladesh is in Europe and particularly in my own country, in the United Kingdom. We have a significant population of Bangladeshis in the UK, at the last count almost 300,000 live in the UK. And in fact, every "Indian" restaurant is actually run by Bangladeshis as far as I know. But more seriously, if we look at the something like 269 people who have been convicted of terrorist offenses in the United Kingdom in the last 20 years, most of them were of South Asian origin, included among were some 20 Bangladeshis. What I was saying is right. It's an unfortunate but well observed fact that the diaspora is often more radical than the people back home and I think we might explore the reasons for that. Maybe one is very actively promoting among smaller communities overseas where you have a concentration of people. But there are a lot of factors of work. In 2015, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh warned the then British Prime Minister that there is a risk of the Bangladeshi diaspora in the United Kingdom being radicalized and then returning to Bangladesh to radicalize people there.

Just a few general points about this Islamist terrorism. Most of the attacks are against civilians. Most of the victims are civilians. Most of the victims by the way globally, are Muslims. That's typical, by the way, of terrorist organizations. I spent a lot of time fighting the IRA in Northern Ireland. Most victims of the IRA were Catholics. So, terrorist organisations are about oppression and control, not about liberation. Quite the contrary. And the first bit of control they want is over the community from which they come. And so, it is not surprising in a way that most of their victims are indeed from that community. Globally, there have been something like 400 deaths from terrorist attacks. About 15 were publicized terrorist attacks globally. There were three in the United Kingdom: Westminster Bridge-



House of Parliament on 26 March, when 5 people were murdered. In Manchester on 26 May, when 22 people were murdered. And London Bridge–Borough Market on 3 June, when 8 people were murdered. As far as I know there were no Bangladeshis involved in any of those particular attacks by the way. Now, in terms of explanation: Some people have tried to make some kind of link between British foreign policy and terrorism and extremism. Interestingly, the mass murder in Manchester, Salman Abedi, grew up in a Libyan family that was violently opposed to the regime of Ghadaffi. So you would imagine that his family would have been very grateful to the British government, not only for getting rid of Ghadaffi, but for giving them sanctuary in our country. So trying to link our foreign policy with him obviously doesn't work. The prime example perhaps of foreign policy that has gone wrong that people point to is of course Iraq. But new terrorist attacks haven't been carried out by people of Iraqi origins. Islamist terrorism began before the Western nations took up the fight against terrorism. And many of the countries subject to Islamist terrorist attacks have never been engaged in action against any of the foreign sources of such terrorism. Some are corrupted into a view about the origins the terrorism through a perception of abuse of Muslim countries. I think that word "perception" is very important because it is the perceptions that people have – false perceptions – which so often lead them up a wrong path. Too often aligned as being fed and I have to say often by own non-Muslim extremists in our own country who feed and propagate these lines. By the way, as a side note that has nothing to do with terrorism, but if you look at that Grenfell Tower fire tragedy that took place in the United Kingdom, interestingly the sort of action groups and everything now that has been build up around that have all been infiltrated by extreme left-wing organisations, such as the Socialist Workers Party and all of that. So, what I'm saying is that the extreme left also has a strong influence on elements of our Muslim communities in Britain and takes them the wrong way. And don't forget that British intervention in many countries has often specifically been in protection of the Muslim population, far from attacking them it has been supporting them. I think of the examples of Bosnia, Kosovo and Libya, where we got out of our way to avoid civilian casualties, although sometimes unfortunately there are such casualties. I'm conscious that time is marching on.



What more has to be done to prevent extremism within our societies? Why are the diasporas more extreme than those back home? I think that is a question that needs to be answered. We have problems of integration, we have problems of separation, we have problems of control of people coming into our countries. And often of course, it is not a new outsider who is the problem but people who were born in our countries of migrant origin. So if you like, we have created a fresh generation of extremists. I



think more has to be done to educate young people about our own country and about our own history and societies. Including by the way our own young people. I think too many young British people have known very little about our own history. And I'm not talking about all the negative stories, I'm talking about the great history and the very positive contributions that countries like Britain have made around the world. We need to embrace immigrant communities in the same way. Of course, we have large population of immigrants in the country who have integrated extremely well but it is the ones who haven't integrated who are the problem. I would say finally that the Bangladeshi community like other Muslim communities must do more to integrate. I don't know what the answer is – should we only have English spoken in Mosques? Should we have no foreign Imams preaching in Mosques? Should be there no foreign funding of Mosques? Would this all contribute? And instead of all people constantly looking what is going on back home, I think they should be asking themselves “What more can I do to become a full member of the society in which I now live?”

## **Questions & Answers**

**Q1:** Some politicians are still suffering from Pakistani colonial hangover and that contributes to Islamic militancy in BD.

**Q2:** I was wondering if you would make any link to global inequality as effect in the rise of protest or militancy and its link to lack of equal voice.

**Q3:** I am from the South Asian Democracy Forum- what sort of role Jamaat Islami plays in the issue of rising religious radicalisation in Bangladesh, how strong Islamic groups in terms of economic issues, administration and on the country sides?

**Q3:** I am from Secular BD Movement UK. In Bangladesh secularism and democracy are going in two different ways. I am born as a Hindu; my family is suffering in Bangladesh for many years. I am involved in human rights for last 14 years but could not achieve anything. How can I protect my family back home? Do you have any sort of any suggestion how I can go back to Bangladesh and live in my own home safely and happily?

**Q4:** I'm Dr. Biddhut Barua from Secular Forum from Denmark, Copenhagen. Only by killing or guns you can stop terrorists in Bangladesh. But what is the procedure to stop terrorism in Bangladesh? With a gun you can kill a terrorist, but with education you kill the terrorism also.

## **ANSWERS**

**Major General Rashid:** First, I would like to take the question of Pushpita who asked for certain kinds of assistance for protecting her rights of her family in Bangladesh (Q3). As an ex-military officer and also quite close to the security forces, I can assure you that in Bangladesh in this moment I do not perceive any threat to any particular family, if it is not involved in otherwise any protection problem. And if you have any, you can certainly communicate directly to any human right organisation if not to our organisations. They will assist you in identifying the cases. As the general Bangladesh people is not threatened the way you had mentioned.

Second, about Jamat-e-Islami: I would like to connect the Jamat-e-Islami and also the Islamic militancy. Just to make it short: The emergence of Bangladesh itself was against what we call “two nations theory”, means that is the Islamic Ummah. The emergence of Bangladesh was against the Islamic Ummah because they actually got separated from an Islamic state which was known as Pakistan. So Jamat-e-Islami was a party at that time who supported Pakistan to cause a genocide of 3 million people, violated one million people. So that is the crime created by Jamat-e-Islami politically. And once we have seen that Bangladesh has come in the world map as a secular democratic country, they never accepted this statehood. So automatically they have utilized the Islam for their political cause. In that context, the first outfit, which was known as Harkat ul Jihad al Mujahid Al Fuji, most of

the members actually had the Jamat connection. The next generation we had the seen was JMB. There were nine members of the leadership they call Surah Council. Out of nine, five were Jamat ex-leaders. The outfit had tremendous economic support of the Jamat organisation, because Jamat still maintaining a huge economic empire in Bangladesh. So again, secular governments and a non-secular political force in the fight, Jamat is a very active role player. In that context, we do find a big connection – it is a secret connection – with Jamat-e-Islami, the terrorists outfits and the terrorists leaders. Thereby we can term that he is equally responsible. And Jamat itself follows the policy of Sharia state which is actually the same ideology of Al-Qaida. So, a lot of links.

**Geoffrey van Orden:** Let me just say a couple of words on the question on religious militancy, we had a question there. Well, religious militancy, political Islam. This is when we talk about Islamists as opposed to Muslim. And most of the concerning attacks we are talking about are Islamists, we can't escape from the fact that there is some sort of Islamic motor who is to claimed Islamic route. Many would say this is a corruption of the true Islam. We have heard from General Rashid when he spoke at the beginning talked about the problems of Salafism. Indeed, it is the more extreme version of the Islam which I intend to stoke extremism.

On the global equality issue – come on. There has always been inequality. I would say also that never has there been such prosperity in the world. Never has there been such widespread prosperity. The thing that has changed is the awareness of what is going on in the rest of the world. And I think in particular now social media has contributed enormously to this. People are very aware of the situation not only in their own country but elsewhere, but in foreign countries and far of foreign countries. So, I think it is there is a perception of discrimination, there is a perception of abuse I don't think that is well founded. And I would say there is never any excuse for terrorism.

**Saleem Samad:** There was a question about education, whether we can eradicate radicalism or terrorism through education. It's like climbing the Mount Everest: it is a very difficult route or road to literally diffuse radicalism. But we talk about the 1971 war and the legacy and what we had fought for, the people who died, the tremendous people who died for the cause of Bangladesh. This is missing in the most of the textbooks. You believe it or you don't believe it. It doesn't reflect. It is something like I tell you what you need to read. So that is the education policy. Number one: you cannot force a student to learn the history of Bangladesh. You have to literally to be there to explain. There are many interesting efforts right now in Bangladesh. You will find university students, hundreds of them. Not only one university, several universities, and also from the private universities; They have founded small groups going to villages on vacations. They go to the villages and they talk about Bangladesh and what is the future. They don't talk about what is Bangladesh we left behind, but what is going to be next. This is one of the issues. Let me tell you one thing: it is very difficult to have really a book on secularism in the school text books. Those days have gone. In Bangladesh, it will be very difficult to write extensively about secularism and political Islam, which this Sir has just mentioned. It will be very difficult, they will not go against the current, Bangladesh will not afford to go against the Islamists.

**Q5:** Is there any option plan being worked out by the Bangladesh government to prevent ISIS to achieve their goals? If any, what are they? And according to your opinion how should they be implemented?

**Q6:** How can we get the solution? All the religious beliefs are peaceful. Why don't we bring all the leaders to a platform and they will talk? Those Islamic leaders, for example, saying that many young men are going from Europe with a motive to suicidal actions. Everybody knows. Why they go? Because they are told that they will go directly to paradise. This kind of things, they believe in. they are innocent, actually. Why can't we arrange, call all the leaders to one table. Many times. We have to continue this sort of programs.

**Q7:** Saleem Samad said on women empowerment. He tried to say that the Bangladeshi government was moving from the concept of secularism. They try to adopt some concepts from the mullah. The women empowering, for that reason, our Prime Minister got an award from the UNESCO or the UNICEF or something. She got the award for the women empowering, so Mr Saleem Samad was not correct in his statement.

**Q8:** My name is M M Murshed, i am the coordinator of Dhaka-Brussels Solidarity for Peace. My observation is: Bangladesh is the only country in the world to tackle the terrorist attacks successfully, only Bangladesh took minimum time to tackle it after Holey Artisan attack. Only in Bangladesh two terrorist groups surrendered in a short period. So why do you think that the government failed to tackle this kind of problems?

**Q9:** My name is Yunus Khan. I'm coming from Germany Bangabandhu Foundation. Bangladesh government is doing best. When terrorist attacks take place in Europe no one calls them terrorist country. But when something like that happens in Bangladesh, why do they call Bangladesh a terrorist country?

## **ANSWERS**

**Major Rashid:** The role of the Jamat-e-Islami and the Islamic Chattra shibir (student outfit) is not different. There are two different outfits. Islamic Chatta shibir and its militancy are well recognized, not only nationally, internationally as well. The organisation was listed as a terrorist organisation by the US state department, if you have seen that list. Jamat-e-Islami and the terrorist outfit have some secret connections, which I discussed.

What I wanted to contest is Saleem Samad presenting Bangladesh and the situation. I understand his emotional touch. There is an organisation called Hefajat Islam, who has a good amount of mullah supporters. People think that government has made some negotiations with them. That's why they were accommodated with their religious values in our society. There was something taken out from the text books which were considered to be secular. And there is something new which was included. So that actually caused a kind of controversies, raging the secular society. But actually, the thing that we perceived was done. And after that the government has decided and established a committee, it has to be re-established and the process is on. And books will be republished. That's this is the current situation.

Second thing is that killing and stopping radicalisation. Just a short answer: killing is not your choice. It is compulsion. When I go as a security officer, I am not among suicidal member. I have been trained to kill my enemy and saving myself. If the terrorists are so much dangerous, which causes a number of security person deaths in the conduct of operation, certainly they will apply the control force. And in application of the control force, if terrorists die, that question cannot be raised that the military forces are killing them. I consider this sort of question raising is nothing but creating a political protection for the terrorists. And we see the same kind of cry is prevailing in Bangladesh also. And we have observed 20 operations very carefully, these were very dangerous operations, in the process of which 30 police officers were injured and two police officers were killed. The last operation which was conducted in Sylhet, many of you are from the same area, eight people were killed, including a military intelligence officer of the rank of lieutenant Colonel. Do you want to sacrifice your intelligence elements or not? That was the answer to that question. It will continue and strategies will be applied. Our question is whether application of force was controlled or uncontrolled? In Bangladeshi cases, most of the cases we have seen, number of bullets and others fired, is very much controlled.

**Geoffrey van Orden:** to the question on Interfaith dialogue: the problem here is everybody has to keep his own house in order. And given what we were talking about today, it's the local mosque and

the local madrassa and indeed the family, that has responsibility. What is going on in the mosque, what is going on in the madrassa, if that can be properly brought under control, then we would be going to get somewhere. And especially by the way in the diaspora. That's the thing that concerns me.

**Saleem Samad:** I'm going back to the women's policy. The national women's development policy, which was drafted in 2011, has not been able to pass through the Parliament. So, the issue is, that the women's development policy – the draft policy is still on the website – you will find one of the most proactive policy ever in the region of South Asia. So, that was my issue that this policy has not been able to be implemented because of threats by the Hefajat Islam and other Islamic groups. That was the only issue I wanted to debate.

**Julie Pernet:** I'm not an expert on Bangladesh, my federation started to work on the issue when we actually received many calls for help from atheists, or questioning religion from Bangladesh. We received many calls. And we didn't know what to do, because our federation was not equipped to deal with burocrations. How do you relocate people? You have to have your own organisation to do that. And we are not equipped with that.

## **SECOND SESSION**

**Brando Benifei:** Yes, sorry, for disrupting this sequence. I was supposed to be at the end of the panel and not at the beginning. But they changed as usual the meetings in the Parliament, so I excuse the other speakers if I can exchange my position from the last to the first. I want to thank you very much for this useful conference today and look forward to the conclusion. Unfortunately, due to parliamentary commitments, I cannot stay the whole time, but I wanted really to be present also because of the crucial topic that you chose as a central topic of the conference. The issue of preventing radicalisation and in general the attitude towards young people and the role the diaspora can play towards this goal, fighting radicalisation. We have been witnessing some worrying developments in this sense in many countries in the world in the last years, including Bangladesh. And there has been an increasing trend in radicalisation. In a general worsening in the human rights situation. And I am sure you will discuss this more in detail among the rest of this conference of today.

Of course, youth is a key population to address. I work a lot on youth policies as a Co-Chair of the youth intergroup in the European Parliament. When I was introduced, some of the issues I am dealing with were mentioned. So I want to thank you particularly for choosing to invite me, because I really try together with many others committed colleagues to be sure that in EU in my constituency no young people from all the grounds, from all origins do not feel excluded from society, through employment, through political participation, citizenship, education, engagement. Otherwise I think, if we do not deal with this, on the overall perspective, we will have huge negative consequences, far larger than the ones you experienced as Bengali community.

Of course, we know very well, to give you an example you unfortunately know very well the perpetrators of the attack in Dhaka in July 2016 were very different from the kind of young people that we have seen participating in attacks in Europe recently. They were cultivated youth, coming from wealthy and prominent families in their country. But I think that they were again in anyway – and I am sure that is anyway the case, even if they were so different from economically and societally marginalised youths we have in Europe – they probably felt somehow isolated in their own, they were living in their own world, in their own space where they had the possibilities to get radicalised. So, I think it's crucially important for all, for youth coming from all backgrounds – the importance of the social networks which in this case I am not meaning Facebook or Twitter, which anyway are important and are an issue of discussion in terms of what kind of responsibility the platform have. This is a big debate, here in Europe. But in this case, I meant society groups, associations, family. And I think that this development of the organized and present civil society is always crucial to prevent radicalisation.



