



IRI Report: Switzerland

Max Hofer

October 2020

* The views expressed in this publication are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Institute of Counter Terrorism (ICT)

Executive Summary

Switzerland has served as a logistical base of operation for various Jihadist groups around the globe for years, and therefore has not been troubled by major terrorist attacks. This changed dramatically with the emergence of ISIS and the wave of foreign fighters travelling to Syria from countries throughout Europe. Although Switzerland is considered to be a neutral state, not participating in any warring conflict, it is nonetheless considered to be a kuffar state in the eyes of radical Islamists and therefore constitutes a legitimate target for global Jihad. The presence of radical Islam in Switzerland may be traced back to the 1960s, when the Swiss government granted Said Ramadan, the Muslim Brotherhood's founder Hasan al-Bana's son in-law, asylum. From here, Ramadan was able to continue spreading the Brotherhood ideology around the globe and establish himself within the Saudi-funded Muslim World League. For many years, Islamist individuals were able to create networks that ideologically, logistically, and financially supported radical groups in their native countries. With the emergence of ISIS, a strategic shift took place within Jihadi groups, evolving from centralized and structured to decentralized and unstructured groups, with a growing presence on social media. It also became increasingly difficult for security services to detect radical individuals online, making it easier for terrorist organizations to conduct propaganda, recruitment, and financing activities. The case of the Salafi-Jihadi youth network in Winterthur was one of the most high profile in Switzerland. Out of all the Jihadist cases in Switzerland, this example has received the most media attention in the German-speaking part, with various articles reporting on different aspects and individuals of this network.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Islam in Switzerland	6
A Brief history	6
Muslim Population in Switzerland Today	7
Muslim Organizations in Switzerland	10
Islamism in Switzerland	11
A Brief History	11
Foreign Educated Imams	12
The Muslim World League (MWL) and Saudi Arabia’s Influence	13
The Islamic Museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds	13
Turkey’s Influence is on the Rise	15
Central Council of Muslims Switzerland (IZRS)	16
Street Dawa Operations	18
Map of Islamic Communities in Switzerland	18
Jihadism in Switzerland	20
A Brief History	20
Official Numbers released by the Swiss Government	22
Radicalization in Switzerland	23
Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors	24
Push and Pull Factors	27
Neurological Evidence for Peer Influence during Radicalization Processes	28
Creating a Social Psychological Profile	29
Possible Generic Profile of a Swiss Jihadist	31
Case Study – Salafi-Jihadi Network in An’Nur Mosque Winterthur	32
Jihad Travelers	32
Salafist Youth Gang	39
Court Case against Members of the Youth Group	41
Police Raid on Swiss Jihadists Nationwide	42
Charges against former prayer leader Azad M.	42
Conclusion	44
Bibliography	46
Appendix: Statistics of Muslim Population in Switzerland	51

List of Figures

Figure 1: Muslim Population in Switzerland (2017).....	7
Figure 2: Mosques in Switzerland (Source: University of Lucerne)	8
Figure 3: Nationalities of Muslims in Switzerland	8
Figure 4: Nationalities of Muslims in Switzerland	8
Figure 5: Muslim Organizations Switzerland (Sources: Saida Keller-Messahli and FIOS)	10
Figure 6: Foreign Influence on Swiss Islamic Associations (Sources: Saida Keller-Messahli, Raphael Rauch, Tobias Tscherrig, and FIOS).....	19
Figure 7: Swiss Jihadist Travelers as of February 2019 (Source: Federal Intelligence Service).....	22
Figure 8: Gender and Age of Radicalized Individuals in Switzerland (Source: Eser Davolio et al.) ...	25
Figure 9: Number of Radicalized Individuals in every Region (Source: Eser Davolio et al.).....	26
Figure 10: Family Roots of Radicalized Individuals in Switzerland (Source: Eser Davolio et al.)	27
Figure 11: Salafi-Jihadi Network in Winterthur	38

List of Tables

Table 1: Level of Religiosity (Sources: Raphael Rauch & Swiss Statistical Office).....	9
Table 2: Muslim Population Switzerland in Cantons (Source: Federal Statistical Office)	51
Table 3: Muslim Population in Largest Cities (Source: Federal Statistical Office)	51
Table 4: Nationality of Muslims in Switzerland (cumulative 2013-2017) (Source: Federal Statistical Office)	51
Table 5: Socio-Demographics of Muslims in Switzerland (Source: Federal Statistical Office).....	52

List of Images

Image 1: Sandro V. (Source: Till Hirsekorn – Der Landbote)	33
Image 2: Valdet Gashi (Source: Vice).....	33
Image 3: Hasan with AK (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook).....	34
Image 4: Hasan and Valdet Gashi (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)	34
Image 5: Vedad & Esra's Father in Turkey (Source: Watson; Original: Faith Karacali [dha]).....	34
Image 6: Christian holding a head (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)	35
Image 7: Christian im Combat Gear (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook).....	35
Image 8: Ahmed with his Laywer (Source: Der Landbote; Original: Keystone)	36
Image 9: Mohammad leading Prayer during Recess (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)	39
Image 10: Youth Group in the An'Nur Mosque (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)	39
Image 11: Members of the youth gang (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)	40
Image 12: Adal (left) and another member of the clique (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)	40
Image 13: Rexhep Memishi in the An'Nur Mosque (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)	41
Image 14: Azad M. (Source: Kurt Pelda)	42

Introduction

In August 2020, one of the most high profile court cases against the alleged Jihadist Sandro V., from the German-speaking city of Winterthur, commenced in front of the Supreme Court of Switzerland. The legal pursuit of Sandro had been an ongoing process since 2014, when the Interpol office in Rome asked the Swiss federal police about a Swiss phone number (Sandro's) that was saved in the contact list of a known Bosnian ISIS recruiter.¹ Sandro V. has been charged with violating the Federal Act on the Proscription of the Groups Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, and Associated Groups for travelling to Syria in 2013 and upon his return, establishing a network of Salafi-Jihadi youths, of whom eight subsequently joined ISIS in the upcoming years.²

While Switzerland has served as a logistical base of operation for various Jihadist groups around the globe for years, and therefore was not targeted for major terrorist attacks, this has dramatically changed since the emergence of ISIS and the wave of foreign fighters travelling to Syria from countries throughout Europe. Although Switzerland is considered to be a neutral country, not participating in any warring conflict, it is nonetheless considered to be a kuffar state in the eyes of radical Islamists and therefore constitutes a legitimate target for global Jihad.

The aim of this study is to focus on the phenomenon of radical Islam, as opposed to Islam as a religion, and which may only be attributed to a small percentage of the Swiss Muslim community. First, the development and evolution of Islam in Switzerland will be outlined, demographic information presented, and the organization of the Muslim community within the country illustrated. Next, the analysis will focus on political Islam in Switzerland, which has its origin in the 1960s when the Swiss government granted Said Ramadan, the Brotherhood's founder Hasan al-Bana's son-in-law, asylum. From here, Ramadan was able to continue to spread the Muslim Brotherhood ideology worldwide and establish himself as a key player in the Saudi-funded Muslim World League. Moreover, this study uncovers extensive ties between Islamic centers and organizations in Switzerland and radical entities in Balkan states, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and more. Lastly, the study will highlight various Jihadist activities within Switzerland, mostly support and financing activities that have taken place throughout the years. Because the government maintained rather loose asylum criteria for many years, it allowed for fugitive Jihadists to relocate to Switzerland and continue logistical and financial support activities from a safe place. Upon the

¹ Pelda and Knellwolf, "Hat Der «Emir» Junge Winterthurer in Den Jihad Geschickt?"

² Pelda and Knellwolf, "«Der Grösste Fehler in Meinem Leben»."

emergence of ISIS in 2011, the novel wave of foreign fighters joining ISIS also swept over Switzerland, resulting in approximately 77 individuals to travel to Syria. In light of this phenomenon, the entire radicalization process will be analyzed in more detail, highlighting the psychosocial factors at play in the majority of cases of radical Islamists and Jihadists in Switzerland. The discussion presented will then be exemplified by a case study of the Winterthur Salafi-Jihadi youth clique, which must be considered a hotbed of Jihadi radicalization in the German-speaking part of Switzerland.

Islam in Switzerland

A Brief history

In 1946, three missionaries of the Ahmadiyya movement³ arrived in Zurich with the intention of traveling further to Germany, to proselytize there. However, in the years following the Second World War, it was nearly impossible to cross the border into Germany. Therefore, two of three missionaries continued on to the Netherlands, while one, Sheikh Nasir Ahmad, stayed in Zurich and founded the first Mosque in Switzerland (Mahmud Mosque). Further, he published the first German translation of the Quran.⁴ According to Vidino⁵, the first wave of Muslim immigration started nearly two decades later. He states that in the 1960s, Switzerland's labor market was shorthanded and in desperate need of non-skilled labor. Therefore, the government allowed economic migrants from Turkey and former Yugoslavia, given that they fulfilled the basic requirements, to work in cities where the demand for workers was pressing. They were mostly young single men, who came with the intention of returning back to their home country. Their culture and religion was practiced in private and did not affect the public all too much. Vidino goes on stating that by the 1970s, more than 16'000 Muslims were living and working in Switzerland, predominately in industrial, and less in rural and agricultural, areas. After the Swiss government introduced a new family unification law, the first generation of migrants, many of whom had married and had families that they were supporting in their home countries, were able to have their wives and children join them in Switzerland, which led to a more visible and stable presence of Muslims in the country. Also, interactions between Muslims and Swiss society went beyond the factories where these workers were employed and spilled over to schools, hospitals, and housing

³ The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat was established in India by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889. Together with Sunni, Shia, Alevites, etc. they are also a religious persuasion of Islam. In Switzerland they form a small minority within the Muslim community.

⁴ Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Schweiz, "Mahmud Moschee."

⁵ Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 8-9

projects. As reported by the Swiss Statistical Office⁶, the Muslim population in Switzerland grew to more than 150'000 throughout the 1980s and 1990s. By the year 2000, it more than doubled to approximately 310'000, accounting for roughly 4.3% of the Swiss population. This was partially due to the migrants' offspring but also a result of political asylum seekers from the Middle East, Bosnia, Kosovo, North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa evading civil wars, dictatorships, and hunger crises.⁷

Muslim Population in Switzerland Today

In 2017, the Muslim population in Switzerland had experienced a growth of about 22.5% to 379'748. This large increase can be traced back to the high birthrates of Muslims, but also to the stream of migrants overrunning European countries, of which Switzerland was not spared, following the rise of ISIS and the crises in Syria and Iraq. Figure 1 shows the cantonal distribution of the Muslim population in Switzerland in 2017. The canton with the largest number of Muslims is Zurich (80'992), followed by Aargau (39'967), Bern (34'095), Vaud (33'799), St. Gallen (31'690), and Geneva (23'854).

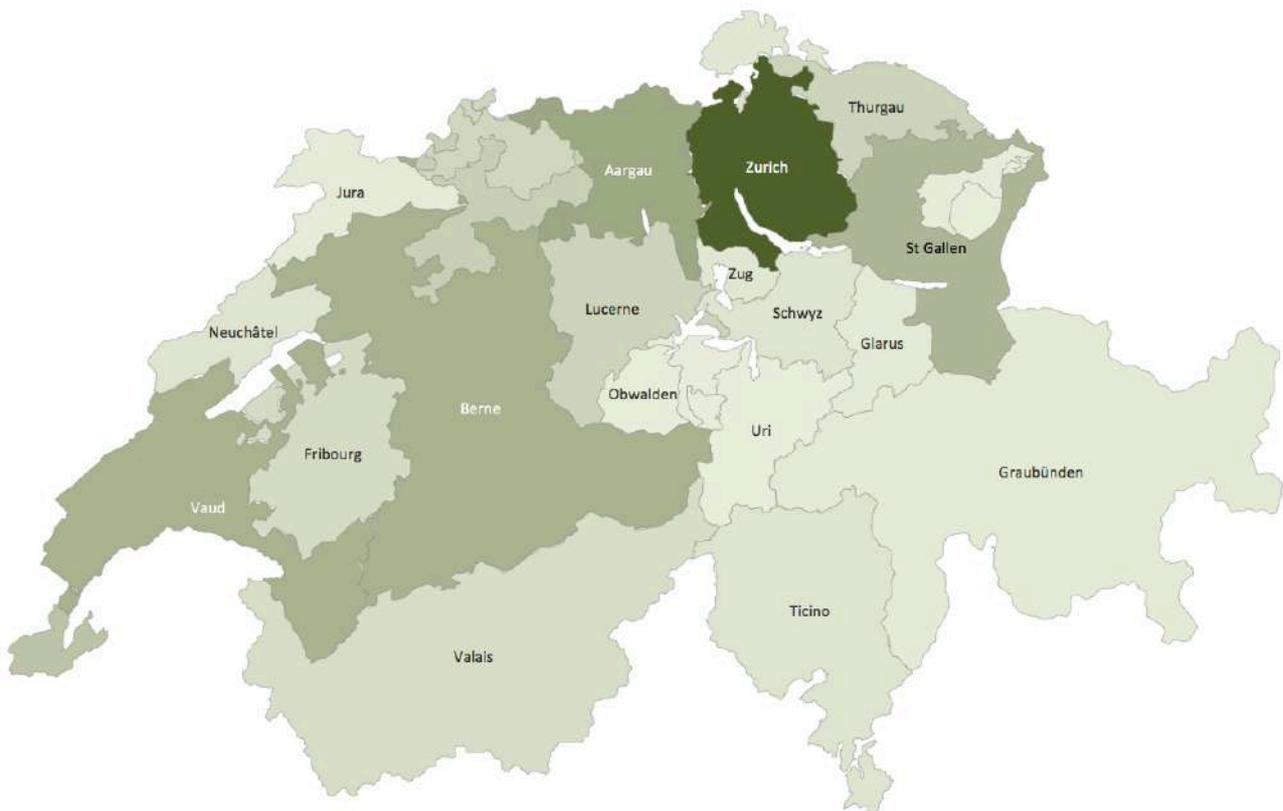


Figure 1: Muslim Population in Switzerland (2017)

⁶ Federal Statistical Office, “Religions in Switzerland.”

