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ICT's 13th International Conference

# World Summit on Counter-Terrorism Terrorism's Global Impact

**Sunday-Wednesday, September 8-11, 2013**  
**Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, Israel**



Terrorism is a dynamic, mutable phenomenon. Again and again it changes shape, takes on and throws off guises, adapts itself to the challenges of the day and to local and global trends, to the rise and fall of ideologies, technological developments, and the particular interests of states, regimes and superpowers. The characteristics of modern terrorism are ceaselessly affected by these evolutionary processes. Yet in addition, every few decades terrorism makes a leap that alters the very challenge it poses. A new *modus operandi* quickly becomes dominant: Because of its perceived effectiveness, it is adopted by terrorist organizations worldwide. And indeed, the new method usually causes many more injuries and casualties, which gain it ever greater media coverage. Above all, the new *modus operandi* seems to pierce the soft underbelly of modern society, even as it remains impervious to state counter-terrorism efforts. During the past 60 years, three such leaps in *modus operandi* can be identified: (1) At the end of the 1960s, airplane hijackings became a commonplace, first tried by Palestinian terrorist organizations, and chiefly by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine under the leadership of George Habash. (2) During the 1980s, it was suicide terrorist attacks that swept across the Middle East, starting among the terrorist organizations in Lebanon and spreading to Palestinian terrorist organizations, and from them to local and global jihadist groups everywhere. (3) The third leap occurred during the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and was marked by the unprecedentedly horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which sparked subsequent attempts by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates to repeat their success. Relentless efforts to perpetrate multi-casualty terrorist attacks are illustrated by the actions of Richard Reid, the so-called "Shoe Bomber", who boarded American Airlines Flight 63 from Paris to Miami on December 22, 2001 carrying a booby-trapped shoe, and of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, known as the "Underwear Bomber", who boarded Northwest Airlines Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit on December 25, 2009 carrying a bomb in his underwear; and by the October 29, 2010 plot of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) to fly HP printers laden with explosives from Yemen to the US.

As we approach The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual World Summit on Counter-Terrorism, it appears we are on the cusp of another leap in local and global terrorism, this time to the imminent, tangible threat of unconventional – especially chemical and biological – terrorism. It is being precipitated in part by the civil war in Syria, which is marked by a crisis of governance in the regime of Bashar al-Assad and the intensive involvement of the two most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world. These organizations come from both sides of the aisle. Hezbollah, a Shi'ite hybrid terrorist organization, is protecting the Assad regime under the tutelage of Iran. And groups of Sunni jihadist fighters, known as mujahideen, who are inspired by and affiliated with Al-Qaeda, are striving to topple the Assad regime and establish an Islamist caliphate in Syria's stead. Regardless of who "wins" – be it the local and global Sunni jihadists or the Shi'ite minions of Iran's ayatollahs and Hezbollah's leaders – it appears likely that Syria's immense arsenal of chemical and biological weapons will fall into the most dangerous of hands. Leaving one of the largest unconventional arsenals in the world to these nefarious terrorist elements poses an almost immeasurable threat, not least because, based on past experience, the arsenal is liable to be used. If we take as an example the appropriation by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) of the Libyan Army's conventional weapons, which became "available" after the fall of Qaddafi's regime, we can expect Syria's unconventional weapons to be swiftly transferred by terrorist actors in Syria to their affiliates around the world, who are liable to use them in terrorist attacks anywhere and everywhere, against any number and type of target.

On the eve of September 11, 2001, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) was one of the few, if not the only institute to warn of the threat posed by Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden. Again this year, the ICT will raise its voice at the Annual World Summit on Counter-Terrorism to warn of the danger posed by the next great (unconventional) leap of terrorism.

The variable nature of modern terrorism and the looming danger of another change in its *modus operandi* makes your participation in this year's World Summit all the more urgent. Join this summit of counter-terrorism experts and lend your voice to the informed discussions and efforts to define coming threats while searching for the best methods to confront them.

This year's conference will be convened from September 8-11, 2013, and will revolve around the following topics:

## 1) Terrorist Actors and Ideologies

The first series of workshops will be devoted to terrorist actors and their ideologies: the cornerstone of the terrorist threat. This year, the ICT Annual Summit will focus its analysis on Sunni jihadist actors in four hotspots: North and sub-Saharan Africa; Syria, including Syrian jihadist groups and their sponsors in Iraq and elsewhere; the threat in the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip; and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. In addition, this series of workshops will address the involvement in terrorism of Hezbollah and Iran. The first series of workshops is as follows:

1. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and North Africa
2. The Al-Nusra Front and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)
3. The Palestinian Arena: Hamas and Jihadist Actors in the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip
4. The Worldwide Involvement in Terrorism of Hezbollah and Iran
5. Eastern Europe and the Caucasus
6. Al-Qaeda Central and Its Proxies

## 2) Terrorist Tactics and Strategies

The second series of workshops will address the various tactics, strategies, and *modus operandi* currently being employed by myriad terrorist actors. The workshops will cover both established and emerging tactics and strategies, including homegrown terrorism and the "lone wolf" phenomenon; cyber-terrorism; terrorism involving pharmaceutical targets or tactics; the proliferation of unconventional (CBRN) weapons; and the growing use of rockets and missiles as a terrorist tactic. The second series of workshops is as follows:

1. Cyber-Terrorism
2. Pharma-Terrorism
3. The Proliferation of Chemical and Biological Weapons among Terrorist Actors as an Outcome of the Civil War in Syria and the "Arab Spring"
4. Homegrown Terrorism, Local Initiatives and "Lone Wolves": The Case Study of the Boston Marathon
5. Rockets and Missiles as Terrorist *Modus Operandi*
6. Defining Terrorism: A Fundamental Counter-Terrorism Measure

## 3) The Context of Terrorism

The third series of workshops will be dedicated to the broader context within which contemporary forms of terrorism flourish. The relationship between terrorism and other forms of political violence, and between terrorism and conflicts such as insurgency, ethnic and sectarian strife, and civil war is often symbiotic. Moreover, terrorism thrives on the innovations of terrorist actors, a growing number of whom cooperate among themselves. The third series of workshops is as follows:

1. Terrorist Innovation
2. Terrorist Inter-Group Cooperation and State Sponsorship
3. Hybrid Terrorism: The Political and Military Activities of Terrorist Organizations
4. Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict and Its Impact on Terrorism
5. Failed States and Governance

## 4) The Challenges of Counter-Terrorism

The fourth series of workshops will consider the many challenges of counter-terrorism. Although states targeted by terrorism have been able to score some counter-terrorism successes in recent years, challenges remain, due to the evolving conception of the nature of the enemy; rapidly changing regional developments; terrorist actors' persistent motivation to harm their enemies; and the dilemmas faced by democracies, in particular, that attempt to effectively confront the challenge of terrorism (most recently evidenced in the Boston Marathon bombings). The fourth series of workshops is as follows:

1. Deterrence and the Use of Force in Counter-Terrorism
2. Countering Terrorist Communications and Incitement
3. Legal and Intelligence Challenges in Counter-Terrorism
4. US Counter-Terrorism Doctrines: The Difference between the Bush and Obama Administrations

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