

The Female Brigade of the Islamic State (ISIS): Why Feminism Fail to Respond?

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to discuss the concept of “Female Jihad” coupled with discussion of the causes which compel women to join the ranks of the Female Brigade of Islamic State (IS). Women from the western, developed societies also join IS for multiplicity of reasons. The light is also shed over tools utilized by ISIS to attract the young and vulnerable. The article also focuses on the theoretical tools used by the Feminists in the understanding of these female fighters. It also discusses that why the Feminists and the states have so far not been successful to protect women, from joining these terrorist organizations. Lastly, recommendations are also made on how to control the influx of the people into these violent organizations and the role Feminists and the states have to play to provide for and protect those who want to return

Key Words: Feminism, Feminists, Gender, Discrimination, Islamic State (ISIS), Al-Khansaa, Marginalization

Introduction

The article is an attempt to analyze and understand the female fighters of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) particularly focusing the underlying reasons which made the women join the terrorist organization viz. ISIS. From a Feminist perspective, theoretical approaches are also discussed in this regard, and lastly the reason as to why the Feminists, as well as the States, have not been successful to protect and rehabilitate regarding these female fighters is also look upon. The article is an attempt to understand the causes which impel the women to join the militant organizations like ISIS. Also, the article serves as a basic guide for the states on how to handle the former ISIS fighters who want to return to their country, and to prevent more influx of the people to terrorist organizations.

It is imperative, foremost, to discuss the central concept of Feminism, and the evolutionary process which has led females to joining ISIS.

Feminism: A Brief Overview

Feminism can be understood as a political, cultural and economic movement aiming for the establishment of equal rights and opportunities, and

legal protection, of females_([History and Theory of Feminism](#)). Issues like gender discrimination, inequality, and marginalization are at the heart of Feminism. There are different strands of Feminism, differing in their means for the emancipation of women.

Feminist scholarship starts their debate by presenting a dissection of the term “Gender”, and how it is different from “sex”. Feminists define Gender as referring to “the complex social construction of men’s and women’s identities...[and] behaviors...in relation to each other”_([Thorburn, 2000](#)). Moreover, Feminists maintain that the discourse on gender revolves around the “notion of power and power dynamics between genders”_([Thorburn, 2000](#)). To say that, Gender, unlike sex which is biological, is defined by feminists as being a social construct that define and impose who are men and who are women. And, fundamental to this construction is the “power dynamics”_([Thorburn, 2000](#)) between these two socially defined identities i.e. men and women, that have been implemented, strengthened and preserved historically.

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Another term that is recurrent in the Feminist literature is “patriarchy”. Feminists define patriarchy as “a system in which females are subordinate to males” established, sustained and propagated in a way that it is considered right for men to command and females to obey. Lorraine Code argues that the roots of patriarchy can be traced as far back as the times of Aristotle—when he asserted that “women’s biological inferiority is akin to her reasoning capabilities” (Code, 2002).

Thus, Feminism calls for cultural, economic, political, social and societal emancipation of women from the shackles imposed by the historical process and structure that is maintained and sustained by patriarchy.

Feminism in IR

Feminists, by stating the difference between gender and sex and by defining patriarchy, view the world constructed as one in which males are dominant, and where women are oppressed and are not given equal rights and representation and opportunities. Same goes for Feminist critique in International Relations (IR): the scholarship argues that most of the key figures in IR i.e. Heads of states, Heads of governments, Ministers, Diplomats, Practitioners, etc. have been, and still are, male. That is, even the field of IR is patriarchal in essence. Thus, “discussions within IR remain largely constrained by those who lack consideration of women’s roles in world politics (because they have not been trained to value and include the perspective of women)” (Ruiz).

Just like other theories, Feminism is a theory which carries within itself a wide range of facets and strands that concern how it should be represented. However, for the ease, Code’s classification of the Feminist theories into two strands i.e. i) Standpoint Feminism and ii) Radical Feminism is taken for the study.

Standpoint Feminism analyzes how the “the gendered construction of knowledge... [helps to] understand traditional topics in international relations” and is “alerting us to the idea that gender may be structuring how we think in the international context”. Simply put, Standpoint theory maintains that social sciences (IR, etc.) should be practiced from the standpoint of females because, Feminists argue, they are better equipped to understand some aspects of the world (Collins, 2009).