⁷ Vidino, “Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.”: 8-9

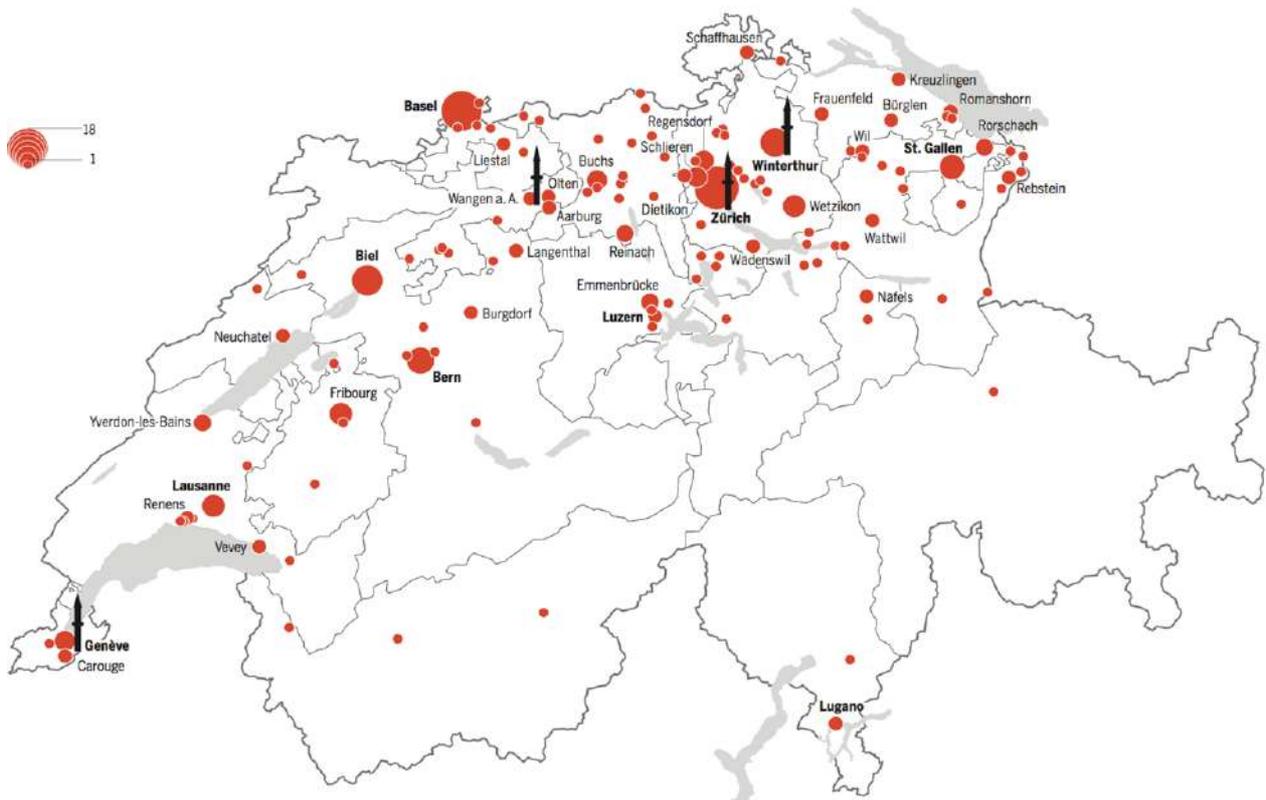


Figure 2: Mosques in Switzerland (Source: University of Lucerne)

Correspondingly, the cities with the highest Muslim population are in the aforementioned cantons, specifically in Zurich (19'320), Basel (13'037), Geneva (9'638), Lausanne (8'835), and Winterthur (8'281). Figure 2 shows where the Mosques in Switzerland are located geographically, which coincides with the distribution of the Muslim population. Roughly 75% of Muslims live in the German speaking part of Switzerland, 22% in the French region, and 1.7% in the Italian part.

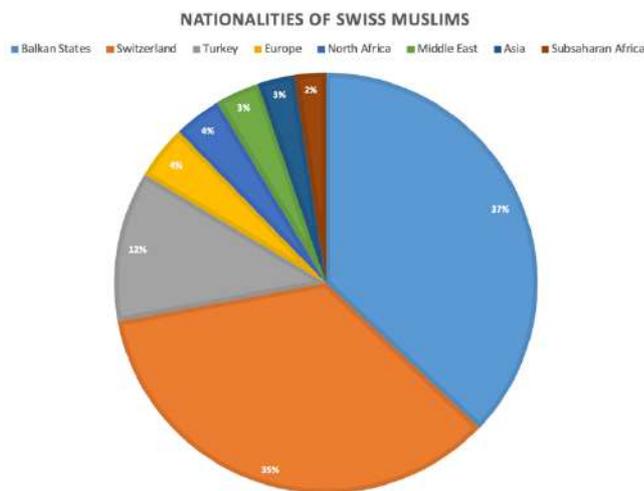


Figure 3: Nationalities of Muslims in Switzerland

Nationals from Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia make up the largest portion of the Muslim population in Switzerland (37%) and are predominately Sunni. The second largest nationality is Swiss (35%), which include all Muslim citizens with a Swiss passport. However, a considerable number of these Swiss citizens have ethnic backgrounds in the Balkan states, Turkey, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, but are not

counted as Nationals from these countries. Turkish nationals are the third-largest group (12%), of which one part are Sunni and the other are Alevites. Most Alevites in Switzerland are of Turkish descent. Nationalities from North Africa (4%), Sub-Saharan Africa (2%), and Asia (3%) are Sunni for the most part. Muslims from the Middle East (3%) are partially Sunni and partially Shiites, whereby the majority of the approximately 12'000 Shiites are from Iran. More detailed information on the Muslim population can be found in Tables 2 through 5 in the Appendix.

Religious Persuasion		
Nationality of Muslims in Switzerland		
Swiss	35%	
Foreigners	65%	
How often Muslims in Switzerland visit religious services		
Often	12%	
Seldom	42%	
Never	46%	
How often Muslims in Switzerland pray		
Daily	30%	
Sometimes	30%	
Never	40%	

In general, Muslims in Switzerland practice a moderate Islam, which may be attributed to the fact that there has been a Muslim presence since the 1960s with a predominately smooth integration process of the first two generations into Swiss society. However starting in 2013, a new wave of immigrants from Syria and Iraq have immigrated to Switzerland and their integration has created a certain amount of friction.

A poll conducted by the Swiss Statistical Office shows that 12% of the Muslims in Switzerland visit religious services in Mosques at least once a week, which would be considered often. The majority indicated that they pray at the mosque between once to twelve times a year (42%) or not at all (46%). Further, results show that only 30% pray daily, whereas most only pray sometimes (30%) or never (40%).

Table 1: Level of Religiosity (Sources: Raphael Rauch & Swiss Statistical Office)

The data for these statistics was obtained from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and is based on the Muslim population of Switzerland (age 15 and up) for the year 2017. In some

instances, the statistics show cumulative data from 2013-2017.⁸ The results, displayed in Appendix II, should be taken with a grain of salt. Due to geographic and socio-demographic factors, the response rates of the different variables vary (to some extent greatly) and yield diverse confidence intervals. The ones displayed in brackets were even extrapolated from less than 49 observations. Therefore, some results may be highly questionable. Figure 2 and the data in Table 1 were derived from the University of Lucerne, as well as reports written by the Federal Statistical Office and Raphael Rauch.⁹

Muslim Organizations in Switzerland

Muslim communities are represented, on a federal level, by the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Switzerland (FIOS). On a cantonal and communal level, the FIOS has 12 member associations speaking for more than 200 Mosques and Islamic centers.¹⁰ They encompass Muslim communities of an entire canton as well as Muslim communities of specific ethnicities, which is the case for the Islamic Community of Bosniaks (IGB) and the Albanian Islamic Association of Switzerland (AIVS). The organizational structure of the FIOS is depicted in Figure 4.

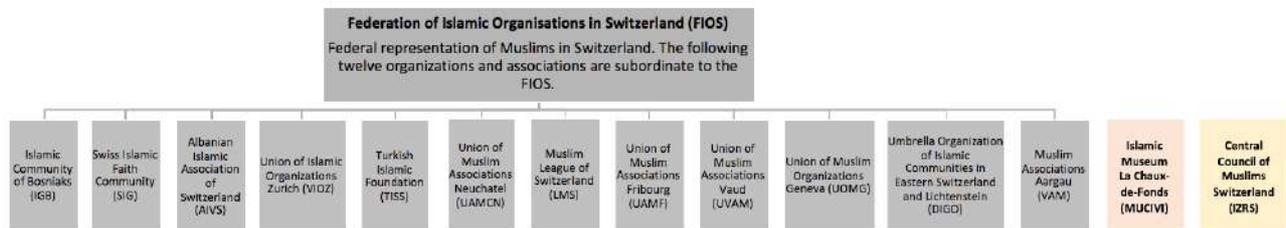


Figure 5: Muslim Organizations Switzerland (Sources: Saida Keller-Messahli and FIOS)

Even though the FIOS is the official umbrella organization of Muslim communities, the Central Council of Muslims in Switzerland (IZRS) is not included. This can be traced back to its radical Salafist orientation and its leading figures, who are Swiss native converts to Islam. In comparison to the FIOS, the IZRS is a minor organization but with a disproportionately high media presence. Although the IZRS only speaks for a small portion of Muslims in Switzerland, they consider themselves to be the official representation within the country and abroad. The Islamic Museum La Chaux-de-Fonds (MUCIVI) is an independent organization as well, which has received a lot of media coverage due to the connections of its leadership to controversial figures and

⁸ Federal Statistical Office, “Religions in Switzerland.”

⁹ Rauch, “Finanzierung von Moscheen - Woher Kommt Das Geld Für Die Schweizer Moscheen?”; Behloul, “Islam”; Federal Statistical Office, “Religiöse Und Spirituelle Praktiken Und Glaubensformen in Der Schweiz.”

¹⁰ Federation of Islamic Organizations in Switzerland (https://www.fids.ch/?page_id=5569)

countries in the radical Islamic arena. That being said, the IZRS and the MUCIVI are not the only controversial Muslim entities in Switzerland. Within the FIOS there are several Mosques, Islamic centers, foundations, and organizations that are entwined with countries and organizations representing and promoting a puritanical form of Sunni Islam.

Islamism in Switzerland

A Brief History

As written by Vidino¹¹, Islamism in Switzerland can be traced back to the 1960s, following the exile and relocation of a handful of Muslim Brothers to the city of Geneva, evading severe persecution by the Egyptian regime presided by Gamal Abdel Nasser. The most notable member among them was Said Ramadan, the private secretary to and son-in-law of Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna. Upon his arrival, he established the Islamic Center of Geneva, the first of many Centers throughout Europe, with the financial support of Saudi-Arabia, and which served as one of the main headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West. Vidino continues that Ramadan established himself as a key player in the Muslim World League, a Saudi-funded organization with the goal of spreading their Wahhabi ideology around the globe. He became Saudi-Arabia's main advocate in the West, coordinating activities of scattered refugee Muslim Brothers and sympathetic students in Europe and North America, all from the comfort of his base in Geneva. Subsequent to Ramadan's death in 1995, his oldest son Hani replaced him as the head of the Islamic Center. Together with his younger brother Tariq, a leading Muslim intellectual, they have repeatedly been the focus of controversies due to their radical views.¹² While the Egyptian Muslim Brothers were the first Islamists to take advantage of Switzerland's asylum policies, they were definitely not the last. Throughout the 1990's and 2000's, several (high ranking) members of Islamist groups, such as the Libyan Muslim Brotherhood, Tunisian al-Nahda and Moroccan Al-Adl wal-Ihssane, settled in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In addition, Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) members sought refuge throughout the civil war in the 90's, most notable being Ahmed Zaoui, the founder of FIS's coordination council.¹³ The presence of the Ramadan family, and other Brotherhood-influenced groups, has made Geneva an influential hub in the Islamist scene, partially due to the high influx of wealthy Saudi, Kuwaiti, Emirati, and Qatari

¹¹ Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 9-12

¹² Ibid.: 9-12

¹³ Ibid.: 9-12

tourists visiting the lake city and donating vast amounts of money to local Islamist activists.¹⁴ From their free and protected environment, they publish magazines, run websites, organize conferences and political protests, fundraise, and liaise with like-minded groups worldwide.¹⁵

Foreign Educated Imams

Prior to 9/11, Saudi Arabia was the main exporter and advocate of Wahhabism, a puritanical form of Islam, establishing itself as a powerful force within the Muslim world. With its newfound oil wealth from the 1950s onward, it started spending large sums of money to train religious scholars, develop a Wahhabi-oriented teaching system and fund Dawa operations around the globe.¹⁶ Following the collapse of Yugoslavia, Saudi foundations started to finance the construction of a large number of mosques in states like Kosovo and Macedonia.¹⁷ Further, religious leaders from the Balkans were able to enroll in Islamic universities abroad, such as in Mecca and Medina, where they were educated in the Wahhabi creed, with the goal of exporting it to and making it socially acceptable in Europe.¹⁸ Today, a legion of Imams from the Albanian diaspora are trained in Saudi Arabia and deployed to Mosques all over Europe. This is also evident in Switzerland, where the Union of Albanian Imams Switzerland (UAIS), presided by Nehat Ismaili, consists of a large number of foreign trained Albanian Imams rumored to have close relations to radical circles.¹⁹ Currently, there are approximately 40 Albanian Imams active in Switzerland.²⁰ They regularly invite radical Salafi figures from Kosovo and Macedonia to preach at local seminars and events.²¹ In addition, there have been several claims that (Albanian) Imams have distributed Salafi texts among inmates of Swiss prisons. It is a steady attempt to replace the moderate Islam currently practiced in Switzerland with Wahhabism.²²

Turkish Muslim communities are supported by the Turkish state-run religious authority Diyanet through the provision of Imam. When an application is made and granted, Diyanet sends an Imam to Switzerland, covering his salary and all other expenses. For example, the Turkish Islamic Foundation Switzerland (TISS), maintaining approximately 50 mosques, currently has 34 Imams imported from Turkey. The Bosnian Muslim communities in Switzerland have a network

¹⁴ Ibid.: 9-12

¹⁵ Ibid.: 9-12

¹⁶ Bar et al., “Establishment Ulama and Radicalism in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.”: 13

¹⁷ Meier, “Drehscheibe Für Salafistische Imame.”

¹⁸ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 34-40

¹⁹ Ibid.: 34-40

²⁰ Schmid and Trucco, “Bildungsangebote Für Imame - Ein Ländervergleich Aus Schweizer Perspektive.”: 9

²¹ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 34-40

²² Ibid.: 34-40

similar to the Turks, in which the highest religious authority of Bosnia-Herzegovina, called Riyaset, supports the diaspora in 17 states around the world. The only difference is that Riyaset is a separate entity and not part of the government apparatus. Lastly, the Arabic mosques employ 15-20 Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan, Libyan, and Lebanese Imams that are predominately active in the French-speaking region of Switzerland, due to their bilingual (Arabic, French) origins.²³

The Muslim World League (MWL) and Saudi Arabia's Influence

The establishment of the MWL in the 1960s was part of Saudi Arabia's large-scale efforts to disseminate Wahhabi ideology around the world. Although the regime has given into western pressure and taken a more moderate stance after 9/11, they still maintain their Dawa infrastructures, although on a slightly smaller scale.²⁴ The Muslim World League has close ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and operates in more than 120 countries around the globe. Its ideological alignment becomes evident when considering their involvement with Quran schools and Jihadi training camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan.²⁵ In Switzerland, the MWL financially supports and directly influences the Islamic Cultural Foundation and main mosque in Geneva, as well as the King-Faysal Foundation in Basel.²⁶ These foundations, and the mosques they sponsor, have been under scrutiny for several years for tolerating the attendance of extremists, having members joining ISIS in Syria and employing Imams who are blacklisted by the French Security Services.²⁷

The Islamic Museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds

To the public, the Islamic Museum in La Chaux-de-Fonds (MUCIVI), inaugurated in 2016, portrays itself as an "apolitical" institution.²⁸ However, when examined closer, controversial entanglements are brought to light. According to Keller-Messahli²⁹, the institution is financed by private donors tied to the power apparatus of Gulf States such as Kuwait and Qatar. Also, the controversial Qatar Charity and Kuwait's Zakat House, of which both have ties to Jihadi circles, are sponsors of the museum. The Zakat House is known for its close ties to Hamas and raising funds for their operations. The Qatar Charity is presided by Yusuf al-Qardawi, a known supporter of

²³ Schmid and Trucco, "Bildungsangebote Für Imame - Ein Ländervergleich Aus Schweizer Perspektive.": 10-15

²⁴ Bar et al., "Establishment Ulama and Radicalism in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.": 15-17

²⁵ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 64

²⁶ Rauch, "Finanzierung von Moscheen - Woher Kommt Das Geld Für Die Schweizer Moscheen?"

²⁷ Hoffmann, "König Faysal Stiftung Und Ihre Terrorfinanziers"; Leybold-Johnson, "Geneva Mosque to Be Run by Swiss Management."

