# THE VIRTUAL CALIPHATE

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## DAESH JIHADI PROPAGANDA

**ABSTRACT**

DAESH has invested significant resources in transferring propaganda techniques from offline to online, manipulating public opinion and attracting sympathizers through religious and ideological justifications for violence against perceived enemies, and promising a utopian state represented by the Islamic Caliphate. Thus, the Islamic Caliphate has transformed itself into a virtual Caliphate, free of territorial constraints, with global reach which has allowed the organization to survive and build networks of sympathizers around the world, with propaganda in the virtual environment playing a significant role. Although authorities continue to make efforts to eliminate the jihadist presence online, the internet's versatility and the organization's adaptability allow DAESH members and sympathizers to resurface each time, which demonstrates that although DAESH has lost its physical territory, the organization still poses a threat, with the risk of its resurgence at any time.

*Keywords:* *DAESH, organizations, Caliphate, violence, terrorists' attacks, abuses.*

# Introduction

Exploiting the instability in Syria, Iraq, and Africa, combined with the manipulation of public opinion, consequently attracting sympathizers through radical interpretation of religion and ideological justifications for violence, calls for unity among Muslims, demonization of perceived enemies, and the promise of purpose and belonging to a utopian state represented by the Islamic Caliphate, all these elements have contributed to the rise of DAESH on the global stage from 2014 to the present-day. The organization's high degree of adaptability to military situations in conflict regions, as well as technological and social changes, has facilitated the emergence of the "virtual Caliphate", compensating for territorial losses through the use of online platforms for recruiting, inspiring, and training followers in carrying out violent attacks.

# Terrorism – From Concept to Global Threat

The phenomenon of terrorism has become a global concern once national security crises and extremist threats from areas with terrorist potential - through the transit of radicalized individuals and religious propaganda, specifically of an extremist nature conducted beyond the MENA region - were transferred internationally, specifically in the West and Europe.

Despite terrorism not being a new concept, the identification and classification of terrorist acts have proven difficult due to the lack of an internationally accepted definition. Following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, experts theorized the evolution of modern terrorism, categorizing it into 4 distinct waves, each lasting between 30 and 40 years. These waves include anarchist terrorism from the 19th and early 20th centuries, anti-colonial terrorism from the 1920s to the 1960s, and left and right-wing terrorism from the 1970s to the 1980s (Rapoport, 2013).

In the early 1990s, Islamist groups carried out violent attacks both regionally and internationally. They used religion as a justifying force for acts of violence against "infidels"[1], the perpetrators considering this behavior a divine duty based on certain theological imperatives (Hoffman, 1993).

At the same time, the context (determined by a variety of social, economic, political, geographical, and cultural factors) amplifies the religious factor in justifying terrorist actions. Thus, religion cannot be considered the sole factor used as a cover for gaining legitimacy (Stoian-Karadeli, 2020). Moreover, many terrorist groups have emerged in response to political repression, social inequalities, economic deprivation, or military interventions, with extremist activities being openly justified through religious or cultural factors (Volpp, 2002).

Regarding the *modus operandi* of terrorist acts, assassinations, and hostage-taking have persisted, but the suicide bombing has been the most impactful and lethal tactical innovation, as it can be carried out on land, in the air, or at sea, almost always resulting in mass casualties and significant structural damage to the surrounding areas. This practice has reaffirmed the concept of the "martyr" (شهيد in Arabic, transliterated as *shaheed*), according to which the death of a fighter during an attack is noble, and self-sacrifice represents the ultimate way to show total devotion to the cause. Although only the perspective of rewards in paradise could inspire such acts, suicide attacks have also been used by secular groups, including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, who are credited with inventing the suicide belt and pioneering the involvement of women in carrying out suicide attacks (Walls, 2017), methods widely adopted by DAESH as well.

Given the complexity of the phenomenon, it is difficult to establish which terrorist groups have had the greatest impact on society. However, on an international level, there are only a few entities that, through their operational and propaganda techniques, have managed to entice a significant number of adherents, ensuring their global expansion and subsequent survival (despite the joint efforts of counter-terrorism organizations). Among these entities are DAESH, Al-Qaeda[2] (Al-Qaeda, 2023), Boko Haram[3] (Boko Haram, 2023), Hezbollah[4] (Hezbollah, 2023), and the Taliban Movement[5] (Taliban, 2023).