Drawing on the gendered construction of IR, Tickner argues that IR has been marginalizing

women’s voices, and stressed that women have the “knowledge, perspectives and experiences that should be brought to bear on the study of international relations”. Code cites an example in this regard: So far as Traditional Theories of IR are concerned, Security is about defense of a state. Tickner would argue that this should not be the case because security for women “might be different because women are more likely to be attacked by men they know, rather than strangers from other states.” That means that even when the state is secure from the Traditional theories of IR, women may be insecure from the elements that exist in that state. To say that, Feminist view an individual female as the referent object of security.

On the other hand, Radical Feminist Theory is defined by Martin Griffiths as the one that “focus[es] on the lives and experiences of women...showing how women’s activities are made invisible on the international scene.” The argument can be summarized in a well-known question posed by another Feminist, Cynthia Enloe: “Where are the women?” Enloe, a radical feminist, argues that females should not only seek more representation and rights, but also look for the areas where women have already fulfilled their role to ensure “that international system works smoothly and efficiently.” Enloe is of the view that following inquiry into such matters would bring to fore the issues of “low politics” which actually are significant to the safety of women. Simply put, Radical Feminist theory is of the view that females have never been excluded from IR, but their efforts are never publicly acknowledged. And they call for acknowledgment and appreciation of works led by females in international politics, and also emphasize a greater role of female in the said field i.e. IR.

Once we have looked briefly over the Feminist theory and its focus on emancipation of Women from the shackles imposed by the patriarchal society, it is now imperative to look at another extraordinary phenomenon: Women marching into the ranks of ISIS. But before that, an overview of the ISIS is equally important.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) and Daesh, is a powerful militant organization operating mainly in Middle East. The history of Islamic State can be traced back to 2004 when Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi of Osama bin Laden’s Al Qaeda founded “Al Qaeda in Iraq”. The aim was to remove the western occupation of Iraq (following the US’s invasion in 2003) and replace it

with a Sunni regime. In 2013, when Syrian Civil War started, the group grew its operating abilities and started fighting against the Syrian forces—which led them to acquire more territories. Since their control had extended from Iraq to many parts of Syria, in 2013, the group officially renamed itself as “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.” [_\(Gerges, 2016\)](#).

Since the formal renaming of the militant organization, ISIS has seen a sudden upsurge in number of females joining the ranks. In 2015, around 550 women left their home to travel to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS [_\(Jacobs, 2017\)](#). These numbers have increased throughout the years accounting for nearly 4,800 females in 2018. [_\(Vale, 2018\)](#).

As mentioned earlier, ISIS majorly operates in Syria and Iraq with the objective of creating Sharia-based Islamic states in the region first, and then the whole world. Foreign fighters, extremists are being radicalized through various channels e.g. social media, to create influx in the region. This has made this organization a main source of instability not only in the Middle East but to whole world. The continuing war and conflicts in the Middle East, particularly Syria, have been used as a magnet to attract youth from more than 90 countries to join this organization. As a result, hundreds of fighters including boys and girls from Eurasia, as well as the West, join this organization every year. While most of the ISIS combatants are men, a large number of women have left their homes to join ISIS. The main medium employed by ISIS for their propaganda is mainly Social Media and Networking sites [_\(Ali, 2015\)](#).

Al-Khansaa Brigade

The ISIS has multiple designated wings for carrying out operations of varying types and degrees. Out of these, one is operated by female members of the ISIS. That is known as Al-Khansaa Brigade. The unit is a de-facto police wing which is responsible for moral and physical policing of the female population of Mosul and Raqqa. The unit became operational at the end of 2014 and continues to work till this day. The headquarters is believed to be located in Raqqa and the strength of soldiers is around 60. The current commander of this wing is “*Fateha Majiti*”.

Al-Khansaa brigade came into being with sole purpose of controlling the female population of Islamic State and to impose Sharia Law on them. The brigade performs the duties of Patrolling, training of young recruits, searching and also holds punishments for the women violating Sharia Laws. A commander of

ISIS named Abu Ahmad in support of AL-Khansaa claimed that they have formed a female wing which holds accounts of all the women in the Islamic State and is responsible for educating women and bringing them to the path of Sharia. The Al-Khansaa brigade is also equipped with a team of female hackers which is involved in hacking more than 100 accounts of authorities both in Iraq and outside Iraq.