²⁸ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 41

²⁹ Ibid.: 44-45

Islamic Jihad, who issued a fatwa calling for suicide attacks against Israel. Moreover, Nabil al-Awadi, a known ISIS financier, is associated with the charity as well.³⁰ The institution is connected to the Muslim Brotherhood and is involved in their European Dawa operations. In exchange for adhering to the Salafi creed and practicing a backward Islam, the Qatar Charity financially supports Muslim organizations and communities around the World. Specifically in Switzerland, the charity has donated approximately 3 to 4 million dollars to Muslim institutions in Biel, Lausanne, Lugano, and La Chaux-de-Fonds.³¹

At the center of this controversy are Nadia Karmous, the museum's director, and her husband Mohamed, a suspected member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The French-Algerian couple have been active in Switzerland since the 1990s, presiding over a dozen associations, culture centers, and mosques. Although denying any real involvement with the charity and their connections to the Brotherhood, it was revealed that Nadia Karmous signed a contract with Yusuf al-Qardawi in 2014, securing funds for the MUCIVI. Additionally, it became public that the couple agreed to help Qatar Charity to expand their operations in France, after the Mohamed Karmous was caught smuggling 50'000 Euros across the border.³² Another indication for Nadia Karmous' proximity to the Muslim Brotherhood is her admiration for Tariq Ramadan, the grandson of Hasan al-Bana, who is currently holding a Qatari-financed chair in religious studies at the university of Oxford and trying to continue in his grandfather's footsteps. She regularly promotes his events, by which she directly promotes his extremist views.³³ He has close ties to Qatar Charity, being on its payroll as a consultant. It is important to Qatar to be associated with the Ramadan family, which is why the charity pays Tariq Ramadan a \$35'000 monthly salary.³⁴ To bring these arguments full circle, the library of the museum offers writings from leading Salafi-Jihadi thinkers, such as Sayyid Qutb and Abd Allah Mawdudi.³⁵

Khaldoun Dia-Eddin, scientific director of the MUCIVI and vice-president of the FIOS, distances himself publicly from any radical Islamic ideas. However, according to an interview in the *Landbote* on January 19th 2018³⁶, a listing of previous appointments in various foundations showed that he sat on boards together with known and at times even convicted members of the

³⁰ Ibid.: 44-45

³¹ Tscherrig, "Muslimbruderschaft: Gelder Fliessen in Und Durch Die Schweiz."

³² Ibid.

³³ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 42-44

³⁴ Rickenbacher, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Switzerland."

³⁵ Fuchs, "Das Erste Islam-Museum Der Schweiz: Was Taugt Die Neue Ausstellung?"

³⁶ Frick, "Der Brückenbauer Und Seine Kontakte Zu Muslimbrüdern."

Muslim Brotherhood. He claimed that his interactions merely served a certain purpose, such as ensuring funds for Mosques, and the Brotherhood never exerted any influence otherwise. In his opinion, as long as it stays that way, he does not see any issues with these ties.

Turkey's Influence is on the Rise

A certain naivety and negligence seems to exist within the Swiss government when it comes to Islamic organizations. An example for this may be found in the state government of Zurich's regular consultations with Wahhabi and Islamist Turkish Imams, from the Swiss Islamic Faith Community (SIG) and the Union of Islamic Organizations in Zurich (VIOZ), regarding religious matters.³⁷ The Swiss government seems oblivious to the fact that these Imams are supported by the extremist Turkish power apparatus surrounding Erdogan, with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood and involved in widespread Dawa operations across Europe. Their aim is to gain influence in the Turkish diaspora. A prime illustration of this connection is depicted in red in Figure 5 below. The Union of European-Turkish Democrats (UETD) is the official lobby organization of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Europe. They maintain economic, cultural, militant, intelligence, and religious infrastructures and are in direct connection to Diyanet, the official religious authority within Turkey and abroad.³⁸ Diyanet employs more than 100'000 officials worldwide and owns a TV/radio station, construction company, advertising agency, university, Islamic research center, and welfare institution. According to Doris Fiala, a member of the Federal Assembly, Diyanet financially supports Turkish organizations in the diaspora, as well as employs several imams in and imports them to Switzerland.³⁹ The Turkish Islamic Foundation Switzerland (TISS) is their official branch within the country, whose chairman of the board, Mehmet Görmez, is Turkey's minister of religious affairs and Erdogan's close confidant.⁴⁰ Approximately 70 Milli Görüs (IGMG) mosques, which follow a nationalistic and Islamist line that is not in accord with constitutional democracies, are under their control. The Federal Office of Police (fedpol) has designated the IGMG as an organization prone to violence and radicalism.⁴¹ However, in spite of this, the Swiss government allows an Albanian Imam, who prides himself on being moderate but has close ties to Milli Görüs, to teach religious studies at public schools.⁴²

³⁷ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 47-48

³⁸ Ibid.: 50

³⁹ Ibid.: 49

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 50

⁴¹ Ibid.: 55-56

⁴² Ibid.: 60

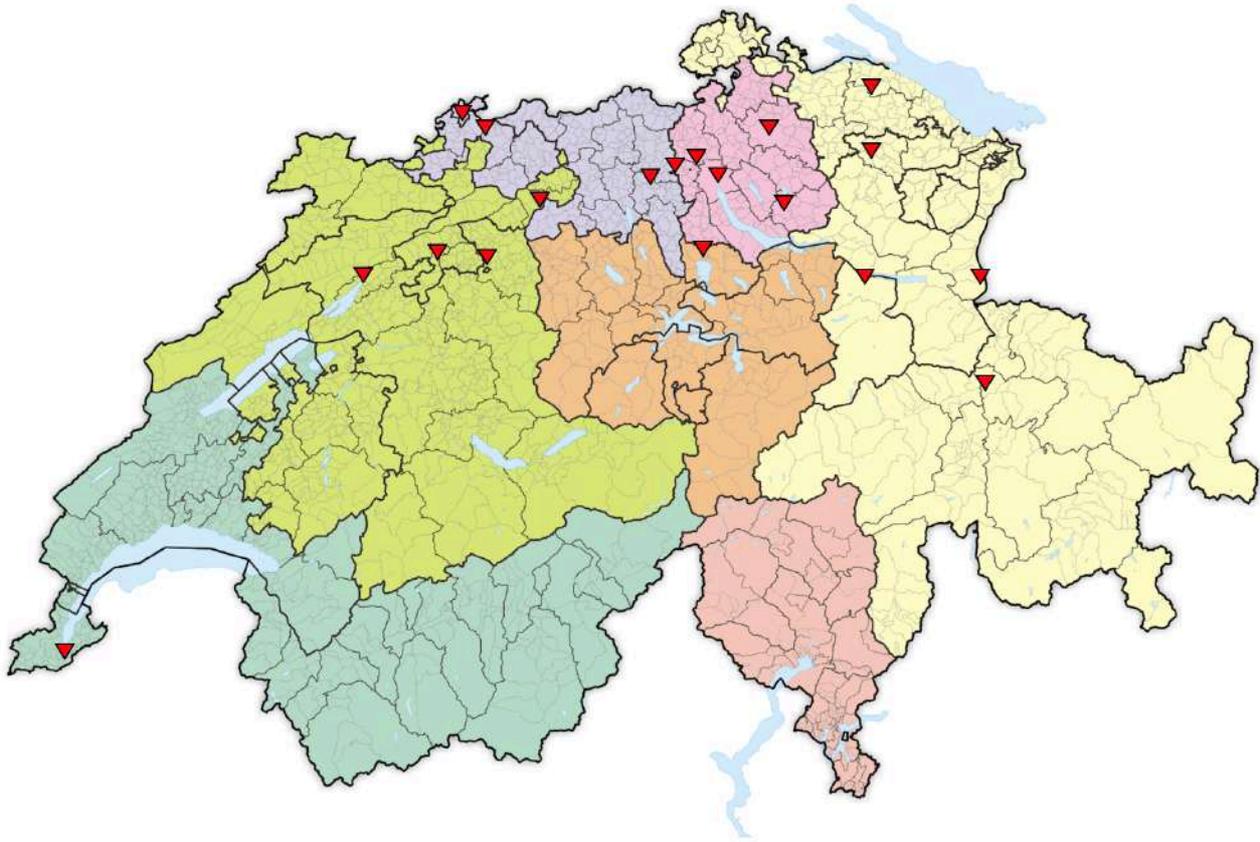


Figure 5: Milli Görüs Mosques in Switzerland (Source: <https://ajanda.igmg.org/placecategory/places/>)

Central Council of Muslims Switzerland (IZRS)

The IZRS is a small organization composed of hardline conservative Muslims, spearheaded by two Swiss-born converts, Nicholas Blanco and Qasim Illi, claiming to represent all Muslims in Switzerland. It was established following the 2008 referendum banning the construction of new minarets in the country.⁴³ Their mentality is reflected in Blanco’s statement that Sharia law is superior to all man-made laws, as well as Illi’s public protests against Israel, burning their flag, and ultimately denying their right to exist.⁴⁴ The group’s main narrative follows the role of the victim; that Muslims in Switzerland are subject to alienation and constant discrimination. They maintain a Salafist Weltanschauung and strong connections to the Salafist scene in the Balkans and Gulf states.⁴⁵ Blanco regularly appears on Qatari TV, depicting Switzerland as racist and Islamophobic. This resonated with the Eid al-Thani Charity, which grew close to the IZRS and regularly donated money to the group.⁴⁶ Both the U.S and Israeli government blacklisted the charity for financially

⁴³ Ibid.: 95

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 95-96

⁴⁵ Vidino, “Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.”: 27-28

⁴⁶ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 95

supporting terrorist organizations. In addition, the chairman of Eid al-Thani has leading roles in two Islamic foundations in Switzerland, which share their postal addresses with the IZRS.⁴⁷ According to Pelda and Rüegg⁴⁸, the IZRS has approximately 20 unincorporated associations and shell companies registered to their address, some of which linked to Jihadist circles. For example, the Association des Savants Musulmans (ASM) is presided by Abdul Mohsen al-Mutairi, a Kuwaiti university professor for Sharia law, who is on the U.S terrorist watchlist for financing the al-Nusra front in Syria. Another member of the ASM, Abd al-Wahhab Humaiqani, is on the watchlist as well for presumably financing terrorism and being a leading member of AQAP. Further, the secretary general of the IZRS, Ferah Ulucay, is a member of the Zurich-based association Observatory for Human Rights in Kuwait, together with Anwar Altabtabae, who is the brother of known Kuwaiti politician and Jihadist Waleed Altabtabae.⁴⁹

Conservative politicians and liberal Muslims have accused the IZRS of supporting and recruiting for terrorist organizations.⁵⁰ According to Vidino⁵¹, the IZRS supports the premise that the Muslim world are subject to ideological attacks and have the right to fight the foreign enemy on Muslim land, as is the case in Palestine and Afghanistan. However, for moral, religious, and strategic reasons, the group's leaders do not promote violence within Switzerland. He goes on stating that while they do not directly incite violence, the IZRS creates an atmosphere, a breeding ground, for radical and violent individuals to operate. In an interview with Vidino in 2013, Blanco argued that the organization should not be held accountable for Jihadi content posted by its members. A sign of the leaderships' true intention was established in the Swiss court when Blanco, Illi, and lead content creator Naim Cherni were recently found guilty of creating and disseminating propaganda for Jabhat al-Nusra. While filming a two-part documentary series, Cherni travelled to Syria and interviewed Abdullah al-Muhaysini, providing the controversial Saudi cleric and Nusra warlord a platform to advertise his cause.⁵² Moreover, at least seven former IZRS members travelled to Syria to fight non-believers and partake in the establishment of the Caliphate.⁵³

⁴⁷ Boyadjian, "Die Katar-Connection Des Islamischen Zentralrats."

⁴⁸ Pelda and Rüegg, "Der Jihad-Aufruf in Bümpliz Und Die Terror Connections Des IZRS."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 27

⁵¹ Ibid.: 29-30

⁵² Knellwolf, "Islamischer Zentralrat Schweiz Warb Für Al- Qaida."

⁵³ Pelda and Rüegg, "Der Jihad-Aufruf in Bümpliz Und Die Terror Connections Des IZRS."

Street Dawa Operations

The German street-based Dawa campaign “LIES!” was launched in 2011 by Ibrahim Abou-Nagie, a Palestinian Salafist who publicly stated that he does not abide by any man-made laws.⁵⁴ Spreading into Switzerland, the campaign set up booths in several cities, handing out translated versions of the Quran and providing radicalized individuals a platform to indoctrinate ordinary people with their ideas. In some cases, volunteers linked to “LIES!” travelled to Syria.⁵⁵ Following the withdrawal of their permit to distribute Qurans on the street by local and cantonal authorities, the group tried to circumvent this prohibition by rebranding themselves to “We Love Mohammed” and “Free Quran”.⁵⁶

Map of Islamic Communities in Switzerland

The following map illustrates the previously discussed Islamic communities in Switzerland, their connections, and influences around the globe. The extensive Dawa operations of states such as Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, as well as the ideological influences of the Muslim Brotherhood become starkly visible in Figure 5.

⁵⁴ Keller-Messahli, *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen.*: 101

⁵⁵ Pelda, Knellwolf, and Rüegg, “Die Jihad-Karte Der Schweiz”; Pelda, “Er Hat Genug von Den Islamisten.”

⁵⁶ Federal Intelligence Service, “Sicherheit Schweiz,” 2018.: 40

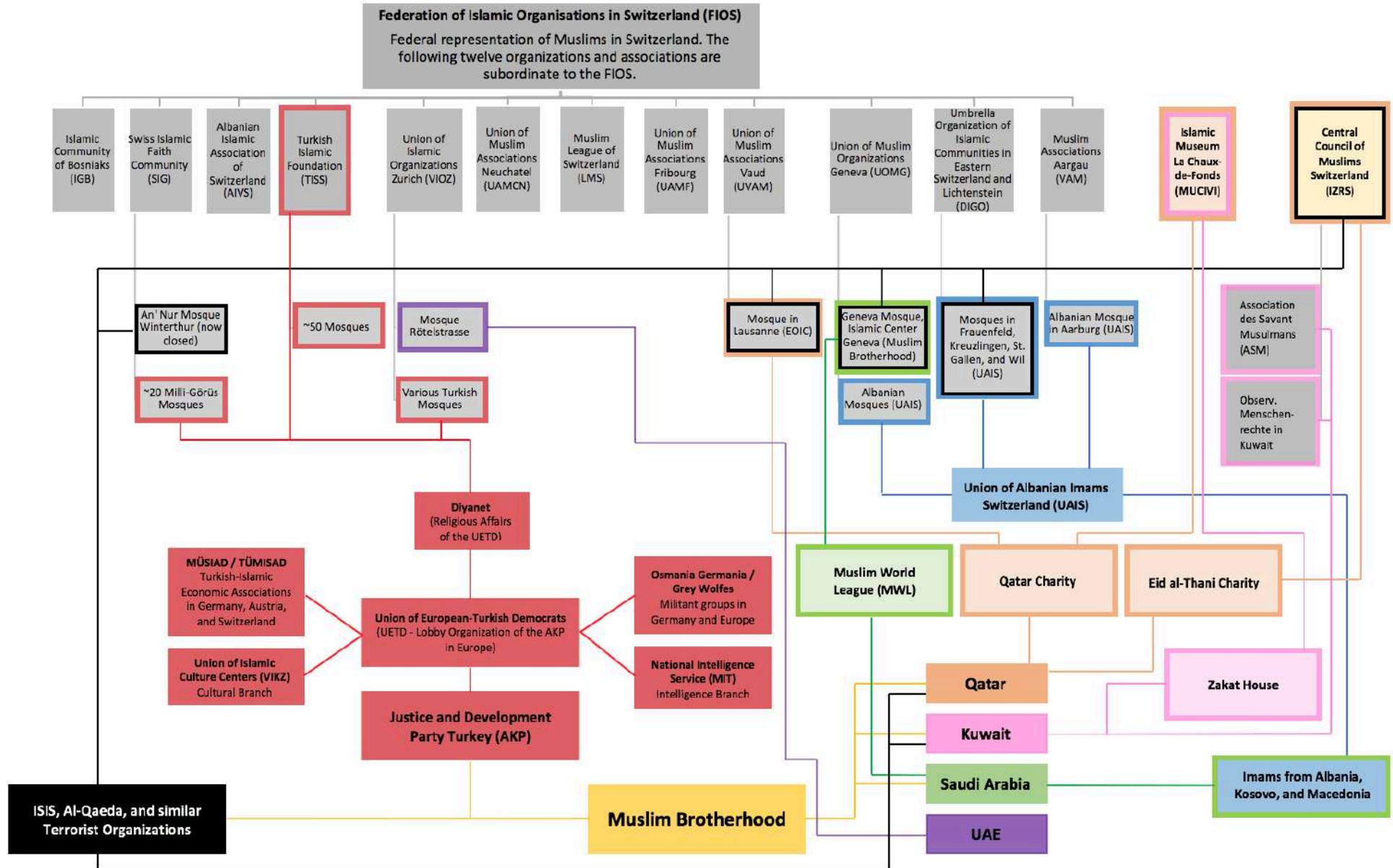


Figure 6: Foreign Influence on Swiss Islamic Associations (Sources: Saida Keller-Messahli, Raphael Rauch, Tobias Tscherrig, and FIOS)