I come myself from Italy, which is home to a large Bengali population, one of the two biggest ones together with UK. Many are now born in Italy, coming from the community. And they are more than 140.000 Bengali residents in Italy, many in Rome, in the capital, many are taking citizenship, many children are present in our primary schools. Unfortunately, like many young people in Italy, there is a significant degree of so called NEETs, so people who are not in education, in training, or in employment also among the young Bengali in Italy. And I must say that this kind of youth, the inactive people that sometimes find a way to – find a way out of their frustration through violent ideologies are the ones we are up to target. This is not just an issue of religious radicalisation but with from people with various backgrounds, also political radicalisation and of any ideology of extremism.

So, I think that it's crucial that we continue working in EU for these. And looking also from the EU side, just to also say a few words on the other part of the issue, not just what is happening in Europe, but also what is happening in Bangladesh. Europe is Bangladesh's first trading partner. We are working alongside the country, with the aim of improving the economic and social development. But we have to say clearly that Europe plays a special attention and especially the European Parliament. I will make now few example, not only to the commerce, but in particular to human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. And especially workers' rights also, that are especially important in his case. Because after the Rana Plaza collapse in 2014 we launched the sustainability compact, which is focused on improving workers' conditions and standards, especially in the garment sector. Following this line of concern which applies to other Asian countries, also such as China or Vietnam, the Parliament has recently adopted a resolution precisely to call for the launch by the European commission on the long overdue flagship initiative on the garment sector to avoid exploitation of workers for the sake of cheap fashion. Back in 2014, we adopted a resolution on the situation of human rights, and just last April we voted another one on the phenomenon of the child marriage, a very worrying situation. In both of these resolutions, we express our serious concern on the repression pursued by the security forces, often rewarded with impunity. On the financial and legal restriction on civil society and NGOs and on the attacks on freedom of expression.

To conclude that there are still many factors, making Bangladesh very fragile in terms of social cohesion and respect of fundamental freedoms. In such a context, restrictions on civil society also negatively affect the work we have been discussing, that I have talked about in the first part of my intervention, pushing people towards extremism and the need of some kind of ventions towards such a restrictive societal environment. As I tried to say and to explain, this is a challenge for all societies obviously in different degrees and in different forms. But I think – and I will really conclude on this – that this is especially important to have the organized communities to be engaged like you are doing today, because you are the ones that can speak more directly with your community, people all over, both back in Bangladesh and in the various countries. As I mentioned I come from one country with one of the biggest communities. So, I really want to thank you for this initiative and I hope we can further develop this network with the European Parliament, with the organisations with all the actors which are present and which are participating. I am convinced, this a fundamental work, this is fundamental not just for your community or Bangladesh, but for the reasons I tried to explain, for the all of our society. So, thank you and let's continue working together.

**Roberta Bonazzi:** So, the role of the diaspora- As I've been thinking how to address this or trying to respond to this question that is the title of our panel. Before I do so, let me give you a bit of background of the type of work we've been doing, my colleagues and I have been doing in Brussels and in several European countries.

First of all, we are, I would say we are the intersection between policymaking



and grassroots. The focus of our work is on prevention of radicalisation. When I say we work on grass root levels we engage and we support individuals within a number of Muslim communities in several European countries. But we also work with decision makers, with policy makers both on European level and national level. What we have been trying to do for the past 12-13 years, was to empower the visibility, train, support those actors within these relevant communities that represent alternative voices. That first of all, even before the public at large were very aware of what was going on within their own communities and how young people within their respected communities were being recruited, radicalized, approached and somehow moved into – I would say – a level, a dimension that highlights the differences between us and them. Us – as one community and them – the mainstream community. They are the ones who were keen to work with us and were trying to ring the alarm bell on what was going on. And they were feeling very frustrated because what they were seeing was, that the mainstream community across Europe, not in one particular country, across Europe, the mainstream community, the media, policy makers were not really listening to them. They only seemed to be engaging with those who somehow fit the general cliché of what many were trying to call “Muslims”, as if Muslim, the religion itself, is represented identity, which then excludes the whole variety of individuals who recognise themselves, who are either believe or practice in the religion, but recognized themselves within this religion and overall culture. So, this is the kind of work that we’ve been doing, based on the assumption that counter terrorism strategies need to be developed on the bases of a very comprehensive approach. An approach that takes into account security measures and repressive measures on one hand, but all the relevant actors within society and first of all the role of civil society. So, there is overall awareness at government level, at decision making level across Europe and across the world in general that repressive measures alone are not effective, can not only be deterred, but cannot fight the current terrorist threat they are facing. The big question is how to empower civil society, what role civil society can play in preventing radicalisation? Encountering or developing alternative narratives that are currently at the base of recruitment and have inspired so many.

When we talk about the work and the role civil society can play in this overall challenge, there are many aspects that need to be taken into account and on which decision makers, all those institutions, bodies, governments that fund efforts to prevent radicalisation have to focus. First of all, the question is, how to select civil society organisations, how to select alternative partners that can on one hand prevent radicalisation, but on the other, most importantly, empower the many voices within relevant communities that can represent positive examples and represent individuals and groups who are totally engaged within their own respective countries and societies.

Some of the elements that have emerged certainly over the past three years I would say with the growth of threat in Europe and across the world and certainly the phenomenon of Daesh and ISIS and the ability to recruit so many ... What are the root causes of radicalisation? And yes, for sure, for a long time or some of the elements that emerged as root causes are certainly marginalisation or perceived marginalisation, discrimination, lack of education, lack of economic and financial opportunities – these are all elements that emerged. And yet, there is no evidence, that these are the real factors and elements that have determined radicalisation processes.

The only element that recurring red threat or glowing element in radicalisation role of ideology. The Islamists understood ideology and the



continues to be a recurring these processes is the role that in terms of political

interpretation of religion in bringing in all these elements together. As we heard in the introduction, the case of the perpetrators of the Dhaka attack a year ago is in one way a confirmation of the fact that lack of economic opportunities was not the root cause and the lack of education was not the case. And we don't have to go to Bangladesh to see this phenomenon. Very careful assessment or study of the lives of the perpetrators of the attacks in Europe, of all these individuals being radicalised actually indicates that they were not completely marginalised. So the conclusion of this is that the causes are certainly complex. There are many factors that play, including certainly physiological and emotional fragility. Yes of course. These are important elements, because we see at the same time, the only element that is justified and used by ISIS or other groups, in also non-violent groups, is the role that religion plays.

And looking at the background, this is the overall picture we are looking at. And as I conclude my remarks, there is just a few aspects I would like to highlight. One is that, as I said, we need to work with civil society organisations. The key question is how to identify the right partners. Not all civil society organisations necessarily share the same values and principals and first of all the rule of law that is applicable within certainly liberal democracies. Many don't have necessarily the expertise and in some cases many players who have to potential of being catalysts of positive change don't have the necessary training for engaging within communities.

To go back to the beginning of this panel, this conference, the role of the diaspora. I believe that the diaspora from Bangladesh, but also from many other countries across Europe or in the West plays a very important role in preventing the radical and extremist interpretation of religion, in portraying and in speaking up on how communities are being radicalised. And I share with you an anecdote which I thought was very interesting. We just completed, finalised a survey of the situation of refugees, primarily Syrian refugees, but not only. We interviewed about 250 actors from the government side. So all those within European government in charge of integration of refugees, NGOs, and actors on the ground in charge of implementing integration policies and refugees themselves, recipients of these policies – about 150 refugees in seven European countries.

One of the elements that have emerged quite recurrently in all our meetings is a sense of frustration of how the kind of cod of conservative approach, or even worse or the number of Islamist organisation that were trying to engage with refugees. For us it is interesting because they were the first ones to say: "We don't need that! What is going on? What we've been told is even worse than what we are finding at home." So, the question about the role of the Diaspora is very important, but again is parallel to the role of civil society organisations. What does the diaspora want? Who is the diaspora? And how is the diaspora really working to prevent radicalisation? Thank you!

**Emma Achilli:** Front Line Defenders, we mostly work on individual cases and trying to get the EU to react on them when the defenders you will know human rights defenders who peacefully advocate for the rights, included in the UN declaration. And so, peacefully and for themselves and their So, they are a bit different from activists or other categories or maybe working purely on journalism issues. people who are trying to defend the communities vis-à-vis the authorities



wish so. As are people all rights they do so communities. political journalists These are rights of their normally.

Maybe one of our recommendations diaspora, is that, if you are in Brussels, done inviting MEPs but also people from the European External Action Service, is to ask the EU to press the government to act. So, you can be effective here in Europe through your national European

governments, through the European Union to try to influence the situation and ask the Bangladeshi government to respect human rights. Because the main responsibilities for the protection of rights is with the government. So of course, there are people in this case attacking defenders but the government has an absolute responsibility to protect people who are working on human rights. So that is what we wanted to focus our report on, because there is something called the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, where states have agreed, have recognized the risk that people are taking defending human rights towards the government itself who is not always happy with criticism but also through any other type of actor who wants to attack people who are standing up for rights.

So, in particular I would like to highlight the fact that women human rights defenders are more risk of receiving threats, also concerning the families. Also in this case because killings have up until now focused mostly on males, they worry their sons might be attacked by proxy. So that is one way they have of getting to female human rights defenders. As we are running out of time, I won't go through them, but we can discuss them later on in the questions and answers.

**Harry van Bommel:** I would like to start with a quote: “Violent extremism is an affront to the purposes of the United Nations. It undermines peace and security, human rights and the state of development. No country or region is immune for its impact. Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon without clear definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of believe.” With this introduction, the Secretary General of the United Nations presented his plan of action to prevent violent extremism to the General Assembly two years ago. The Secretary General, however, acknowledged the fact that “in recent years, terrorist groups, such as Islamic State and Al-Qaida, have shaped our image of violent extremism.” More importantly, they have defined the debate on how to address the threat of violent extremism and where this road leads us can be seen in the United States and in Europe. President Trump's attitude towards Muslims is well documented. During his campaign, he expressed suspicions about American Muslims and within a week of taking office, he issued an Executive Order banning people from seven Muslim majority countries from entering the United States. The program countering violent extremism was renamed into countering radical Islam or countering Jihad. This program not only stigmatized Muslim communities, as inherently suspect, but also creates serious risks of mistaking certain actions as pre-terrorism. It might even lead to suppressing religious observants and speech. The program is led by officials, who publicly renunciate the faith that is practiced by 1.6 billion people around the globe.

American and European programs countering violent Islam label people as potential terrorists. But these programs are often based on wrong assumptions. One assumption that is disproven by decades of empirical research is that extremist ideology is a driver of terrorism. Many people have extreme ideas, but never act violently. The reverse is also true. Another false assumption is that there is a predictable path that leads to terrorism and that potential terrorists have identifiable marks. This approach creates a serious risk that individuals who have nothing to do with terrorism will be labelled potential terrorists. Scientific reports claim that in the UK thousands of people, including children, have wrongly been identified as potential terrorists. Government agencies waste enormous amounts of resources in their approach to counter violent extremism.

Politicians and lawmakers react on the threat of terrorism by doing what they do best: making new laws. New laws for massive data collection and stigmatizing measures are adopted in a rapid speed. In France, President Macron wants to extend the state of emergency for the sixth time since it was invoked in 2015. The state of emergency gives the police exceptional powers. He also asked the government to prepare legislation to reinforce security measures permanently. This overreaction is a threat to human rights and not effective in the prevention of terrorism. This fact is also noted by the Secretary General of the UN in his report. He refers to the Norwegian mass murder Anders Breivik who killed 77 people in 2011 and was explicitly aiming at destabilizing Norway's tolerant society by dividing local communities and provoking an overreaction.



Violent extremism is definitely not new to Western societies. In fact, in the seventies and eighties of last century, there were more terrorist attacks with more casualties in Europe than today. Who has forgotten the acts of Rote Armee Fraktion in Germany, the Red Brigades in Italy Action directe in France, the IRA in the UK? The latter nearly succeeded in assassinating the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The others were successful in killing politicians and random citizens. The approach to counter violent extremism was effective in those days. All the terrorist organisations were eliminated, the members were arrested and convicted. Some are still in jail. It is true that it took years before that result was achieved but the chosen approach turned out to be effective in the end. A remarkable difference in perception between then and now is the conviction that the legal framework was efficient. All that was needed, was an enhancement of the police force and the intelligence services. Today's policy is exactly contrary to that. New laws and measures are introduced rapidly, not seldom leading to the restriction of free expression or limiting access to information.

At the same time, the police forces in Europe have faced serious budget cuts. In some parts of Europe, the police is not able to deal with the level of crime they are facing. In my own country, the Netherlands, there is a serious shortage of police officers. Last week, national newspapers reported that the police will not arrest known petty criminals, thieves and burglars during the summer due to the shortage of personnel. The countryside has changed into an area free of police. In the United Kingdom, Belgium and many other European countries thousands of policemen were laid-off at a time when classical policing work is needed more than before. Classical police work is relevant in the prevention of violent extremism. According to the French top expert on terrorism, Olivier Roy, half of the violent extremists in France, Germany and the United States have criminal records for petty crime. Roy estimates that 60 percent of those who turned to violent extremism in Europe are second generation Muslims who have lost their connection with their country of origin and have failed to integrate into Western societies. These individuals live in an identity vacuum in which violent extremism thrives. They have knowledge of Islam and Roy suggests that they are radical before even choosing Islam. He concludes that we need to investigate Islamification or radicalism, not radicalisation of Islam. The findings of Roy are confirmed by a study of the The Hague Center of Strategic Studies on individuals who travelled to Syria and Iraq to join Islamic State. Most of them have not finished their education, dropped out of high school and many are stocked in crime and drug abuse. 17 percent are newly converted and know very little about Islam. In the prevention of violent extremism, more attention should be paid to the position of the group of second generation Muslims.

This is where the European Muslim diaspora comes in. Religious and community leaders are essential in mentoring vulnerable young citizens in their communities. Having a poor education and almost no religious knowledge makes the youngsters vulnerable to indoctrination. Membership of a group, either engaging in criminal activities or in violent extremism, gives them a sense of belonging. Efforts should be made to help religious and community leaders to reach out to vulnerable youngsters. Countering violent extremism requires a framework that views Muslims as a source of strength rather than suspicion. Communities should feel comfortable sharing information when suspect criminal activity rather than pressured to detect unproven markers of radicalisation. Mutual trust can only be generated if government agencies are able to reset their engagement efforts with Muslims to cover a broad range of issues rather than focusing on contemptuous counterterrorism programs. Remark must be made about schools and teachers. At its world congress in Ottawa in 2015, the Federation of Youths and Teachers, Education International, noted that education is key to tackling all forms of extremism. Inclusive education for all is an important preventive measure, which promotes citizenship, strengthens critical thinking and teaches to understand and accept differences of opinions, conviction and belief while respecting the rule of law, diversity and equality.

There is a serious concern as well. Unions of teachers object to teachers being enlisted in programs to counter violent extremism. The American Federation of Teachers describes such programs as "ideological profiling and surveillance" that would have a "chilling effect on our schools and

immigrant communities, jeopardizing children's sense of safety". The National Union of Teachers in the UK passed a motion last year calling to scrap the current program to counter violent extremism because it causes suspicion in the class room and confusion in the staff room. These concerns need to be addressed properly. Teachers are not hired to spy on their students, to read their minds and to predict the future.