The organizational structure of Al-Khansaa is purely sex-segregated. Only women are functionaries in it. Women are recruited from the age range of 18-25 years. These women are trained for a month and then recruited to units. Women soldiers which undergo this training also receive a monthly pay of around 70 to 100 pounds. Coming towards the recruits’ classification, most of the soldiers are recruited locally from the areas of Raqqa but an interview conducted by Fox News indicated that there are many soldiers who are foreign nationals specifically Europeans which are part of this unit.

The Female Brigade i.e. Al-Khansaa is not defunct but functional to a lower extent. The brigade has been influential in carrying out significant operations, and is actually a revolutionary concept as it gives women an opportunity to take up arms—and even extend punishments to the violators. To these women, that is *jihad*.

Female Jihad

The phenomenon of women marching in the lines of ISIS fighters is, in fact, an emancipating and revolutionary process of oppressed women in a patriarchal society. ISIS empowers women as it turns them into warriors—at least superficially—giving them a sense of power and authority which they have ever longed for in male-dominated society. Women delivering their thoughts, although extreme to children, on internet gives them a power of influence in society. In fact, they utilize their traditional role of house making, and participate. The sense of motherhood they create, nourishes not only young fighters for Jihad but also highlight their role in the society. In addition, they write translations, provide logistics support, sometimes manage human resource which also enables them to contribute to this cause and have a feeling of influence. Women take ISIS as an organization that will provide freedom and manifest their dreams of taking control. In this regard, Al-Khansaa brigade of ISIS is particularly important but is beyond the scope of this article.

The theoretical framework that feminism employs on the women joining the ISIS can easily be understood if one has acquainted themselves with Feminism as a theory. Feminism calls of equality of men and women, and emancipating women from the shackles of the patriarchal society, as discussed earlier.

This section discusses theorizing as a process used to test assumptions on different phenomena regarding women joining the ISIS. It also focuses on the “cultural nationality” and economics (The Women in Daesh: Deconstructing Complex Gender Dynamics in Daesh Recruitment Propaganda, 2017) that forces women to join ISIS with addition to male-centered approach who do not consider, according to the Feminists, any of the perspectives and experiences of women and issues that affect women.

Moreover, it is necessary to see ISIS through gender-specific lens. The concept of jihad for men is different than that of women. According to Katharina Von Knop, “the concept of the female Jihad means that the women carry out a political act by supporting their male relatives, educating their children in the ideology and facilitating terrorist operations” (Knop, 2007)—this concept of female jihad is the key point of understanding female recruits and recognizing the potential threat they pose. The concept of female jihad is necessary to be discussed because jihad is the main motivating factor behind women recruitment.

At this juncture, it is imperative to note the concept of jihad for the women:

“A Muslim woman is a female Jihad warrior always and everywhere. She is a female Jihad warrior who wages Jihad by means of funding Jihad. She wages Jihad by means of waiting for her Jihad warrior husband, and when she educates her children to that which Allah loves. She wages jihad when she supports Jihad when she calls for jihad in word, deed, belief, and prayer.”

—Umm Badr, “Obstacles in the Path of the Jihad Warrior Woman,”

Why do Women Join ISIS?

Men fight for power, or for honor, etc., women seek the same (Pearson, *Why Men Fight and Women Don't: Masculinity and Extremist Violence*, 2018). Physically, they are unable to achieve any of this—as women are not strong enough to bear heavy damages, etc.—so the only way left for them is to facilitate the process for men. In ISIS, women are majorly on non-

combatant roles (Anita Peresin and Alberto Cervone, 2015). But they do fight. More often than not, though, they provide service roles to male combatants or they serve as wives of male jihadists (Spencer, 2016). These roles that women are playing through jihad allows women to have an influence over their children and their homes—which they have always wished and, now, struggle for. These women are gifted with money when they marry the *jihadis*.

Moreover, the weapons are also provided to give them a sense of superiority and adventure (Masi, 2014). The women also develop a kind of sisterhood between themselves while they fight. This sisterhood leads them to develop and form communities which propagate the ideologies ISIS. And, in this way, they not only develop a sense of belonging between them but also serve as attraction to new recruits.