Jihadism in Switzerland

A Brief History

Similar to other European countries in the 1980s and early 1990s, Vidino⁵⁷ has written about the influx of Jihadist militants, mostly from North Africa, who used Switzerland as an integral logistical base to raise funds, spread propaganda, and provide other supportive actions to further their organizations' cause. Up until 2001, the Jihadi networks could, for the most part, operate freely within the country, with only few arrests and deportations. However, 9/11 changed the Swiss authorities' approach to terrorism. While assessing that the Jihadi presence was minimal and attacks on home soil were unlikely, they still monitored jihadist movement more closely and took such actions against them as freezing assets of Al-Qaeda and Taliban supporters and opening criminal cases.⁵⁸ In 2003, following the bombings in Riyadh, the Saudi government was able to identify 36 Swiss mobile phone numbers in one of the attacker's mobile phone. The Swiss authorities were able to trace these numbers to Abdul Hamid el-Fayed, a Yemeni living in Biel, and subsequently uncovered a human smuggling network, supported by four fellow Yemeni, one Somali, and one Iraqi. Intelligence suggested that el-Fayed was in contact with a senior Al-Qaeda operative, who was involved in the Riyadh attacks and the 2000 USS Cole bombing in Yemen, requesting forged documents in order to leave Qatar and enter Switzerland.⁵⁹ El-Fayed was also found to be a business partner of IZRS founding member Nicholas Blancho.⁶⁰ A further case in 2006 revealed that various people of interest provided logistical support to several North African groups, most notably the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). For example, the authorities opened a criminal investigation against Algerian national Bassam Rifai and several members of a Zurich-based North African gang for committing bank robberies and thefts throughout Switzerland, in order to send funds, computers, mobile phones, and other items to the GSPC. Information gained through a federal security service wiretap of Rifai's conversations, uncovered a possible plot for shooting down an El-Al flight at Zurich Airport. Unfortunately, the Swiss authorities were not able to charge any of the aforementioned suspects with terrorism-related offences due to the high evidentiary requirements of the law, and opted for deportation or petty criminal charges.⁶¹ The first successful prosecution was in 2007, when Moez Garsallaoui and his wife Malika el-Aroud were charged with supporting a terrorist organization, albeit being

⁵⁷ Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 12-13

⁵⁸ Ibid.: 13-14

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 13-14

⁶⁰ Brupbacher, "Nicolas Blancho: Spuren Führen Zu Al-Qaida."

⁶¹ Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 14-15

sentenced to minimal jail time. Garsallaoui, a Tunisian national and member of Hizb ut Tahrir, sought Asylum in 1997 after facing possible persecution for his militant activities. El-Aroud, a Moroccan national from Belgium, was known within Jihadi circles for being the widow of Al-Qaeda operator Abdessatar Dahmane, who killed the Afghan Northern Alliance leader hours before the 9/11 attacks. Both lived in Garsallaoui's apartment near Fribourg and set up several websites publishing propaganda material, such as videos, messages, news, and bomb-making instructions. While el-Aroud is currently serving an eight year sentence in Belgium for recruiting for Al-Qaeda, Garsallaoui escaped to Pakistan, where he continued his activities, even threatening revenge on Switzerland, until he was killed by a U.S drone strike in 2012.⁶²

In 2009, 2010, and 2011, there were several cases of individuals linked to Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM – successor of GSPC) and to the Iraqi-Kurdish Al-Qaeda affiliate Ansar al-Islam, operating from within Switzerland. In all of the cases, no evidence of planning or executing an attack on Swiss soil was found. However, they were either providing logistical support by sending electronic items or funds obtained through illegal activities, spreading propaganda material, or exchanging messages with Jihadis in neighboring countries.⁶³ In 2012 and 2013, numerous cases of individuals, supporting Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al-Qaeda splinter groups in Syria logistically, or even travelling there to join them, were in the limelight. Although, Jihadi travelers from Switzerland have been recorded since 2001, the number has since increased significantly by 2014 to 40, with the majority traveling to Syria and Somalia. Additionally, several people were monitored online, disseminating Jihadist propaganda material on social media or hosting Jihadi websites in Switzerland.⁶⁴ The Islamic State (ISIS) gained global prominence in 2014, with ties leading to Switzerland as well. The Swiss Government, with interagency coordination between the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS), the Federal Office of Police (fedpol), and Federal Prosecutor's Office (BA), was able identify, arrest, and prosecute an ISIS-cell operating out of Schaffhausen. Three Iraqi nationals, in close contact with a presumed leader of ISIS, were accused of planning an attack, supplying walkie-talkies and smuggling foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq, as well as infiltrating terrorists into Europe.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid.: 15-16

⁶³ Federal Office of Police, "Fedpol Annual Report," 2009; 2010; 2011; Vidino, "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.": 16-17

⁶⁴ Federal Office of Police, "Fedpol Annual Report," 2012; 2013; Federal Intelligence Service (FIS), "Switzerland's Security 2014."

⁶⁵ Federal Office of Police, "Fedpol Annual Report," 2014; 2015; Knellwolf and Pelda, "Schaffhauser IS-Zelle Darf Sich Auf Mildere Strafen Freuen."

Official Numbers released by the Swiss Government

A Federal Department of Defense (VBS) report from November 2019⁶⁶ assessed 67 individuals as being high-risk and immediate threats to Switzerland’s internal and external security. Further, they recorded a total of 92 cases of Jihad travelers joining a theater of Jihad somewhere in the world: 77 went to Syria or Iraq, 13 to Somalia, 1 to the Afghanistan/Pakistan region, and 1 to the Philippines. Of these Jihad travelers, a total of 16 people have returned back to Switzerland and 31 were killed in action. According to the report, approximately 20 Jihad travelers with Swiss or dual citizenship are currently detained somewhere within the Syrian-Iraqi conflict zone. The whereabouts of the unaccounted for Jihad travelers are unknown. These numbers have remained stagnant since 2016 and do not include individuals who have attempted to travel to Syria but were intercepted somewhere on route. Lastly, the FIS are monitoring 640 users on online platforms who disseminate Jihadist propaganda and communicate with like-minded individuals within Switzerland and abroad.

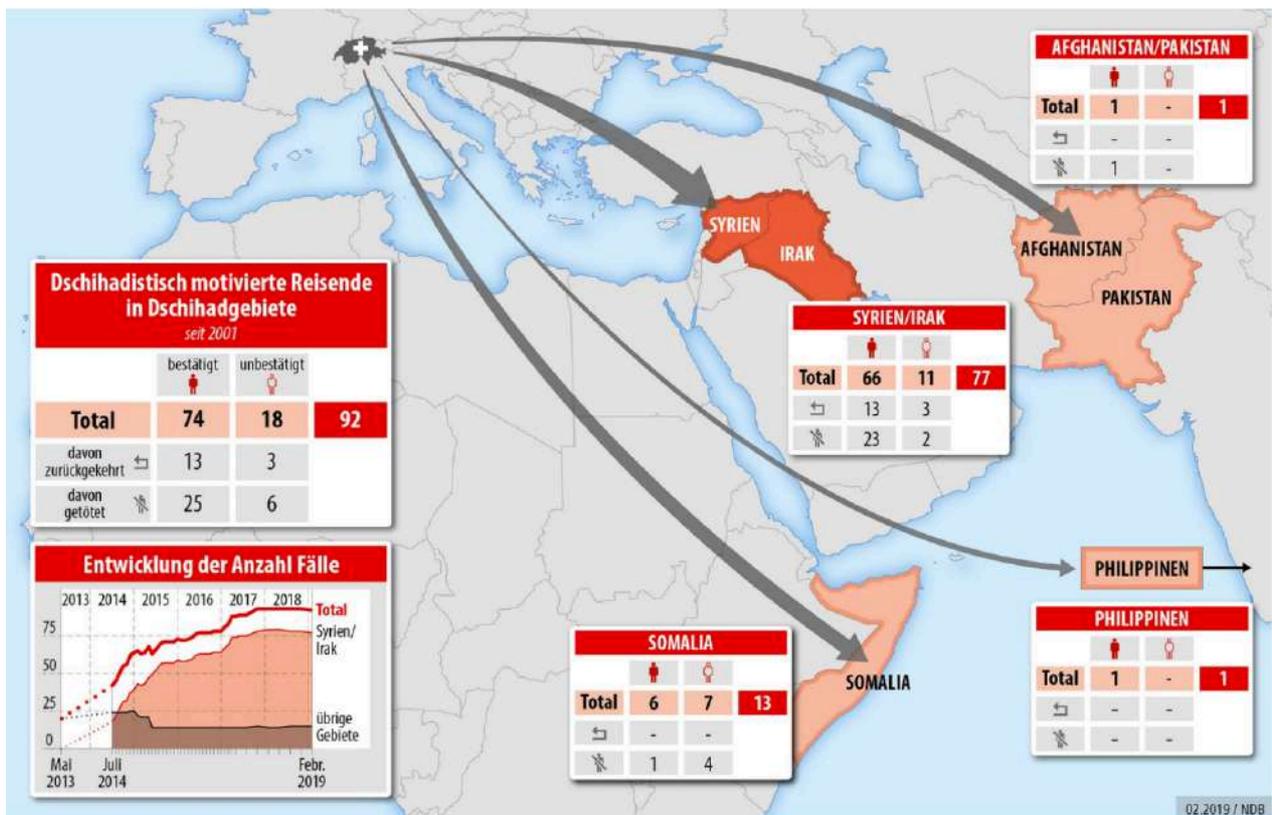


Figure 7: Swiss Jihadist Travelers as of February 2019 (Source: Federal Intelligence Service)

⁶⁶ Federal Department of Defense, “Risikopersonen Terrorismus.”

Radicalization in Switzerland

When analyzing radicalization, the Internet is an integral part of the process, which is also the case in Switzerland.⁶⁷ Security officials have observed an increase in online Jihadi activity, with people showing support for various groups, posting propaganda material, as well as visiting top tier Jihadi forums.⁶⁸ They are usually active in their native language (Arabic, Bosnian, Albanian, Somali, German, French) but occasionally also in English.⁶⁹ According to Vidino, “a small, loose-knit community of Swiss-based individuals supporting some of the most militant interpretations of Salafism is easily visible online”.⁷⁰ He continues that merely a small percentage of Salafists in Switzerland promote violence against Western society, and an even lower number will translate that into actions. However, there are some instances where individuals put their words into effect; for example in 2008, a French-Algerian CERN employee was monitored plotting possible attacks throughout Europe with AQIM leadership; or in 2011, the FIS received a tip from their German counterparts about a Swiss-born convert plotting an attack against the U.S military base Ramstein together with a German Jihadist.⁷¹

That being said, in an interview with the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* on April 1st 2017, a Swiss terrorism expert stated that radicalization is always attended by human interaction with like-minded individuals.⁷² The 2017 annual report of the Federal Office of Police (fedpol) corroborates this narrative, writing that the Internet accelerates and reinforces radicalization, however, real-life contacts pose a greater influence in the process.⁷³ These interactions usually start at mosques or in circles close to them. Although Switzerland does not have any publicly Jihadist mosques where the leadership actively engages in terrorist activities, there is a cohort of Swiss residents passively or actively associated with Jihadist networks, who frequent Switzerland’s most conservative houses of worship.⁷⁴ As previously outlined, some of these places are run by Muslim Brotherhood affiliated foundations and associations, and are funded by Saudi, Qatari, Kuwaiti, or Turkish sources. It is the perfect place for radical individuals to meet fellow conservative Muslims and indoctrinate them with their extremist views. However, it is important to add that mosques usually serve as the initial meeting point, with more “Jihadist-leaning” discussions taking place in

⁶⁷ Vidino, “Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland”: 22; Federal Intelligence Service, “Sicherheit Schweiz.”: 39

⁶⁸ de Graffenried, “Nous Traquons Les Djihadistes Sur Internet.”

⁶⁹ Vidino, “Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.”: 23

⁷⁰ Ibid.: 22

⁷¹ Ibid.: 22-24

⁷² Kucera and Gyr, “«Die Terroristen Haben Auch Uns Studiert».”

⁷³ Federal Office of Police, “Fedpol Annual Report,” 2017.: 13

⁷⁴ Vidino, “Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland.”: 25

private settings.⁷⁵ Prime examples of this are the now closed An’Nur mosque in Winterthur, the Ar-Rahman mosque in Biel, or the King Faysal mosque in Basel.

Considering that Switzerland has not suffered from any grave political violence and not participated in any wars since the establishment of the federal state in 1848, has developed into an extremely wealthy nation (second highest GDP/Capita in the world), and on the surface is very diverse and inclusive (25% foreigners), the question arises: what grievances or other motivations lead individuals living in Switzerland to radicalize? Understanding an individual’s biography, as well as his push and pull factors is essential.⁷⁶

Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors

The FIS provided Eser Davolio et al.⁷⁷ an anonymized data sample of 130 jihadist-radicalized individuals in Switzerland for their analysis of Jihadist radicalization, of which 72 are jihadist-motivated travelers, 9 failed travel attempts, and 49 non-travel related extremists. The dataset grants insights into the backgrounds of violent extremists, as well as supporters and propagandists of Jihadist groups. The variables in the sample record socio-demographic information (age, gender, origin, residence, education, and occupation), social contexts and personality (family problems, drug use, psychological abnormalities, criminality, and violence), radicalization factors (groups, internet, Dawa activity, and contact with Salafi preachers), and Jihadist activities (particular emphasis on Jihadist-motivated travels). However, the authors state that the sample is not representative of Swiss Jihadis in general and therefore can only provide limited significance for the possible conclusions.

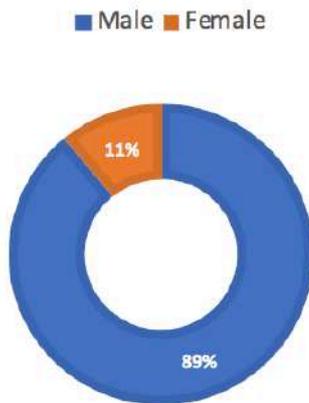
The number of men (116) in the dataset is significantly higher than the number of women (14). The percentage of radicalized women in Switzerland (11%) is relatively low, in comparison to other European countries (10-30%). The average age in the sample is 28 years old, with the majority being between 21 and 30. It is important to add that while 18% are below the age of 20, only 6% are minors (see Figure 7). Further, 40% are single, 13% separated, 44% married, and more than half had children. This information may be important for radicalization reasons ascribed to family ties.