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[1] Kafir - كافر in Arabic - a term used to represent a person who does not believe in Allah, denies divine authority, or rejects Islamic principles (Kafir, n.d.).
[2] Sunni Islamic extremist organization founded in 1988 by Osama bin Laden; has particularly encouraged attacks against Western targets (Al-Qaeda, 2023).
[3] Terrorist organization based in Nigeria, responsible for numerous attacks in West Africa (Boko Haram, 2023).
[4] Shiite militant Islamic group and political party based in Lebanon; has been involved in various conflicts in the Middle East (Hezbollah, 2023).
[5] Sunni Islamic extremist group based in Afghanistan, involved in insurgency against the Afghan government (Taliban, 2023).

# DAESH

The terrorist organization known today as DAESH (an acronym derived from the Arabic phrase الدّولة الإسلاميّة في العراق والشام transliterated as *Ad-Dawlah Al-Islāmiyya fīr Al-Irāq wa-l Shām*, meaning Islamic State in Iraq and Levant/ISIL), also known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or the Islamic State[6] (Islamic State, 2023), emerged in the early 2010s under the leadership of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. DAESH gained notoriety from 2014 onwards through its campaigns in Iraq and Syria, as well as the attacks carried out on European soil (e.g. Paris in 2015; Nice, Berlin, Brussels, and Istanbul in 2016) (Europol, 2021).

The origins of DAESH can be traced back to the U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq in 2003; in 2004, the group initially emerged as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), led by Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. Although this association was a symbiosis for both groups, Al-Zarqawi gaining support and notoriety from Iraqi jihadists with the help of Al-Qaeda, and the latter developing a significant presence in Iraq, from the outset, there were divergences in operational objectives: Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri focused their attacks on American targets, while AQI waged campaigns of violence against Iraqi security forces and civilians, both Shiite and Sunni, who were considered apostates (McCants, 2015).

After the death of Al-Zarqawi in a U.S. airstrike in 2006, AQI went through a forced process of reorganization and rebranding, coming close to extinction due to the intervention of the US forces in the region. This was avoided through the unification of different jihadist groups active in Iraq by Al-Zarqawi, with the joint council announcing, after his death, the formation of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), led by Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi, who continued their activities according to previously conceived objectives and tactics (Stern & Berger, 2015).

After the elimination of ISI leader Abu Omar Al-Baghdadi and other members by American forces in 2010, two major events contributed to the survival of ISI. Firstly, the persecution of Sunni Muslims by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki led to the joining of Sunni resistance with the extremist movements active in the region, specifically ISI (Cockburn, 2014). Secondly, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011 provided the perfect premise for ISI to expand its territory by entering the Syrian conflict through the group Jabhat Al-Nusra (established in 2012 and affiliated with Al-Qaeda) (Byman, 2016). The Jabhat Al-Nusra – ISI merger on April 9, 2013 became the turning point between the newly established organization, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS/DAESH), and the parent organization, Al-Qaeda, which repudiated the unification and denied any connection with ISIS (Stern & Berger, 2015). During this period marked by changes and adaptations to new operational situations and the emergence of new technologies with the phenomenon of digitization, DAESH was led by Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, who persisted as the leader of the organization until 2019.

On July 4, 2014, after occupying significant portions of Syrian and Iraqi territories, Al-Baghdadi announced the formation of a global Caliphate, declaring himself the caliph and calling on Muslims worldwide to pledge allegiance to the Islamic State (Gomes & Mikhael, 2018).

Although DAESH shares some similarities with Al-Qaeda, such as the context of their emergence, namely U.S. interference in Arab states, and the desire to change the state of inferiority/submission of the Arab world to the West, at a political and administrative level, DAESH prioritized territorial assertion through the use of terror as a weapon to dominate the populations in the occupied territories, as well as the identification of local and international enemies. In this context, it aimed to create a state-like organization that allowed for better control of the seized areas and minimized the impact that the occasional death of a leader could have had on the organization's functioning. The state-like structure also enabled the organization to finance itself through taxes, in addition to donations from local/international sympathizers and funds from illegal activities. In contrast, Al-Qaeda initially relied on the income sources of Osama bin Laden and only later on donations and illicit activities to finance its objectives (Napoleoni, 2014).