But the question still remains that what will they get after letting their husband die in suicide attacks leaving them alone with their children? The answer to this question is the honor they receive. They are considered as women who have reserved a place in heaven (Saripi, 2015). ISIS takes care of their children and guarantees their survival. In this way women get everything they demanded: Power, honor and status (Bjorgum, 2016). Thus, the concept of female jihad leads women into ISIS. While the concept of jihad is the major motivating factor behind recruitment of women, there are several other factors that are responsible for this.

While discussing the motivating factors of women joining ISIS, it is necessary to build up a coherent analysis that depicts the social condition women are facing nowadays. Women are actually the gatekeepers of the society as they are bringing up the new generation. So, any wrong step vis-à-vis these architects will lead them to more danger. And this is happening right at the moment. Women are also the victims of the war in Syria (around 25 percent of deaths are that of Women) (Taylor, 2015) and elsewhere, and this provides an impetus to go further into violent organizations like ISIS. For example, men leave their wives alone with their children. The women, on the other hand, have to face the calamities alone. Political surveillance of state and social stigma leaves them barehanded to contribute and pave the way for any part for their and their children's healthy development. If their husband dies fighting, which is true in most of the cases, the women are left completely stranded. As Syria and Iraq have strict laws about second marriage, it is nearly impossible for

them to re-marry (Syria: Extremists Restricting Women's Rights, 2014).

Moreover, if they are unable to provide the death certificate of their first husband it is impossible for them to inherit any property. Faced with ostracism and financial pressures, most of the women go for organizations like ISIS that not only feed them but also helps to raise their children. In this way, strict laws and false protection of women security lead them to more danger.

The reasons and motivating factor along with other factors responsible for ever-increasing numbers of female fighters in ISIS are discussed below (Shajkovi, 2018).

Seeking Revenge

Revenge is one of the most dominating factors responsible for the female fighters' influx to ISIS. Avengers are heavily grieved by the geopolitics, marginalization, and discrimination. They want to an end to this. For this, ISIS's false propaganda of fighting for rights comes into use. Women from this category are provoked to join ISIS by giving them enough power to take action on behalf of poor or weak. This is a key motivator in bringing them to Syria from their homes.

Seeking Meaning of Life

According to Department of Homeland Security of United States of America, most of the women who are joining ISIS were actually in the pursuit of meaning in their life. Muslim women from European countries like Germany, Austria, Netherlands are involved in this category. These women are desperate to change their life to positivity. As the western culture makes them aloof and emotionally stagnant, these women want to belong to something larger than life. In this case, ISIS's religious propaganda works for filling the gap. The ISIS recruiters are physically present to do this job. Most of these cases are religiously triggered since most of the women find their connection with religion.

Adventurous: Thrill-Seeker Females

These are the women who are thrill seekers. Their bored life gives them anxiety and depression, and a sense of stagnation. These women seek sex, fulfillment of their desires, romance, etc. They are fond of men who show valor and are involved in some kind adventures. They want to live amongst them and experience such adventures e.g. beheading individuals, carrying out strikes, etc. These types of recruits are mostly students from high schools and universities. The ISIS digital propaganda is involved in

this. Video files, pictures, blogs are made available where conflicts and wars are shown as adventures. The videos of ISIS female fighters winning the war, conquering areas, etc. give them a rush of adrenaline. This type of content serves enough to lead them to someone who recruits them to ISIS.

The Materialistic Factors

Then, comes the women who want to join ISIS for money. As ISIS is involved in propagating and illustrating itself as a highly-paid organization, many of the people with their families want to become part of it. Many men, too, with their families have made their way to ISIS for better future. This is also a reason for women joining ISIS.

Roshanara Choudhry: A Case Study

A case study of this argument is Roshonara Choudhry (Pearson, 2015): a British-Muslim woman turned jihadist. Influenced by ISIS's propaganda on YouTube, in particular the videos by a radical cleric Anwar AlAwlaki, and also Sheikh Abdullah Azam, she embarked on the journey to fulfill the religious obligation of Jihad. In an interview with the police, when she was arrested, she confessed to being influenced by Awlaki. The edited version of the interview was published by *The Guardian*_(Dodd, 2010):

Q: OK, can you pinpoint the time when that changed or was it a gradual ... was there one particular incident?

A: Like, erm, after like listening to the lectures, I realised by obligation but I didn't wanna like fight myself and just thought other people should fight, like men, but then I found out that even women are supposed to fight as well so I thought I should join in.

Q: Where did you find that out from?

A: A YouTube video by Sheikh Abdullah Azzam.