The prevention of violent extremism is in line with the UN sustainable development goals. Goal 16 "to promote just, peaceful and an inclusive society" could be seen as supportive inter-prevention violent extremism. It stresses one of the major goals of the post-2015 agenda – education. Investment in education is investment in the prevention of violent extremism. Definitely not just in developing countries but also closer at home in Europe. When it comes to violent extremism, the investment in prevention is far more cost effective than allocating resources to deal

with the consequences. Let us hope that decision makers at all levels will take that into account while making plans that will lead to a just, peaceful and inclusive society for all.

**Amma Asante:** When you ask me to talk about the role of the diaspora in countering violent extremism, my first thought is always: When an attack, serious attack is done by a non-Muslim, most of the times we don't call it terrorism. We define the person most of the time sick, but when a Muslim does something, it's the fault of the Islam. My first reaction to the diaspora, when we are talking about our role and our responsibility in countering violent extremism, my answer is emancipation. And that is what I would like to talk about.

Yes, we are part of the diaspora. And yes, we have a land where we were born or originally were born our parents, where we come from. And a land where we dream of going back one day. But at the end of the day, we are part of the society we currently live in. So, we should stop seeing ourselves as foreigners or passengers. And we should stop allowing others to marginalize us. We should be part of the society we live in, not 50 percent, not even 90, but a full 100 percent. Because, if we do not include ourselves, nobody else will. Because the systems of exclusion are already set and it is up to us not to dance to the tunes of its music.

Secondly, we should consider ourselves to be rich and blessed and offer an added value to the societies where we live in. To be born somewhere else, raised somewhere else and then to leave and live in another country provides us this special opportunity to combine the best of two worlds in one. And once we realize how blessed we are to have this mirror or reflection all the day, it is inevitable that you will develop a positive self-image and identity.

And this is not merely for ourselves but above all for our children. I believe that an answer to radicalisation and extremism is a sense of belonging and a strong positive self-image. Every time an attack is done by a youngster who is home-grown, as we call it, the first question that comes to my mind is: How come that you can hate the society where you were born and raised that much that you would like to destroy it? How come?

In the Netherlands, last week, a report came out. And they found out that when you have a strange surname, your chances of having a job is far less than somebody with a Dutch name who has committed criminal activities. I would like to raise two questions to you and reason which you about to answer: How can we help our children to be included and protect them from exclusion? And how can we help them to develop a positive self-image, develop strong identities and make them less

vulnerable?



I have found out, or I have read out, radicalization is to be a “state of one mind by which we measure the willingness to accept the most extreme consequence of one’s thinking and turning it into deeds. These deeds can cause contradictions that in themselves are manageable to escalate to the level whereby societies can be disrupted by the use of violence and it can lead to behaviour that can others deeply or touch them in their freedom or because groups turn their back on the society.” In the Netherlands, an indication for radicalisation is the number of young people that join the Islamic state or other radical groups. According to the National Coordinator for the Fight against Terrorism and Security approximately five people have left the country to join the Jihad. Those are the figures of November 2015. There are different stages one has to go through before you become radicalized. At the same time, there are different reasons that can trigger somebody to become radicalized. And what are those triggers? Identity seeking, seeking for a meaningful live, seeking for righteousness and seeking for sensation. We speak of extremism when individuals or groups use other than parliamentary manners, cross the boundaries of the law and commit violent illegal activities to influence political decision-making. The Netherlands have approximately one million Muslims, of which approximately 340,000 is under 18. And according to the same Dutch Coordinator to Fight against Terrorism and for Security, five people have left. Five. So, the question is: One million Muslims, five have left and come back – is the Islam the problem?

Now I would like to go back to my initial statement and question. How can we help our youth to be included and how can we help them to develop a positive self-image that will make them less vulnerable? A Dutch-Moroccan sociologist once said “It is not exclusion that hurts, but what hurts, is to be excluded after you had been convinced that you were included.” And when we talk about the home-grown terrorists, I think he makes a point. After bringing up our children, letting them know that they are part of the societies they live in, encouraging them to study, have a diploma, and then you have done your best, you have your diploma in your pocket, you go and look for a job interview and you were turned off because of your surname. What would that do to our youth?

Inequality is the real state in which many of our children live in in Europe, in the diaspora. They also have to deal with another thing. On the streets, they have to deal with a culture, which is defined by sociologists by the “masculine culture”. In school, they have to deal with a culture that is defined by experts as the “feminine culture”. And then at home, most of the times, they have to deal with the

traditional culture in which your opinion as a child is not relevant: When your parents speak, you listen, you obey and you do not criticise. So, our youths are constantly juggling between different kinds of cultures, which poses – I believe – which can pose a serious threat to who you are and your self-identity. It can make you insecure, they do not have an anchor. My answer would be, we should strike a balance between the street culture, the school culture and the home culture. And I'd love to go back to your own responsibility, because when we have to wait for lawmakers and politicians, we have to wait a long while. So, I like to go back to what we can do in our own homes. And I think, being a mother of two children<sup>1</sup>, what is so important is not the diploma per se – It is important, but not per se! I think what is more important is to talk with our children about their position in this society. And tell them that there is a difference. Not tell them so that they will accept it, but that they will be conscious of it. So that once they have to deal with these differences.

It will not shake them off. But that they will understand and will have a concept to identify and to position themselves. So, it starts with a home culture where there is an open dialogue and communication between parents and their children. A place where they feel safe, where they can talk. When they are being contacted by other people who want to make them believe that they are something they are not, who want to recruit them for a fight somewhere else. That they will come home and talk about so that together you can solve it. And if you can't solve it, you can go and look for professional help to help you solve it.

I remember when I was growing up, trying to find out who I was, where I belonged and my position in society. My parents told me to be true to myself, to my African origin, my Ghanaian roots and at the same time embrace the good and the positive things that the Dutch society and the Dutch culture has to offer. And my father told me that "once you go out" – I was going to the university – he told me that "Once you go out of this door and you will enter the buildings of the university, you will find out that you are a minority because there will not be many looking like you with the same background as you. And that can lead you to throw away where you come from, your origin, your culture, what we have told you at home. Don't do that! Even thought that might look very, you know, that could seem very obvious and a logical response." They told me not to do that, they told me to embrace what the Dutch society has to offer – the good things, not everything, the good things – and to combine it and make the best out of two cultures. Teaching me that is okay to be different. Teaching me that it is okay to use my African heritage as the ground under my feet. And to use it as a ground that a tree needs to be rooted in and from thereon explore the world. Grow branches, reach out to the world outside myself. I will never forget how this helped me when they taught me to say that I am Dutch whenever anybody who asked me where I come from – because one of the questions our youths are faced with: "Where are you from?" – "Well, I'm from the UK, I'm from the Netherlands. "No, where are you originally from!" – always pointing to you that you are not from there, that you do not belong. My parents taught me to say "I'm Dutch. With African roots". And that has offered me a ground to stand on and to build self-confidence. And not to be afraid of the world around myself, not to see the world myself as a threat. And also, to feel free to come home and discuss daily reality of being a migrant student at university. And I think that if we could create among our homes this openness of culture in dealing with our youngsters, I believe it will help them. It is not the solution. Absolutely not. But it will help them to become much less vulnerable for those out there who wants to exploit our youths to fight their ideas of ideological-religious war that is not ours. It is theirs.

**Thomas Renard:** But everything I say is in this policy brief that was recently published on the website of our Egmont Institute which is called "Europe's 'new' Jihad: homegrown, leaderless, virtual". Basically, the context of my presentation is after the fall of Mosul, after the successive defeats of the Islamic State, after the announcement today still to be confirmed of the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, still very much conditional. What is the state, what is the evolution of the Jihadi threats in Europe? And from my point of view, as I described in my publication, the threat has become or is



becoming increasingly leaderless, virtual and homegrown. I will try to make these points as quickly as possible and highlight the implications or recommendations for response here in Europe.

So, the first point is that the Jihadi threat in Europe is becoming increasingly leaderless, in a sense that what we are seeing is a transformation from a structured organisation – a state, a kalifate – to a Jihadi movement, glued only by aim and ideology rather than leadership. And in that sense obviously the death of al-Baghdadi is not the end of the Islamic State because the Islamic State has already anticipated the evolution with a leadership that is much less central to the functioning of the organisation. This is a very similar evolution to the one Al-Qaida underwent in the 2000s when we moved from a central organisation based in Afghanistan to a much more networked, fluid, diffused kind of movement with franchises worldwide and with a local network cells of homegrown terrorists. It is also an evolution that has been theorised by Jihadi scholars themselves, by Abu Musab al-Suri, by Anwar al-Awlaki and many others. Even if one should not overestimate the influence of these thinkers, but we rather recognize that this evolution is object or subject of circumstances and opportunities. Circumstances because obviously the evolution of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria forces the group to become leaderless, more networked, less reliant on its central leadership. And also on opportunities: We have to recognize that this evolution is facilitated, is made possible by the fact that the Islamic State was successful in recruiting or convincing a very large pool of sympathisers worldwide. Much larger than any other Jihadi organisation has succeeded in the past. The implication is that you do not fight a Jihadi movement, a Jihadi ideology in the same manner than you fight a Jihadi group. So, clearly we have now to acknowledge this evolution and to rethink our strategy vis-à-vis this movement.

Second, this Jihadi threat is becoming increasingly virtual. A virtual kalifate is replacing, has already in a way replaced the Kalifate in the Levant, which is nearing its end in its current form at the very least. Having said this, even if ISIS ends, the Jihadi threat will not end with it again occurring the point that I just made. It is virtual because it is not rooted in a specific territory. It is also virtual because it is increasingly online based. I'm not one of those who say that people will radicalize online exclusively. But we have to acknowledge that – even if it's still anecdotal and research still has to confirm these findings – but we have to recognize that online consumption, social networks, those that are internet based, play a growing or increasing role in radicalisation, recruitment and even planification of attacks. The implication or the recommendation in line with this is that our response to counterterrorism must also increasingly focus on the virtual world. A lot of things have already been done in terms of taking down Jihadi content, for instance, but I think there is still much more that can be done in that aspect.

And third point – home-grown: Most studies confirm that most recent attacks were committed by what we call home-grown terrorists. It's actually that we also have to recognize that home-grown is a very fuzzy concept. When we say home-grown, some people think people born and raised here. When we say home-grown kind of attack, some people also sometimes have more in mind the degree of autonomy of an individual vis-à-vis a terrorist foreign organisation. And we also have to recognize that often home-grown individuals are related to foreign organisations or foreign networks. So this is a very fuzzy kind of categorisation but still, let's go with it. If we acknowledge a degree that terrorist attacks were committed by people that were either born or raised in Europe, then it's a very important finding because that means that terrorism is a local problem which must be addressed at home first. And I think this is very important because we do not always have to look for the root causes, as it had been discussed before or elsewhere. But we rather have to look at ourselves, to look into the mirror and understand why do our youngsters, why do people from the diaspora, people from first generation or second generation or third generation – because it is true that in France it's second generation people mostly that have joined Syria in this country, in Belgium it's mostly people from the third generation. So I think this kind of findings actually reflect more the demographic of our country than a real trend. As also people from various diasporas that have radicalized and joined Syria and Iraq. So I

think we have to be a little bit careful about generalisation. This is far from being a new phenomenon. Hometown terrorism is something actually that is more the rule than the exception. What is rather new here is the scope of this phenomenon. As I was saying, ISIS is in no comparison the biggest recruiter of sympathisers worldwide. Pool of sympathisers to the Jihadi ideology of ISIS is unprecedented. Now, with the evolution of the situation in Syria and Iraq, what we call the pull factors of radicalisation have disappeared. But the push factors, the factors of radicalisation that push people to be tempted to be seduced by the Jihadi ideology – these push factors remain. And a number of them have been mentioned already: discrimination, marginalisation, inequality, deprivation etc. etc. All of these together in a very complex mix, in a very complex cocktail are factors that we should increasingly focus on. We should recognize that there is no longer these pull factors, people are less tempted by the adventure to go to Syria or Iraq, for what at some point was really a real social human military adventure. That has disappeared, this is a good thing. This will probably help control the phenomenon to some extent, but again, the push factors have not being addressed significantly and in some cases not at all. So this is something that really should still be done. And as I said earlier, home-grown terrorists, what we call home-grown terrorist fighters is an important phenomenon, but what I'm worrying also now is that the situation in Syria and Iraq is changing. We have an increasing number of returning fighters, people returning from Syria and Iraq. These individuals present a challenge but also the way these people will interact on the one hand with radicals, home grown radicals, and with the online sphere on the other hand, make me worry. I'm worried that the interplay between the virtual sphere, the returnee fighters and the home-grown radicals is quite a deadly cocktail. The implication, and this is my last point, or the recommendation related to that is again act domestically first. Much more efforts are needed on the prevention side that has been said in previous presentations, there has been a tendency to focus on reactive measures, repressive measures. And I don't think this is, I mean in my view this is the last line of defence, police, military, this is really the last line of defence. But what we really need is first line of defence, preventing people from turning to radicalised ideas in the very first place. And if they do so, to give them the proper following monitoring, mentoring that is required in those cases.

## **Questions & Answers**

**Q1:** Nowadays terrorist activities are not a problem of a single nation, it is global. So my question is: Is this terrorist activity made by religion or politicians, nationally and internationally? Second part of my question is: Who is the financier of this terrorist group nationally and internationally? So if we do not stop the financing and the guidance, these terrorist groups will never stop their terrorist activities all over the world.

**Q2:** My question is that now in such weird political situation in Bangladesh, how the diaspora and the civil society could engage themselves in the radicalisation process.

**Harry van Bommel, former MP:** We are talking about organisations, national or international. I don't think we can consider these organisations the way we usually look at international organisations with a central office, a head office where decisions are taken and national or international branches who carry out the decisions. I think the problem is more an ideology that has gone international. And that people and supporters of this ideology are able to find each other and to commit the crimes they commit. So, the problem is far more difficult to understand and to counter than simply getting back territory in Iraq or Syria. Or by killing its leaders. That is not going to do the job.

**Q3:** I think what I want to say is probably a little comment or something that can add to the discussion: We talked on and off about I think the importance of education and training. We're really

talking about ideas and why education is very important. We always have to ask what kind of education. What is the content? And that is maybe where we can try and make a difference because education in itself probably doesn't mean much unless we know what is being taught. One of the problems with the Madrasas in Bangladesh which has not been discussed at all is that most of us don't know the content what is being taught there. And there are quite a few which refuse any enquiry. So it goes back to my question about the need to question, to continue to enquire all the time. I really appreciated Ms Asante's comment about the importance of becoming a part of society and at the same time knowing where you come from, what you do, what you think. And I think that helps to put things in perspective. And probably one of the problems Mr Renard was talking about that young people here are in a way a little bit lost, and why is that. What can we do? Here too, we go back again to the question of education. I think history is a very important aspect in that. I don't want to make a speech, but I think that the history of where you come from, what's happened to your country, what's happening to you here, what happened to your ancestors, where you are going – all of this needs to be brought into a wider consciousness. I think that would be one way of approaching it.

**Thomas Renard:** I fully agree. I usually tend to say that at least 80 percent or no more of counter-radicalisation and counter terrorism policies have nothing to do with terrorism and radicalisation. It is just common sense, good policies. I mean, these are policies that try for a more prosperous, a more egalitarian, more cohesive society. And again, we can have discussion for hours about what are the root causes to terrorism. But in the end, it is clear that inequality, deprivation, marginalisation – all of that is a problem, is a societal problem that can lead to petty crime, that can lead to a divided society which in itself is a hinder to a better society. And that can lead also to radicalisation and violence. Then how do you shape educational programmes to address that specifically... I'm less certain that it should be done in a way that overemphasize differences. I think there is a lot of work to be done in Europe including in this country about our past. About our colonial past, about how we have dealt with diasporas. How we have welcomed the Italian population, Spanish population, Moroccan population, Turkish population... I don't think we have done that properly yet. I mean, when I was a student in high school, we actually never discussed it. So clearly, if you never discuss this, people are left with certain stigmatisation, prejudices as well to foreign communities. So, there is a lot of work to be done. But that should not be done on the other hand by overemphasizing the differences between the communities. I mean, when I talked to Muslim friends, they tell me a problem that occurs very early at school is: even teachers tell them "Oh yeah, but you are Muslim, for Muslims it's a different story" They emphasize, overemphasize these differences and that is a broader problem about how to train teachers. Because sometimes teachers are good in terms of their skills, mathematics or geography or whatever but they are not trained for addressing this broader and very important issues.