Both organizations were significantly influenced by the Wahhabi teachings, which rejected any religious innovation, warned against cultural influences, and asserted that only some Muslims were truly faithful. However, DAESH pursued a more extreme interpretation of these teachings, focused on purifying Islam, which explains why DAESH targeted and killed both Muslims and non-Muslims alike (McCants, 2015).

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[6] A term frequently used in reference to DAESH, often avoided to prevent universal validation of the organization (Islamic State, 2023).

When it comes to their objectives, DAESH constructed a strategy aimed at transnationalizing the Caliphate through infiltrating conflict zones and intensifying tensions through calculated armed attacks, extracting resources for self-financing, utilizing regional and global propaganda, enticing leaders or other organizations to join them, recruiting and indoctrinating new members in an extremist manner, motivating and inspiring "lone wolves" to commit terrorist attacks in their home countries (Stern & Berger, 2015).

## Propaganda and the Virtual Caliphate

Jihadist propaganda has been an important strategy through which terrorist organizations have achieved certain objectives. Initially, DAESH adopted the propaganda model of Al-Qaeda, distributing video materials through platforms like YouTube, with content similar to Al-Qaeda's productions, the only difference being the comments inciting violence against Shiite Muslims (Perper, 2021).

However, as of 2014, realizing the importance of the online environment, DAESH invested significant resources in transferring propagandistic techniques from offline to online, compensating for the decrease in physical territories by utilizing the internet as a platform to provide information on training activities, planning and execution of attacks, as well as to motivate, inspire, and encourage believers to join their cause. They produced more content, of a higher quality. The most notable difference between Al-Qaeda and DAESH with regard to propaganda was the latter's adaptability to new technologies, maximizing the use of all tools of digitalization. While Al-Qaeda was the first organization to use propaganda as a weapon, it failed to keep up with technological progress, focusing its propagandistic activities on videos and websites, neglecting the significance of social media platforms that DAESH fully exploited to recruit young individuals (Choi et al., 2018).

There are multiple factors - social, cultural, economic, ideological, and religious - that underlie the desire of young individuals to join terrorist organizations. Shaping a particular problem or crisis (e.g., the abuses by the Bashar Al-Assad regime in Syria) and justifying violence as a means to resolve it are the premises upon which jihadist propaganda recruitment relies, while also exploiting the vulnerabilities and individual motivations

of those susceptible to radicalization. Furthermore, terrorist organizations tailor their narratives according to the type of audience. On the one hand, they use trauma and the desire for revenge to attract individuals from conflict zones, and on the other hand, they exploit discrimination, marginalization, and frustration among individuals from non-conflict or Western regions, creating a connection between the latter group and ostracized Muslim communities through graphic materials (e.g., Muslims in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, Iraq, or Afghanistan) (Speckhard, 2016).

Functioning as tools of emotional persuasion, most visual elements used in jihadist propaganda count on conscious or subconscious associations that the younger generation makes between the presented images/symbols/actions and their personal experiences or perceptions (e.g., the victims and destruction of holy sites, the revenge offered by jihadist fighters, the abuses of foreign armed forces, and the salvation provided by terrorist organizations) (Hassan & Azman, 2020).

The sense of belonging plays an important role in the radicalization of young individuals in search for a personal or religious identity, often turning to online platforms to find answers. Online self-radicalization is based on the fascination that young people develop for belonging to a group that demonstrates loyalty to Islam or retaliatory actions on behalf of the Muslim community through the materials they distribute (Hassan & Azman, 2020). Terrorist organizations exploit such sentiments in order to captivate followers by interpreting religious texts in a way that allows them to justify the use of violence, disguising armed actions under the guise of self-defense (e.g., DAESH uses specific verses from the Quran, such as Surah Al-Anfal 8:60, to justify armed attacks, including against civilians) (Poljarevic, 2021) and promoting extremist ideologies, such as glorifying suicide attacks, invoking the idea of martyrdom (e.g., terrorist organizations like DAESH, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad argue that death in their cause is an honorable and righteous act, rewarded in the afterlife) (Henne, 2012).