⁷⁵ Ibid.: 25-26

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 21

⁷⁷ Eser Davolio et al., “Updated Review and Developments in Jihadist Radicalisation in Switzerland – Updated Version of an Exploratory Study on Prevention and Intervention.”: 10-11

RATIO OF RADICALIZED INDIVIDUALS



Age Distribution of Radicalized Individuals

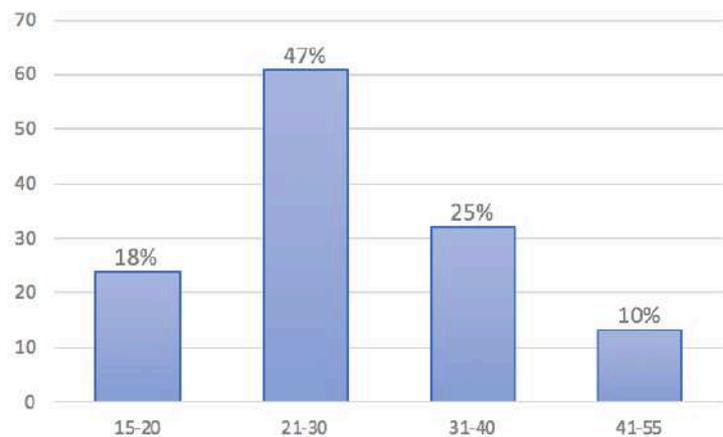


Figure 8: Gender and Age of Radicalized Individuals in Switzerland (Source: Eser Davolio et al.)

Information about the level of education was available for 96 out of the 130 individuals. For most of this cohort (88%), it is on a secondary level in the form of apprenticeships. Merely 6% have a baccalaureate qualification and 5% hold a university level degree. Nearly one third of the sample was unemployed prior to radicalization, 58% were employed, and 11% attended school. However, the unemployment rate grew to 58% after being radicalized.

The majority of the sample was recruited and radicalized in urban centers and their suburbs, with merely 11.5% residing in rural areas. In absolute terms, more than half (53.9%) are from the German-speaking part, while 42.3% are from the French-speaking and 3.8% from the Italian-speaking parts. However, in relative terms, the Lake Geneva region exhibits a larger radicalization ratio with 2.7 per 100'000 population versus for example the Zurich region with 1.4 per 100'000 population. This may be attributed to the cultural divide between the three main language regions in Switzerland, as they absorb the mindset and more common cultural background of bordering countries and therefore react differently to Islamic radicalization. With France being the largest hotbed of Jihadists within Europe, there is a certain spillover effect into the French-speaking region of Switzerland, which may be why a higher ratio of radicalized individuals can be observed. Figure 8 shows the detailed number of Jihadists, in every region in Switzerland, who are part of the sample.

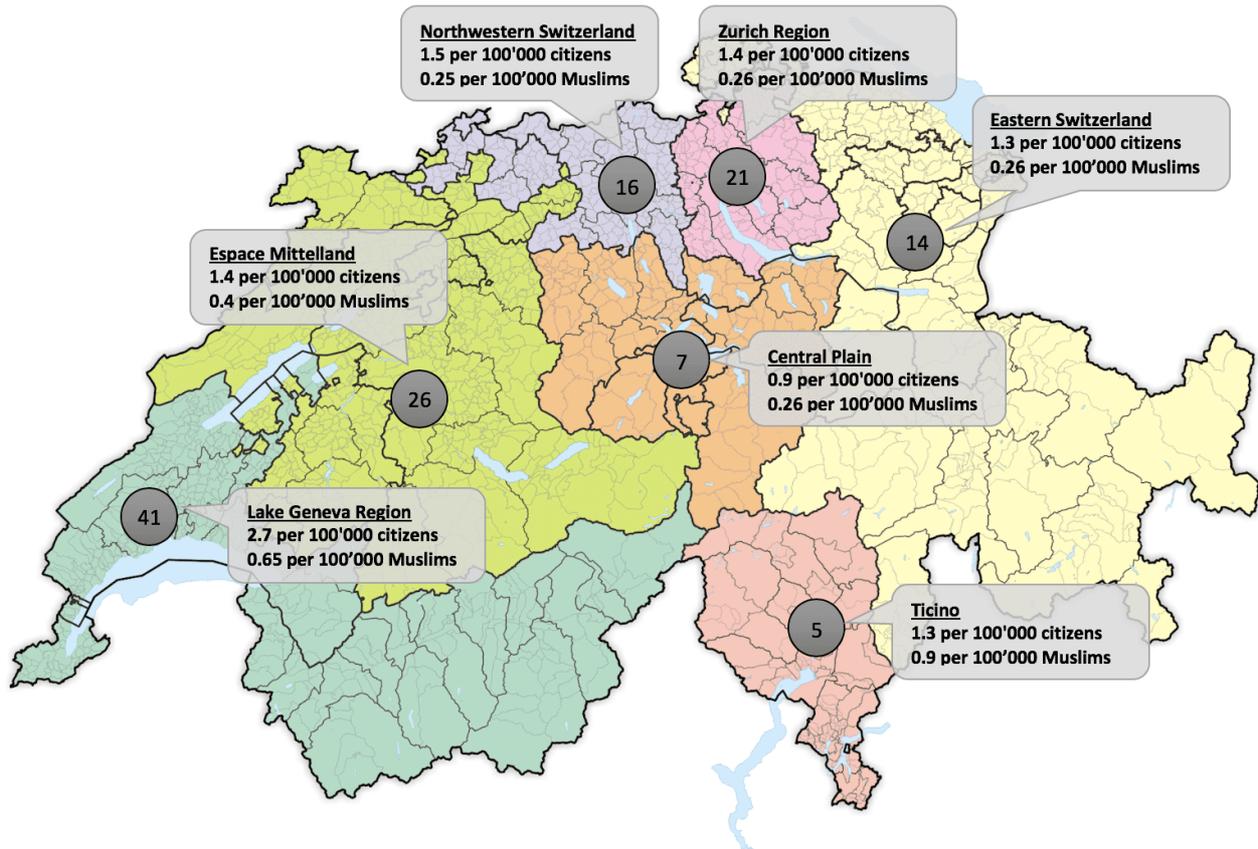


Figure 9: Number of Radicalized Individuals in every Region (Source: Eser Davolio et al.)

According to official Federal Department of Defense data⁷⁸, roughly one third of the Jihadist travelers held a Swiss passport, of which 18 were dual-citizens. The remaining travelers were in possession of a resident permit. Eser Davolio et al.'s dataset shows that 35.2% were born in Switzerland, 21.1% migrated with their families before the age of 12, and 10.2% arrived prior to their 18th birthday. Therefore, it may be concluded that the majority of people in the cohort grew up, were educated, and socialized in Switzerland, which allows the use of the word "home-grown" in most cases of this cohort.⁷⁹ The family origins are similar to Figure 3 in the first section of this report. 32.3% have roots from the Balkans, 20.8% from North Africa, 15.4% from the Middle East, 8.5% from Asia, and 4.6% from Sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 9). Their representation differs according to the language region. The data shows that Jihadists with roots in the Balkans or Middle East are predominately from the German-speaking part, whereas the North Africans are mostly from the French-speaking region.

⁷⁸ Federal Department of Defense, "Dschihadistisch Motivierte Reisebewegungen – Zahlen Februar 2019."

⁷⁹ Eser Davolio et al., "Updated Review and Developments in Jihadist Radicalisation in Switzerland – Updated Version of an Exploratory Study on Prevention and Intervention.": 14

REGIONS OF ORIGIN OF RADICALIZED INDIVIDUALS

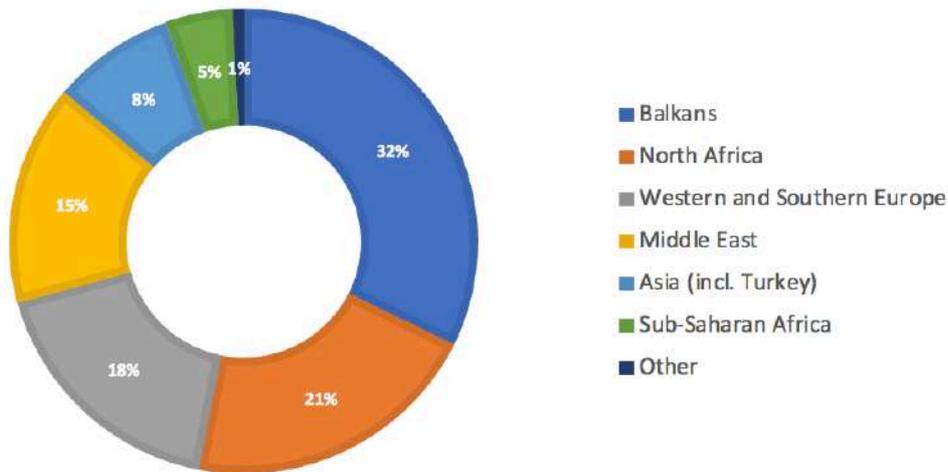


Figure 10: Family Roots of Radicalized Individuals in Switzerland (Source: Eser Davolio et al.)

Push and Pull Factors

When considering the psychosocial data, the sample does not provide complete information. Yet it is still possible to conclude that some of the Jihadists have faced social issues over the course of their lives. These can be categorized as so called push factors. Out of 130 members of this data set, 27 individuals grew up in problematic family circumstances and 22 experienced the loss of family members or other people close to them. Further, 29 of the cohort faced difficult life situations, such as impending deportations, break-ups or the loss of employment. The effects can lead individuals to question the meaning of their life and make them susceptible to radical worldviews.⁸⁰ Interestingly, more than half (53%) of the cohort had a history of drug use and 25% were criminally active, with 21 individuals having served a prison sentence. The dataset also includes psychological information to a certain extent, but cannot be generalized due to its heterogeneity and incompleteness. Some individuals (22%) showed signs of psychiatric problems, ranging from learning difficulties, ADHD, lack of impulse control, and depression, to severe schizophrenic psychosis and suicidal tendencies.⁸¹

In addition to the push factors discussed above, Eser Davolio et al. also highlight pull factors that they could extract from the available dataset. In their analyzed cohort, 21 individuals were definitely engaging in extremist propaganda online, whereas 18 only probably, and 11 not at all. However, as discussed in the beginning of this chapter, consuming Jihadist material online

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 15-16

⁸¹ Ibid.: 15-16

alone rarely leads someone to radicalize. Often, there is human interaction with like-minded individuals at some point during the process. The low number of cases in the sample, for which relevant data exists, shows that 28 out of 130 were in contact with Salafist preachers. According to the FIS, some were actively recruiting supporters for Jihad.⁸² A large part of the sample (93) was influenced during their radicalization by people in their social circles. Oftentimes, these like-minded individuals were of the same age and for women especially, by their spouses. It is of note that three quarters of the cohort were radicalized over the course of more than a year and often experienced personality changes during this time. It is also noteworthy that one out five radicalized individuals in the sample was a convert. Also, at least 22% of the sample participated in the Quran distributing campaign “LIES!” in several Swiss cities.⁸³

Neurological Evidence for Peer Influence during Radicalization Processes

A novel study conducted by Atran⁸⁴, a research company that strives to figure out why individuals resort to violence, found neurological evidence that peer groups play a significant role in determining whether extremists will become violent. The research team was able to convince 146 individuals who showed radicalized tendencies to take a survey. Based on the gathered data, the team was subsequently able to recruit 30 men, between 18 and 36 of age, to undergo brain scans while simultaneously conducting further tests. The first set of findings showed that the part of the brain linked to deliberation lit up far less while answering questions pertaining to their willingness to sacrifice themselves for values they hold sacred (ex. the Quran), than while answering questions about their willingness to kill for values they do not care so much about. The second set of results showed that extremists’ areas in the brain linked to deliberation lit up when they noticed that their peers were not willing to exert violence in defense of a particular value. Many of the test subjects would then adjust their answers, post-brain scan, in order to better align with their peers.⁸⁵ Therefore, arguments linked to the effect of like-minded individuals in radicalization processes are not only demonstrated in psychosocial studies, but are also corroborated by the neurological evidence discovered in Atran’s study.

⁸² Federal Intelligence Service, “Sicherheit Schweiz,” 2018.: 40

⁸³ Eser Davolio et al., “Updated Review and Developments in Jihadist Radicalisation in Switzerland – Updated Version of an Exploratory Study on Prevention and Intervention.”: 15-16

⁸⁴ Atran, “This Is Your Brain on Terrorism: The Science Behind a Death Wish.”

⁸⁵ Feldman and Politzer, “Inside the Dangerous Mission to Understand What Makes Extremists Tick — and How to Change Their Minds.”

Creating a Social Psychological Profile

According to Alderdice⁸⁶ most terrorists are not psychologically ill or suffering from personality disorders. The assumption that they are is a misconception. People with psychological problems are often rejected by terrorist organizations, since their instability poses a high risk. Alderdice as well as Borum and Fein⁸⁷ describe several types of terrorists, of which the mentally disturbed are merely one of many. The social psychological categorization of terrorists includes: “identifiers” who grow up in environments where solving problems with violence had been maintained for generations and they identify with their fathers and grandfathers participating in the struggle; the “identity seekers” who are driven by the need to belong and be a part of something meaningful and define their identity through group affiliation; the “revenge seekers” who are diffusely frustrated and angry with a group or entity and look for an outlet to discharge that; “criminals” who seek personal gain from the illegal activities often attributed to terrorist organizations, such as trafficking drugs, weapons, and humans; and the “thrill seekers”, which are the least common, who are looking for excitement, adventure, and glory.

Applying this terrorist typology concept, the identifiers, identity seekers, and revenge seekers could explain the majority of Swiss Jihadists. A large portion of Eser Davolio’s sample have a migration background from the Balkans, Turkey, North Africa, and the Middle East, all of which exhibit a history of political and religious violence. This may have led them to identify with the struggles in which their parents and grandparents participated. Additionally, their high unemployment rate and social isolation factors may have led them to question their purpose in life and follow their desire for a sense of belonging and to be a part of something meaningful. Further, social isolation, unemployment, and discrimination could also have led to anger and frustration towards institutions and society in Switzerland. Combined with the radical Islamic concept of the Western “ideological attack”, this may have led them to take the path of radicalization.

Webber and Kruglanski⁸⁸ examine this phenomenon from a social psychological perspective, proposing a concept based on three factors: individual motivation, ideological justification of violence, and group processes. The core idea of individual motivation is that the individual experiences some form of unfair humiliation, disenfranchisement, discrimination, a

⁸⁶ Alderdice, “The Individual, the Group and the Psychology of Terrorism.”

⁸⁷ Borum and Fein, “The Psychology of Foreign Fighters.”

⁸⁸ Webber and Kruglanski, “The Social Psychological Makings of a Terrorist.”

personal failure, or the loss of a loved one at the hands of an enemy. On a fundamental level, humans need to feel worthy, respected, or significant, but humiliating experiences create a disparity between how one wishes to view oneself, and the actual negative self-image created by these humiliating circumstances. This leads them to seek alternate routes that can restore their feelings of self-worth, which can be classified as opportunity factors.

The first opportunity factor is ideology, which provides them with a framework to (a) identify an external entity to blame for their humiliation, (b) morally justify violence against the entity, and (c) simplistically divide the world into “good” and “evil” (black and white). The moral justification of violence against another human being may be accompanied by a splitting of the ego. The ego serves as the decision-making component of one’s personality and when it is split it is able to set previously acquired morals aside.⁸⁹ This mechanism of “moral disengagement” manifests itself through dehumanization (portraying the enemy as less than human or the devil), diffusion of responsibility (division of duties so that no individual task is too terrible), or displacement of responsibility (for the sake of Allah or as self-defense against a stronger enemy).⁹⁰

The second opportunity factor refers to group dynamics, further thinning the herd from humiliated people to committed Jihadists. Social networks, both physical and virtual, play an important role in the radicalization process. The presence of like-minded radical individuals increases the willingness to engage in violent actions from three perspectives: deviating against normative pressures becomes easier when one has allies in the cause, close radical friends validate the propriety of the ideology and the justification of killing, and it creates a strong sense of collective identity where peers are seen as “brother in arms”.