One word on finances or financing terrorism because it hasn't been addressed: It's half a problem only in the way that the Islamic State was a very rich, a very powerful organisation. And it could be weakened by targeting their finances. But as soon as this organisation is shifting to a networked movement, where the central organisation doesn't really play a central role anymore, then finance is much less important. Because for a young individual in Europe to radicalize, being recruited and carry an operation, sometimes it doesn't take more than going online – this is an extreme case, I acknowledge it, but – going online, being radicalized online, taking a kitchen knife and walking the street and starting stabbing people. That doesn't cost a lot of money. Most studies show that a terrorist attack is very cheap. Controlling and developing a central organisation is very expensive. But again, in my view, we are moving away from that configuration and so financing or countering financing of terrorism is debatable in terms of how important, how central that is as a strategy.

**Roberta Bonazzi:** Can I add on the financing side? I liked the fact, the role that financing has, when it comes to ISIS. One element that we need to highlight, since we're talking about prevention of radicalisation, and that is financing that comes to Europe or you mentioned Madrasas to fund extremist centres from Mosques to schools and there is a whole range of schools that actually espouse this

ideology, not even calling it violent ideology. Some of the speakers that have preceded this panel have referred to the ideological continuum that crosses borders from Bangladesh to the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt to the role that a number of Gulf countries, led by Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have played not only in their regions but in Europe, in South Asia, in Afghanistan, in Bangladesh. There is a Mosque and a religious centre that preach and have an impact on education – sorry on radicalizing and spreading ideologies, the ideology. When we talk about education, it's very important – yes – to train teachers to understand. And I'm not talking about brain washing, is literally informing, educating teachers. And I'm giving an example. We're working very closely with the Radicalisation Awareness Network. It's very interesting, very good initiative of the European Commission to bring together practitioners from across Europe dealing with different disciplines. But all working together on understanding and developing better practices, good practices in terms of preventing radicalisation. Teachers are incredibly exposed and very isolated also in dealing and supporting their own students. Partly because don't always have the time, the skills, the expertise to understand what is going on. And they don't necessarily have supports from their respected governments or national structures. I'm repeating this is not my interpretation. I'm sharing with you what I've learnt and what we've learnt working with teachers, educators and social workers. About one year ago we produced a handbook for teachers. We started with Germany. And the idea of this handbook came, because several of our colleagues in different European countries said to us 'Teachers are overwhelmed by how to address and how to deal with their kids. How to share values, how to respond to basic questions.' So on one hand teachers are very important players in detecting the signs but also offering a hand to pupils, to kids. They don't have to call the police, but they need to understand, whether certain types of questions, certain behaviours are just a statement, an identity statement, or maybe signs of radicalisation. But how can you understand? So that is where a lot of work, a lot of efforts have to focus on, supporting and empowering also teachers on how to engage and how to detect the ideology. What is being taught at school is very important also.

**Mr Murshed (vote of thanks):** Terrorists are not Muslims. Terrorists have no religion, no names, no countries, no boarder. Prime Minister and Bangladesh government have a strong, effective and



appropriate role against terrorism across the world. She is the role model against terrorism, against the terrorist activities. And she is also a good Muslim as well. I would like to thank all the audience of the first session and second session to give their most valuable time and energy to give us a platform to work together against terrorism. It is time to work together. There is no boarder to work together against terrorists or terrorism. And we have to be more united for that purpose. I want to thank on behalf of EBF, all who are involved against terrorism, who are present here today. I would also like to thank the Press Club Brussels to give us an opportunity to have this session here.

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## **MEDIA COVERAGE**



<http://dailyasianage.com/news/72587/meet-to-face-extremism--in-brussels-tomorrow>

Published: 12:13 AM, 10 July 2017, Dhaka

### **Meet to face extremism in Brussels tomorrow**

Special Correspondent

Bangladesh diaspora in Europe will hold a day-long conference on 'Countering Violent Extremism' at Brussels Press Club on Tuesday. The event organized by European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) will discuss impact and policy options to defend secularism and democracy in Bangladesh.

The Brussels Conference is expected to provide a platform for South Asians and Europeans activists and policymakers to reach a consensus to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists.

Speakers including Brando Benifei, Member of European Parliament (MEP), Social Democratic Party, Italy, Jean Lambert, MEP, Green Party, UK, and Geoffrey Van Orden, MEP, Conservative Party, UK will participate in the discussion.

Dr Elizabeth O'Casey, Director of Advocacy, International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), Belgium, Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, Belgium, Prof Chetan Bhatt- Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels, Belgium, Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Europe in the World, Egmont- Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium, Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament, Labor Party, The Netherlands and Harry van Bommel, Member of Parliament (former), Socialist Party, The Netherlands will also present papers.

Major General (Retd) Abdur Rashid of the Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies will present keynote paper on 'Sources of Islamic Terrorism: Scriptures, Indigenous or Inspired' and Saleem Samad, Special Correspondent of The Asian Age will present a paper on 'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh'.

While Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, EBF, Bikash Chowdhury Barua and MM Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Peace Committee will facilitate the conference. Bangladesh community living in Belgium, Netherlands, UK, France, Switzerland and Germany will also take part in the conference. This conference is a follow up event from the previous seminar which was held on 18 October 2016 at the European Press Club in Brussels.

Published: 02:47 AM, 15 July 2017, Dhaka

<http://dailyasianage.com/news/73721/jihadi-threats-outsmarts-europe-security-officials>

## Jihadi threats outsmarts Europe security officials

Europe stilling reeling from terror attacks. Recent terrorist attacks in Europe were committed by homegrown radicals, mostly by loners with limited ties to the Islamic State. Many terrorism experts say the jihadi threat pattern is dramatically shifting its character and strategy, but the nature of these changes is often exaggerated or misconceived.

Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow at the Egmont Institute and an Adjunct Professor at the Vesalius College, Brussels gave an exclusive interview on the sidelines of the Bangladesh diaspora platform European Bang-ladesh Forum (EBF) conference on "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladesh Diaspora". "As a result, our capacity to craft effective counter-terrorism policies is hindered, despite their urgent necessity," the terrorism expert said.

Renard in a policy research study "Europe's 'new' jihad: Homegrown, leaderless, virtual" published by EGMONT Royal Institute for International Relations in July 2017. Oussama Zariouh, the perpetrator of the failed terrorist attack in Brussels' central station on June 20 has become the new face of jihad in Europe. All we know at this stage of the investigation is that he acted alone without direct orders or links to the Islamic State (ISIS) - although claiming to act on their behalf, says Remard.

He was a 'homegrown' terrorist who arrived in Belgium from Morocco in 2002, at the age of twenty. A loner and homegrown, that was also the profile of the perpetrator of the failed attack on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, earlier in June, while the attackers in London and Manchester were equally homegrown.

The threat perception across Europe is arguably sliding from a focus on 'foreign terrorist fighters' (FTF) to an obsession with 'homegrown terrorist fighters' (HTF). The HTF-FTF dynamic is dependent upon the Islamic State's own strategy on circumstances and opportunities.

Unfortunately, a recent study found that 73 percent of the attacks in Europe and North America, over the past three years, were committed by homegrown terrorists, and another 14 percent involved citizens from neighboring countries.

Since 2012, Western intelligence services had feared that young Europeans travelling to Syria and Iraq would return home and pose a security threat, but new studies negates the theory, the expert said.

The evolution of the jihadi threat in Europe is largely dictated by circumstances and opportunities. Circumstances have fundamentally changed over the past couple of years. The accumulation of military defeats and the death of some senior members have forced the group to loosen control over its territory and networks, he added.

Security officials in Belgium, confess that what worries them most is unidentified homegrown radicals, initiating a killing spree with an everyday weapon, such as a knife or a car - or even homemade explosives, such as in Brussels recently.

From Asia to Africa, a number of regional groups have already pledged allegiance to ISIS/ISIL or Daesh, while autonomous sleeping cells and 'lone wolves' are acting on its behalf in Europe, North America, Australia and elsewhere.

The jihadi ideology focuses on the conquest of vulnerable minds, not lands. It is also virtual for it relies on the internet and social media to propagate its ideas, recruit new militants, connect them together, and encourage or even guide violent actions.

The jihadi movement will survive ISIS anyway. A virtual caliphate is already emerging on the ruins of the caliphate in Iraq and Syria battlefield. It is virtual in the sense that it does not require any physical territory. His elaborate research recommends that terrorism and radicalization must, first and foremost, be addressed domestically to counter international dimension of its challenge.

He suggestion for more cooperation is required at the European and global levels to address a phenomenon that is indeed transnational. More exchanges of good practices should therefore be encouraged and facilitated. On the other hand, we should keep in mind that the jihadi movement will likely seek to upgrade itself again in more hospitable territories, in the Middle East or elsewhere.

More fundamentally, however, the jihadi threat in Europe will not vanish miraculously following the fall of the caliphate, or the death of its leaders, Renard concluded.

**-Saleem Samad from Brussels**

**DAILY STAR, DHAKA**

02:32 AM, July 13, 2017 / LAST MODIFIED: 02:33 AM, July 13, 2017

## **Awareness must for eradicating terrorism**

### ***Speakers tell Brussels seminar***

Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a seminar in Brussels on Tuesday emphasised the need for education and awareness building to eradicate terrorism.

They said terrorism was not a problem of any particular country, rather the world. They also called upon all to make coordinated efforts to curb it, said a press release.

The seminar was organised by European Bangladesh Forum. Speakers, who are from different European countries and Bangladesh, praised the government of Bangladesh for its role against terrorism.

Among others, Chetan Bhatt, professor of London School of Economics; Julie Pernet, a rights activists, Robert Bonaji, head of counterterrorism in Brussels; Amma Asante, former MP of Labour Party (Netherlands); Harry van Bommel, former MP of Socialist Party (Netherlands); Ansar Ahmed Ullah, president of European Bangladesh Forum; and Maj Gen (Retd) Abdur Rashid, security analyst, attended the seminar.

Published: 01:56 AM, 13 July 2017, Dhaka

## Do more to contain radicalization: MEPs

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Bangladesh diaspora platform in Europe held a day-long conference on "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladesh Diaspora" on Tuesday at Brussels Press Club. Member of European Parliament (MEP) Van Oden Geoffrey (Conservative Party-UK) and Brando Benifei (Social-Democratic Party-Italy), also former Dutch MPs Amma Asante, and Harry van Bommel in their deliberations urged the Bangladesh government to uphold secularism to counter terrorism and rise of Islamism.

Expressing their satisfaction over the Bangladesh government's effort to counter terrorism and defusing the political Islam, they said the government need to do more to contain radicalization. The radicalization of a global issue and unfortunately Bangladesh's feet has been gradually dragged into terror network map.

The event organized by European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) discussed on the impact and policy options to defend secularism and democracy in Bangladesh. The Brussels Conference provides a platform for South Asian and European activists and policymakers to reach a consensus to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists.

Van Oden Geoffrey said Britain's relationship with South Asia is ancient and his relation with the South Asian region is also deepened after he became an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on South Asia in European Parliament. He said the series of incidents in United Kingdom, including the Manchester, Westminster terror attacks, none of the militants are from Bangladesh.

But many British-born Muslims and Muslim converts were radicalized at home have joined the "ISIS holy war in Syria and Iraq". The former Dutch lawmakers lamented that the Bangladesh diaspora in Europe are victims of discrimination and identity crisis.

The politicians said the leaders of Bangladesh diaspora have a role to play to aware its nationals of radicalization, extremism and Islamism which will create an environment of peace building and tolerance among the immigrants in Europe. Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, based in Brussels raised the issue of insecurity of the bloggers, online activists and secular activists in Bangladesh.

She left the onus on the Bangladesh government for independent investigation of the murders of human rights defenders, secular bloggers and attacks on others and also free-thinkers. Achilli demanded to scrap the notorious ICT Act which restricts freedom of expression has caused widespread harassment and intimidation of journalists and online activists in Bangladesh.

Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid, Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies in his keynote paper "Sources of Islamic Terrorism: Scriptures, Indigenous or Inspired" said, the secular fabric and multicultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to political Islam.



He blamed the Islam based political parties focused on political strategy based on Jihadi Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moududism. The social divide turned quite acute and collided for state power, Islamist forces often used terrorism as an instrument of defeating liberalism, the security expert said.

Saleem Samad, Special Correspondent of The Asian Age, Bangladesh, in his paper on "Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh" said the denial of Bangladesh government and security agencies of footprint of ISIS or Islamic State militants for obvious reason of being isolated by the West.

Others who spoke at the conference were Prof Chetan Bhatt- Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics; Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels, Belgium; Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Europe in the World, Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium.

Bangladesh community living in Belgium, Netherlands, UK, France, Switzerland and Germany also took part in the conference. Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, EBF, Bikash Chowdhury Barua and M M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Peace Committee, facilitated the conference.

-Special Correspondent from Brussels



Europe 17.Mon - Jul 10:07:44 am 11k views  
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## **Lack of Integration and Inclusion Promote Terrorism among Diaspora**

Brussels, July 11 ||

Speakers urged the active role of diaspora communities and the role of civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in the European as well as home countries in the global south. They demanded the special focus on the social inclusion and integration of the young generation for the better protection against radicalisation and terrorism.



Speakers urged this in the day-long conference on "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladeshi Diaspora" held in the European Press Club in Belgium on Tuesday. European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) organized the conference as part of the series of programs against the violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and the perspective of Bangladesh.



President of the European Bangladesh Forum, UK Ansar Ahmed Ullah presented welcome address in the conference. In the opening session on Bangladesh and global context was chaired by the Head of the Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, UK. The keynote paper on "Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis" was presented by the Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS) Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid. The session was addressed, among others, by Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation IHEU, Brussels on "The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh and beyond" and Saleem Samad, senior journalist and Ashoka Fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special Correspondent of the Asian Age, Dhaka.

The Member of European Parliament from the European Conservatives and Reformists Party, UK Geoffrey Van Orden presented the discussion as Guest of Honour on "Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult" in the context of de-radicalisation. Van Orden stressed on the integration and social inclusion as root cause of increasing trend of terrorism among the young people with and without background of migration. Considering the recent history of the terrorism and violent extremism speakers in conference expressed their great concern at the rise of the terrorists inside Europe and in the home country they are from. Even not only the young people from Diaspora families, rather youth from the European families are being involved in the violent extremism due to the lack of integration, social inequalities and exclusion. The similar situation including the faulty educational system and the suppression of the freedom of opinions cause the root to the radicalization and terrorism inside the country and the export of terrorism from Bangladesh, they added.

The working session on Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do was chaired by EBF, UK President Ansar Ahmed Ullah. Member of European Parliament from Social-Democratic Party, Italy Brando Benifei addressed the session as Guest of Honour. Among others, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels and Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy Roberta Bonazzi, Head of EU Office of Front Line Defenders in Brussels Emma Achilli on "Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk", Senior Research Fellow of Europe in the World, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium Thomas Renard on "Key trends of terrorism in Belgium and Europe", former Member of Parliament from Labour Party in The Netherlands Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament from Socialist Party in The Netherlands Harry van Bommel, on "Violent extremism: Islam or Crime" addressed the conference. The Coordinator of Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee M. M Murshed rendered vote of thanks.

Among others, BASUG Chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of German-Bangladesh Association and House of Integration Juboraj Talukder, President of Bangabandhu Foundation, Germany (BFG) Younus Ali Khan, BFG Advisor Mahbubul Hoque, BASUG Project Coordinator in Germany AHM Abdul Hai and Senior Program Officer Mahamud Firoz, Commonwealth Liaison Coordinator of the British and Commonwealth Women's Club of Brussels Anar Chowdhury, BASUG Internee Marco Schmidberger, Secretary of European Press Club Abu Tahir and about one hundred representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations took part in the conference.