Analyzing the speeches of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, it has been noted that beyond the military-operational context, the leader conveyed messages to sympathizers on Islamic holidays (Ramadan, Eid Al-Adha), aiming to intensify the sense of duty of the followers towards Islam, or at times when information about his death was circulating, to assure the public that he was alive and the organization will persist in its effort to wage jihad. Furthermore, Al-Baghdadi's discourse

exhibits characteristics of religious propaganda in which the author glorifies divine power, with Allah being all-powerful and controlling the fate of all men, thus the leader seeks help and protection from anything that could divert him from the path of Allah. For Al-Baghdadi, the ideal Muslim state is the one inherited from Muhammad, namely the Caliphate, which, at least theoretically, should encompass all territories where Muslims reside. Therefore, the name of Allah is frequently repeated in the disseminated speeches.

A prevalent theme in jihadist propaganda, including that of DAESH, is hostility towards the West, Christianity, and non-Muslims/apostate Muslims (takfiris), accused of oppressing the ummah (Muslim nation) and hindering the formation of a global Islamic state (Allendorfer & Herring, 2015). By utilizing important aspects of Islamic identity (the legitimacy of Sharia, the duty of Muslims to wage jihad, the unity of the ummah, divine sanction, martyrdom, etc.), DAESH aims to sensitize its audience by portraying justifications for their initiated actions. A relevant example is the speech delivered by Al-Baghdadi on September 28, 2017, in which he explicitly emphasized the importance of "offensive jihad," underlying the fact that "apostate unbelievers" should be attacked "in their own territory." Subsequently, one of the attacks that followed was carried out in France by a Tunisian ethnic, a DAESH follower, who stabbed two young women at the Saint-Charles metro station in Marseille and was later shot by the police forces (BBC News, 2017).

Except the audio messages directly addressed to the target audience by terrorist organizations' leaders/representatives, jihadist propaganda predominantly relies on the visual aspect of distributed materials, using imagery to expand the audience, including those who lack reading or text-processing skills, in regions with a large population of young individuals and high illiteracy rates (Winkler & Dauber, 2014). Terrorists employ various visual means to achieve their objectives, such as: chromatic elements associated with specific meanings (black for the importance of jihad, blue and white evoking hope and heavenly paradise, and green synonymous with Islam), natural elements (the sun, moon, crescent, water, flowers, and desert) to represent aspects of Islamic identity, weaponry to illustrate the violent nature of jihad and the military strength of the organization, Islamic symbols and texts (including the Quran and the testimony of faith - shahada) that serve as calls for Muslims to uphold their religious duty and

participate in jihad, different animals (particularly lions, eagles, and horses) used as symbols of courage, power, and victory. Moreover, martyr photographs are considered central in jihadist propaganda as they praise and celebrate individuals who have made the ultimate sacrifice, while images portraying children and women are used to stir feelings of injustice, anger, and the desire to retaliate.

Terrorist organizations, specifically DAESH, which exhibit a strong anti-Western sentiment, frequently use edited images depicting symbols from Western traditions and religious or political figures, often accompanied by calls to violence (in various regional or internationally recognized languages) in their propaganda campaigns. An example is DAESH's propaganda campaign in December 2018. In the context of President Donald Trump's announcement of withdrawal of the military troops from Syria, DAESH and its affiliates disseminated threats against Western states, as well as against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu through channels such as Telegram and the official Al-Ghurabaa website. The materials included graphic images of the mentioned political leaders, as well as a video of the organization's leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, urging supporters to engage in violence and seek revenge (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2023).

Furthermore, terrorist organizations present themselves to their audience in a favorable light aligned with their established objectives. In this context, DAESH utilizes propagandistic techniques to portray itself as a pure Islamic utopia engaged in a holy war against its enemies, while also ensuring social justice, fair governance, and an authentic religious and moral existence for its followers/believers. This image created and propagated through social media appeals to sympathizers who are eager either to contribute to changing the operational situation (e.g., overthrowing the oppressive regime of Bashar Al-Assad) or to be part of an apparently united Muslim community (DAESH presenting itself as a home for Muslims worldwide), despite the lack of direct contact with extremist ideologies. There are numerous examples of individuals from different backgrounds for whom jihadist propaganda messages have had the intended impact, such as the case of three women from the UK who left their spouses and traveled to Syria with their children to join the Islamic Caliphate, or a young couple from Mississippi, graduates in Psychology, who made efforts to reach Syria with the same purpose (Hoffman, 2016).

