



**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES**  
**POLICY DEPARTMENT**



**SALAFIST/WAHHABITE  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT  
TO EDUCATIONAL,  
SOCIAL AND  
RELIGIOUS  
INSTITUTIONS**

**AFET**



DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EXTERNAL POLICIES OF THE UNION

**DIRECTORATE B**

POLICY DEPARTMENT

**STUDY**

**SALAFIST/WAHHABITE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO  
EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**

**Abstract**

In recent years, the impact of funding educational, social and religious institutions by Salafi/Wahhabi networks in the Muslim world has become remarkable. This finding opens a political issue in an environment that is undergoing considerable social tensions and very rapid transformations. The main issue of this study concerns the purpose of these funds. Are they purely charitable or are they elements of a political control strategy? This study, devoted to the case of Egypt, Tunisia, Bosnia, Pakistan and Indonesia came to a common conclusion for these five countries. Financial aid granted by Salafi/Wahhabi, whether by institutional or private donators, systematically pursue a goal of political influence.

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## PREAMBLE

The reader will note that this study does not offer a detailed analysis of the question, yet more importantly, it seems necessary to us to establish a distinction between Salafism and Wahhabism. This theoretical issue is not the object of our research, but nevertheless deserves to be mentioned in our introduction.

Often considered "quasi namesakes" and although both within the Hanbali school<sup>1</sup>, we believe that the common sense analysis of Wahhabism and Salafism, which reduces the phenomenon to a fundamentalist and literalist Sunni Islam, is too simplistic.

It can not account for the specificity of Wahhabism which merges, within the meaning of the first term, with the private interests and policies of the dynasty and the apparatus of the Saudi state not able to restore the complexity of the various currents which make up the Salafist galaxy. This includes quietist movements and detached from classical political issues and others which were organised in political parties and took advantage of opportunities offered, for example, by the recent revolutions in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia. Not to mention terrorist organisations that are actively involved in the bloodiest episodes of armed conflict that reverberates the Muslim world.

Our study focuses on five case studies: Bosnia, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Tunisia. Apart from their common membership in the Sunni Muslim world, one would be tempted to affirm at first sight that everything separate these five countries. Their histories, their ethnic composition, their socio-economic situation or their more or less political stability make them distinct scenarios. This does not mean that the five situations did not provide a breeding ground for the Wahhabi and Salafi networks.

It is perhaps also remarkable the political plasticity of these currents, especially known and almost always presented in terms of their unique fundamentalist dimension, which must be retained. The adaptability of Salafist movements operating in the country of interest, especially in those who come to experience a sudden change in regime, is a consideration which is essential for any prospective analysis on the political influence of these radical currents.

It is important to distinguish between the natural traditionalist and literalist religious doctrine that underlies Salafism and the remarkable abilities of the latter to deploy strategies and tactics of occupation of the political field. The best evidence is the ability to adapt Salafists, with more or less success, to very different political contexts, and timeliness of their "turnaround" alliance.

This distinction made, it should be recalled that the Salafist project is not a seizure of power. It is a means and not an end. The ultimate goal of Salafism remains what it has been since the beginning of the Hanbali School, namely the imposition of the most rigorous Sunni Islam (inverser).

If we accept this proposal, and our study tends to show, it is necessary to see the divide between Europe and the Muslim world to increase progressively due to political success recorded by the Salafist movements.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hanbali School developed from the eleventh century in the Abbasid Caliphate (Baghdad Caliphate). This Sunni current is characterized by the rigor, traditionalism and literalism of its religious doctrine. The Hanbali School declined during the sixteenth century under the Ottoman influence in Iraq and Syria, but has found a favorable ground in Arabia (today Saudi Arabia) to develop in the form of Wahhabism.

## 1. EGYPT

The world has witnessed the social impact, the mobilisation capacities and the damages that can be caused by Egypt's Salafi movement after the broadcasting of the anti-Islam movie the "Innocence of Muslims" on YouTube in September 2012. Following calls made by influential Salafi preachers, an angry mob of thousands of people gathered in front of the US embassy in Cairo and scaled the compound's walls, in a scene that recalled Iran's hostage crisis in 1979 (Associated Press, 2012). The protest lasted for three days, and was ended by a joint- intervention of the police and the military. According to the Egyptian state television Nile TV, at least 224 people were injured in the incident, which was largely condemned by the country's highest religious and political authorities (El Fagr, 2012). However, a similar incident occurred on January 18, 2013 in front of the French embassy, after calls for protests against the military intervention in Mali circulated in Salafi mosques and on social networks (France 24, 2013). Once more, these facts have highlighted the increasingly aggressive political behaviour of the Salafi activists, which cannot be regarded as a peripheral issue.

In this chapter, we will focus on the main trends of Salafism in Egypt, being aware of the threat of the phenomenon for the social and political stability of post-Mubarak Egypt. Once a quietist, apolitical and charity-oriented conservative movement, Salafism indeed made a dramatic and unexpected entrance in Egyptian politics during the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections. The Salafi parties Hizb Al Nour (Party of The Light), Hizb el-asala (Authenticity Party) and Hizb El-Benaa Wa El-Tanmia (Building and Development Party), which rallied under the banner of the Alliance for Egypt (today the Islamist Bloc), indeed managed to win 125 seats in the National Assembly after a pragmatic and very effective election campaign focused on social issues (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012). This success allowed the movement to emerge as one of the main opposition forces to the triumphant Muslim Brotherhood. We will therefore attempt to determine what brought Salafism into the political struggle, and what permitted the Al-Nour party to achieve this electoral success. As a reminder, only a few months before the election, prominent Salafi preachers were still condemning any political action, including Tahrir Square protests which led to the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak.

The study will also closely examine how the Salafi ideology gained ground in Egyptian society due to the influence of Saudi scholars, the habits established by expatriate workers or students returning from the Gulf, and the influx of money coming from Muslim charitable organisations aimed at spreading the Wahhabi ideology. This movement has had an even greater impact with the multiplication of local pan-Arabic television channels carrying the radical Islamist message. We will also see how the Salafis have faced the intrinsic contradiction between quietism and political action since the end of the Mubarak regime, and their reaction to the violent struggle of some of their sympathisers who joined the Jihad and the Jama'a al-Islamiyya since the 1970's (Meijer, 2009).

We will have to shed light on the competition between the Salafi and the Muslim Brotherhood, including the way Saudi funding for the Salafis has become an element of a struggle for regional influence with Qatar. Lastly we will try to forecast where the emergence of political Salafism in Egypt puts us from a long term perspective, or if it will run out of steam due to internal tensions and increasing fears in the public for the country's peace and stability.

### 1.1 Egypt's main Salafi organisations

As previously mentioned, Al Nour's party's electoral success came as a major surprise for many observers of Egyptian society. They had played only a minor role in the outbreak of the revolution and they seemed to lack the political strength and experience to match the capability of the Muslim Brotherhood to mobilise voters (Boehmer & Murphy, 2012). Moreover, they had always expressed their

rejection of parliamentary democracy, which they consider to be anti-Islamic and heresy (Al-Masry Al-Youm, 2011). Yet, Salafism has been part of the country's socioeconomic landscape since the 1920's, as it is rooted in the same Islamic revivalist and modernist wave that gave birth to the Muslim Brotherhood (Tammam, 2011).

In 1926, Al-Azhar graduate Sheikh Mohamed Hamed El-Fiqi founded the Ansar al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah<sup>2</sup> society to fight against "un-Islamic" practices and superstitions allegedly advocated by Sufism and Shiism (Gauvain, 2010). For decades, its only stated goal was the protection of Sunna. The society therefore prohibited political activism, considered as a potential source of division among Muslims. Moreover, it soon developed into a Trojan horse of Wahhabi Salafism in Egypt. In the 1970's, the failure of Nasserism<sup>3</sup> and the look-west policy implemented by Anwar El Sadat led to the improvement of bilateral relations between Sadat's Egypt and the Saudi kingdom. A large number of Egyptian workers and students went to Saudi Arabia, becoming familiar with the rigorist way of life and social norms in-force in the country (Brown, 2011). In return, Saudi religious institutions overflowed Egypt with oil money and free Wahhabi literature and propaganda material, including cassettes recorded by prominent sheiks from Mecca and Medina, which are the two holiest cities of Islam. This strong financial and ideological support allowed the Salafi to challenge the spiritual authority of al-Azhar University, which had stated that the dangers posed by Wahhabis to Islam were as significant as secularism, Marxism or Christian evangelisation efforts. It is worth mentioning that many Salafis were educated in Saudi Arabia instead of al-Azhar, which may have contributed to the hostility of the religious university toward them (Nasira, 2010).