Photo@AbdulHai

## Seminar on countering violent extremism held in Belgium

Published : 12 Jul 2017, 21:41:21

Prof. Chetan Butt, London of School of Economics, Julie Parnet, European Humanist Federation, Brussels, Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid, executive director of the Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS), Dhaka, Saleem Samad, senior



journalist, attended a seminar tilted

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European Bangladesh Forum organised

a seminar tilted "Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladesh Diaspora" held at Brussels in Belgium on Tuesday.

Present and former members of European Parliament attended the seminar. They spoke about the violent extremism undermines peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.

No country or region is immune from its impact. It is a diverse phenomenon without clear definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief, the speakers said.

To prevent violent extremism need to take a more comprehensive approach which compasses not only ongoing , essential security based counter terrorism measures , but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism

that have given rise to the emergence of these new and more virulent group, they added.

They also said religious and other leaders in the Diaspora community could play a key role in mentoring vulnerable youngsters. Government policy should be aimed at improving socioeconomic opportunities, especially for young people. Better education and decent jobs are essential.

Every speaker appreciated of present government of Bangladesh to overcome after attack of Holy Artisan bakery last year. Now days in Bangladesh, foreigners are fear free from terrorism attack due to government high alert activity.

Van Oden Geoffrey MEP, Conservative Party, UK, Julie Parnet, European Humanist Federation, Brussels, Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels & Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy, Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, Head of EU Office, Brussels – “Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk”, Amma Asante, former MP, Labour Party, The Netherlands, Harry van Bommel, former MP, Socialistische Partij, The Netherlands, Brando Benifei MEP, Social-Democratic Party, Italy MEP EU Parliament, Prof. Chetan Butt. London of School of Economics, Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid, Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS), Dhaka, Saleem Samad, senior journalist, an Ashoka fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special correspondent, the Asian Age, Dhaka, Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, European Bangladesh Forum, UK, Bikash Chowdhury Barua , Hague ,Holand Dr. Bidduth Barua ,Copenhagen , Denmark , M M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee, were attended the seminar. bbarta/KF.



## **Lack of Integration and Inclusion Promote Terrorism among Diaspora**

*bisshobanlanews24 London*

আপডেট: ১২:৫৯, জুলাই ১৩, ২০১৭



Brussels, July 11 : Speakers urged the active role of diaspora communities and the role of civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in the European as well as home countries in the global south. They demanded the special focus on the social inclusion and integration of the young generation for the better protection against radicalisation and terrorism.

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The Member of European Parliament from the European Conservatives and Reformists Party, UK Geoffrey Van Orden presented the discussion as Guest of Honour on "Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult" in the context of de-radicalisation. Van Orden stressed on the integration and social inclusion as root cause of increasing trend of terrorism among the young people with and without background of migration. Considering the recent history of the terrorism and violent extremism speakers in conference expressed their great concern at the rise of the terrorists inside Europe and in the home country they are from. Even not only the young people from Diaspora families, rather youth from the European families are being involved in the violent extremism due to the lack of integration, social inequalities and exclusion. The similar situation including the faulty educational system and the suppression of the freedom of opinions cause the root to the radicalization and terrorism inside the country and the export of terrorism from Bangladesh, they added.

The working session on Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do was chaired by EBF, UK President Ansar Ahmed Ullah. Member of European Parliament from Social-Democratic Party, Italy Brando Benifei addressed the session as Guest of Honour. Among others, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels and Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy Roberta Bonazzi, Head of EU Office of Front Line Defenders in Brussels Emma Achilli on "Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk", Senior Research Fellow of Europe in the World, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium Thomas Renard on "Key trends of terrorism in Belgium and Europe", former Member of Parliament from Labour Party in The Netherlands Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament from Socialist Party in The Netherlands Harry van Bommel, on "Violent extremism: Islam or Crime" addressed the conference. The Coordinator of Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee M. M Murshed rendered vote of thanks.

Among others, BASUG Chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of German-Bangladesh Association and House of Integration Juboraj Talukder, President of Bangabandhu Foundation, Germany (BFG) Younus Ali Khan, BFG Advisor Mahbubul Hoque, BASUG Project Coordinator in Germany AHM Abdul Hai and Senior Program Officer Mahamud Firoz, Commonwealth Liaison Coordinator of the British and Commonwealth Women's Club of Brussels Anar Chowdhury, BASUG Internee Marco Schmidberger, Secretary of European Press Club Abu Tahir and about one hundred representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations took part in the conference.

**European Bangladesh Forum' held a half a day-long conference on 'Countering Violent Extremism**

Posted on [July 16, 2017](#) by [kamal Mehedi](#)

**Britbangla Report: Social inclusion and integration of young generation needed against radicalization and terrorism**

Bangladeshi diaspora platform in Europe 'European Bangladesh Forum' held a half a day-long conference on 'Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and the Bangladesh Diaspora' on 11 July at the Brussels Europe Press Club as part of a series of programmes against violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and Bangladesh. Members of European Parliament Geoffrey Van Orden MBE MEP, Conservative Party, UK, Brando Beneifei, Social-Democratic Party, Italy, former Dutch MPs Amma Asante from the Labour Party and Harry van Bommel from the Socialistische Partij in their presentations urged the Bangladesh government to uphold secularism to counter terrorism and the rise of Islamism.



society to counter extremism and terrorism in Europe as well as home countries in the global south. They focused on social inclusion and integration of the young generation against radicalisation and terrorism.

The event organised by the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) discussed the impact and policy options to defend secularism and democracy in Bangladesh. The Conference also provided a platform for South Asian, European activists and policymakers to reach a consensus to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide



assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists.

Geoffrey Van Orden MEP who was Guest of Honour in his presentation titled 'Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult' in the context of de-radicalisation said Britain's relationship with South Asia is ancient and his relationship with the South Asian region has also deepened after he became an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on South Asia in European Parliament. He said in the recent series of terror incidents in the UK, including Manchester, Westminster & London Bridge attacks, fortunately none of the militants were from the Bangladeshi diaspora but many British-born Muslims and Muslim converts have been radicalized and have joined the ISIS holy war

in Syria and Iraq.

The former Dutch lawmakers lamented that the Bangladesh diaspora in Europe are victims of discrimination and identity crisis. The politicians said the leaders of Bangladesh diaspora have a role to play in making aware of its community of radicalization, extremism and Islamism which in turn will create an environment of peace building and tolerance among the immigrants in Europe. Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, in her paper raised the issue of insecurity of the bloggers, online activists and secular activists in Bangladesh and demanded the scrapping of ICT Act which restricts freedom of expression that has caused widespread harassment and intimidation of journalists and online activists in Bangladesh.

Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid, Director of Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies in his keynote paper 'Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis' said the secular fabric and multicultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to political Islam. He blamed the Islamist political parties focused on political



strategy based on Jihadi Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moududism.

Saleem Samad, Special Correspondent of The Asian Age, Bangladesh in his keynote paper on 'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh' said while the Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state, ISIS never made it a secret that its 'warriors' are targeting three groups of people in the country, foreigners, who are described as 'crusaders' or 'allies of the crusaders', non-Sunni Muslims including the Shias and the Ahmadiis, who are described as 'Rafida' and 'apostate sects', and Hindus, Buddhists and Christians who are described as pagans, idolaters, 'cow-worshippers' and apostates.

In the working session titled 'Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do' those who spoke at the conference were Prof Chetan Bhatt, Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels, Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium, on 'Key trends of terrorism in Belgium & Europe' and Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation on 'The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh & beyond'.

Following the presentations in the Q&A session those who contributed and took part in the discussions were Pushpita Gupta, UK Nirmul Committee, Astrid Frey, The Hague Peace, Netherlands, Eric Damiens, Managium, Belgium, Kawsar Ahmed, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Netherland, Pablo Galvez Roldan, Bangladesh desk at the Asia Pacific division at the European External Action Service (EEAS), Tazeen Murshid, Universite Libre de Bruxelles, President of Bangabandhu Foundation (BFG), Germany, Younus Ali Khan, Dr Bidduth Barua from Denmark, Bidhan Deb, Arif Uddin and representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations from Belgium, The Netherlands, UK, France, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and Germany. Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, EBF opened the conference & moderated the second session of the conference while M M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Solidarity for Peace Committee, gave vote of thanks at the end.

Photos by: Abdul Hai ACB@17





## ব্রাসেলসে ইবিএফ আয়োজিত আন্তর্জাতিক সেমিনারে বক্তারা বিশ্বব্যাপী ধর্মের নামে সন্ত্রাস উগ্রবাদ প্রতিরোধে প্রবাসী বাঙালিদের এগিয়ে আসতে হবে

লন্ডন প্রতিনিধি

সন্ত্রাস ও উগ্রবাদ প্রতিরোধ প্রবাসী বাঙালিদের এগিয়ে আসতে হবে। বিশ্বব্যাপী ধর্মের নামে উগ্রবাদীরা সন্ত্রাসকে ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে, কেউ যাতে উগ্রবাদ এবং সন্ত্রাসের দিকে ধাবিত না হয় সেলক্ষ্যে বিশ্বব্যাপী সচেতনতা সৃষ্টির পাসাপাশি আন্তর্জাতিক একা গড়ে তোলতে হবে। এটি একটি আন্তর্জাতিক সমস্যা, বিশ্বের প্রতিটি দেশ এবং সমাজে উগ্রবাদ চুকে পড়েছে একক কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে তা প্রতিহত করা সম্ভব নয়। উগ্রবাদ মোকাবেলায় বিশ্ববাসীকে একত্রিত হয়ে কাজ করতে হবে।

ব্রাসেলসে ইউরোপীয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম (ইবিএফ) আয়োজিত আন্তর্জাতিক সেমিনারে বক্তারা এজেন্ডা ব্যক্ত করেন। বক্তারা বলেন- ধর্মকে পূজি করে বিশ্বব্যাপী সন্ত্রাসকে ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে উগ্রবাদীরা। এদের শেকড় কিন্তু এক জায়গায় এরা বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন নামে সামাজিক রাজনৈতিক ও ধর্মীয় সংগঠন ও সাহায্য সন্ত্রাসের বানানো উগ্রবাদকে লাগান করছে। বিশ্বব্যাপী কয়েকটি সংগঠন শিক্ষা এবং সেবার নামে ননভায়ল্যান্স সন্ত্রাস করে যাচ্ছে। এদের সনাক্ত করতে বিশ্বব্যাপী সচেতনতার সৃষ্টি করতে হবে। প্রতিটি সচেতন নাগরিকের উচিত এদের কর্মকাণ্ড পর্যবেক্ষণ করা।

ইবিএফ এর প্রেসিডেন্ট আনসার আহমেদ উদ্ভার সভাপতিত্বে ব্রাসেলস প্রেসক্লাবে অনুষ্ঠিত এই সেমিনারে "এগোনেট ভায়ালেন্স এক্সট্রিমিজম এন্ড টেররিজম ইন ইউরোপ এন্ড বাংলাদেশ" শীর্ষক আলোচনায় অংশ নেন ইউকে কনজারভেটিভ দলীয় মেম্বর অফ ইউরোপীয়ান পার্লামেন্ট জেফরী ডেন ওরডেন এমবিই এমইপি, ইতালীয়ান সোসাল ডেমক্রেট দলীয় ব্রানদো বেনিফি, লেবার দলীয় সাবেক ডাচ এমপি এয়ামা আশান্তি সোসালিস্ট পার্টির হ্যারী ভ্যান ডোয়েল, সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের স্যাকুলারিজম কাউন্সিল টেররিজম এবং ইসলামপন্থীদের উত্থান প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে আলোকপাত করেন বক্তারা। সেমিনারে সভাপতির বক্তব্যে আনসার আহমেদ উদ্ভার সন্ত্রাস নিমূলে বাংলাদেশ সরকারের বিভিন্ন

পদক্ষেপের প্রশংসা করে বলেন, জঙ্গি দমনে বাংলাদেশ সরকার জিরো টলারেপে বিশ্বাসী তিনি বাংলাদেশের ভয়ংকর সন্ত্রাসীদের যথেষ্ট তার ও তাদের বিচারের সম্মুখীন করায় সরকারের প্রশংসা করেন। সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা ও গণতন্ত্রের ভবিষ্যৎ নিয়ে আলোকপাত করেন বক্তারা।

জাফরী ভ্যান অরডেন এমইপি বলেন সাউথ এশিয়ান দেশগুলোতে উগ্রবাদীদের উত্থান ঘটেছে এবং ঘটছে, আর এর বিস্তৃতি ঘটছে এখন বৃটেন সহ সমগ্র ইউরোপ ব্যাপী, সন্ত্রাস নিমূল করতে হলে বৃটেনসহ ইউরোপের দেশগুলোর সাউথ এশিয়ান দেশগুলোর সাথে সম্পর্ক আরো জোরদার এবং কাউন্টার টেররিজমকে আরো শক্তিশালী করতে হবে। আর এ ব্যাপারে দেশগুলোর ফরেন এ্যাফেয়ার্সকে আরো তৎপর হওয়ার আহবান জানান। তিনি সম্প্রতি লন্ডন মানচেস্টার সহ বিভিন্ন স্থানে সন্ত্রাসী হামলার বিবরণ তুলে ধরে বলেন এর সাথে জড়িতদের বেশীর ভাগই সাউথ এশিয়ান বংশোদ্ভূত ব্রিটিশ এবং কনভার্ট মুসলিম। এখান থেকে যাতে আর কেউ উগ্রবাদের দিকে ধাবিত না হয় এখন পদক্ষেপ নিতে হবে। কারা এখানকার মুসলিম তরণ-তরুণীদের সিরিয়া ইরাক গিয়ে আইএস বাহিনীতে অংশ নিতে উৎসাহিত করছে, এরাতো এই বৃটেন এবং ইউরোপ থেকে কাজ করছে, তাদের শেকড় খুঁজে বের করতে হবে। এখানেই শেষ নয় বিশেষ করে বাংলাদেশ, পাকিস্তান এবং ভারত থেকে আগত অভিবাসীদের তাদের সন্তানদের ব্যাপারে আরো সচেতন হতে হবে। সাবেক ডাচ এমপি আশান্তি বলেন বাংলাদেশী ডায়োসপারারা কমিউনিটি ইউরোপে ভিকটিম ডিসক্রিমিনেশন এবং তাদের পরিচিতি সংকটে ভোগছে, একটি গোষ্ঠী এদের ধর্মের নামে এক্সট্রিমিজমের দিকে ধাবিত করছে। তিনি বলেন বৃটেন এবং ইউরোপে বাংলাদেশ এবং পাকিস্তানের ইসলামপন্থী দলগুলোর শাখা রয়েছে।

সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশে একের পর এক মুক্তমনা ও রুগারদের হত্যার জন্যে এসব ইসলামপন্থীদের ইঙ্গিত করে বলেন এ ব্যাপারে আমাদের