Q: And what was he saying?

A: He was saying that when a Muslim land is attacked it becomes obligatory on every man, woman and child and even slave to go out and fight and defend the land.

The story does not stop here. There are countless social media posts which actually depict the emotions of these women. Such as:

So many beheadings at the same time, Allahu Akbar [God is the greatest], this video is beautiful #DawlaMediaTeamDoingItRight

I was happy to see the beheading of that kaafir [non-believer], I just rewinded to the cutting part... (Hoyle et al., 2015, p. 29)

You Christians all need beheading with a nice blunt knife and stuck on the railings at Raqqa. (The Guardian, 2014a)

The aforementioned testimonials and statements are just a glimpse of how the propaganda tools of ISIS have been successful in attracting females as well as men. The reasons for joining the organizations vary, some of which have been discussed earlier.

Having discussed reasons, now we shall have a look at how the Feminists theoretically describe the female brigade of ISIS.

Theoretical Explanations

The causes and reasons behind joining the female brigade of the ISIS are mainly gender discrimination, inequality and the prevailing male-dominated structure of society. Now some light shall be shed over the understanding of these women by the Feminists.

Most of the Feminists employ an “ethnographic” approach to the understanding of the female fights of ISIS. It aims at uncovering the underlying causes and the perspectives on how gender is understood and given meaning in a social context, and how this understanding and meaning is related to power (Elana D. Buch and Karen M. Staller: 2014). Moreover, Feminists also argue that cultural dimension is manifested in this regard as women are given lesser representation in public sphere, thus creating an “identity crisis” (TiinaMäntymäki, Anna Foka and MarinellaRodi-Risberg 2015). Feminists also take into consideration the role of media in creating a discourse of identity crisis on part of women—thus leading them into a sense of inferiority (Caroline Enberg 2015).

That being said, Feminists explain the underlying causes of identity crisis and the sense of inferiority that overwhelm women behind going all-out and joining the terrorist organization like ISIS.

Another theoretical approach applied to these females is that of “Deviant” women (Gentry, 2007). Since the society is based on agents and structures and structures compel the agents to act in a certain way, women who do not conform to these structures, and also the “normal femininity”, are considered “others” i.e. deviant women—thus, again, creating a sense of discrimination and marginalization. They further argue:

“women conducting violent acts are perceived as less feminine or even less human; they are flawed in their femininity. Since violent women deviate from the social understanding of femininity, they are categorized as ‘bad’ women.” (Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry: 2007)

Simply put, Feminists employ their narrative of marginalization and discrimination against women in the male-led society, which does not necessarily take into consideration the protection and rights of women, in the theoretical explanation of the females joining the camps of ISIS.

Having illustrated the theoretical debates concerning the female terrorists of ISIS, it must be noted that the scholars take the case of Female ISIS fighters into the Critical Security domain which takes individuals, not states, as the referent objects and benefactors (Natalie Florea Hudson, Alex Kreidenweis and Charli Carpenter 2013).

Moreover, as the Feminism itself is an off-shoot of Post-Positivist tradition that questions the established reality, the Feminist in this case also question the well-established structure of patriarchy. By doing that, they signal toward the discrimination and marginalization of women that pave the way for women to join organizations like ISIS.

We have looked at the underlying causes which compel the females to join ISIS camps. Moreover, we have also looked into where the Feminists stand in their explanation of these females, and the theoretical perspectives they employ in the study of these females have also been discussed. We now move towards the indispensable question which concerns this phenomenon: Why have Feminists, as well as the states, failed to protect and bring back these vulnerable individuals?

Feminist and States’ Response to these Fighters

According to a study, till July 2018, around 41,490 individuals had joined the notorious, terrorist organization. Out of these affiliates, 4,761 (13%) were females. What is more interesting is that, after the fall of the so-called Caliphate in March 2019 (when ISIS lost its final piece of territory), the females returning to their original country accounted for only 4% (256) of the total number of the returnees (i.e. 7,336 individuals). The disproportionate number of females returning to their homelands needs dissection—which will be discussed henceforth.

At the time of joining, most of the females are “young, second or third generation immigrant living in

a Western country” (Ulas, 2019) who are understandably vulnerable to extremist thoughts and ideologies. Coupled with the several reasons discussed before, these females end up joining ISIS’s female brigades. When these females become active ISIS fighters, they are termed as “terrorists” and criminals in their homeland which, ultimately, cuts any single possibility of them returning to their original countries.