As is mentioned in a U.S. diplomatic cable made public by Wikileaks in February 2011, it is difficult to estimate the exact number of Salafis in present-day Egypt (The Telegraph, 2011). Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, Ansar Al-Sunnah hasn't established a centralised military-like hierarchy, and many of its followers can be members of other organisations, including other Salafi groups, or even the Brotherhood. Despite its strength and its extended network of contacts, the society has been maintaining its apolitical code of conduct. Moreover, it has always rejected the use of violent action against power. For this reason, the organisation enjoyed some liberties under Sadat and Mubarak's regime, and was thus able to develop its network across the country.

Still today, Ansar Al-Sunnah runs around 150 branches and 2,000 mosques disseminating the teachings of prominent Wahhabi scholars across Egypt<sup>4</sup>. It is also said to widely benefit from various donations from Gulf countries. Recently the Egyptian newspaper Elaph reported the society had received a total of LE 223 million (around 25 million euros) from NGOs based in Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar since January 2011 (Hasanin, 2011). According to sources within the Ministry of Justice, the Kuwait's Islamic Heritage Revival Association has donated LE 114 million (around 12.5 million Euros), to

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<sup>2</sup> Hereafter mentioned as Ansar al-Sunnah

<sup>3</sup> Nasserism was imposed in Egypt under the authority of President Gamal Abdel Nasser Hussein, head of state from 1956 until his death in 1970. This ideology, which came from the same reformist mold as the Muslim Brotherhood, has attempted to usher the Islamic political tradition in modernity. It has therefore sought to integrate modern concepts such as democracy, socialism, capitalism, imperialism and state, while maintaining the traditional interpretation of the concepts of equality, unconditional obedience to a leader, war and peace. Nasserism was attached to identify Muslim community with the "Arab Nation" (Carre, 1972). The military defeat of 1967 against Israel and the end of the attempted union with Syria in the "United Arab Republic" marked the failure of Nasserism despite its influence on the entire Arab political class during the '50s and '60s.

<sup>4</sup> Among them are Sheikh Abdel Razek Hamza, former member of Saudi Arabia's Grand Scholars assembly (Hai'at Kebar El-'olama'), Sheikh Abul Wafa Darwaish, president of the society's branch in Sohag, Dr. Mohamed Khalil Harras, Professor in Al-Azhar and Om Al-Kora Universities, Sheikh Mohamed Abdel Wahab Al-Banna teacher in Mecca Haram, Sheikh Abdel Zaher Abul Samah, Imam of the Grand Mosque and Director of Dar El-Hadith Philanthropic Society in Mecca (Hassan, 2010).



Ansar Al-Sunnah, and Qatar LE 181.7 million (around 20 million Euros), in order to “strengthen its power in Egypt through the group”. It must be mentioned that Kuwait later denied the information (Toumi, 2012). The spokesperson for Ansar Al-Sunnah, Jamāl Sa’d Hātim, also denied that the group had received LE 181 million from the Emirate, as it has been claimed in the press (‘Anaz, 2011).

Egypt's other main Salafi organisation, Al-Dawa Al Salafiyya (the Salafi Calling), has followed a different path, even though the 2 bodies share a common social basis among middle and lower-class people (Boehmer & Murphy, 2012). Al-Dawa Al Salafiyya was indeed born from a violent opposition with the Muslim Brotherhood for the control of Alexandria in 1976. Contrary to Ansar al-Sunnah, it didn’t hesitate to qualify the Egyptian rulers as infidels, although it never directly entered into the political field under Mubarak’s regime. It was therefore allowed less latitude by Mubarak’s regime than Ansar al-Sunnah, and many of its scholars and preachers were subject to specific security measures decreed by the authorities. In the 1980s Al-Dawa was indeed able to create the al-Furqan educational institute, the Sawt al-Da’wa (the Voice of the Call), and a wide social-services network comprising of a “Zakat” Committee (Islamic tithe), several orphanages and clinics and other public facilities built across the city’s lower-class neighbourhoods (Ashour, 2012).

One has to note that the Egyptian regime has long considered Salafi organisations an ideal counter-fire to leftists and revolutionary ideologies, as well as to the much more political Islamism advocated by the Muslim brotherhoods. This strategy, largely based on the ideological and theological concepts born in Saudi Arabia, was put into question when a fringe of the Salafi movement turned to violence at the end of the 1980’s, finding it was religiously acceptable to fight against an impious regime. In this context, terror groups, such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and Jama’a al-islamiyya, emerged from the same ideological matrix as the Al-Dawa Al Salafiyya. Both groups eventually relinquished violence after years of bloody attacks and tough confrontations with the security forces (Meijer, 2009). The threat of Salafi Jihadism has however reappeared in the Sinai Peninsula after the 2011 revolution, thanks to the financial support of Saudi intelligence services and Wahhabi charities pretending to build mosques and other religious facilities (Alahdalsadik, 2012).

## **1.2 Extension the Salafi network and entry into politics**

As we have seen, Egyptian Salafism traditionally oriented towards working-class neighbourhoods, thanks to the presence of radical mosques and local branches involved in the field of social aid work. As an example, Salafi activists have been distributing cooking gas for reduced prices in several neighbourhoods of Cairo. Salafis also focused on education and on proselytism, gaining ground with the younger generations (Gillard & Wells, 2012). Moreover, the social conservative rhetoric of the Salafists has grown in popularity with the lower middle class upset with bad governance, abuse of power and widespread corruption in the last years of the Mubarak’s regime.

The Salafi audience increased dramatically in 2003, with the launching of ten religious channels on the Nilesat Satellite communication network (Bohn, 2011). In the beginning, authorities didn’t act to prevent the radical ideology of Wahhabi “televangelists” reaching the homes of millions of middle-class citizens. Once again, the regime had bet on the traditional quietist and apolitical approach of Salafism to counterbalance the social influence of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the government brought these channels to a temporarily close in 2010, having become aware of the danger represented by the rising salafist ideology for the regime’s stability (Mahmoud, 2010). It is worth mentioning the specific case of Al-Badr channel, which was accused of inciting “hatred against Christians” (Egypt Independent, 2010).

Despite these timid and belated measures, several Salafi preachers had become among the most influential and revered voices in Egypt when the outbreak of the Arab spring came about in January



2011. At the beginning of the revolution, Salafi organisations did not appeal to join Tahrir Square's demonstrations. On the contrary, they called their members to "protect public properties and to cooperate with the armed forces", hence polishing their image of guarantors of the social stability (Boehmer & Murphy, 2012). Moreover, Ansar Al-Sunnah issued a fatwa forbidding its members to take part in the revolution "against a Muslim ruler"<sup>5</sup>. When it was clear that the regime was about to fall, Al-Dawa Al Salafiyya adopted the opposite view and pleaded for a transition period and called for the emergence of an Islamic state based on Sharia law. The organisation fully entered into the political game and campaigned for the adoption of a new Islamic constitution.

As election time approached, Al-Dawa Al Salafiyya activated its entire network of social organisation to create the Al-Nour party. Moreover, the party developed a socio-economic oriented electoral platform in order to reassure voters who might have been frightened by its extremist religious views. With this in mind, the Al-Nour party allegedly made extensive use of money coming from the Gulf in order to finance their electoral campaign. Weeks before the election, a report published by the government suggested that the Al-Nour party had benefitted from 50 million U.S. dollars coming from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in order to finance its activities. The information was denied by the party and by the two petro-monarchies, although it was obvious that Al-Nour had considerable means to open numerous political offices, to organise political rallies and pay and advertise on television. Moreover leading figures of the party turned their links with Gulf countries into a campaign argument, openly stating that they would receive more money from pan-Islamic charities to implement their promises and finance social programs in poor neighbourhoods.

As mentioned earlier, this strategy has produced spectacular and surprising results. Outflanked on their right, the Muslim Brotherhood and the newly elected president Mohammed Morsi were forced to appoint Salafi advisors, although they excluded the Al-Nour party from cabinet positions (Bayoumi, *The many faces of Mohamed Morsi*, 2012). These successes however did not give the Salafis the guarantee they could prevail in the long-term. Due to deep internal disputes between political reformers and religious hardliners, the leader of the Al Nour Party, Abdel Ghafour, resigned in late December and formed a new party called Al Watan ("The Homeland"). In addition, Al-Nour further divided itself into several factions struggling for control over the party's structure (Bayoumi, *Party split threatens Egypt's Salafis*, 2012). This situation reflects the fundamental characteristic of Salafism, which remains a fragmented movement, caught in numerous ideological and theological cross-currents influenced by Egypt's domestic context.