আরো সচেতন হতে হবে। সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তমনা লেখক রুগার ও সংখ্যালঘুদের নিরাপত্তা যথেষ্ট নয়, বক্তারা এখানে বাংলাদেশ সরকারকে আরো বলিষ্ট পদক্ষেপ নেওয়ার পাসাপাশি সেমিনারে মুক্তমনা লেখকদের হত্যার বিচার ও সৃষ্ট তদন্তের দাবী জানান। কীনাটি স্পিকারের বক্তব্যে কনফ্রিঙ্ট ল এন্ড ডেভলপমেন্ট স্টাডিজের ডিরেক্টর অবসরপ্রাপ্ত মেজর জেনারেল আদুর রশিদ বলেন বাংলাদেশের সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি এবং সেকুলারিজমের বিরুদ্ধে উগ্রবাদীদের অপব্যথা দায়ী। তিনি বলেন এদের অপব্যথার কারণে বাংলাদেশে ধর্মীয় উগ্রবাদের বিস্তার ঘটছে। ইসলামমিষ্টরা বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের বানানে সমাজে অপব্যথা দিয়ে যুবসমাজকে বিভ্রান্ত করছে এসব যারা করছে এরা হলো জিহাদী, ওহাবী এবং মউদুনীবাদের অনুসারী। হাজার হাজার বছর ধরে বাংলাদেশের মানুষ সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতির মাঝে বসবাস করে আসলেও বিগত কয়েক বছরে বাংলাদেশে এসব ইসলামপন্থীদের ঝাড়া সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি যেমন বিনষ্ট হচ্ছে গজিয়ে উঠছে উগ্রবাদ এবং ধর্মের নামে সন্ত্রাস।

সেমিনারে আরো বক্তব্য রাখেন হিউমেনিট্য ফেডারেশনের জুলি ফান্টি, লন্ডন স্কুল অব ইকনমিক্সের অধ্যাপক চেতন ভাট, কাউন্টার এক্সট্রিমিজম প্রজেক্ট এর রবার্ট বনাঞ্জি, রয়েল ইন্সটিটিউট ফর ইন্টার ন্যাশনাল রিলেশন এর টমাস রেনার্ড।

গ্রন্থোত্তর পর্বে অংশ নেন ইউকে যুক্তকদালাল নিমূল কমিটির পুষ্পিতা গুপ্তা, ন্যাডারল্যান্ডের দি হেগের এসটিভ ফেরী, বেলজিয়ামের এরিক ডামিনেস মেনগুইয়াম, কাওজার আহমেদ আহমদিয়া মুসলিম জামাত নেদারল্যান্ড। পাবলু গলভেজ রলান্ড বাংলাদেশ ডেস্ক এট দ্য এশিয়ান পেসিফিক ডিভিশন এট দ্য ইউরোপীয়ান এক্সটার্মেল এয়াকমন্স সার্ভিস (ইইএএস), তানজেন মোরশেদ ইউনিভারসাইট লিবরে ডা ব্রাক্সেল প্রেসিডেন্ট বঙ্গবন্ধু ফাউন্ডেশন জার্মেনী, ইউনুস আলী খান, ডাক্তার বিদ্যুৎ বড়ুয়া ডেনমার্ক, বিধান দেব ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট

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BANGLA

JAHOTAI NEWS

# Countering violent extremism conference in Brussels



By Ansar Ahmed Ullah

Bangladeshi diaspora platform in Europe EBF held a half a day-long conference on 'Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and the Bangladesh Diaspora' on 11 July at the Brussels Europe Press Club as part of their series of programmes against violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and Bangladesh. Member of European Parliament Geoffrey Van Orden MBE MEP, Conservative Party, UK and Brando Benifei, Social-Democratic Party, Italy, spoke as Guest of Honour. Former Dutch MPs Amma Asante from the Labour Party emphasized on social cohesion while Harry van Bommel from the Socialistische Partij in his presentation 'Violent extremism: Islam or Crime' urged the Bangladesh government to uphold secularism to counter terrorism and rise of Islamism.

Expressing their satisfaction over the Bangladesh government's effort to counter terrorism and defusing of political Islam, they said radicalisation is a global issue and unfortunately Bangladesh's feet has been gradually dragged into the terror network map. Speakers urged active role of diaspora communities and the civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in Europe as well as home countries in the global south. They focused on social inclusion and integration of the young generation against radicalisation and terrorism.

The event was organised by the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) to discuss the impact and policy options to defend secularism and democracy in Bangladesh and to provide a platform for South Asian, European activists and policymakers to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists.

Geoffrey Van Orden MEP in his presentation titled 'Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult' in the context of de-radicalisation said Britain's relationship with South Asia is ancient and his relationship with the South Asian region has also deepened after he became an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on South Asia in European Parliament. He said in the recent series of terror incidents in the UK, including Manchester, Westminster and London Bridge attacks, fortunately none of the militants were from the Bangladeshi diaspora but many British-born Muslims and Muslim converts have been radicalized and have joined the ISIS holy war in Syria and Iraq.

The former Dutch lawmakers lamented that the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe are victims of discrimination and identity crisis. The politicians said the leaders of Bangladeshi diaspora have a role to play in making aware of its community of radicalization, extremism and Islamism. Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, Ireland, in her paper 'Bangladeshi

Human Rights Defenders at Risk' raised the issue of insecurity of the bloggers, online activists and secular activists in Bangladesh and demanded the scrapping of ICT Act which restricts freedom of expression that has caused widespread harassment and intimidation of journalists and online activists in Bangladesh. She left the onus on the Bangladesh government for independent investigation of the murders of human rights defenders, secular bloggers and attacks on secular activists and free-thinkers.

Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid, Director of Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies in his keynote paper 'Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis' said the secular fabric and multicultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to political Islam. He blamed the Islamist political parties focused on political strategy based on Jihadi Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moudjudism.

Saleem Samad, Special Correspondent of The Asian Age, Bangladesh in his keynote paper on 'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh' said while the Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state, ISIS never made it a secret that its 'warriors' are targeting three groups of people in the country, foreigners, who are described as 'crusaders' or 'allies of the crusaders', non-Sunni Muslims including the Shias and the Ahmadis, who are described as 'Rafida' and 'apostate sects', and Hindus, Buddhists and Christians who are described as pagans, idolaters, 'cow-worshippers' and apostates.

In the working session titled 'Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do' those who spoke at the conference were Prof Chetan Bhatt, Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, Roberta

Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels, Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium, on 'Key trends of terrorism in Belgium & Europe' and Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation on 'The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh & beyond'.

Following the presentations in the Q&A session those who contributed and took part in the discussions were Pushpita Gupta, UK Nirmul Committee, Astrid Frey, The Hague Peace, Netherlands, Eric Damians, Managium, Belgium, Kawsar Ahmed, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Netherlands, Pablo Galvez Roldan, Bangladesh desk at the Asia Pacific division, at the European External Action Service (EEAS), Tazeen Murshid, Universite Libre de Bruxelles, President of German-Bangladesh Association & House of Integration Juboraj Talukder, President of Bangabandhu Foundation, Germany (BFG) Yunus Ali Khan, BFG Advisor Mahbubul Hoque, Commonwealth Liaison Coordinator of the British and Commonwealth Women's Club of Brussels Anar Chowdhury, Dr Bidduth Barua from Denmark, Belgium Awami league's advisor Dr Faruque Mirza, vice president Bidhan Deb, vice president Jamal Hussain Monir, publicity secretary Akhtaruzzaman, science & technology secretary Imran Ali, Jubo League's secretary Khalid Minhaj, Joint secretary A B M Mustafiz, publicity secretary Arif Uddin, Secretary of European Press Club Abu Tahir and representatives of Diaspora, civil society and political organisations from Belgium, The Netherlands, UK, France, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and Germany. Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, EBF opened the conference and chaired the working session. M M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Solidarity for Peace Committee, brought the conference to end by giving vote of thanks.



বাংলা পোস্ট

কমিউনিটি সংবাদ

ব্রাসেলসে ইবিএফ আয়োজিত আন্তর্জাতিক সেমিনারে বক্তারা

# সন্ত্রাস উগ্রবাদ প্রতিরোধে প্রবাসী বাঙ্গালীদের এগিয়ে আসতে হবে

সন্ত্রাস ও উগ্রবাদ প্রতিরোধে প্রবাসী বাঙ্গালীদের এগিয়ে আসতে হবে। বিশ্বব্যাপী ধর্মের নামে উগ্রবাদীরা সন্ত্রাসকে ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে, কেউ যাতে উগ্রবাদ এবং সন্ত্রাসের দিকে ধাবিত না হয় সেলক্ষ্যে বিশ্বব্যাপী সচেতনতা সৃষ্টির পাশাপাশি একা গড়ে তোলতে হবে। এটি একটি আন্তর্জাতিক সমস্যা, বিশ্বের প্রতিটি দেশ এবং সমাজে উগ্রবাদ ঢুকে পড়েছে একক কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে তা প্রতিহত করা সম্ভব নয়। উগ্রবাদ মোকাবেলায় বিশ্ববাসীকে একত্রিত হয়ে কাজ করতে হবে। গেল ১১ জুলাই ব্রাসেলসে ইউরোপীয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম (ইবিএফ) আয়োজিত আন্তর্জাতিক সেমিনারে বক্তারা অতিমত ব্যক্ত করেন। বক্তারা বলেন ধর্মকে পুজি করে বিশ্বব্যাপী সন্ত্রাসকে ছড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে উগ্রবাদীরা। এদের শেকড় কিন্তু এক জায়গায় এরা বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন নামে সামাজিক রাজনৈতিক ও ধর্মীয় সংগঠন ও সাহায্য সংস্থার ব্যানারে উগ্রবাদকে লালন করছে। বিশ্বব্যাপী কয়েকটি সংগঠন শিক্ষা এবং সেবার নামে নন ভায়ল্যান্স সন্ত্রাস করে যাচ্ছে। এদের সনাক্ত করতে বিশ্বব্যাপী সচেতনতার সৃষ্টি করতে হবে। প্রতিটি সচেতন নাগরিকের উচিত এদের কর্মকাণ্ড পর্যবেক্ষণ করা।

ইবিএফ এর আনসার আহমেদ উল্লাহ সভাপতিত্বে ব্রাসেলসে প্রেসক্লাবে অনুষ্ঠিত এই সেমিনারে “এগিয়ে আসতে ভায়ল্যান্স একট্রিমিজম এন্ড টেররিজম ইন ইউরোপ এন্ড বাংলাদেশ” শীর্ষক আলোচনায় অংশ নেন ইউকে কনজারভেটিভ দলীয় মেম্বর অফ ইউরোপীয়ান পার্লামেন্ট জেফরী ভেন ওরডেন এমবিই এমপি, ইতালীয়ান সোসাল ডেমক্রেট দলীয় ব্রানদো বেনিফি, লেবার দলীয় সাবেক ডাচ এমপি এয়ামা আশাভি সোসালিস্ট পার্টির হ্যারী ভ্যান ভোমের্গ, সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের স্যাকুলারিজম কাউন্সিল টেররিজম এবং ইসলামপন্থীদের উত্থান প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে আলোকপাত করেন বক্তারা। সেমিনারে সভাপতির বক্তব্যে আনসার আহমেদ উল্লাহ সন্ত্রাস নির্মূলে বাংলাদেশ সরকারের বিভিন্ন পদক্ষেপের প্রশংসা করে বলেন, জঙ্গি দমনে বাংলাদেশ সরকার জিরো টলারেলে বিশ্বাসী তিনি বাংলাদেশের ভয়ংকর সন্ত্রাসীদের প্রাণহানি ও তাদের বিচারের সম্মুখীন করায় সরকারের প্রশংসা করেন। সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা ও গণতন্ত্রের ভবিষ্যৎ নিয়ে আলোকপাত করেন বক্তারা।

জাফরী ভ্যান অরডেন এমপি বলেন সাউথ এশিয়ান দেশ গুলোতে



জোরদার এবং কাউন্সিল টেররিজমকে আরো শক্তিশালী করতে হবে। আর এ ব্যাপারে দেশগুলোর ফরেন এ্যাফেয়ারসকে আরো তৎপর হওয়ার আহবান জানান। তিনি সম্প্রতি লন্ডন মানচেস্টার সহ বিভিন্ন স্থানে সন্ত্রাসী হামলার বিবরণ তুলে ধরে বলেন এর সাথে জড়িতদের বেশীর ভাগই সাউথ এশিয়ান বংশোদ্ভূত ব্রিটিশ এবং কনভার্ট মুসলিম। এখান থেকে যাতে আর কেউ উগ্রবাদের দিকে ধাবিত না হয় এখনি পদক্ষেপ নিতে হবে। কারা এখানকার মুসলিম তরুণ তরুণীদের সিরিয়া ইরাক গিয়ে আইএস বাহিনীতে অংশ নিতে উৎসাহিত করছে, এরা তো এই বুটেন এবং ইউরোপ থেকে কাজ করছে, তাদের শেকড় খুঁজে বের করতে হবে। এখানেই শেষ নয় বিশেষ করে বাংলাদেশ, পাকিস্তান এবং ভারত থেকে আগত অভিবাসীদের তাদের সম্ভাবনার ব্যাপারে আরো সচেতন হতে হবে।

সাবেক ডাচ এমপি আশাভি বলেন বাংলাদেশী ডায়াসপোরার কমিউনিটি ইউরোপে ভিকটিম ডিসক্রিমিনেশন এবং তাদের পরিচিতি সংকটে ভোগছে, একটি গোষ্ঠী এদের ধর্মের নামে একট্রিমিজমের দিকে ধাবিত করছে। তিনি বলেন বুটেন এবং ইউরোপে বাংলাদেশ এবং পাকিস্তানের ইসলামপন্থী দলগুলোর শাখা রয়েছে। সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশে একের পর এক মুক্তমনা ও রূপারদের হত্যার জন্যে এসব ইসলামপন্থীদের ইঙ্গিত করে বলেন এ ব্যাপারে আমাদের আরো সচেতন হতে হবে। সেমিনারে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তমনা লেখক রূপার ও সংখ্যালঘুদের নিরাপত্তা যথেষ্ট নয়, বক্তারা এব্যাপারে বাংলাদেশ সরকারকে আরো বলিষ্ট পদক্ষেপ নেওয়ার পাশাপাশি সেমিনারে মুক্তমনা

সম্প্রতি এবং সেকুল্যারিজমের বিরুদ্ধে উগ্রবাদীদের অপব্যবস্থা দায়ী। তিনি বলেন এদের অপব্যবহার কারণে বাংলাদেশে ধর্মীয় উগ্রবাদের বিস্তার ঘটছে। ইসলামমিষ্টরা বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের ব্যানারে সমাজে অপব্যবস্থা দিয়ে যুবসমাজকে বিভ্রান্ত করছে এসব যারা করছে এরা হলো জিহাদী, ওহাবী এবং মউদুনীবাদের অনুসারী। হাজার হাজার বছর ধরে ইসলামপন্থী দল গুলোর কারণে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রতি যেমন বিনষ্ট হচ্ছে গজিয়ে উঠছে উগ্রবাদ এবং ধর্মের নামে সন্ত্রাস।

সেমিনারে আরো বক্তব্য রাখেন হিউমেনিষ্ট ফেডারেশনের জুলি ফান্টে, লন্ডন স্কুল অব ইকনমিক্সের অধ্যাপক চেতন ভাট, কাউন্সিল একট্রিমিজম প্রজেক্ট এর রবার্টা ব্যানাজি, রয়েল ইন্সটিটিউট ফর ইন্টার ন্যাশনাল রিলেশন এর টমাস রেনার্ড। প্রশ্নোত্তর পর্বে অংশ নেন ইউকে যাতকদালাল নির্মূল কমিটির পুণ্ডিতা গুপ্তা, ন্যাদারল্যান্ডের দি হেগের এসটিড ফেরী, বেলজিয়ামের এরিক ডামিনেস মেনগুইয়াম, কাওছার আহমদ আহমদিয়া মুসলিম জামাত নেদারল্যান্ড। পাবল গলভেজ রলাভ বাংলাদেশ ডেব এটদ্য এশিয়ান পেসিফিক ডিভিশন এটদ্য ইউরোপীয়ান এক্সটারনেল এ্যাকসন সার্ভিস (ইইএএস), তানজেন মোরশেদ ইউনিভারসাইট লিবের ডা ব্রাঙ্কেল প্রেসিডেন্ট বঙ্গবন্ধু ফাউন্ডেশন জার্মেনী, ইউনুস আলী খান, ডাক্তার বিদ্যুৎ বড়ুয়া ডেনমার্ক, বিধান দেব ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট বেলজিয়াম আওয়ামীলীগ, ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট জামাল হোসেন হানির বেলজিয়াম

বেলজিয়াম ডায়াসপারা সোসাইটির প্রতিনিধিবৃন্দ। বেলজিয়ামের সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের প্রতিনিধিরা এ ছাড়া কনফারেন্স যুক্তরাজ্য, জার্মানী, ফ্রান্স, ইতালী ও ইউরোপের অন্যান্য দেশ থেকে প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশী বিভিন্ন সামাজিক সাংস্কৃতিক ও রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের প্রতিনিধিরা অংশ নেন। ব্রাসেলসে ঢাকা সলিডারিটি ফর পীস কমিটির কোঅর্ডিনেটর এমএম মোশেরের ধন্যবাদ বক্তব্যের মাধ্যমে সেমিনারের সমাপ্তি ঘটে।



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<http://londontimesnews.com/english/2017/07/12/countering-violent-extremism-seminar-held-in-belgium/>

## Countering Violent Extremism seminar held in Belgium



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European Bangladesh Forum organised a seminar “Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladesh Diaspora” Brussels Belgium at Brussels Press Club 11 July 2017. Lots of European Parliament present & ex-member was present and speaks regarding this

matter. They speak, violent extremism undermines peace and security, human rights & sustainable development.