No matter the reason behind joining the ISIS, when these females realize the grave mistake they have made, and show willingness to come back to their country of origin, they are not given the right to do so—rather they are ridiculed and doomed for their mistakes. Most recent examples of such cases include Shamima Begum and Hoda Muthana.

Shamima Begum was a British citizen. After joining the ISIS, she married a jihadist and stayed there for four years. When Begum requested to be given the right to come back to her country with her newborn baby, she was denied that right and was stripped off of her UK citizenship. Muthana’s case is no different—a young female in her 20s, when she requested to be reunited with her family in the US, Michael Pompeo (Secretary of State) denied that. (Hanoush, 2019)

The examples are countless. And, that is exactly the reason why the states, and the feminists, have failed here. When there is the dire need of rehabilitation and protection for these females, there are forsaken and left on their own. The time when these females show willingness to come back is the most delicate juncture—it is an opportunity which must be availed by both the Feminists and the State, and as well as the entire humanity. But, unfortunately, neither Feminists have been vocal in this regard nor the States have taken the responsibility to assimilate them back to their society.

In this regard, the steps taken by Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark are noteworthy as these countries have introduced a post-trial psychological rehabilitation program for the former female ISIS fighters so as to de-radicalize them and mainstream them into their society. These states understand of the fact that rehabilitation and social reintegration are the key factors to help steer the naïve teenagers away from extremism (Khalid, 2018).

Still, the question of the fairness of trials exists. Being a member of terrorist organization, the person is looked upon with disdain, abhorrence and prejudice by common people as well as the governments. Though fair trial is necessary, it is equally significant to

try to extend a hand toward these vulnerable people. Also, it is one of the best times to provide them with rehabilitation and incorporate them into de-radicalization programs. The states and feminists have to do more in this regard.

Conclusion

Due to the various factors and reasons discussed above, vulnerable yet ambitious females end up joining the ranks of ISIS. Feminists, on their part, employ various theoretical perspectives for understanding this phenomenon, discussing in their arguments the cultural and societal and politico-economic structures of inequality and gender discrimination which drive the females to join the militant organizations. While most of these females are indoctrinated and influenced by the ideology of ISIS propagated through a multitude of channels and mediums, the states as well as Feminists are doing very little to re-integrate and rehabilitate those female fighters which want to come back.

It must be noted here that most of these women, who have joined militant organizations like ISIS, were vulnerable to these ideologies. While the social media outreach of ISIS has increased throughout the years, states have done little to curtail that. This explains the increase in numbers of the ISIS fighters recently. Similarly, instead of going soft and providing for them, states are going hard on those who joined these organizations. The cases of US and UK (discussed above) manifest that.

ISIS has fallen, for now. But the recent Turkish Operation Peace Spring, and subsequent fleeing of a large number of ISIS leaders may pave the way for its resurgence considering the fact that US plans to withdraw its troops from the Middle East. If the reasons discussed in the article are not looked into and considered and analyzed, more and more fighters including female may again embark on the same journey which has kept Human Rights activists, Feminists and statesmen awake at night. Hence, there is a dire need to keep this from happening by reintegrating more and more former ISIS fighters to their societies and to provide for them as much as possible.

Recommendations

Feminists are pragmatic and rational in their arguments against gender discrimination. Women should be given the rights and equal opportunities so as to have the life they deserve. States, especially

Middle Eastern, should do more to bring and implement reforms that ease the lives of women. As most of the female fighters of ISIS are from Middle Eastern states, it is imperative on the states to have adequate laws that would not compromise their identity but, at the same time, would provide for the women e.g. laws regarding second-marriages and inheritance should be reformed so that women whose husbands have died or fled may re-marry, and live a life that they deserve.

As for the former ISIS fighters—especially females as they are victims of discrimination and are vulnerable to extremist ideologies—there should be

special psychological and physical rehabilitation programs for them so as to delicately de-radicalize them, as well as to help them with their trauma as most of these women are subjected to violence and rape and sexual assault (Yilmaz, 2017).

The states should take responsibility of these former ISIS fighters. Trial is not the only option. Most of these fighters have already gone through so much traumatic experiences that a judicial, whether fair, trial is not fruitful. The key is to help them with their psychological, mental and physical health so much that they never wish for that life again.

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