Having said this, one has to bear in mind that the most important strength of the Salafis is their grass-roots connectedness and the scope of their conservative rhetoric. Even if they are unable to survive as a major political force, they have already had a profound impact on the evolution of new Egypt, partly thanks to the continuous influx of Wahhabi donators from Saudi Arabia.

### **1.3 Prospects for political Salafism**

As we have attempted to highlight in the present chapter, the Salafi ideology is deeply rooted in the Egyptian society. Compared to other Muslim countries, Saudi-based Wahhabism has had little to do with the emergence of radical Islamist movements in Egypt. On the contrary, one has to note the leading role of the country in the development of revivalist, rigorist and anti-Sufi trends even before the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. Since then, the Muslim Brotherhood and the various Salafi

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<sup>5</sup> "Going against a Muslim ruler who rules by the Sharia of Allah, performed prayers among the Muslims, and did not show outright infidelity, then the way of Ahl Al-Sunna rules that this is not permissible, even if he transgresses and creates injustices..." (Hassan, 2010)

organisations that came out of the Ansar al-Sunnah society have struggled for supremacy among radical Islamists. This competition between opposed religious tendencies led to clashes in the Egyptian universities as early as the 1970s and to a long-lasting opposition between the Salafis and the academic authorities of the Al-Azhar University. Although their vision of Islam has been condemned on numerous occasions by this old institution, the Salafis managed to attract a growing number of followers among the younger population of poor urban neighbourhoods and rural areas.

Since the 1970's the Salafis indeed took advantage of the political situation – especially of the regime's effort to curb both the Muslim Brotherhood and the leftist organisations – to set up complex networks of mosques, religious schools and charitable organisations. In addition to the relative tolerance of the regime for their movement, the Salafis also benefited over the years from rising influx of money from Gulf countries, whether it came from remittance, scholarships, public and semi-public Saudi or Kuwaiti charities or private donations. Moreover, thanks to this ideological support, Egyptian Salafi groups always had access to an abundance of religious material, such as printed versions of the Qur'an or recorded tapes of radical preachers. The Salafis gained an even wider audience at the end of the 1990s, after the creation of several religious channels on the NileSat TV network of satellite television. Aware of this favourable position, and despite more difficult relations with the regime in the 2000s, the main Salafi scholars first refused to take part in the revolution in 2011.

Indeed, as we have demonstrated in this chapter, the Salafis didn't try to convert this deep social penetration into political influence before the fall of Hosni Mubarak's regime. Since the 1920's, Salafi leaders were always reluctant to get involved in politics due to theological reasons. Moreover, the Salafis were reluctant to political action by the crackdowns ordered by authorities after Egypt's Jihad Organisation and Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya fall into violence after an ideological twist. In addition, contrary to the Muslim Brotherhood, they never built the centralised and hierarchical structures which are necessary to claim or exercise power. However, the newly-founded Al Nour Party achieved an indisputable success in the 2011 general elections, largely due to the social despair of large parts of the population, as well as to the Saudi financial support.

Both from these historical and recent facts, we have to notice the speed by which the Salafis have managed to build on the influence of their scholars and of their social presence in poor neighbourhoods. However, the difficult socio-economic crisis and the endemic corruption affecting Egypt do not constitute a sufficient cause to explain the last successes of the Salafis. As we have attempted to demonstrate, the struggle for regional influence between Wahhabi Saudi Arabia and pro-Muslim Brotherhood Qatar also played a major role, as the two petro-monarchies haven't hesitated to provide cash money to finance the activities of their protégés.

In the future, it remains to be seen if the Salafi movement will be able to remain united in order to retain the political influence gained thanks to the work done on the ground with the Saudi money. Violent excesses by rioters in front of the American and French embassies, as well as numerous controversies between prominent scholars cast doubts over this assumption. At the same moment, these incidents are a legitimate cause for concern as the recent lust for power shown by the Salafis could soon prompt the re-emergence of a violent Islamist activism boosted by influxes of external money.

## **2. TUNISIA**

Clashes and civil unrests incidents involving Salafi activists have become part of post-revolutionary Tunisia's daily life. Every day brings new accounts of violence perpetrated by Salafi militias acting as morality police. Their main targets remain liquor stores, moderate mosques, historic Sufi shrines, schools

or cultural institutions. Over the past months, these activists have also increased attacks against security forces and diplomatic representations. In one of the most dramatic and commented incidents since the events that led to the fall of Ben Ali's regime, a furious Salafi mob indeed stormed the U.S. embassy in Tunisia in February 2012 to protest against the broadcasting on Youtube of the movie "The Innocence of Muslims". According to media reports, 2 people died and 29 others were injured during clashes between rioters and security forces (Amara, 2012).

At the beginning of 2013, new demonstrations took place in front of the French embassy to protest against the military intervention in Mali (AFP, 2013). France also decided to close its schools in the country on several occasions due to the risk of attacks by Islamist groups. One should also recall the clashes between secularists and the Salafis during the pro-niqab protests at Manouba University (Daley, 2012), as well as the violent demonstration against the broadcasting of "blasphemous" movie Persepolis by private television station Nessma in October 2011 (Child, 2011). On this subject, it is interesting to note that a court later fined the station director Nabil Karoui for airing the movie (The Guardian, 2012).

This environment of violence contrasts with the wave of hope which accompanied the "Jasmine revolution". When Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his family fled the country and took refuge in Saudi Arabia, many had hoped that the secularism and the progressive legacy achieved since the time of Habib Bourguiba would persist in New Tunisia. At that stage, religious groups had indeed remained almost voiceless during a revolution mainly directed against the abuses of the repressive state apparatus, the corruption of the elites and the country's deteriorating economic situation.

The landslide electoral victory of the Islamist party Ennahda therefore appeared as a major danger for maintaining secular rights and preserving the country's stability, as well as the proliferation of micro-organisations belonging to the Salafi trend. The latest events that have shaken Tunisia after the assassination of opposition politician and lawyer Chokri Belaid have strengthened fears about the country's stability and about the real agenda of the Islamists.

## **2.1 Development of Tunisian Salafism**

During most of Ben Ali's time, Tunisia's Islamists were almost invisible due to fierce domestic repression. Islamist leaders and activists were jailed or forced to exile, such as Rashid al-Ghannushi, whose triumphant return from London occurred in January 2011. However, just like in the other Maghreb countries, the Salafi trend had already grown across the country throughout the current economic crisis. The radical Islamist ideology indeed thrived on poor neighbourhoods' low living standards, underemployment, inadequate basic infrastructures and lack of housing.

In the specific case of Tunisia, several pietistic and apolitical organisations had even enjoyed some support from the regime. President Ben Ali indeed authorised some Wahhabi scholars formed in Saudi universities to preach in several mosques of the poorer districts of Sousse or Sfax. For the former regime (Amghar, 2007), these preachers who were following the guidelines of the Saudi Dār al-Iftā' al-Misriyyah<sup>6</sup> were a defence against Jihadism or political Islam advocated by Ennahda and other groups and parties which were born out the Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique in the 1980s (Merone & Cavatorta, 2012).

Tunisia had refused introducing Wahhabism teachings ever since Ibn Saoud and Mohamed Ibn Abdelwahab proposed Bey Hammouda Pacha to join their movement at the beginning of the 19th century (Ben Hamadi, 2013). Moreover, the country has built a strong secular and modernist tradition

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<sup>6</sup> Dār al-Iftā' al-Misriyyah (standing committee for academic research) provides fatwas which establish the Saudi version of the Islamic legality.

from its independence in 1956 to the present day. However, a domestic Salafi Jihadi tendency was able to develop and strengthen, especially after taken up contact with other Jihadi organisations in Afghanistan, Iraq and in neighbouring Algeria (Al-Jazairy, 2012).

Salafi Jihadism was also fuelled by the deteriorating living standards and by the increasingly kleptocratic trends of the regime. Over the last few years of President Ben Ali's reign, the worrying expansion of this trend prompted authorities to pass new anti-terror legislation, to launch widespread repression campaigns in religious circles and to jail hundreds of its followers, including the members of the Jihadi group Jund Assad ibn el-Furat, which had been set up in 2006 (Merone & Cavatorta, 2012).