No country or region is immune from its impact. It's a diverse phenomenon without clear definition. It is neither new or exclusive to any region, nationality or system of belief. To prevent violent extremism need to take a more comprehensive approach which compasses not only ongoing, essential security based counter-terrorism measures, but also systematic preventive measures which directly address the drivers of violent extremism that have given rise to the emergence of these new and more virulent group. Religious and other leaders in the Diaspora community could play a key role in mentoring vulnerable youngsters.

Government policy should be aimed at improving socioeconomic opportunities, especially for young people. Better education & decent jobs are essential. Every speaker appreciated of present govt. Of Bangladesh to overcome after an attack of Holy Artisan bakery last year. Nowadays in Bangladesh, foreigners are fear free from terrorist attack due to govt. high alert activity. Presence of speaker was, Mr. Van Oden Geoffrey MEP, Conservative Party, UK, Ms. Julie Pernet, European Humanist Federation, Brussels, Ms. Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism, Project in Brussels & Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy, Ms. Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, Head of EU Office, Brussels – “Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk”, Ms. Amma Asante, former MP, Labour Party, The Netherlands, Mr. Harry van Bommel, former MP, Socialistic Party, The Netherlands, Mr. Brando Benifei MEP, Social-Democratic Party, Italy MEP EU Parliament, Prof. Chetan Butt. London of School of Economics., Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid, Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law & Development Studies (ICLDS), Dhaka, Mr. Saleem Samad, senior journalist, an Ashoka Fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special correspondent, the Asian Age, Dhaka, Mr. Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, European Bangladesh Forum, UK, Bikash Chowdhury Barua, Hague ,Holand, Dr. Bidduth Barua ,Copenhagen , Denmark, Mr. M. M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee.

News Author: Rony Mohammed, Europe Correspondent-London Times News



<http://deshpriyonews.com/?p=12990>

London



## বেলজিয়ামে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী সেমিনার

(Last Updated On: জুলাই ১২, ২০১৭) London

মঙ্গলবার বেলজিয়াম এর রাজধানী ব্রাসেলস প্রেস ক্লাব হলে ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম এর উদ্যোগে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাসবিরোধী এক সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সেমিনারে বক্তারা বলেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও জঙ্গি বাদ কোন দেশের সীমানা পেরিয়ে আজ সারা পৃথিবীর সমস্যা। এই সমস্যা সমাধানে সবাইকে একযোগে কাজ করতে হবে। কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে একা সমাধান সম্ভব না। গুলি বা বন্দুক দিয়ে কোন দেশের সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধ করা যাবে না, হয়তু কয়েকজন সন্ত্রাসীকে হত্যা করা যাবে। এই জন্য আমাদের শিক্ষা দিয়ে সচেতন করতে হবে, পরিবারের ও আপনজনের সদস্যদের প্রতি খেয়াল রাখতে হবে। আমাদের সন্তানরা যেন কোন বিপদে না যায়। বিশ্বের সবাইকে একযোগে সম্মিলিত ভাবে কাজ করতে হবে। এছাড়া সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বর্তমান বাংলাদেশ সরকারের সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী কার্যক্রমের প্রশংসা করেন ইউরোপিয়ান পার্লামেন্টের বর্তমান ও সাবেক সংসদ সদস্য বৃন্দ। বর্তমান সরকারের হোলি আর্টিসান ঘটনার পর দ্রুত গৃহীত পদক্ষেপের কথা উল্লেখ করেন। বাংলাদেশের বিএনপি ও জামাত সহ বিভিন্ন মৌলবাদী গোষ্ঠী জঙ্গিবাদে পরোক্ষ ভাবে সহযোগিতা করছে বক্তারা উল্লেখ করেন। মৌলবাদী জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে বাংলাদেশ এর প্রধানমন্ত্রী অত্যন্ত কঠোর অবস্থানের ভূমি প্রশংসা করেন। আলোচনা করেন লন্ডন ইকোনমিক স্কুল এর অধ্যাপক চেতন বাট, ব্রাসেলস এর মানবাধিকার কর্মী জুলি পেরনেট, ইউকে কনজেরভেটিভে পার্টি র এমপি ওডেন জিওফ্রে, ব্রাসেলস এর হেড অফ কাউন্টার টেররিজম রবার্ট বনাজি, ব্রাসেলস ইউরোপিয়ান ইউনিয়ন এর এম্মা আছিলি, ইউরোপ এর সিনিয়র রিসার্চ ফেলো টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড লেবার পার্টি আন্স্টে সাবেক এমপি, বেলজিয়াম সিনিয়র রিসার্চ টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রাটিক পার্টির সাবেক এমপি হ্যারি বোন বোস্কেল, ইতালি এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রাটিক পার্টি এর ও ইউরোপীয়ান পার্লামেন্টের এমপি ব্রান্ডো বেনিফিলে, বাংলাদেশের নিরাপত্তা বিশ্লেষক মেজর জেনারেল (অব) আশুর রশিদ, এশিয়ান এইজ এর সাংবাদিক সালীম সামাদ, ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম এর সভাপতি আনসার আহমেদ উল্লাহ, হল্যান্ডের বিকাশ চৌধুরী বড়ুয়া, সূমনা বড়ুয়া অনুষ্ঠানের কোঅর্ডিনেটর এম মোর্শেদ, সেকুলার ফোরাম অফ ইউরোপ এর সাংগঠনিক সম্পাদক ও ডেনমার্ক আওয়ামী লীগ এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক ড.বিদ্যুৎ বড়ুয়া, লন্ডন এর পুষ্পিতা, খালেদ মিনহাজ, আরিফ উদ্দিন ।

<http://www.jagannathpurtimes.com/2017/07/12/lack-of-integration-and-inclusion-promote-terrorism-among-diaspora/>

## “Lack of Integration and Inclusion Promote Terrorism among Diaspora”

by [editor](#) - July 12, 2017 0



Jagannathpur times international news desk:

Speakers urged the active role of diaspora communities and the role of civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in the European as well as home countries in the global south. They demanded the special focus on the social inclusion and integration of the young generation for the better protection against radicalisation and terrorism.

Speakers urged this in the day-long conference on “Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladeshi Diaspora” held in the European Press Club in Belgium on Tuesday. European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) organized the conference as part of the series of programs against the violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and the perspective of Bangladesh.

President of the European Bangladesh Forum, UK Ansar Ahmed Ullah presented welcome address in the conference. In the opening session on Bangladesh and global context was chaired by the Head of the Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, UK. The keynote paper on “Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis”

was presented by the Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS) Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid. The session was addressed, among others, by Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation IHEU, Brussels on “The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh and beyond” and Saleem Samad, senior journalist and Ashoka Fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special Correspondent of the Asian Age, Dhaka.

The Member of European Parliament from the European Conservatives and Reformists Party, UK Geoffrey Van Orden presented the discussion as Guest of Honour on “Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult” in the context of de-radicalisation. Van Orden stressed on the integration and social inclusion as root cause of increasing trend of terrorism among the young people with and without background of migration. Considering the recent history of the terrorism and violent extremism speakers in conference expressed their great concern at the rise of the terrorists inside Europe and in the home country they are from. Even not only the young people from Diaspora families, rather youth from the European families are being involved in the violent extremism due to the lack of integration, social inequalities and exclusion. The similar situation including the faulty educational system and the suppression of the freedom of opinions cause the root to the radicalization and terrorism inside the country and the export of terrorism from Bangladesh, they added.

The working session on Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do was chaired by EBF, UK President Ansar Ahmed Ullah. Member of European Parliament from Social-Democratic Party, Italy Brando Benifei addressed the session as Guest of Honour. Among others, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels and Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy Roberta Bonazzi, Head of EU Office of Front Line Defenders in Brussels Emma Achilli on “Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk”, Senior Research Fellow of Europe in the World, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium Thomas Renard on “Key trends of terrorism in Belgium and Europe”, former Member of Parliament from Labour Party in The Netherlands Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament from Socialist Party in The Netherlands Harry van Bommel, on “Violent extremism: Islam or Crime” addressed the conference. The Coordinator of Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee M. M Murshed rendered vote of thanks.

Among others, BASUG Chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of German-Bangladesh Association and House of Integration Juboraj Talukder, President of Bangabandhu Foundation, Germany (BFG) Younus Ali Khan, BFG Advisor Mahbubul Hoque, BASUG Project Coordinator in Germany AHM Abdul Hai and Senior Program Officer Mahamud Firoz, Commonwealth Liaison Coordinator of the British and Commonwealth Women’s Club of Brussels Anar Chowdhury, BASUG Internee Marco Schmidberger, Secretary of European Press Club Abu Tahir and about one hundred representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations took part in the conference. Photo: Abdul Hai

[BANGLA POST, London, 21-27 July 2017](#)



## Brussels Conference: Social inclusion and integration of young generation needed against radicalization and terrorism

Bangladeshi diaspora platform in Europe 'European Bangladesh Forum' held a half a day-long conference on 'Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and the Bangladesh Diaspora' on 11 July at the Brussels Europe Press Club as part of a series of programmes against violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and Bangladesh. Members of European Parliament Geoffrey Van Orden MBE MEP, Conservative Party, UK, Brando Benifei, Social-Democratic Party, Italy, former Dutch MPs Amma Asante from the Labour Party and Harry van Bommel from the Socialistische Partij in their presentations urged the Bangladesh government to uphold secularism to counter terrorism and the rise of Islamism. Expressing their satisfaction over the Bangladesh government's effort to counter terrorism and defusing political Islam, they said the government need to do more to contain radicalization. 'Radicalization is a global issue and unfortunately Bangladesh's feet has been gradually dragged into the terror network map. Speakers urged active role of diaspora communities and the civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in Europe as well as home countries in the global south. They focused on social inclusion and integration of the young generation against radicalisation and terrorism. The event organised by the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) discussed the impact and policy options to defend secularism and democracy in Bangladesh. The Conference also provided a platform for South Asian, European activists and policymakers to reach a consensus to understand the impact of Islamist terrorism and explore ways to provide assistance to those who are under attack from the Islamists. Geoffrey Van Orden MEP who was Guest of Honour in his presentation titled 'Why is Counter Terrorism so Difficult' in the context of de-radicalisation said Britain's relationship with South Asia is ancient and his relationship with the South Asian region has also deepened after he became an active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on South Asia in European Parliament. He said in the recent series of terror incidents in the UK, including Manchester, Westminster & London Bridge



**'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh' said while the Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state, ISIS never made it a secret that its**



attacks, fortunately none of the militants were from the Bangladeshi diaspora but many British-born Muslims and Muslim converts have been radicalized and have joined the ISIS holy war in Syria and Iraq. The former Dutch lawmakers lamented that the Bangladesh diaspora in Europe are victims of discrimination and identity crisis. The politicians said the leaders of Bangladesh diaspora have a role to play in making aware of its community of radicalization, extremism and Islamism which in turn will create an environment of peace building and tolerance among the immigrants in Europe. Emma Achilli, Front Line Defenders, in her paper 'Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk' raised the issue of insecurity of the bloggers, online activists and secular activists in Bangladesh and demanded the scrapping of ICT Act which restricts

freedom of expression that has caused widespread harassment and intimidation of journalists and online activists in Bangladesh. She left the onus on the Bangladesh government for independent investigation of the murders of human rights defenders, secular bloggers and attacks on secular activists and free-thinkers. Major General (Retd.) Abdur Rashid, Director of Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies in his keynote paper 'Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis' said the secular fabric and multicultural political stronghold in Bangladesh is considered as potential threat to political Islam. He blamed the Islamist political parties focused on political strategy based on Jihad Islam, a philosophy drawn from Wahabi segment of Islam and its sub continental version called Moudjudism. Saleem Samad, Special

Correspondent of The Asian Age, Bangladesh in his keynote paper on 'Media Quest on Bangladesh Response to Jihadist Footprint in Bangladesh' said while the Jihad in Bangladesh is ostensibly against the secular state, ISIS never made it a secret that its 'warriors' are targeting three groups of people in the country, foreigners, who are described as 'crusaders' or 'allies of the crusaders', non-Sunni Muslims including the Shias and the Ahmadis, who are described as 'Rafida' and 'apostate sects', and Hindus, Buddhists and Christians who are described as pagans, idolaters, 'cow-worshippers' and apostates. In the working session titled 'Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do' those who spoke at the conference were Prof Chetan Bhatt, Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, Roberta Bonazzi, Head of Counter Extremism Project in

Brussels, Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont - Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium, on 'Key trends of terrorism in Belgium & Europe' and Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation on 'The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh & beyond'.