In fact, since the early 2000s, the arsenal of terrorist organizations has expanded to include not only traditional weaponry (such as AK-47 assault rifles, explosives, hand grenades, ammunition cartridges, etc.) but also technological devices for the production and dissemination of propaganda materials, such as CDs, DVDs, tapes, recording cameras, laptops, computers, and internet connectivity. DAESH even established Diwan al-I'lam al-Markazi/Central Media Office, dedicated to producing propaganda content (including beheadings, suicide attacks, testimonials of jihadist fighters) distributed online through official websites, magazines, and social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2018). Telegram emerged as a communication tool for jihadists following the constant actions taken by authorities to block or remove extremist-terrorist content online. With territorial and personnel losses experienced between 2015 and 2017, DAESH shifted its funding to other operational segments, leading to a visible decline in its media activities, as evidenced by the reduction in the number of materials promoted online.

Concerning the means used to disseminate propaganda materials online, the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center (ITIC)[7] identified numerous platforms either officially belonging to DAESH or connected to its content. Throughout the evolution of this entity, its media activities have changed, and currently, only a few of DAESH's jihadist propaganda platforms are confirmed as active, such as the weekly magazine Al-Naba, the news agency A'maq, Al-Furqan Media (responsible for producing official video and audio recordings), as well as social media networks.

In 2019, an operation led by Europol and the European Union, in cooperation with various online service providers (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Telegram) and authorities from EU member states, resulted in the elimination of hundreds of thousands of accounts and servers affiliated with DAESH. This significantly hindered the group's online activity. Among the mentioned platforms, Telegram (preferred by terrorists due to its default security settings) had the highest number of channels and accounts removed. Additionally, new mechanisms for detecting and removing terrorist content were implemented, preventing DAESH members from returning afterward (Seldin, 2019).

Moreover, the spread of messages to specific audiences or translating them into regional languages can provide clues about DAESH's future plans. For example, the Al-Azaim Media Foundation, operating in Afghanistan, has predominantly published materials in African, Asian, and Eastern European languages since 2022, which could indicate a potential shift in DAESH's recruitment or operational cell formation objectives in these areas (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2023).

The rhetoric employed in the disseminated materials aimed to validate the organization globally and attract new followers from diverse origins and ethnicities by presenting enhanced offensive capabilities and extreme violence portrayed directly through images/videos to intimidate enemies, as well as utilizing Islamic concepts/symbols to ideologically justify the organization's actions (McDearis, 2016). Additionally, personalized content and the physical and ideological aggressiveness portrayed in DAESH's shared content have a greater mobilizing effect on "lone wolves" for carrying out terrorist attacks in their home countries, particularly in the West. Although these individuals have limited contact with the terrorist organization, they resort to self-radicalization through consuming extremist content and act on their own behalf in its name (Byman, 2015).

## DAESH – Past, Present, Future

DAESH emerged as a major terrorist threat to both the Middle East and the West in 2014. At its peak, the organization controlled approximately one-third of Syria and 40% of Iraq, declaring the establishment of the Islamic Caliphate and pursuing continued expansion through strategies based on extreme violence and jihadist propaganda. Despite its influence, by December 2017, it had lost 95% of its territory, including its two major strongholds: Mosul (Iraq's second-largest city) and the de facto capital, Raqqa (a city in northern Syria), due to the military intervention by the US-led coalition.

Despite the territorial and resource losses suffered, as well as the operational efforts made to maintain territorial control between 2014 and 2017, the organization managed to coordinate and inspire numerous armed attacks resulting in hundreds of casualties beyond the borders of the so-called Caliphate. This was due to the organization's ability to adapt and establish global connections by expanding its network of affiliates (Glenn et al., 2019).