## **2.2 Tunisia's ambiguous political games**

After the revolution, Tunisia's transitional government freed and pardoned most of these Jihadi prisoners, including people connected to international terrorism. Among them was Seif Allah Ibn Hussein, aka Abou lyadh, who is allegedly involved in the assassination of Afghan military leader Ahmad Shah Massoud by two Tunisian terrorists in September 2011 (Dahmani, 2012). After being released, he founded the Ansar al-Sharia Salafi group and took the lead of the most radical Salafi activists in the country. It is this group which called for the demonstration in front of the U.S. embassy in February 2012. After the incident, authorities jailed Salafi preacher Hassen Brik (Laghmari, 2012) but failed to arrest of Seif Allah Ibn Hussein (Libération, 2012). Moreover, the latter made a public preach the very next day on the failed police operation. The softness of the Islamism-led government shed some light on the shady relations between Ennadha and Ansar al-Sharia.

The ambiguous attitude adopted by Ennadha reveals how complex is the political and geopolitical game which is played in Tunisia. Following the assassination of opposition activists Lotfi Nagdh, Lotfi Kallel and Chokri Belaïd, Rached Ghannouchi accused a "shadow government" linked to the former regime of attempting to destabilise the country by increasing tensions between Islamists and Secularists (Tunisie numérique, 2013). The leader of Ennadha implicitly put the blame on Saudi Arabia, which has offered asylum to Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and has continued to send radical preachers to Tunisia. As a matter of fact, one can say that both the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Ennadha and the Salafis are caught in the struggle for influence between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Ennadha is playing on the fear of radical Salafism to pressure the Secular camp and impose its own Islamist agenda.

In this context, one has to mention the growing role of Saudi charity organisations, which have found a fertile ground to spread their ideological views in post-revolutionary Tunisia. The political landscape that emerged from the Arab Spring has left more room for semi-official organisations from the Gulf such as the Muslim World League and the International Islamic Relief Organization-Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) to expand their activities in the region. In May 2012, the IIROSA announced it was willing to open new "chapters" in countries such as Tunisia, "where the situation is still volatile" (Khan, 2012).

The financial strength of the Gulf petro-Monarchies has enabled them to support the building of many Mosques and Islamic educational facilities, increasing their grip over large sections of society. According to several reports, these organisations offer scholarships in Saudi universities, and are also providing free training to Salafi activists in private structures in Tunisia. From the Saudi perspective, this strategy is aimed at undermining the influence gained by Qatar in the region with the electoral success of Ennadha and the fall of Colonel Gadhafi in neighbouring Libya.

### 3. BOSNIA

The spread of Salafism/Wahhabism in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a source of great concern for European security agencies. Several terrorist attacks have taken place in recent years in this area due to the implementation of this ideology in the country. On October 28, 2011, a 23-year-old member of the Bosnian Wahhabi movement opened fire on the American embassy in Sarajevo wounding a police officer. In 2008 and 2009, numerous Wahhabis were arrested for plotting terror attacks on Christian sites and European Union Forces in Bosnia. In July 2010, one police officer was killed and several others were injured after a bomb attack on a police station in Bugojno blamed on a Wahhabi group (Schlesinger, *Wahhabism: A Forgotten Legacy of the Bosnian War*, 2011). It is important to highlight that even though the Wahhabi movement in Bosnia is estimated to only include 3,000 out of 1,4 million Muslims (Schlesinger, *Wahhabism: A Forgotten Legacy of the Bosnian War*, 2011), its presence has radicalised many people and has been the cause of growing concerns. According to several analysts this movement has “bred a new generation of homegrown jihadis, the so-called “white devils”, whose European features make them precious commodities for infiltrating Europe without being suspected” (Deliso, 2007).

#### 3.1 The Islamic foreign volunteers

Wahhabism has taken root in Bosnia as a side effect of the war with the Serbs and the Croats between 1992 and 1995. During the war, around 3,000 Islamic foreign volunteers, among them many Wahhabis, went to Bosnia to help the Muslim Bosnians in their fight and Islamic countries provided financial support through charities. The volunteers were incorporated into a unit called El Mudzahid, part of the 7th Brigade based in the central towns of Tuzla, Zenica and Maglaj. However soon the foreign fighters and agencies providing funds introduced Salafism to Bosnia, and more specifically the Saudi version of Salafism, Wahhabism (Schlesinger, *The Internal Pluralization of the Muslim Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina: From Religious Activation to Radicalization*, 2011). Within Sunni Islam there are four main schools of Islamic jurisprudence: Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafi'i. The majority of the Salafist movement have a propensity to follow the Hanbali school of Islam. The majority of Bosnian Muslims were Sunnis who followed the moderate and liberal Hanafi school of Islam and their way of life soon caused attrition with the much more conservative foreign Wahhabi fighters.

Nasir Ahmad Nasir Abdallah al-Bahri, better known as “Abu-Jandal”, Osama Bin Laden’s personal bodyguard for four years, who had joined the mujahedin brigade in Bosnia, recalled that:

“Communist ideology had wiped out all the features of the Islamic religion and understanding of Islam. We saw some Muslim youths wearing a cross around their necks without knowing what this meant, although they belonged to Muslim families and some of them had Arab and Muslim names. They were completely ignorant of Islam. Therefore, we saw that the responsibility we shouldered in Bosnia was broader and more comprehensive than the mission of combat, for which we had come. So we found that we became bearers of weapons and at the same time bearers of a call, a book, a message” (Gerges, 2007).

Iran and Pakistan supplied arms to the Bosnian government, but Saudi Arabia raised more than \$373 million for the “Bosnian jihad”. The foreign volunteers who stayed in the country after the war, charity staff providing funds and foreign educated Bosnians provided the vanguard of the local Wahhabi movement (Schlesinger, *Wahhabism: A Forgotten Legacy of the Bosnian War*, 2011).

#### 3.2 Religious, social and educational support

By the end of the war, 64,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed and more than two million displaced, either becoming internal refugees or emigrating outside the country. Several hundred foreign fighters married



Bosnian Muslim women and remained in the country obtaining Bosnian passports. Others remained illegally in remote villages throughout the country. Saudi Arabia has played a major role in the Wahhabi movement by financing social and religious institutions. As Morrison describes:

“Aid from Islamic countries (in particular Saudi Arabia) was focused on social programmes such as building madrassas (Islamic schools) and funding programmes for war orphans, and infrastructural reconstruction projects (the rebuilding of mosques in the Muslim-dominated parts of Bosnia & Herzegovina). But the aid came with conditions. Saudi money has indeed helped fund social programmes and reconstruction of mosques, but the character of Islamic places of worship has changed significantly as a consequence. In the ten-year period since the end of armed conflict in Bosnia, around 550 new mosques have been built - primarily in the Wahhabi style. But aid donated by the Saudis was not restricted to the reconstruction of mosques. According to the Balkan Investigative Research Network (BIRN), the Wahhabi movement in Bosnia was strongly supported by the Saudis, who used an organization called the High Saudi Committee for Relief (under the auspices of a Saudi government ministry) to channel funds throughout the Bosnian war and thereafter (Morrison, 2008)”.

From 1992 to 1995, 614 of the 1,144 mosques were destroyed and 307 were damaged; 218 of the 557 masjids were destroyed and 41 were damaged; out of the 1,425 waqf holdings, 405 were destroyed and 149 were damaged. However according to the Islamic Community's Center for Islamic Architecture, by 2010 an estimated 95% of all mosques destroyed during the war have been reconstructed (Karčić, 2011). Many of them were rebuilt following the Wahhabi criteria. The most striking example is the King Fahd Mosque in Sarajevo which was constructed along the stylistic lines of a Saudi Wahhabi mosque. The original interiors were destroyed and replaced with whitewashed walls (Morrison, 2008).

Most of the funds have been provided through Islamic charities which not only built and restored houses of worship but also slaughter-houses, provided Mecca pilgrimages, distributed copies of the Koran and Islamist propaganda, often offered small amounts of cash, organised summer camps for young people and religious courses and offered scholarships in Muslim educational institutions in the Arab world (Lederer, 2005). In this way these organisations strengthened the roots of Wahhabism in the country. As Schlesinger notes, although the majority of Bosnian Muslims were not open to this ultra-conservative form of Islam, the internal conditions of the country provided an atmosphere in which the arrival of radical Islam was welcomed by a small number of disillusioned Muslims.