These factors of humiliation, ideology, and group dynamics can be described as “pull factors” and are found in the FIS dataset of Jihadist-radicalized individuals in Switzerland. More than half are unemployed, others are separated from their partners or awaiting deportation, which could be interpreted as a personal failure. Further, some have experienced discrimination or the loss of a loved one (though not necessarily by the enemy). Being a confirmed follower of the Salafi-Jihadi ideology, it can be assumed that the individuals promote the concept of the Western “ideological attack” against Islam, which identifies non-believers as the devil, portrays the attack as a defensive (holy) war against a stronger occupying force, and as a result legitimizes the use of

⁸⁹ Campelo et al., “Who Are the European Youths Willing to Engage in Radicalisation? A Multidisciplinary Review of Their Psychological and Social Profiles.”

⁹⁰ Bandura, “Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement.”

violence. This is evidence of the dehumanization of the enemy and displacement of responsibility to Allah. Finally, the dataset outlines that like-minded peers and recruiters play a key role in radicalization processes in Switzerland. More than 70% of the individuals were influenced by various people in their personal environment, attributing group dynamics as one of the primary factors for radicalization in Switzerland.⁹¹

Possible Generic Profile of a Swiss Jihadist

Swiss Jihadists are predominately male (only roughly one out of ten will be female), with an average age of 28. They most likely have a migration background (Balkan, Turkey, North Africa, Middle East) but were socialized in Switzerland. The chances of them being a Swiss convert is roughly one out of five. They are most likely from urban or suburban areas, have a medium to low education level, and are poorly integrated into the employment market. Social issues, such as a broken home, discrimination, social isolation, the loss of a loved one, imminent deportation, drug use, or criminal activity could likely exist. These individuals' motivation may stem from their view of suffering unfair humiliation and be in conjunction with their ideological justification for violence, which are found in radical Islamic ideologies and may lead to the decision of joining ISIS in Syria or Iraq. In addition, like-minded peers, recruiters, or spouses play a key role in their radicalization process, leading to the possibility of identifying further Jihadist-radicalized individuals.

This generic profile represents the findings of a relatively small sample size and as such cannot be generalized to predict future activity. However, it does provide some in-depth information of previous and current cases, which allows for indicators that may potentially be helpful in pre-emptive or counteractive measures to be taken by the Swiss local, state, or federal government.

⁹¹ Eser Davolio et al., "Updated Review and Developments in Jihadist Radicalisation in Switzerland – Updated Version of an Exploratory Study on Prevention and Intervention.": 17

Case Study – Salafi-Jihadi Network in An’Nur Mosque Winterthur

Up until its closure in 2017, the An’Nur mosque in Winterthur was considered to be the largest hotspot of Jihadist radicalization in Switzerland. At least 12 individuals associated with this mosque traveled to Syria, which is the highest number from a single Swiss city.⁹² It is presumed that they were part of a larger Salafi-Jihadi network, made up of mostly adolescents and a handful of older men, surrounding the mosque and further institutions in Winterthur. Between 2012 and 2017, in addition to the Jihadist travelers, there have also been a handful of court cases against members of the Salafist clique, as well as Imams and prayer leaders.⁹³ This case study illustrates a prime example of what was discussed earlier regarding radicalization. Individuals are primarily influenced by like-minded peers within their circle of friends or family. The majority of Jihadist travelers were young, unemployed, and had a low level of education, possessing little to no career perspectives. Further, most of them had a migration background with roots from the Balkans, Turkey, or Arab countries.⁹⁴ The following case study will examine in-depth the Jihadist travelers who departed from, and in some cases returned to Switzerland, and then focus on the broader network of the Salafi-Jihadi youth clique. For security and privacy reasons, the real identities of the individuals discussed were concealed and have been changed to aliases.

Jihad Travelers

The first officially recorded Jihad traveler from Winterthur left to join the Islamic State in the summer of 2012. The 32-year-old German national with Kosovan roots, known as G.F., regularly frequented the An’Nur mosque and distributed Qurans for “LIES!” in several Swiss cities.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, it could not be determined if he was part of the larger Salafi-Jihadi network.

As the “self-declared” Emir of Winterthur, the media, as well as federal prosecutors, believe that Sandro V. (31), an Italian-Bosnian convert, is the link that ties most of the Jihadist travelers within the youth clique together (see Image 1).⁹⁶ Displaying typical characteristics as discussed in Eser Davolio et al.’s research, he was poorly integrated into the employment market

⁹² Pelda, Knellwolf, and Rüegg, “Die Jihad-Karte Der Schweiz.”

⁹³ Knellwolf and Rau, “An’Nur-Prozess: Zwei Landesverweise, Imam Darf Bleiben”; Baumgartner, “Winterthurer Aushilfs-Imam Soll Terroranschläge Geplant Haben”; Knellwolf, “An’Nur-Imam Empfahl Hinrichtungsvideo.”

⁹⁴ Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist.”

⁹⁵ 20 Minuten, “Sie Alle Zogen von Winterthur in Den Jihad”; Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist.”

⁹⁶ Pelda, “Islamisten-«Leitwolf» Aus Winterthur Verhaftet”; Baumgartner, “Sandro V. War Ein Autonarr, Betrüger – Und Charismatischer Jihadist.”

and lived from social service distributions for years. Various failed entrepreneurial attempts led him to commit several crimes involving fraud, for which he was ultimately convicted. In 2013, the devoted Salafi-Jihadist decided to travel to Syria himself.⁹⁷ According to his former wife, Sandro was absolutely convinced that joining ISIS in their Jihad against the unbelievers was his personal duty.⁹⁸ Not denying his trip to Syria in front of the federal prosecutors, he disputed any involvement in violent actions, stating to have only participated in humanitarian aid. However, pictures and chat histories depict a different narrative, showing him in combat gear and talking about becoming a martyr.⁹⁹ Yet, his trip lasted only a couple of weeks, after which he returned back to Switzerland.

The question arises: how did Sandro rise up to become one of the main figureheads of the Salafi-Jihadi youth group? Not only did he attend the An’Nur mosque on a regular basis, he also co-founded a mixed martial arts gym called MMA Sunna, together with the German-Kosovan Thai boxing world champion Valdet Gashi (29) who eventually joined ISIS as well. Overtly, MMA Sunna functioned as a regular gym, open to the public. However, covertly, Sandro and Valdet trained part of the Winterthur youth gang in separate classes, preparing them for their Jihad in Syria. In total, 8 teenagers and adolescents participating in the training sessions ultimately joined ISIS. Moreover, Sandro spearheaded the Swiss branch of the street Dawa campaign “LIES!” – members of the youth clique were active there as well – and maintained connections to preachers of hate abroad, who in the meantime have been imprisoned for supporting terrorist activities.¹⁰⁰

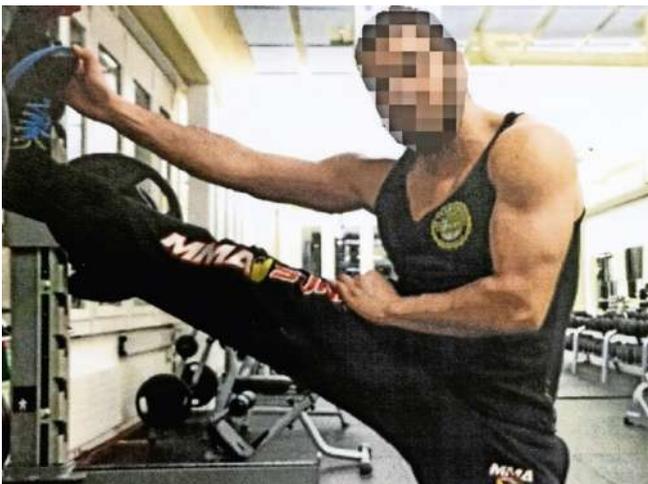


Image 1: Sandro V. (Source: Till Hirsekorn – Der Landbote)



Image 2: Valdet Gashi (Source: Vice)

⁹⁷ Baumgartner, “Sandro V. War Ein Autonarr, Betrüger – Und Charismatischer Jihadist.”

⁹⁸ Hirsekorn, “Die Schlinge Um Den «Emir von Winterthur» Zieht Sich Langsam Zu.”

⁹⁹ Baumgartner, “Sandro V. War Ein Autonarr, Betrüger – Und Charismatischer Jihadist.”

¹⁰⁰ Baumgartner.

In the summer of 2014, Hasan (21) – also known as Ibn Muhamad al-Kurdi – was the first one from the Salafi-Jihadi youth group to make his hijra to the Caliphate and was a close friend of Valdet Gashi (see Images 3 and 4). Official reports state that Hasan died during an airstrike some months later.¹⁰¹



Image 4: Hasan with AK (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)



Image 3: Hasan and Valdet Gashi (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)



Image 5: Vedad & Esra's Father in Turkey (Source: Watson; Original: Faith Karacali [dha])

Shortly after, Hasan’s friend and training partner Vedad (21), together with his sister Esra (20), followed the call as well and traveled to the area of conflict – at the time they were 16 and 15 years old.¹⁰² Reports state that the “Emir” Sandro grew up in the same neighborhood as the siblings and was an important part of their radicalization.¹⁰³ One year later, they managed to send their parents a distressed text message, upon which the parents immediately flew to Turkey and Syria to start looking for their children (see Image 5). Under unclear circumstances, the siblings were able to flee the Caliphate and return

¹⁰¹ 20 Minuten, “Thaibox-Star Trainierte Winterthurer Jihadisten”; Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist”; Kunz, “Die Zürcher Jihad-Reisenden Im Überblick”; Bächtold, “Winterthur Und Der Jihad: Das Ist Bis Jetzt Bekannt.”

¹⁰² Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist.”

¹⁰³ Baumgartner, “Das Rätsel Um Das Jihad-Geschwisterpaar Aus Winterthur.”

to Switzerland.¹⁰⁴ Their case attracted a lot of media attention, due to the fact that they were the first minors to be tried in court for supporting ISIS ideologically and logistically, as well as violating the Federal Act on the Proscription of the Groups Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, and Associated Groups.¹⁰⁵ They received a 10 and 11-month suspended prison sentence with an additional probationary period of one year. Prior to his departure, Vedad was part of the street Dawa operations of “LIES!” and distributed Qurans in several Swiss cities.¹⁰⁶

In 2015, Christian (18) – also known as Abu Malik, a Swiss-Italian convert, left Winterthur to join ISIS in Syria. He was member of the clique, grew up in the same neighborhood as his friends Hasan and Vedad, regularly attended the An’Nur mosque, and trained with them at MMA Sunna. During his time in Sham, he posted pictures of himself wearing combat gear and even holding a decapitated head (see Images 6 and 7). Swiss authorities presume that Christian was killed in an airstrike a few months after his arrival.¹⁰⁷



Image 6: Christian holding a head (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)

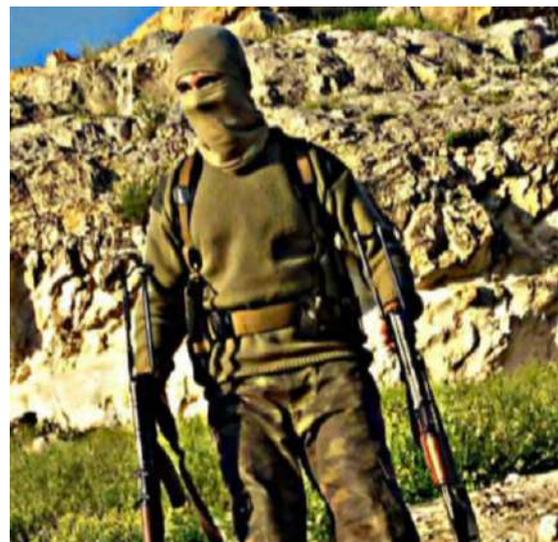


Image 7: Christian im Combat Gear (Source: 20 Minuten; Original: Facebook)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Schoop and Baumgartner, “Esra Ist 15, Vedad 16. Zusammen Reisen Sie Nach Syrien. Nach Wenigen Monaten Kommt Die Nachricht: «Papi, Hol Uns Zurück».”

¹⁰⁶ Knellwolf and Pelda, “Hat Der «Emir von Winterthur» Die Jungen Geschwister Rekrutiert?”

¹⁰⁷ Bächtold, “Winterthur Und Der Jihad: Das Ist Bis Jetzt Bekannt”; Kunz, “Die Zürcher Jihad-Reisenden Im Überblick”; Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist.”



Image 8: Ahmed with his Lawyer (Source: Der Landbote; Original: Keystone)

Ahmed (30) – a Swiss-Lebanese dual citizen – attempted to travel to the conflict area in spring of 2015, with the intent of becoming a Shahid. However, he was intercepted by Swiss police at the airport and never made it to his destination. The police found a piece of paper on him, with two phone numbers. One belonged to Vedad (who at that time was still in Syria) and the other one to Hasan. He explained to

the authorities that his intentions were to visit his friends Vedad, Hasan, and Christian. Interestingly, federal prosecutors were able to prove that Ahmed was in close contact with the three prior to their departure. Together with them, Ahmed participated in the MMA Sunna training sessions and was an active member within the Salafist youth group surrounding the An’Nur mosque.¹⁰⁸ The federal court sentenced him to an 18-month suspended sentence for violating the Federal Act on the Proscription of the Groups Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, and Associated Groups, as well as disseminating propaganda material. In other words, if he does not commit a crime during his probationary period, he remains a free man (see Image 8).¹⁰⁹

Abdul (25), who likely ran with the same Salafi-Jihadi youth group, traveled to Syria in the summer of 2015. However, he returned to Switzerland shortly thereafter.¹¹⁰ The Kosovan M. J. faced a fate similar to Ahmed and never made it to the Caliphate. As a result, he threatened to commit his Jihad in Switzerland on several occasions, specifically targeting the Jewish quarter in Zurich, which led to his subsequent arrest and criminal conviction. M. J. attended the An’Nur mosque frequently and participated in the Quran distribution campaign “LIES!”. However, it is unknown if he was a member of the clique.¹¹¹ Unfortunately, no further information could be found on these two cases, as news reports were extremely limited.

Figure 10 illustrates the confirmed interconnections between the Jihadist travelers, which could be extracted from various news articles. It also depicts the larger network of the Salafi-Jihadi

¹⁰⁸ Garne, “Ahmed J.: «Ich Wollte Schon Als Kind Als Märtyrer Sterben».”

¹⁰⁹ Bächtold, “Eine Zu Milde Strafe, Aber Immerhin Ein Urteil.”

¹¹⁰ 20 Minuten, “Sie Alle Zogen von Winterthur in Den Jihad.”

¹¹¹ Pelda, Knellwolf, and Rüegg, “Die Jihad-Karte Der Schweiz.”

clique surrounding the An’Nur mosque in Winterthur. However, due to limited open-source information, not every individual could be linked together, which is why the clique was separated into two sub-groups. The only direct connection that could be established was between Nadim and Junis. As Junis is very connected to the Jihadist travelers, it seems plausible that both sub-groups were part of the larger network.