Following the presentations in the Q&A session those who contributed and took part in the discussions were Pushpita Gupta, UK Nirmul Committee, Astrid Frey, The Hague Peace, Netherlands, Eric Damien, Managium, Belgium, Kawsar Ahmed, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Netherlands, Pablo Galvez Roldan, Bangladesh desk at the Asia Pacific division at the

European External Action Service (EEAS), Tazeen Murshid, Universite Libre de Bruxelles, President of Bangabandhu Foundation (BFG), Germany, Younus Ali Khan, Dr Bidduth Barua from Denmark, Bidhan Deb, Vice President, Belgium Awami League, Vice President Jamal Hussain Monir, Secretary Akhtaruzzaman, Science & Technology Secretary Imran Ali, Publicity Secretary Arif Uddin and representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations from Belgium, The Netherlands, UK, France, Italy, Denmark, Switzerland and Germany. Ansar Ahmed Ullah, President, EBF opened the conference & moderated the second session of the conference while M M Murshed, Coordinator, Brussels-Dhaka Solidarity for Peace Committee, gave vote of thanks at the end. Photos by: Abdul Hai

12 July 2017, New York

### বেলজিয়ামে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত

ব্রাসেলস, বেলজিয়াম : বিগত ১১ জুলাই, ২০১৭ মঙ্গলবার বেলজিয়াম এর রাজধানী ব্রাসেলস এর প্রেস ক্লাব হলে ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম এর উদ্যোগে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাসবিরোধী এক সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সেমিনারে বক্তারা বলেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও জঙ্গি বাদ কোন দেশের সীমানা পেরিয়ে আজ সারা পৃথিবীর সমস্যা। এই সমস্যা সমাধানে সবাইকে একযোগে কাজ করতে হবে। কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে একা সমাধান সম্ভব না। গুলি বা বন্দুক দিয়ে কোন দেশের সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধ করা যাবে না, হয়তু কয়েকজন সন্ত্রাসীকে হত্যা করা যাবে। এই জন্য আমাদের শিক্ষা দিয়ে সচেতন করতে হবে, পরিবারের ও আপনজনের সদস্যদের প্রতি খেয়াল রাখতে হবে। আমাদের সন্তানরা যেন কোন বিপদে না যায়। বিশ্বের সবাইকে একযোগে সম্মিলিত ভাবে কাজ করতে হবে।



এছাড়া সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বর্তমান বাংলাদেশ সরকারের সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী কার্যক্রমের প্রশংসা করেন ইউরোপিয়ান পার্লামেন্টের বর্তমান ও সাবেক সংসদ সদস্য বৃন্দ। বর্তমান সরকারের হোলি আর্টিসান ঘটনার পর দ্রুত গৃহীত পদক্ষেপের কথা উল্লেখ করেন। বাংলাদেশের বিএনপি ও জামাত সহ বিভিন্ন মৌলবাদী গোষ্ঠী জঙ্গিবাদে পরোক্ষ ভাবে সহযোগিতা করছে বক্তারা উল্লেখ করেন। মৌলবাদী জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে বাংলাদেশ এর প্রধানমন্ত্রী অত্যন্ত কঠোর অবস্থানের ভূয়সী প্রশংসা করেন। আলোচনা করেন লন্ডন ইকোনমিক স্কুল এর অধ্যাপক চেতন বাট, ব্রাসেলস এর মানবাধিকার কর্মী জুলি পেরনেট, ইউকে কনজেরভেটিভ পার্টি র এমপি ওডেন জিওফ্রে, ব্রাসেলস এর হেড অফ কাউন্টার টেররিজম রবার্ট বনাজি, ব্রাসেলস ইউরোপিয়ান ইউনিয়ন এর এম্বা আছিলি, ইউরোপ এর সিনিয়র রিসার্চ ফেলো টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড লেবার পার্টি আশ্মা অসন্তে সাবেক এমপি, বেলজিয়াম সিনিয়র রিসার্চ টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্র্যাটিক পার্টির সাবেক এমপি হ্যারি বোন বোম্বোল, ইতালি এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্র্যাটিক পার্টি এর ও ইউরোপীয়ান পার্লামেন্টের এমপি ব্রান্ডো বেনিফিলে, বাংলাদেশের নিরাপত্তা বিশ্লেষক মেজর জেনারেল (অব) আব্দুর রশিদ, এশিয়ান এইজ এর সাংবাদিক সালীম সামাদ, ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম এর সভাপতি আনসার আহমেদ উল্লাহ, হল্যান্ডের বিকাশ চৌধুরী বড়ুয়া, সুমনা বড়ুয়া অনুষ্ঠানের কোঅর্ডিনেটর এম মোর্শেদ, সেকুলার ফোরাম অফ ইউরোপ এর সাংগঠনিক সম্পাদক ও ডেনমার্ক আওয়ামী লীগ এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক ড.বিদ্যুৎ বড়ুয়া, লন্ডন এর পুষ্পিতা।



বেলজিয়ামে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত





সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও জঙ্গি বাদ বর্তমানে সমগ্র পৃথিবীর ভয়াবহ সমস্যা। এ সমস্যা সমাধানে সকল জনগোষ্ঠীকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভাবে কাজ করা দরকার। কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে এ মহামারী সমস্যা সমাধান সম্ভব নয়।

পৃথিবীর সকল সংগঠন সকল দেশ কে সাথে নিয়ে সন্ত্রাসবাদের মোকাবেলা করতেই এমন উদ্যোগ নেয়া হয়েছে বলে জানান আয়োজক সংগঠন ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরামের সভাপতি আনসার আহমদ উল্লাহ।

সন্ত্রাসবাদ মোকাবেলায় বাংলাদেশ সরকার এর সাহসী ভূমিকা সেমিনার এ উপস্থাপন করেন ইনস্টিটিউট অফ কনফ্লিক্ট ল এন্ড ডেভলপমেন্ট এর এক্সিকিউটিভ ডিরেক্টর অবসরপ্রাপ্ত মেজর জেনারেল আব্দুর রশিদ। এসময় বাংলাদেশে জঙ্গিবাদ মোকাবেলায় সরকারের সফলতা তুলে ধরেন তিনি।

আন্তর্জাতিক এ সেমিনারের ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরাম এর

সভাপতি আনসার আহমেদ উল্লাহ, সভাপতিত্বে আলোচনায় অংশগ্রহণ করেন লন্ডন ইকোনমিক স্কুল এর অধ্যাপক চেতন বাট, ব্রাসেলস এর মানবাধিকার কর্মী জুলি পেরনেট, বাংলাদেশের নিরাপত্তা বিশ্লেষক মেজর জেনারেল (অব) আব্দুর রশিদ, এশিয়ান এইজ এর বিশেষ প্রতিনিধি সালীম সামাদ, ইউকে কনজেরভেটিভে পার্টি'র এমইপি ওডেন জিওফ্রে, ইউকে গ্রিন পার্টি এর জিম ল্যান্সাট এমইপি, ব্রাসেলস এর হেড অফ কাউন্টার টেররিজম রবার্ট বনাজি, ব্রাসেলস ইউরোপিয়ান ইউনিয়ন এর রুন্ট লাইন ডিফেন্স এম্বা আছিলি, ইউরোপ এর সিনিয়র রিসার্চ ফেলো টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড লেবার পার্টি আন্স্কা অসন্তে সাবেক এমপি, বেলজিয়াম সিনিয়র রিসার্চ টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রেটিক পার্টি হ্যারি বোন বোন্সেল, ইতালি এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রেটিক পার্টি এর ব্রান্ডো বেনিফিলে, ডায়াম্পোরা এন্ড ডেভলপমেন্ট এর চেয়ারম্যান বিকাশ চৌধুরী বড়ুয়া। সেমিনারে সমাপনী বক্তব্য রাখেন ব্রাসেলস ঢাকা পিস কমিটি,র কোর্ডিনেটর এম এম মোশেদ। গুলি বা বন্দুক দিয়ে কোন দেশের সন্ত্রাসবাদ যেমন বন্ধ করা যেমন সম্ভব নয় তেমনি কয়েকজন সন্ত্রাসীকে হত্যা করেও সন্ত্রাসবন্ধ বন্ধ করা যাবে না। মূলত যুবসমাজ এর সচেতনতা বিশ্ব শান্তিতে হুমকি সৃষ্টি কারী সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ করতে পারে। এবং সেজন্য শিক্ষার কোন বিকল্প নেই বললেন ইউরোপিয়ান পার্লামেন্টের

সেমিনারে আরো উপস্থিত সম্পাদক ডাঃ বিদ্যুৎ বার তাহের বেলজিয়াম সভাপতি বাবু বিধান দেব, সম্পাদক আকতারুজ্জামান, আলী, বেলজিয়াম যুবলীগের এ বি এম মোস্তাফিজ, প্রচার দালাল নিমূল কমিটির

শেলী মির্জা, আকরাম শিকদার সহ জার্মান ও ইতালি থেকে আগত আওয়ামীলীগ ও মানবাধিকার সংগঠনের নেতারা।



আবু তাহির, ব্রাসেলস, বেলজিয়াম

<http://www.nobokontho.com/?p=20997>

বাংলাদেশ ও বিশ্বের বিভিন্ন দেশে জঙ্গিবাদ দমন ও প্রতিহত করার জন্য সন্ত্রাস ও জঙ্গিবাদ বিরোধী সকল দেশ ও জনগোষ্ঠীকে একসাথে কাজ করার ক্ষেত্র তৈরির লক্ষ্যে ব্রাসেলসে সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী আন্তর্জাতিক সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরামের উদ্যোগে আয়োজিত এ সেমিনারে এসময় ইউরোপিয়ান পার্লামেন্ট মেম্বার ছাড়াও বিভিন্ন দেশের মানবাধিকার কর্মীরা উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

বেলজিয়াম এর রাজধানী ব্রাসেলসে ব্রাসেলস প্রেস ক্লাব এর কনফারেন্স হলে গত সোমবার অনুষ্ঠিত এ কনফারেন্স বক্তারা বলেন



ছিলেন ডেনমার্ক আওয়ামীলীগ এর সাধারণ বড়ুয়া, ফ্রান্স আওয়ামীলীগ এর উপদেষ্টা ওয়াহিদ আওয়ামী লীগের উপদেষ্টা ডঃ ফারুক মির্জা, সহ-সহ সভাপতি জামাল হোসেন মনির, প্রচার বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিষয়ক সম্পাদক ইমরান সাধারণ সম্পাদক খালিদ মিনহাজ, যুগ্ম-সম্পাদক সম্পাদক আরিফ উদ্দিন, বেলজিয়াম ঘাতক সাধারণ সম্পাদিকা মিসেস আনার চৌধুরী, মিসেস

## ‘জঙ্গিবাদ সারা পৃথিবীর সমস্যা’

প্রকাশ: ১২ জুলাই ২০১৭, ১৬:২৬ | আপডেট : ১২ জুলাই ২০১৭, ১৬:২৮  
পূর্বপশ্চিম ডেস্ক

মঙ্গলবার বেলজিয়ামের রাজধানী ব্রাসেলসের প্রেস ক্লাব হলে ইউরোপিয়ান বাংলাদেশ ফোরামের উদ্যোগে আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাসবিরোধী এক সেমিনার অনুষ্ঠিত হয়।

সেমিনারে বক্তারা বলেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও জঙ্গিবাদ আজ সারা পৃথিবীর সমস্যা। এই সমস্যা সমাধানে সবাইকে একযোগে কাজ করতে হবে। কোন দেশ বা গোষ্ঠীর পক্ষে একা সমাধান সম্ভব না। গুলি বা বন্দুক দিয়ে কোন দেশের সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধ করা যাবে না, হয়ত কয়েকজন সন্ত্রাসীকে হত্যা করা যাবে। এই জন্য আমাদের শিক্ষা দিয়ে সচেতন করতে হবে, পরিবারের ও আপনজনের সদস্যদের প্রতি খেয়াল রাখতে হবে।

বক্তারা বলেন, খেয়াল রাখতে হবে আমাদের সন্তানরা যেন বিপথে না যায়। বিশ্বের সবাইকে একযোগে সম্মিলিত ভাবে কাজ করতে হবে। এছাড়া সাম্প্রতিক সময়ে বর্তমান বাংলাদেশ সরকারের সন্ত্রাস বিরোধী কার্যক্রমের প্রশংসা করেন ইউরোপিয়ান পার্লামেন্টের বর্তমান ও সাবেক সংসদ সদস্য বৃন্দ। বিএনপি ও জামাতসহ বিভিন্ন মৌলবাদী গোষ্ঠী জঙ্গিবাদে পরোক্ষভাবে সহযোগিতা করছে বক্তারা উল্লেখ করেন।

সেমিনারে বক্তব্য রাখেন লন্ডন ইকোনমিক স্কুলের অধ্যাপক চেতন বাট, ব্রাসেলস এর মানবাধিকার কর্মী জুলি পেরনেট, ইউকে কনজেরভেটিভে



পার্টির এমইপি ওডেন জিওফ্রে, ব্রাসেলস এর হেড অফ কাউন্টার টেররিজম রবার্ট বনাজি, ব্রাসেলস ইউরোপিয়ান ইউনিয়ন এর এম্মা আছিলি, হল্যান্ড লেবার পার্টির সাবেক এমপি আন্না অসন্তে, বেলজিয়া ম সিনিয়র রিসার্চ টমাস রেনার্ড, হল্যান্ড এর সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রটিক পার্টির

সাবেক এমপি হ্যারি বোন বোস্কেল, ইতালির সোশ্যাল ডেমোক্রটিক পার্টির ও ইউরোপীয়ান পার্লামেন্টের এমপি ব্রান্ডো বেনিফিলে, বাংলাদেশের

নিরাপত্তা বিশ্লেষক মেজর জেনারেল (অব) আব্দুর রশিদ, এশিয়ান এইজ এর

সাংবাদিক সালীম সামাদ, সেকুলার ফোরাম অফ ইউরোপ এর সাংগঠনিক সম্পাদক ও ডেনমার্ক আওয়ামী লীগ এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক ড.বিদ্যুৎ বড়ুয়া প্রমুখ।



## “Lack of Integration and Inclusion Promote Terrorism among Diaspora”

Brussels, July 11 : Speakers urged the active role of diaspora communities and the role of civil society to counter extremism and terrorism in the European as well as home countries in the global south. They demanded the special focus on the social inclusion and integration of the young generation for the better protection against radicalisation and terrorism.

Speakers urged this in the day-long conference on “Countering Violent Extremism: Global Context and Bangladeshi Diaspora” held in the European Press Club in Belgium on Tuesday. European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) organized the conference as part of the series of programs against the violent extremism and terrorism in Europe and the perspective of Bangladesh. President of the European Bangladesh Forum, UK Ansar Ahmed Ullah presented welcome address in the conference. In the opening session on Bangladesh and global context was chaired by the Head of the Centre for Study of Human Rights, London School of Economics, UK. The keynote paper on “Islamic Terrorism in Bangladesh: Progression and Prognosis” was presented by the Executive Director of the Institute of Conflict, Law and Development Studies (ICLDS) Major General (Retired) Abdur Rashid. The session was addressed, among others, by Julie Pernet from European Humanist Federation IHEU, Brussels on “The role of free expression and secularism in combating violent extremism in Bangladesh and beyond” and Saleem Samad, senior journalist and Ashoka Fellow (USA) and working with Bangladesh Observer and Special Correspondent of the Asian Age, Dhaka.

The Member of European Parliament from the European Conservatives and Reformists Party, UK Geoffrey Van Orden presented the discussion as Guest of Honour on “Why is Counter

Terrorism so Difficult” in the context of de-radicalisation. Van Orden stressed on the integration and social inclusion as root cause of increasing trend of terrorism among the young people with and without background of migration. Considering the recent history of the terrorism and violent extremism speakers in conference expressed their great concern at the rise of the terrorists inside Europe and in the home country they are from. Even not only the young people from Diaspora families, rather youth from the European families are being involved in the violent extremism due to the lack of integration, social inequalities and exclusion. The similar situation including the faulty educational system and the suppression of the freedom of opinions cause the root to the radicalization and terrorism inside the country and the export of terrorism from Bangladesh, they added.

The working session on Impact of Terrorism and what can the Diaspora do was chaired by EBF, UK President Ansar Ahmed Ullah. Member of European Parliament from Social-Democratic Party, Italy Brando Benifei addressed the session as Guest of Honour. Among others, Head of Counter Extremism Project in Brussels and Founder and President of the European Foundation for Democracy Roberta Bonazzi, Head of EU Office of Front Line Defenders in Brussels Emma Achilli on “Bangladeshi Human Rights Defenders at Risk”, Senior Research Fellow of Europe in the World, Egmont – Royal Institute for International Relations, Belgium Thomas Renard on “Key trends of terrorism in Belgium and Europe”, former Member of Parliament from Labour Party in The Netherlands Amma Asante, former Member of Parliament from Socialist Party in The Netherlands Harry van Bommel, on “Violent extremism: Islam or Crime” addressed the conference. The Coordinator of Brussels Dhaka Peace Committee M. M Murshed rendered vote of thanks.

Among others, BASUG Chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua, President of German-Bangladesh Association and House of Integration Juboraj Talukder, President of Bangabandhu Foundation, Germany (BFG) Younus Ali Khan, BFG Advisor Mahbubul Hoque, BASUG Project Coordinator in Germany AHM Abdul Hai and Senior Program Officer Mahamud Firoz, Commonwealth Liaison Coordinator of the British and Commonwealth Women’s Club of Brussels Anar Chowdhury, BASUG Internee Marco Schmidberger, Secretary of European Press Club Abu Tahir and about one hundred representatives from Diaspora, civil society and political organizations took part in the conference.

### **News Coverage by Television Channels from Dhaka and London:**

1. ATN BANGLA TV, DHAKA -  
<https://www.facebook.com/nobokonho24/videos/653984148125023/>
2. EKATTOR TV, DHAKA  
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