These conditions (persecution, economic depression and the consolidation of Muslim identity) were the result of the breakdown of Yugoslav society and the ensuing war. Salafism/Wahhabism provided the appropriate ideology to suit the needs of a shattered community.

“The ideal of Salafism/Wahhabism is to provide a purely Islamic alternative to a way of life which had been corrupted or destroyed. It creates a community where one did not exist or had been destroyed, as was the case in Bosnia, where Muslims often lost their homes, towns and entire families in the war. In a society which had become a chaotic cauldron of ethnic cleansing, hatred, genocide, and atrocity, Salafism/Wahhabism seemed to offer a means by which a lost generation of Bosnian Muslims could restore or instill a clear order to their lives”. (Schlesinger, *The Internal Pluralization of the Muslim Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina: From Religious Activation to Radicalization*, 2011).

It is important to emphasise that education funded by Islamic charities played an important role in the spread of Wahhabism. Since the 1990s, various scholarships have been given out to Bosnian Muslim students to study Islamic studies in Muslim countries. In 2002 there were 107 students in Saudi Arabia, 60 in Syria, 38 in Egypt, 34 in Jordan, 28 in Iraq, 11 in Turkey, 8 in Pakistan, 2 in Libya, 1 in Kuwait and 1 in Lebanon. These students have been an influential channel for the transmission of radical Islamic ideas and practices to Bosnia and Herzegovina (Karčić, 2011).

A parallel education system has developed outside *Bosnia's Islamic Community*, *Islamska Zajednica (IZ)*'s control. Bihac and Zenica Saudi funded Islamic Pedagogical Academies have been established to educate their students in a much more conservative form of Islam.

Islamic organisations were also active in publishing and disseminating large amounts of free Islamic booklets. These organisations included the Saudi High Committee, Al-Haramain Foundation, Taibah International and TWRA. The Saudi High Committee was particularly active in publishing books written by Wahhabi authors, such as Saudi educated Bosnian Muslim Muharem Štulanović. These books covered the very basic topics of Islam and were given out for free.

The Active Islamic Youth, (*Aktivna Islamska Omladina* or AIO), a Muslim social organisation dedicated to pushing the Wahhabi doctrine and creating a sharia state in Bosnia, was financed by the Saudi High Committee and by the Al-Haramain Foundation. Some of its founders were former members of the El Mudzahid military unit. The organisation was able to publish a youth magazine called SAFF (Prayer row), which at its peak had a circulation of 5,000 copies and covered topics ranging from personal hygiene to the US invasion of Iraq. The AIO was shut down in 2005 and again in 2010 apparently due to a lack of funds (Karčić, 2011). SAFF stopped publishing its printed version except for subscription and made its online version free ([www.saff.ba](http://www.saff.ba)).

### **3.3 The Saudi High Committee for Aid to Bosnia**

The Saudi financial intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in December 1992 when a special board was created to help Bosnian Muslims in their war efforts. The board was named the Saudi High Committee for Aid to Bosnia and was overseen by Riyadh's governor, Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz. The Committee funded the mujahedin through seven major Islamic charities: the Muslim World League, Al Haramain, the International Islamic Relief Organization, the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Saudi Arabia Red Crescent Society, the Islamic Waqf Organisation and the Makkah Humanitarian Organisation. Also Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and other countries poured millions of dollars through a charity network centred in Vienna and Zagreb (Deliso, 2007). It was created as system for arming the Bosnian Army based in Austria, transferring foreign fighters and weapons via the Slovenian city of Maribor and the Croatian port city of Split.

The biggest financier of Bosnian Muslims in that period was the Vienna-based Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), established in 1987 by a Sudanese native, Al-Fatih Ali Hassanein through whose account in the Austrian Die Erste Osterreich Bank flowed some US\$350 million in donations from Islamic countries between 1992 and 1995. About half of that money was used for financing the Bosnian government (Alic, 2007).

In 2001, the Saudi High Committee for Aid to Bosnia was forcibly closed after a raid carried out by US peacekeeping troops at its offices in Sarajevo. The authorities discovered that \$41 million was missing from the operating funds, and recovered anti-Semitic and anti-American material intended for children and other materials which were suggesting terrorist intentions, such as maps of government buildings in Washington and files on the use of crop duster aircrafts. Among those arrested in connection to the raid was an Algerian, who had Bosnian citizenship and who was suspected of plotting an attack on the US embassy in Sarajevo. According to local media, the Saudi aid organisation requested that women cover their heads and children go to religious classes in return for financial help to widows, orphans and other victims of the war. The Saudi High Committee for Aid to Bosnia sponsored the King Fahd cultural center and Mosque in Sarajevo, the Islamic teacher's Academy in Bihac, mosques in Tuzla, in Bugojno and the Saudi cultural centre in Mostar. It also financed the Active Islamic Youth (Michaletos, 2012).



In spring 2002, three Islamic charities were closed in Bosnia for links with Islamist terrorism: Al Haramain, the GRF and Bosanska Idealna Futura (BIF). The latter was designated a terrorist sponsor by the US Treasury on November 19, 2002. In June 2006 another Al-Qaeda-linked charity, the Kuwait-based Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS) remained active in Bosnia openly announcing its "humanitarian" projects. It received some 14 million euros into its accounts in two Bosnian banks, Volksbank and the Agricultural Bank of Sarajevo between 2002 and 2005 directly from high-level sponsors in Kuwait (Deliso, 2007).

### **3.4 The funding from the Bosnian diaspora in Vienna**

The first Wahhabi community was established by Bosnian-born Jusuf Barčić in the village of Bocinje and consisted mostly of Arabs who were former fighters in the El Mudzahid unit. Barčić refused to recognize the state and its institutions, laws, and even traffic-lights. He was a charismatic figure and had studied in Saudi Arabia. He died in a car accident in 2007 and his funeral was attended by more than 3,000 Salafis. According to the official Bosnian establishment, Barčić's activity was funded by the Bosnian cleric Muhamed Fadil Porča when he was the imam at al-Tawhid Mosque in Vienna, where a large Bosnian population had settled. As reported by Anes Alic,

"Some Bosnian Islamic community officials also accused Porca of organizing and financing visits to Bosnia for radical Muslims from Germany and Austria. Bosnian media and Islamic community officials also named another Vienna-based Bosnian cleric, Adnan Buzar, as a main supporter of Barčić's movement. Buzar is the son-in-law of Palestinian Sabri al-Banna, also known as Abu Nidal, the founder of the Fatah Revolutionary Council and the most wanted international terrorist in late 1980s. Al-Banna was killed in Iraq in 2002" (Alic, 2007).

During the war, several Islamic aid agencies were based in Vienna and nearly 100 Islamic fighters were granted Bosnian citizenship through the embassy in the Austrian capital. Barčić himself at that time was the representative of the Vienna-based International Islamic Relief Organization (IGASA) for the Bosnian city of Zenica.

It is believed that although the initial Wahhabi influence in Bosnia came directly from Saudi Arabia and its charities which still continue to function in the region, "much of the focus of late has shifted to Vienna as the source of financial and ideological support for radical Islam in Bosnia." Many analysts assume that, "as Saudi money especially was often channelled to Bosnia via Vienna during the Bosnian war, now money is flowing to the Wahhabis via those same channels" (Schlesinger, *The Internal Pluralization of the Muslim Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina: From Religious Activation to Radicalization*, 2011).

Furthermore, Bosnia has become a new hub in the financial network of Islamic banking and the Zakat, an alms tax or tithe, is increasingly becoming a source for financing radical activities. The lack of transparency in Islamic banking and charitable giving provides an ideal environment to transfer money for radical Islamists and makes it difficult to collect intelligence and map out their activities (Oluic, 2008)

### **3.5 Wahhabism continues to present a threat**

Wahhabism is not powerful today in Bosnia, it is just followed by a small minority but has been able to establish solid roots. The current head of the Wahhabi community, Nusret Imamović, openly supports Al-Qaeda and global jihad movements and takes a hard line with regards to Muslims who are not sufficiently pious by his standards. After the attack on the US embassy in October 2011, he was arrested and later released. Then Imamović banned the use of electronic devices and weapons training.

While the predominance of the traditional moderate Hanafi school of Islam is widespread in Bosnia, the presence of a small but radical Wahhabi community raises concerns that Bosnia could be considered by Islamist terrorists as an Islamic bridgehead in Europe and used as a logistic and recruiting base.