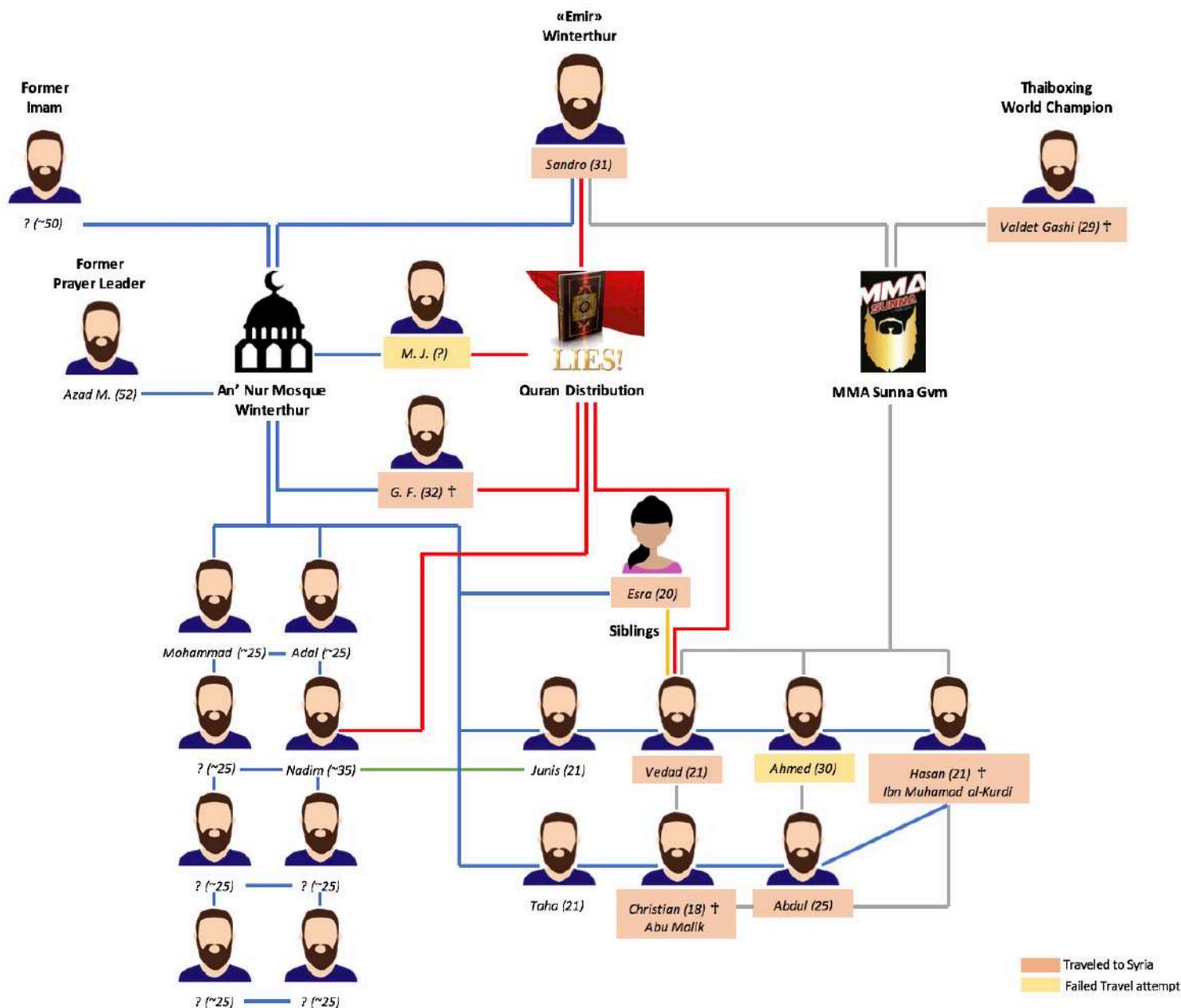


Figure 11: Salafi-Jihadi Network in Winterthur

Salafist Youth Gang

According to a news report¹¹² highlighting the Salafi-Jihadi clique in Winterthur, the group included approximately 25 young men and a handful of older mentors, sharing their knowledge about Islam. Allegedly, Mohammad (~25), the son of the former Imam, acted as the ringleader of the clique. The news reports states that he would lead prayers in the schoolyard and apply pressure on his fellow brothers to attend not only Friday prayers, but regular evening and night prayers as well (see Images 9 and 10).



Image 9: Mohammad leading Prayer during Recess (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)



Image 10: Youth Group in the An'Nur Mosque (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)

In addition, the older mentors graded the clique members on their knowledge of Islam, their piety, as well as fulfilling their duties such as paying zakat. Usually, after attending Friday prayers, the group stayed for Sunna lessons, in which the Imam was very outspoken about his hatred for the Kuffar (see Image 10). The young men started to cultivate a culture amongst each other, in which looking at women, listening to music, and interacting with non-Muslims was frowned upon, thereby creating a certain peer pressure.¹¹³

¹¹² Pelda, “Wie Sich Junge Muslime in Winterthur Radikalisierten.”

¹¹³ Ibid.

Bodybuilding and fitness training was very popular within the clique, which is why a lot of them frequented the weightlifting room and the fight sessions in the MMA Sunna gym. Junis (21), a Swiss citizen with Arab roots, regularly lifted weights with the Jihad traveler Vedad and their other friend Taha (21). It is of note that unlike Vedad, Junis did not partake in the fight sessions with Sandro and Valdet Gashi. Nadim (~35), who is substantially older than the rest, was also part of the group, a regular at the gym, and distributed Qurans for “LIES!”. Junis and Nadim have published propaganda material of famous al-Qaida scholar Anwar al-Awlaki on several occasions, shared anti-Semitic and anti-Shiite content, uploaded pictures glorifying known terrorists and suicide bombers, as well as openly expressed their support for the concept of “Al-Wala Wal-Bara”. Moreover, they have posted links to the website of Abu Walaa, who stands accused of being the highest ranking member of ISIS in Germany and is currently standing trial for recruiting Muslims for the Caliphate. The indictment includes having recruited the Berlin Christmas Market attacker of 2016. Interestingly, German investigators found two cell phone numbers registered to two members of the Winterthur Salafist network in Abu Walaa’s phone. One of them belongs to Adal (~25) who can be seen in Image 11.¹¹⁴ Several members even visited Abu Walaa in Germany.¹¹⁵ This link proves that the youth clique was well connected to Salafi-Jihadi networks abroad and in contact with high-profile individuals.



Image 12: Adal (left) and another member of the clique (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)



Image 11: Members of the youth gang (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)

The youth group came into contact with further Salafi-Jihadi preachers from abroad through various guest Imams from the Balkans, such as Rexhep Memishi from Macedonia, who in the meantime has been sentenced to seven years in prison for recruiting individuals to join the

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Pelda and Knellwolf, “Bis Die IS-Flagge Über Zürich Weht.”

theater of Jihad in Syria. In Image 13, a young man can be seen reciting the Shahada during a conversion ceremony with Memishi in the An’Nur mosque.¹¹⁶



Image 13: Rexhep Memishi in the An’Nur Mosque (Source: Kurt Pelda; Original: Private)

Court Case against Members of the Youth Group

In October 2016, a former Ethiopian Imam at the An’Nur mosque called for the killing and burning of Muslims who did not attend Friday prayers. The sermon was leaked to the press, which led to a police raid at the mosque, the Imam’s arrest, and ultimately his prosecution.¹¹⁷ Eight members of the Salafi-Jihadi youth clique took it upon themselves to discover the identity of the informant. Three weeks later, they caught a young North African taking pictures in the mosque and immediately confronted him. Together with a friend, the victim was held against his will, interrogated, beaten, and threatened with being killed.¹¹⁸ The former Imam, and father of Mohammad, was present during this ordeal and tried to get a confession out of them in his office.¹¹⁹ This was the final straw and led to the closure of the An’Nur mosque at the end of 2017.

Official charges were brought against eight adolescents, including the Imam’s son Mohammad, as well as the Imam himself and the community president. They were accused of

¹¹⁶ Pelda, “Wie Sich Junge Muslime in Winterthur Radikalisierten.”

¹¹⁷ Schoop and Baumgartner, “Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist.”

¹¹⁸ Pelda, “Gefährlicher Frust Bei Winterthurer Islamisten.”

¹¹⁹ Baumgartner and Schoop, “Attacke in Winterthurer An-Nur-Moschee: Die Wichtigsten Antworten Zum Prozess Gegen Zehn Islamisten.”

wrongfully depriving the victims of their personal liberty and assault. Eight of the ten offenders were found guilty and received suspended prison sentences or monetary penalties. In other words, none of them have been required to serve their sentence or pay any money and won't be unless they become delinquent again. However, a Macedonian and an Afghani were deported and banned from setting foot on Swiss soil for seven years. Only the community president and one young adult were exonerated and received monetary compensation for their time in pre-trial custody. The court justified the mild sentences by pointing out that all of them were first-time offenders.¹²⁰

Police Raid on Swiss Jihadists Nationwide

More recently, in October 2019, the Swiss authorities conducted the largest coordinated raid on Swiss Jihadists in the three cantons of Zurich, Bern, and Schaffhausen, arresting a total of 11 individuals. Relevant for this case study is that Vedad (the returned Jihad traveler) and four minors, who were members of the Salafi-Jihadi network surrounding the An'Nur mosque in Winterthur, were among those arrested. Official press releases stated that authorities acted on evidence gathered by the FIS, pointing to violations of the Federal Act on the Proscription of the Groups Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, and Associated Groups. To a large extent, the FIS was able to gather evidence through surveilling the Jihadist returnee Vedad. After being convicted in 2019 for traveling to Syria and supporting a terrorist organization, Vedad continued to disseminate propaganda material and recruit people for Jihad. Following the closure of the An'Nur mosque, it became increasingly difficult to track the youth clique's movements, as gatherings happened frequently in private locations.¹²¹

Charges against former prayer leader Azad M.

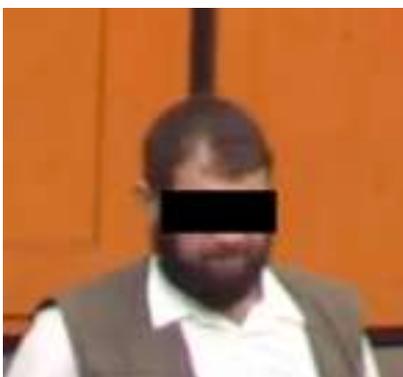


Image 14: Azad M. (Source: Kurt Pelda)

In April 2020, after being in pre-trial custody for nearly three years, the federal prosecutor's office has officially submitted terrorism related charges against Azad M. (52), a former prayer leader at the An'Nur mosque in Winterthur. He stands accused of disseminating propaganda material, recruiting individuals for Jihad, smuggling Jihadists into Syria, supporting ISIS and their operations financially and logistically, as well as

¹²⁰ Knellwolf and Rau, "An'Nur-Prozess: Zwei Landesverweise, Imam Darf Bleiben."

¹²¹ Pelda and Knellwolf, "Grossrazzia in Der Schweiz: IS-Unterstützer in Probezeit Verhaftet."

receiving orders from high-ranking ISIS members to prepare terrorist attacks in Switzerland. It is important to add that no concrete evidence of an imminent terrorist attack existed. Although he was in frequent contact with several of the Jihad travelers from the An’Nur youth group, the authorities were not able to link Azad to their entry into the conflict area. Yet, they were able to determine that the Iraqi prayer leader was directly responsible for radicalizing at least one teenager in the An’Nur mosque. Moreover, authorities came across an interconnected transnational ISIS network, of which he was part, together with more than twenty individuals from Switzerland, Finland, Turkey, Lebanon, and Syria. Investigators were able to link him to an attempted and failed suicide attack in Lebanon, in which he instructed and wired funds to the female terrorist.¹²²

On September 8th 2020, Azad M.’s trial in front of the Supreme Court of Switzerland for the previously outlined allegations commenced. According to his statements during the court proceeding, he was aware of the federal police intercepting private conversations and text messages. He claimed that he was all talk but never intended to harm anyone. However, the court mandated psychiatrist concluded that Azad suffers from a severe case of antisocial personality disorder and that constructive therapy measures would not prove to be effective.¹²³ Federal prosecutors are demanding a seven year prison term, followed by indefinite detainment on the grounds of keeping the public safe.¹²⁴ The Federal Prosecutor’s Office will attempt to deport Azad back to Iraq, however, the likelihood of this to be successful is very slim. Previous trials of ISIS members in Switzerland have shown that deportations were rejected by the court, because the offenders would face severe or even life-threatening prosecution in their native countries. To date, it remains unclear when the Supreme Court will render their verdict.

¹²² Schoop, “Winterthurer Hilfs-Imam Soll IS-Mitglied in Libanon Zu Einem Selbstmordattentat Angestiftet Haben”;
Knellwolf and Pelda, “Ex-Vorbeter Der An’Nur-Moschee Wegen Terrorplänen Angeklagt.”

¹²³ Knellwolf and Pelda, “Wie Gefährlich Ist Azad M.?”

¹²⁴ Schoop, “Islamist Vor Gericht: Azad M. Soll Anschlagpläne Gehegt Haben.”

Conclusion

After the first wave of Muslim immigrants in the 1960s, composed of economic migrants from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, the Muslim population in Switzerland grew from approximately 16'000 to 380'000 in 2017. Today, it consists of people from Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian states as well. The majority of Muslims in Switzerland are Sunni and practice a moderate Islam. Communities are organized through different ethnic, national, and faith-based unions and are represented by the Federation of Islamic Organizations in Switzerland (FIOS) on a national level. The aim of this study was to provide a broad overview of radical Islamic organizations, individuals, and activities within Switzerland and to show that the small alpine country is not an island among heavily affected neighboring countries such as France and Germany.

The presence of Islamists in Switzerland may be traced back to the 1960s, when the Swiss government granted Said Ramadan, the Muslim Brotherhood's founder Hasan al-Bana's son-in-law, asylum. From here, Ramadan was able to continue spreading the Brotherhood ideology around the globe and establish himself within the Saudi funded Muslim World League. This drew a number of fugitive Islamists from the Middle East and North Africa to Switzerland, to seek asylum. For many years, Islamist individuals were able to create networks that supported radical groups in their native countries ideologically, logistically and financially. The events on 9/11 changed the landscape somewhat, with the Swiss government increasingly cracking down on radical Islamic activities within the country.

Due to the federal and decentralized structure of the FIOS, the unions and community centers act autonomously and maintain independent relationships with various entities abroad. The analysis concluded that many of them have close ties to or are financed by radical entities from Turkey, Balkan states, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. These radical entities are oftentimes affiliated with individuals or charities that have been designated by the United States and other countries as supporting terrorist organizations, either logistically or financially. Further, a connection between many Turkish communities and Erdogan's AKP party could be established, illustrating Turkey's increasing Dawa efforts across Europe and especially Switzerland. Many Mosques in Switzerland employ Saudi, Qatari, or Turkish trained Imams, who are oftentimes paid for by various entities within those countries, adding another layer of efforts to spread their ideology among Muslim communities in Switzerland.

With the emergence of ISIS, a strategic shift took place within Jihadi groups, evolving from centralized and structured to decentralized and unstructured groups, with a growing presence on social media. It became increasingly more difficult for security services to detect radical individuals online, making it easier for terrorist organizations to conduct propaganda, recruitment, and financing activities. A new wave of foreign fighters travelling to Syria to join ISIS in the establishment of a new Caliphate took much of the Western world by surprise. Switzerland was not spared by this phenomenon, recording 77 individuals that travelled to Syria and Iraq. By analyzing a dataset of 130 radical Islamic individuals in Switzerland, it could be cautiously extrapolated that they were predominately male, with an average age of 28, likely were second or third generation Swiss citizens from urban or suburban areas and were poorly integrated into the labor market. Oftentimes, radical Islamists in Switzerland came from a broken home, had a criminal history, and experienced some sort of (self-perceived) alienation or discrimination. However, most importantly, It could be determined that their radicalization process involved human interaction with radical preachers, like-minded peers, or even spouses.

The case study of the Salafi-Jihadi youth network in Winterthur that was established by one of the most high-profile Jihadists in Switzerland is an important illustration to this study, as it provides context to a lot of what has been discussed in the “Jihadism in Switzerland” and “Radicalization in Switzerland” sections. Out of all the Jihadist cases in Switzerland, this example has received the most media attention in the German-speaking part, with various articles reporting on different aspects and individuals of this network.