During this period, the organization's online activity also significantly contributed to its presence and survival. Jihadist propaganda inspired numerous attacks in the West through lone wolves (e.g., the coordinated attacks in Paris, in 2015, and Brussels in 2016, resulting in 130 and 32 deaths, respectively, and hundreds of injuries) (BBC News, 2015). DAESH propagandists conducted extensive campaigns demonizing the United States, successfully inciting anger among Muslims in the West. This is evidenced by the terrorist attack in June 2016 on a nightclub in Orlando, Florida (USA), resulting in 49 deaths and 53 injuries. The 29-year-old perpetrator pledged allegiance to the organization and its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi during his conversations with the authorities, citing the killing of Abu Waheeb in Iraq by US military forces as the trigger for the attack (Ellis et al., 2016).

The threat posed by DAESH has not disappeared despite the campaign issued by the US-led coalition and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) against its members and the death of its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2019 during a raid in northern Syria by US military forces (Glenn et al., 2019).

The Islamic Caliphate has transformed into a virtual Caliphate, free from territorial constraints, with a global reach. This has allowed the organization to survive and form networks of sympathizers worldwide, despite dwindling resources and reduced online activity. DAESH has demonstrated a high level of adaptability by exploiting the virtual environment to achieve its objectives (e.g., using encrypted messaging applications like Telegram to communicate with followers and coordinate remote attacks; utilizing social media platforms to radicalize individuals and motivate them to act in the name of jihadist ideology) (Hadra, 2015).

On the other hand, in order to enhance the effectiveness of lone wolf attacks, DAESH has made some modifications to its disseminated modus operandi by coordinating smaller, decentralized cells that are harder to detect and eliminate. These cells typically consist of a few individuals who communicate through encrypted messages and are capable of carrying out armed attacks with minimal coordination from the organization.

DAESH propagandists have encouraged their followers to target civilian populations in crowded public spaces, tourist areas, or places of worship (in contrast to the era of al-Baghdadi when attacks were concentrated on political or military targets, government buildings, military bases, etc.), with the aim of maximizing the number of victims and inducing a sense of panic among the population. Attackers are also encouraged to use low-tech tools that are easier to acquire and less costly (e.g., knives, vehicles, small-caliber firearms), which still have the desired effect when used against a crowd of civilians. Among the relevant examples are the terrorist attacks in February, October, and November 2020, in London, Nice, and Vienna, respectively, claimed by DAESH (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 2018).

In recent years, DAESH has demonstrated a high level of versatility by returning to guerrilla warfare and undergoing organizational restructuring in terms of military-security, administration, and media. The attacks have been focused on strategic points, such as the Sina'a prison (January 2022), with the goal of releasing 3,500 jihadist militants. The attacks were also publicized online through the Amaq News agency to ensure the audience and supporters are aware of the organization's constant presence in the region (Mazel, 2022).

Although authorities continue to make efforts to eliminate the jihadist presence online, the internet's versatility and the organization's adaptability allow DAESH members/sympathizers to resurface each time, creating extremist content that inspires and motivates violent actions, as well as virtual groups for disseminating this content and coordinating attacks. This demonstrates that although DAESH has lost its physical territory, the organization still poses a threat, with the risk of its resurgence at any time.

## Conclusions

Propaganda plays a significant role in the strategic objectives of terrorist organizations, including DAESH. These entities employ various mechanisms to ensure their continuity, such as utilizing Islamic concepts and symbols to justify violent actions and exploiting online platforms for recruitment, mobilization, and inspiration of terrorist attacks.

The virtual environment has proven instrumental in the radicalization of vulnerable individuals. The availability of terrorist content online, the presence of extremist elements on social media platforms, and the use of visually appealing and technically sophisticated

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[7] ITIC - An online think tank that issues informative bulletins and studies about terrorist organizations (Palestinian, Lebanese, and affiliates of global jihad), monitoring various aspects of terrorist activities in the Middle East and elsewhere: countries sponsoring terrorism, terrorist attacks, terrorist infrastructure, weaponry, financing, media institutions of terrorist organizations, etc. (The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, n.d.).

propaganda messages have contributed to an increase in radicalization cases.

DAESH has capitalized on situations of instability in regions like Syria, Iraq, and Africa. They manipulate public opinion, attract sympathizers through religious and ideological justifications for violence, demonize perceived enemies, and promise a utopian state represented by the Islamic Caliphate. These factors have facilitated the organization's rise and survival on the global stage.

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