Wahhabism opposes nationalism, prostitution, usury, alcohol and only recognises the authority of Allah. It could become a powerful and attractive message to the young Muslims in Bosnia and could gain further influence in the future.

The foreign fighters who became settled in the country or who became residents after the war, the funds provided by Islamic countries (most of all by Saudi Arabia, through Islamic aid agencies) and the Bosnian diaspora in central Europe (through foreign-educated Bosnians) have been able to aggressively challenge Bosnia's mainstream Islamic community. They have also been able to prove that even in small numbers Wahhabis can present a threat.

## **4. PAKISTAN<sup>7</sup>**

### **4.1 The origin of the Salafist and Wahhabi penetration in Pakistan**

The roots of Salafist/Wahhabi penetration in Pakistan date back to the 1970s, when Pakistanis were travelling to Saudi Arabia to work (Hassaan, 2009). However, it was only with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 that the Salafist/Wahhabi influence grew exponentially. During the war, Arab states (and Saudi Arabia in particular) started to fund charitable, religious and educational institutions, as well as jihadist organisations in order to contrast the Soviet army and their atheism. The Islamic Revolution in Iran and the war in Kashmir have further strengthened such influence over time.

Before the Afghan war, Pakistanis were not familiar with the Salafist/Wahhabi's dogmas. Nevertheless, their assimilation has been facilitated by the Deobandi school of thought, which is based on common principles such as jihad as a means to restore Muslim power and a strict interpretation of the Quran. The Deobandi school was founded by Indian Muslims at the time of the British occupation of India. It emerged as a reaction to foreign military occupation aimed at suppressing Muslims (Mollazehi, 2008). In 1853 a fatwa making the Indian Subcontinent as "dar ul-harb" (place of war) was issued by Shah Abdul-Aziz. Although the Muslim uprising was defeated by the British army in 1857, the ideas supporting the riot were not. In 1866 the Darul Uloom Deoband madrasa was founded in the village of Deoband, in India's Uttar Pradesh State, making the teaching of jihad one of the main subjects (Mollazehi, 2008).

More than a century later, the Soviet invasion transformed Afghanistan into a new dar ul-harb, whose jihad for liberation from foreign "infidels" was perceived as a moral obligation by many Muslims. This time, Islam was put under threat by the atheism promoted by the Soviet Union (Firdous, 2009). It was at this time that Deobandi and Wahhabi thoughts came into contact. Quoting an Afghan writer, Mollazehi refers that the presence of Salafi jihadists in Pakistan dates back to 1981, when Peshawar became the coordination centre for mujahedeen fighting in Afghanistan (Mollazehi, 2008). Since then, organisations like Maktab al-Khadamat al-Mujahedeen started to receive funding from Saudi Arabia (as well as from other Arab and Western countries), including single personalities like Abdullah Azzam and Osama Bin Laden. Theoretical indoctrination was also provided by Deobandi and Ahl al-Hadith (Wahhabi) schools of thought, as well as by Pakistan's Islamist parties such as Mowlana Fazl ul-Rahman and Qazi Hussein Ahmad's Jama'at ul-Islami (Mollazehi, 2008).

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<sup>7</sup> Considering the strong relations between terrorist organizations and radical madrasas, this paragraph is in common with ESISC's other report "The involvement of Salafism / Wahhabism in the support and supply of arms to rebel groups".

During the war, several madrasas in Pakistan were operating as recruitment centres for the jihad against the communist occupiers (Firdous, 2009). Particularly, Saudi Arabia started to support madrasas in Balochistan and the North-West Frontier Province (now known as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), where wahhabism was taught to contrast both atheism and Sufism; the latter considered as immoral (Pabst, 2009). In this regard, Mollazehi has noted that: “[...] Saudi Arabia, undoubtedly, pursued political and ideological goals under the aegis of jihad in Afghanistan. This means that promotion of Salafi and Wahhabi schools of thought which were financially supported by Saudi Arabia was a long-term goal for that country and Saudi Arabia pursued that goal throughout the Islamic world using petrodollars.” (Mollazehi, 2008).

It was during this period that some of the most influential charitable institutions were created to provide relief to victims and funds for jihadists. For these purposes the Markaz-ud-Dawawal-Irshad (MDI) was founded in 1986 by Hafiz Muhammed Saeed with funds from Arab states (The Guardian, 2010/a). The MDI will later split into two alias organisations: Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD), which exerts an important role in modern day Pakistan.

Once the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, about 2.8 million Afghan refugees remained in Pakistan (Firdous, 2009). Since the mujahedeen remained without a cause to fight, they diverted their attention toward India’s “occupation” of Kashmir. In their view, Kashmir and Afghanistan were two similar places of war where to wage jihad (Firdous, 2009). Consequently, in 1989 the MDI created the LeT as its military branch to fight in the Indian controlled Jammu and Kashmir districts, while the MDI kept charge of humanitarian and religious activities. The leader of both organisations remained the MDI’s founder Muhammed Saeed (The Guardian, 2010/a). Following the 9/11 terrorists attack in Washington and New York, the US inserted the LeT into the list of terrorist organisations. Therefore, in order to preserve MDI’s fundraising activities from sanctions, Saeed resigned from the leadership of LeT and changed MDI’s name into JuD (The Guardian, 2010/a).

Another event that represented a momentum in the Salafi and Wahhabi penetration into Pakistan’s society was the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which opened a new front of confrontation within the Muslim world. Salafi and Shiite interpretation of Islam have always been at the antipodes. Therefore, since 1979 Salafi jihadists had to tighten their ranks against the two new enemies: Communist atheists and Shiite apostates (Mollazehi, 2008). For the occasion, the Sipah-e-Sahaba (SeS) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) terrorist organisations were specifically created to fight Shiites (Mollazehi, 2008) and the number of sectarian clashes rose exponentially.

It is worth noting that Saudi support for combating Pakistan’s external and domestic enemies was in line with Islamabad’s strategy for Central Asia. Therefore, it was supported by the Armed forces and in particular by the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI); Pakistan’s military intelligence agency. Saudi sponsored madrasas and Pakistani intelligence were working in symbiosis, where the former was responsible for producing jihadi literature and the indoctrination and the latter to train jihadists in Afghanistan and in Pakistan’s tribal areas (Firdous, 2009). This led to a deep penetration of Salafi and Wahhabi thoughts within Pakistan’s army and intelligence, which nowadays remains under the flag of the secret cooperation the ISI entertains with some Taliban groups and Taliban-allied organisations like the Haqqani network.

The Haqqani network is indeed a remarkable example of such cooperation. In fact, Jalaluddin Haqqani, the founder of the group, took his name from the Haqqania madrasa (Darul Uloom Haqqania) located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (Green & Khattak, 2011). The Haqqania madrasa, also known as the “University of Jihad”, has trained several Taliban leaders including Mullah Omar (Ali, 2007).

#### 4.2 Present Salafist and Wahhabi financial support to Pakistan's educational, social and religious institutions

According to the Wikileaks' cable #178082 jihadi recruitment networks were established in Punjab and supported with the funding of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates since 2005 (The Dawn, 2011). The cable is regarding a communication to the US State Department sent by the then Principal Officer at the US Consulate in Lahore, Bryan Hunt, on November 2008. Hunt refers to information he received through discussions with local religious and political authorities, as well as with representatives of the civil society. Radical madrasas following the Deobandi and the Ahl al-Hadith creed were established in Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan villages, from where children were indoctrinated to jihad before being sent to training camps in the FATA areas (Federally Administered Tribal Areas). Arab-sponsored "charity organisations" like Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), the Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were the link between Deobandi/Ahl al-Hadith religious leaders and local communities. It is important to note that in order to evade restrictions and sanctions JuD has diversified its portfolio of charitable organisations into separate branches such as: *Falah-e-Insaniat* Foundation, *Tehreek-e-Hurmat-e-Rasool*, *Tehreek-e-Azadi-e-Kashmir*, *Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq*, *Paasbaan-e-Ahle-Hadith*, *aasban-e-Kashmir*, *Al-Mansoorian*, and *Al-Nasaryeen*. It is believed that all these organisations are nothing but branches of JuD (The Guardian, 2010/a).

