

Welcome from the Editors

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to announce the release of Volume XI, Issue 1 (February 2017) of *Perspectives on Terrorism* at <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com>. Our free and independent online journal is a publication of the Terrorism Research Initiative (TRI). Now in its eleventh year, *Perspectives on Terrorism* has over 7,000 regular subscribers from 150 countries, and many more occasional readers and website visitors worldwide. The Articles of its six annual issues are fully peer reviewed by external referees while its Research and Policy Notes, Special Correspondence and other content are subject to internal editorial quality control.

While many armed conflicts around the world have become internationalized civil wars, the spillover effects produced by the war in Syria — now in its sixth year — continue to draw an increasing amount of scholarly attention. In our first article, Anne Speckhard and Ahmed Yayla focus on the origins and ominous role of *Emni*, the intelligence service of the Islamic State (ISIS), which casts its long shadow across the region and into Europe. The second article by Hamoon Khelgaat-Doost, also based on local field research, seeks to explain how ISIS manages to instrumentalise women by creating parallel structures for them that combine Islamist female role requirements with active participation in the Caliphate state. Kristy Campion, in turn, tries to make sense of the seemingly senseless destruction of works of art and sites of antiquities by the Islamic State as well as other jihadist groups seeking to leave their mark in history in search of their own identity. As the Islamic State has sought to create both overland and overseas provinces in its drive for expansion, it faces other jihadist groups, one of them being *Ansar al-Sharia* in Libya (ASL)— the topic of an article by Henrik Gratrud and Vidar Benjamin Skretting. ASL has lost some of its foot soldiers to the Islamic State, but ideologically stands closer to al-Qaida while being more firmly rooted in the local conflict dynamics of Libya.

Al-Qaida core is the subject of a Research Note by Sajjan Gohel, who seeks to decipher the statements of Ayman al-Zawahiri for cues about al-Qaida's strategic and ideological directions. A second Research Note by Michele Groppi focuses on Islamist radicalisation in Italy. He finds, based on a large n-study, that the most common explanations for radicalization—including discrimination, economic disparity, and outrage at Western foreign policy— were nowhere as relevant as an individual's interpretation of Islamist ideology. The Special Correspondence section contains a brief contribution from Nina Käsehage who, while researching Salafism in Europe and interviewing more than 170 Salafists, found herself inadvertently becoming involved in de-radicalisation, stopping 35 out of 38 young Muslims intending to go to Syria from doing so.

In the Resources section of this *Perspectives on Terrorism* issue the reader will find— next to the usual book reviews by Joshua Sinai and a bibliography by Judith Tinnes— a new rubric on online resources for the analysis of terrorism by Berto Jongman. Finally, in the Announcements section there is a reminder to those who have finished a doctoral dissertation in 2016 to submit it to the jury for the TRI Thesis Award, with the deadline end of March approaching fast. There is also a report from one of the national/regional networks of Ph.D. theses writers by Jeanine de Roy van Zuidewijn, listing 23 theses in the making and five concluded recently in the Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium).

The growth of *Perspectives on Terrorism* as an academic journal owes much to the members of our Editorial Board who act as our regular peer-reviewers. However, beyond them there are many more external peer-reviewers whose specific expertise the editors marshalled in 2016. They are listed— and thanked— in another section of the Announcements. Finally, in our last Announcement we report on the restructuring of both *Perspectives on Terrorism* and its parent organization, the Terrorism Research Initiative.

The current issue of *Perspectives on Terrorism* was jointly prepared by Prof. em. Alex P. Schmid and Prof. James J.F. Forest, the main editors of the journal.