According to local Punjabis, the recruitment activities and the number of Deobandi and Ahl al-Hadith's madrasas and mosques have dramatically risen since 2005. This surge was caused by an important influx of money coming from "Islamic charity" on behalf of the aforementioned charitable organisations as relief measures for the earthquake in Kashmir and North West Frontier Province (NWFP). For instance, JuD's alias organisation *Falah-e-Insaniat* Foundation was responsible for the Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps in NWFP (The Guardian, 2010/b). However, the report says that a part of these funds were diverted to expand Deobandi and Ahl al-Hadith's influence in Punjab, a province particularly hostile to those cults. It is also believed that it is common for the JuD to inflate the costs of charitable infrastructures (schools, hospitals, madrasas) to siphon money destined to LeT (The Guardian, 2010/a). In this regard, another cable leaked from the US State Department states that: "Some of JuD's budget, using funds raised both from willing donors and by fraud, is dedicated to social services or humanitarian projects, while some is used to finance LeT operations. – In December 2005, an official of *Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq* forwarded JuD donation receipts to a probable LeT front company in Saudi Arabia where an LeT finance official may have been closely associated to the general manager acting as a front for moving LeT funds [...]" (The Guardian, 2010/a).

Once the JuD and similar organisations had succeeded in establishing a presence in the territory (e.g. through a madrasa or mosque), an influx of annual "donations" began to arrive from private donors from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. These donations have been estimated at around \$ 100 million / year (The Dawn, 2011).

The recruitment process started with JuD, AKF and JeM organisations selecting and approaching families in difficult economic conditions and with several children; preferably male aged between 8 and 12. Then they were introducing Deobandi/Ahl al-Hadith religious leaders (mawlānā) to the families. These mawlānā were then convincing families that their poverty was caused by their deviation from the “true Islam”, due to their following of the Sufi creed. To return to the “right path” they had to offer one or two of their sons to the cause of Islam. This meant that Deobandi/Ahl al-Hadith mawlānā were offering families to educate their children in their madrassas and to give them employment afterwards; either as clerics or jihadists. In the latter case, a compensation of about \$ 6.500 per son was given to the family for each son “martyred”. About 200 madrassas with less than 100 students each have been established for this purpose in the villages of Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan in eastern Punjab, while the northern village of Gujranwala has more than 500 (Walsh, 2011). Once the indoctrination was completed, some of the students were sent to jihadi training camps in FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP) or to act as suicide bombers in targeted areas.

The United States is well aware about the financing network starting from Arab countries and reaching terrorists organisations through charitable institutions. In the US State Department’s memo dated December 2009 it is written that “donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorists groups worldwide” (The Guardian, 2010/b). It is said that countries like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait do too little to stop rich and conservative donors from financing terrorist organisations through charitable and religious institutions. The document urges the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to monitor overseas operations carried out by Saudi-based charities and NGOs, as well as to prevent terrorists from exploiting religious celebrations like Ramadan, Hajj and Umrah for raising funds. The US is aware that Saudi-based charities and religious organisations are used to raising money for Al Qaeda, the Taliban and LeT. Although acknowledging the Kingdom’s efforts to control such activities



when they are meant to target the country, the US urged Saudi Arabia to act even when these funds are raised to finance terrorist activities abroad: “While the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) takes seriously the threat of terrorism within Saudi Arabia, it has been an ongoing challenge to persuade Saudi officials to treat terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia as a strategic priority” (The Guardian, 2010/b). Therefore, more control and regulation over the charitable sector is requested.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar and Kuwait are also mentioned as financial hubs for Al Qaeda, Taliban and LeT’s sponsors. Nevertheless, the lack of information on the issue has not allowed the identification of donors and facilitators.

## 5. INDONESIA

Radical Islam is a long tradition in Indonesia, and existed before the emergence of Salafi and Wahhabi movements in the country. The main characteristic of these movements is their foreign nature as they were brought and built under foreign Middle East influence and funding. The puritan vision of Islam



carried in their ideology found a breeding ground within the small radical part of Indonesian Muslims; most of Indonesian Muslims are moderate (Hookway, 2012) especially due to a particular and syncretic nature of Islam. This is of significance as Indonesia is the most populated Muslim country in the world, with an approximate population of 248.6 millions including 86.1% of Muslims 5.7% of Protestants, 3% of Roman Catholic, 1.8% of Hindu and 3.4% other (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). It is a very ambiguous and almost theological question to determine the exact degree of radical Islam and its implication on the entire Indonesian society. Thus the understanding of Salafism and Wahhabism should not focus exclusively on the content but also on the objectives they carry and the strategy adopted to evolve and remain lingering particularly in the recent period when Indonesian authorities are trying to eradicate Jihadi terrorism and its inciters, such processes do not go without consequences on the evolution of the threat.

The present chapter aims to describe the challenge posed by the Salafi influence to Indonesian society as it has evolved to a more widespread and complex nebula of organisations, schools and political groups.

### **5.1 The building of Salafi influence in Indonesia, from the Middle East to an inner and autonomous tendency**

In the Indonesian educational system we can distinguish three different sorts of institutions. The first one that particularly interest us in the present study is the madrassa, which refers to an Islamic school "that Adopt a modern system of education in which Islamic subjects are taught alongside general subjects" (Hasan). Besides the Salafi madrassa are also referring to the religious authority of clerics and institutions in the Middle-East, especially Saudi Arabia. The second one is called sekolah, modern-style secular school. And finally the Pesantren: "a term which refers to rural-based Islamic educational institutions which teach predominantly Islamic subjects using kitab kuning (classical Arabic books) with the main aim of producing religious leaders. This pesantren are overwhelmingly identified with the traditionalist Muslim organization the Nahdhatul Ulama." Salafi and Wahhabi madrassa under the direct or indirect influence of Middle East donators greatly contributed to the emergence of radical Islam in Indonesia after the fall of Suharto in May 1998.

The persistence of radical Islamist movements largely relies upon a widespread educational system that benefits from great autonomy. We can first define as Salafis those who clearly and explicitly identify themselves as Salafis, "followers of the pious forefathers". One of the main difficulties in understanding the Salafi movements in Indonesia is the theoretical and pragmatic shades between groups that consider themselves as the legitimate representatives of Salafism. This tendency became even broader in the post Bali attacks period when Indonesia and the US started to more carefully monitor the financing from the Middle East, especially from Saudi Arabia; as the funds were drying up the competition among Salafi groups became harsher. Causing, amongst other things, an increasing radicalization supposed to justify the grant.

Furthermore what can be understood in Indonesia as Wahhabism is the direct support and educational structures brought by Saudi Arabia to promote its ultra-conservative religious movement in the country. Historically speaking the strategic implantation of Saudi Arabia in the country started in 1967 with the creation of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, the Islamic Council for Islamic Propagation) enhanced in 1980 with of the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (LIPIA, Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies) in reaction to the Iranian Revolution, the Kingdom tried to secure its Sunni sphere of influence. Besides, the Jihad waged in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union marked a turning point for many radical Islamist organisations, including in Indonesia, which found a common ground to put in practice their radical beliefs. Returning from Afghanistan Indonesian Jihadists significantly

contributed to the strengthening of radical Islam, by both preaching and setting up terrorist groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (Roggio, 2011) (JI).

A part from financing clerics, funding madrassas and pesantren and Saudi Arabia largely participated in the spreading of the Wahhabi ideology through formal institutions: "Mr. Arofiq, 25, entered the Educational Institution of Indonesia-Saudi Arabia, housed in a gleaming building on a main thoroughfare. He lasted in the austere environment for two years. "There were too many forbidden things," he said of the school where the Arabic language, taught by teachers from Saudi Arabia, is the focus of the curriculum. "You were not allowed to join any other student organization. Jeans were out, and they preferred that you wear a beard and long Arabic clothes." Mr. Arofiq did not feel at home at the Saudi-run school, where he said the strict Wahhabi form of Islam was the basis of the teaching. But he was the exception. Most students persevered for the full five years, he said." (PERLEZ, 2003).

Some other countries from the Middle East and Southwest Asia, such as Pakistan and Yemen (Anthony Bubalo, 2011), also contributed to the Salafi movements in Indonesia mainly in educating students in Islamic studies and in inspiring the structure of the Salafi madrassa. In the specific case of Pakistan students could attend institutions that teach radical Islam, such as the Abu Bakr Islamic University, which was already raising questions but it became an even more important issue when intelligence services of both countries reported that students, or undercover terrorist, were forging connections with terrorist group in Pakistan. Yemen also gradually became an important destination for Indonesian students. State control in general is very weak and especially when it comes to the surveillance of the numerous Salafi madrassa and the regulation of foreign students visa. Furthermore the massive presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabic Peninsula (AQAP) and its numerous strongholds facilitate the opportunity for radical students to build connections with terrorist organizations which is in addition waging an open war against the Yemeni authorities. Thus Yemen became a country of great interest for Indonesian Salafis.

Nevertheless back in 2004 the International Crisis Group (ICG) released a wide and comprehensive report (International Crisis Group, 13 September 2004) on Salafism in Indonesia titled: "Why Salafism and Terrorism mostly don't mix". The report was an unprecedented and comprehensive study of the Indonesian Salafi movement although its conclusion and main thesis, contained in the title, was controversial and challenged by the facts over the years<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, through a precise description of the religious landscape in Indonesia the ICG highlights that despite the rise of Salafism in Indonesia the Salafi community remains divided on various key issues, such as the use of violence and the legitimacy of Jihad but also regarding the obedience to a human built hierarchical structure. The main argument is that terrorist identified as "salafi jihadists" are not representative of the entire Salafi movement in Indonesia.

Our purpose was not to tackle the specific question of terrorism; nevertheless the series of terrorist attacks during the last decade had a substantial impact on the Salafi movement in Indonesia, mainly because the massive crackdown on terrorism encouraged the most radical movements to opt for a different strategy mainly through education and preaching.

## **5.2 The vicious circle of radicalism, from the demobilisation to the infiltration of civil society**

Large scale terrorist attacks remain a serious threat despite the overall lull tendency. On July 17, 2009, bomb attacks hit the J.W Marriot and Ritz Carlton in Jakarta killing 9 people and injuring 50, including 6 American nationals. The investigation indicated that the attacks had most probably been planned by

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<sup>8</sup> « Salafism could be more of a barrier to the expansion of Jihadist activities than a facilitator. »



Noordin Mohammad Top<sup>9</sup>, a Malaysian terrorist member of the JI. Furthermore it appears that most of his followers and accomplices were educated within the JI madrassa and that funds from Saudi Arabia financed the attack (Montero, 2009). Even before the 2009 attacks, Indonesia and the US, pressured Saudi donators after it was proven that Saudi funds were indiscriminately financing both Wahhabi and Salafi schools but also terrorist organisations such as the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The shut down of the official Saudi charity organisation Al Aramain was an illustration of a new awareness and actions taken against funds from the Middle East.

In the wake of the Bali bombings<sup>10</sup> in October 12, 2002 and October 1, 2005 and other large scale attacks in the country, Indonesian authorities conducted a massive and unprecedented crackdown against terrorist groups, especially the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) a radical Islamist organisation which later became affiliated with Al Qaeda. The country experienced large success in its fight against terrorism by building strong and effective counter-terror units and a lasting and deep cooperation with the US and Australia in terms of regional security and intelligence sharing. Beyond a classic strategy of counter-terror operations Indonesia also built an original program known as “deradicalisation” as a complement in order to bring back extremist and radical Islamists within society. But despite its successes such a process demonstrated that radical Islamists who were openly calling for jihad and thus terrorism adopted a new and more undercover strategy consisting of fitting in the latitude given by Indonesian authorities and spreading radicalisation from within.

There is indeed a thin line between radical Islamist groups and terrorist groups as most of their members received the same education. The Front Pembela Islam (FPI) or the Islamic Defenders Front (IDF) exemplifies such a tendency where hard-line Islamic groups use both violence and preaching to “defend Islamic morality” mainly against western symbols or habits and religious minorities. The founder of the group, Muhammad Rizieq Syihab was educated in Saudi Arabia and advocates for the application of Sharia law in Indonesia, according to his Wahhabi precepts.

As mentioned earlier there are connections between the Salafi radical Islamist educational system, violent radical Islamist organisations and ultimately terrorist groups. The International Crisis Group highlighted this trend in a remarkable report focused on the Cirebon example (Group, 26 January 2012). It appears that radical, Salafi-inspired, groups, tend to commit more violent actions, including terrorism as their radical education brings them to Jihad. Besides most of these groups benefit from certain lenience from the authorities that still sees them as vigilante groups. This mildness towards such Islamist vigilante groups is also a pragmatic means to avoid direct confrontations and encouraging more radicalisation among extremist groups.

Neither Mainstream Muslim organisations nor the international community seem to clearly identify the rising threat represented by these trends: “The two largest Muslim social organizations in the country, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, differ on where the danger lies. For NU, the problem is salafism, the ultra-puritan stream of Islam that not only preaches intolerance toward non-Muslims but also regards NU’s traditional practices as bida’ (unwarranted innovations). Salafis (as opposed to the more political Salafi jihadis) may not use violence, it argues, but they employ “psychological terrorism” by accusing NU members of not being real Muslims. Many Muhammadiyah members in rural areas see anyone fighting for Islamic law as deserving of support, even if they may not agree with the tactics used.” (Group, 26 January 2012)

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<sup>9</sup> Indonesian police declared that Noordin Mohamad Top was killed on September 17, 2009 by the Densus 88 anti-terrorist unit in Solo Central Java.

<sup>10</sup> The 2002 Bali bombing is believed to have killed around 200 people and injured 300 and the 2005 attack perpetrated by 3 suicide bombers that killed more than 20 people and injured more than 100.

### **5.3 From Global to local**

There was undoubtedly a significant evolution in the last 10 years regarding the overall presence and distribution of funds by Saudi Arabia to Salafi and Wahhabi organisations in Indonesia as indeed the country responded with strength and efficiency to the threat posed by terrorism itself. Indonesia, supported by the United States, managed to suppress, at least partially, the incoming unverified Saudi funds destined to finance Wahhabi and Salafi schools but also terrorist organisation. Nevertheless the roots of terrorism are deeper and go beyond the formal and identifiable Jihadi terrorist groups, mainly through the Salafi channels.

The threat evolved from groups and schools financed from the outside to more local groups that benefited from the process of radicalisation that prevailed for the last decade but also from the tolerance of the Indonesian state regarding radicalism and extremism as long as it remains non-violent. Under certain circumstances we could say that the damage is done.

The most recent trend and consequences demonstrate that radical nonviolent Islamist groups tend to be violent as violent actions, especially small scale terrorist attacks against religious minorities or security forces members, is the logical outcome of an intolerant and political oriented Islam. To tackle that new trend Indonesia should be more involved in regulating both the content and the action of radical Islamist groups, especially when it comes to the educational system where Puritanism should not be a front for terrorism.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

It is of use to consider the networks of influence of the Salafists and Wahhabis by highlighting their fundamentalism and their inability and/or refusal to adapt to modernity.

If this perception is undoubtedly accurate when one attempts to study their religious and philosophical messages, it is much less or absolutely wrong for it when one uses an approach focused on the effectiveness of their strategies and tactics of penetrations into the political sphere.

As we proposed in the introduction, it is necessary to distinguish between the means implemented by the Salafis and Wahhabis of the objective pursued by the puritanical tendencies of Sunni Islam. The charitable and educational initiatives, be they private or public, are ultimately only tools for the penetration of populations likely to embrace their religious doctrine in the short or medium term and more or less heavily.

The remarkable flexibility of the Salafis and Wahhabis, their ability to adapt is demonstrated once one observes their successful attempts to penetrate societies that ultimately shared only the majority presence of populations adhering to Sunni Islam. The weakness of the state apparatus or the precariousness of the economies are of course elements that can play favourably but are certainly not sufficient to account for the Salafi and Wahhabi influence.

A comprehensive approach to the problem could not ignore the essential question of the relationship to "modernity" among hardliners Salafis and the new followers a religious doctrine that advocates extreme traditionalism. An obvious working hypothesis is as follows: there is a more or less marked correlation between socio-economic indicators (household income, education levels, etc.) and adherence to the Salafi movement. It remains, however, that these assumptions would not give an account of the complexity of the problems. Contrary to conventional wisdom, religious "fundamentalism" is not specific to the poorest, regardless of their religious affiliation. In our case, one

must recall that members of the financial elite in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf States committed themselves to disseminating Salafi and Wahhabi ideologies.

Probably it would be necessary to open another debate on the crucial issue of the ideological conflict between an iconoclastic “modernity” and a literalistic doctrine used to support national and personal identities affected by an ever-changing global environment.

Ultimately, what our five case studies show is the ability of networks to adapt to very different contexts: the European Bosnia in the post Yugoslavia war period, the Pakistani security apparatus, the Indonesian economic power or the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. Not to mention the systematic proximity between the educational systems, places of worship and social actions financially supported by the Salafis and Wahhabis and a series of violent organisations and sometimes clearly engaged in terrorist activity.

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