Bibliography

- 20 Minuten. “Sie Alle Zogen von Winterthur in Den Jihad,” 2015.
<https://www.20min.ch/schweiz/news/story/Sie-alle-zogen-von-Winterthur-in-den-Jihad-24532142>.
- . “Thaibox-Star Trainierte Winterthurer Jihadisten,” 2015.
<https://www.20min.ch/schweiz/news/story/Thaibox-Star-trainierte-Winterthurer-Jihadisten-20388527>.
- Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat Schweiz. “Mahmud Moschee.” Accessed January 7, 2020.
<http://www.ahmadiyya.ch/home/index.php/de/mahmud-moschee>.
- Alderdice, The Lord. “The Individual, the Group and the Psychology of Terrorism.” *International Review of Psychiatry* 19, no. 3 (2007): 201–9.
- Atran, Scott. “This Is Your Brain on Terrorism: The Science Behind a Death Wish.” *Foreign Affairs*, no. December (2019). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2019-12-02/your-brain-terrorism>.
- Bächtold, Jakob. “Eine Zu Milde Strafe, Aber Immerhin Ein Urteil.” *Der Landbote*, 2016.
<https://www.landbote.ch/winterthur/standard/eine-zu-milde-strafe-aber-immerhin-ein-urteil/story/25341914>.
- . “Winterthur Und Der Jihad: Das Ist Bis Jetzt Bekannt.” *Der Landbote*, 2015.
<https://www.landbote.ch/winterthur/standard/winterthur-und-der-jihad-das-ist-bis-jetzt-bekannt/story/13967592>.
- Bandura, Albert. “Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement.” In *Origins of Terrorism*, edited by W. Reich, 161–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Bar, Schmuël, Shmuël Bachar, Rachel Machtiger, and Yair Minzili. “Establishment Ulama and Radicalism in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.” *Hudson Institute Series* 1, no. Paper 4 (2006): 12–21.
- Baumgartner, Fabian. “Das Rätsel Um Das Jihad-Geschwisterpaar Aus Winterthur.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2017. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/das-raetsel-um-das-jihad-geschwisterpaar-aus-winterthur-ld.1317049>.
- . “Sandro V. War Ein Autonarr, Betrüger – Und Charismatischer Jihadist.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2017. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/islamisten-hochburg-winterthur-autonarr-betrueger-und-charismatischer-jihadist-ld.1303238>.
- . “Winterthurer Aushilfs-Imam Soll Terroranschläge Geplant Haben.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2019. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/an-nur-moschee-winterthur-hilfsimam-hat-terrorplaene-geschmiedet-ld.1481976>.
- Baumgartner, Fabian, and Florian Schoop. “Attacke in Winterthurer An-Nur-Moschee: Die Wichtigsten Antworten Zum Prozess Gegen Zehn Islamisten.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2018. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/attacke-in-winterthurer-an-nur-moschee-die-wichtigsten-antworten-zum-prozess-gegen-zehn-islamisten-ld.1424007>.

- Behloul, Samuel M. "Islam." University of Lucerne, 2020.
<https://www.unilu.ch/fakultaeten/ksf/institute/zentrum-religionsforschung/religionen-schweiz/religionen/islam/>.
- Borum, Randy, and Robert Fein. "The Psychology of Foreign Fighters." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 40, no. 3 (2017): 248–66.
- Boyadjian, Rupen. "Die Katar-Connection Des Islamischen Zentralrats." *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2016.
<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/die-katarconnection-des-islamischen-zentralrats/story/21917673>.
- Brupbacher, Marc. "Nicolas Blanco: Spuren Führen Zu Al-Qaida." *Der Bund*, 2010.
<https://www.derbund.ch/schweiz/standard/nicolas-blancho-spuren-fuehren-zu-alqaida/story/19838860>.
- Campelo, Nicolas, Alice Oppetit, Françoise Neu, David Cohen, and Guillaume Bronsard. "Who Are the European Youths Willing to Engage in Radicalisation? A Multidisciplinary Review of Their Psychological and Social Profiles." *European Psychiatry* 52 (2018): 1–14.
- Eser Davolio, Miryam, Mallory Schnewly Purdie, Fabien Merz, Johannes Saal, and Ayesha Rether. "Updated Review and Developments in Jihadist Radicalisation in Switzerland – Updated Version of an Exploratory Study on Prevention and Intervention." *Institute of Diversity and Social Integration Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW)*. Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), 2019.
- Federal Department of Defense. "Dschihadistisch Motivierte Reisebewegungen – Zahlen Februar 2019," 2019.
- . "Risikopersonen Terrorismus," 2019.
<https://www.vbs.admin.ch/de/themen/nachrichtenbeschaffung/dschihadreisende.html>.
- Federal Intelligence Service. "Sicherheit Schweiz," 2014.
- . "Sicherheit Schweiz," 2018.
- Federal Office of Police. "Fedpol Annual Report," 2009.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2010.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2011.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2012.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2013.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2014.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2015.
- . "Fedpol Annual Report," 2017.
- Federal Statistical Office. "Religions in Switzerland," 2017.
<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/bevoelkerung/sprachen-religionen/religionen.html>.

- — —. “Religiöse Und Spirituelle Praktiken Und Glaubensformen In Der Schweiz.” Neuchatel, 2016.
- Feldman, Emily, and Malia Politzer. “Inside the Dangerous Mission to Understand What Makes Extremists Tick — and How to Change Their Minds.” *Time*, 2020. <https://time.com/5881567/extremism-violence-causes-research/>.
- Frick, Manuel. “Der Brückenbauer Und Seine Kontakte Zu Muslimbrüdern.” *Landbote*, 2018. <https://www.landbote.ch/front/der-brueckenbauer-und-seine-kontakte-zu-muslimbruedern/story/30907912>.
- Fuchs, Daniel. “Das Erste Islam-Museum Der Schweiz: Was Taugt Die Neue Ausstellung?” *Aargauer Zeitung*, 2016. <https://www.aargauerzeitung.ch/kultur/buch-buehne-kunst/das-erste-islam-museum-der-schweiz-was-taugt-die-neue-ausstellung-130422068>.
- Garne, Jigme. “Ahmed J.: «Ich Wollte Schon Als Kind Als Märtyrer Sterben».” *Der Landbote*, 2016. <https://www.landbote.ch/winterthur/standard/prozess-gegen-den-winterthurer-issymphatisanten-beginnt/story/27494757>.
- Graffenried, Valerie de. “Nous Traquons Les Djihadistes Sur Internet.” *Le Temps*, 2012. <https://www.letemps.ch/suisse/traquons-djihadistes-internet>.
- Hirse Korn, Till. “Die Schlinge Um Den «Emir von Winterthur» Zieht Sich Langsam Zu.” *Der Landbote*, 2017. <https://www.landbote.ch/winterthur/standard/tatverdacht-gegen-emir-von-winterthur-verdichtet-sich/story/14383485>.
- Hoffmann, Joel. “König Faysal Stiftung Und Ihre Terrorfinanciers.” *Basler Zeitung*, 2016. <https://www.bazonline.ch/basel/stadt/koenig-faysal-stiftung-und-ihre-terrorfinanciers/story/26387393>.
- Keller-Messahli, Saida. *Islamistische Drehscheibe Schweiz: Ein Blick Hinter Die Kulissen Der Moscheen*. Kindle Ed. Zürich: NZZ Libro, 2017.
- Knellwolf, Thomas. “An’Nur-Imam Empfahl Hinrichtungsvideo.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, November 10, 2017. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/zuerich/region/an-nurimam-empfahl-hinrichtungsvideo/story/24015189>.
- — —. “Islamischer Zentralrat Schweiz Warb Für Al- Qaida.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2020. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/islamischer-zentralrat-schweiz-warb-fuer-alqaida/story/17694942>.
- Knellwolf, Thomas, and Kurt Pelda. “Ex-Vorbeter Der An’Nur-Moschee Wegen Terrorplänen Angeklagt.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2020. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/ex-vorbeter-der-annur-moschee-wegen-terrorplaenen-angeklagt-893067758719>.
- — —. “Hat Der «Emir von Winterthur» Die Jungen Geschwister Rekrutiert?” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2019. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/hat-der-emir-von-winterthur-die-jungen-geschwister-rekrutiert/story/18128733>.
- — —. “Schaffhauser IS-Zelle Darf Sich Auf Mildere Strafen Freuen.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, March 22, 2017. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/schaffhauser-izelle-darf-sich-auf-mildere-strafen-freuen/story/17990992>.

- — —. “Wie Gefährlich Ist Azad M.?” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2020. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/wie-gefaehrlich-ist-azad-m-164982369523>.
- Knellwolf, Thomas, and Simone Rau. “An’Nur-Prozess: Zwei Landesverweise, Imam Darf Bleiben.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2018. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/zuerich/region/heute-werden-die-urteile-im-an-nurprozess-gesprochen/story/14522245>.
- Kucera, Andrea, and Marcel Gyr. “«Die Terroristen Haben Auch Uns Studiert».” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2017. <https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/genfer-terrorexperte-jean-paul-rouiller-die-terroristen-haben-auch-uns-studiert-ld.154742>.
- Kunz, Nina. “Die Zürcher Jihad-Reisenden Im Überblick.” *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2016. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/aktuell/winterthurer-islamistenszene-die-zuercher-jihad-reisenden-im-ueberblick-ld.113951>.
- Leybold-Johnson, Isobel. “Geneva Mosque to Be Run by Swiss Management.” *Swissinfo.ch*, 2020. https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/change-in-direction_geneva-mosque-to-be-run-by-swiss-management/45503018.
- Meier, Michael. “Drehscheibe Für Salafistische Imame.” *Tages-Anzeiger*. June 4, 2016.
- Pelda, Kurt. “Er Hat Genug von Den Islamisten.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, May 18, 2019. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/Er-hat-genug-von-den-Islamisten/story/24620991>.
- — —. “Gefährlicher Frust Bei Winterthurer Islamisten.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2017. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/zuerich/region/frust-in-der-an-nurmoschee/story/27972223>.
- — —. “Islamisten-«Leitwolf» Aus Winterthur Verhaftet.” *SRF (Swiss Radio and Television)*, 2016. <https://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/islamisten-leitwolf-aus-winterthur-verhaftet>.
- — —. “Wie Sich Junge Muslime in Winterthur Radikalisierten.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2018. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/gehirnwaesche-im-namen-allahs/story/10566477>.
- Pelda, Kurt, and Thomas Knellwolf. “«Der Grösste Fehler in Meinem Leben».” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2020. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/der-groesste-fehler-in-meinem-leben-721731398644>.
- — —. “Bis Die IS-Flagge Über Zürich Weht.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2019. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/bis-die-isflagge-ueber-zuerich-weht/story/28295691>.
- — —. “Grossrazzia in Der Schweiz: IS-Unterstützer in Probezeit Verhaftet.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2019. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/grossrazzia-in-der-schweiz-isunterstuetzer-in-probezeit-verhaftet/story/22491094>.
- — —. “Hat Der «Emir» Junge Winterthurer in Den Jihad Geschickt?” *Tages-Anzeiger*, 2020. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/hat-der-emir-junge-winterthurer-in-den-jihad-geschickt-173264382031>.
- Pelda, Kurt, Thomas Knellwolf, and Michael Rüegg. “Die Jihad-Karte Der Schweiz.” *Tages-Anzeiger*, June 28, 2017. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/der-weg-zum-jihadismus/story/10642228>.

- Pelda, Kurt, and Michael Rüegg. "Der Jihad-Aufruf in Bümpliz Und Die Terror Connections Des IZRS." *Tages-Anzeiger*, December 3, 2017. <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/die-terrorverbindungen-des-islamischen-zentralrats/story/13980330>.
- Rauch, Raphael. "Finanzierung von Moscheen - Woher Kommt Das Geld Für Die Schweizer Moscheen?" SRF (Swiss Radio and Television), 2018. <https://www.srf.ch/kultur/gesellschaft-religion/finanzierung-von-moscheen-woher-kommt-das-geld-fuer-die-schweizer-moscheen>.
- Rickenbacher, Daniel. "The Muslim Brotherhood in Switzerland." *European Eye on Radicalization*, 2019. <https://eeradicalization.com/the-muslim-brotherhood-in-switzerland-the-first-decades/>.
- Schmid, Hansjörg, and Noemi Trucco. "Bildungsangebote Für Imame - Ein Ländervergleich Aus Schweizer Perspektive." *SZIG/CSIS-Studie 3*. Universität Freiburg, 2019.
- Schoop, Florian. "Islamist Vor Gericht: Azad M. Soll Anschlagspläne Gehegt Haben." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2020. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/islamist-vor-gericht-azad-m-soll-anschlagsplaene-gehegt-haben-ld.1575392#subtitle-was-fordert-die-bundesanwaltschaft-second>.
- . "Winterthurer Hilfs-Imam Soll IS-Mitglied in Libanon Zu Einem Selbstmordattentat Angestiftet Haben." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2020. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/winterthur-is-mitglied-und-hilfsimam-angeklagt-ld.1551637>.
- Schoop, Florian, and Fabian Baumgartner. "Die Salafisten von Der Eulach: Wie Winterthur Zur Hochburg Der Jihad-Verführer Geworden Ist." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2018. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/die-salafisten-von-der-eulach-wie-winterthur-zur-hochburg-der-jihad-verfuehrer-geworden-ist-ld.1424527>.
- . "Esra Ist 15, Vedad 16. Zusammen Reisen Sie Nach Syrien. Nach Wenigen Monaten Kommt Die Nachricht: «Papi, Hol Uns Zurück»." *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2018. <https://www.nzz.ch/zuerich/esra-ist-15-vedad-16-zusammen-reisen-sie-nach-syrien-nach-wenigen-monaten-kommt-die-nachricht-papi-hol-uns-zurueck-ld.1441538>.
- Tscherrig, Tobias. "Muslimbruderschaft: Gelder Fliessen in Und Durch Die Schweiz." *Infosperber*, 2019. <https://www.infosperber.ch/Gesellschaft/Muslimbruderschaft-Gelder-fliessen-in-und-durch-die-Schweiz>.
- Vidino, Lorenzo. "Jihadist Radicalization in Switzerland." *Center for Security Studies*, 2013.
- Webber, David, and Arie W. Kruglanski. "The Social Psychological Makings of a Terrorist." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 19 (2018): 131–34.

Appendix: Statistics of Muslim Population in Switzerland

State	Muslim Population	% of Total Population
Zürich	80'992	6.5%
Aargau	39'967	7.1%
Bern	34'095	3.9%
Waadt	33'799	5.2%
St. Gallen	31'690	7.5%
Genf	23'854	6.2%
Solothurn	17'471	7.6%
Thurgau	14'904	6.5%
Luzern	14'810	4.4%
Basel-Landschaft	13'565	5.6%
Basel-Stadt	13'318	8.2%
Freiburg	10'901	4.2%
Wallis	9'618	3.4%
Schwyz	6'413	4.9%
Tessin	6'296	2.1%
Neuenburg	6'202	4.2%
Schaffhausen	4'809	7.0%
Zug	4'600	4.4%
Graubünden	3'056	1.8%
Glarus	2'616	7.7%
Jura	2'154	3.5%
Appenzell A. Rh.	(1422)	3.1%
Nidwalden	(1164)	3.2%
Obwalden	(1017)	3.2%
Uri	(603)	2.0%
Appenzell I. Rh.	(411)	3.1%
Switzerland Total	379'748	5.4%
German Region	288'981	5.8%
French Region	84'226	5.0%
Italian Region	6'326	2.0%
Rhaeto-Romanic Region	(214)	1.0%

Table 2: Muslim Population Switzerland in Cantons (Source: Federal Statistical Office)

City	Muslim Population	% of Muslims in the Canton
Zürich	19'320	23.9%
Basel	13'037	97.9%
Genf	9'638	40.4%
Lausanne	8'835	26.1%
Winterthur	8'281	10.2%
Bern	5'892	17.3%
St. Gallen	5'385	17.0%
Biel	4'093	12.0%
Luzern	3'088	20.9%
Lugano	1'545	24.5%

Table 3: Muslim Population in Largest Cities (Source: Federal Statistical Office)

Nationality	Muslims
Balkan States ¹	131'661
Switzerland	124'284
Turkey	41'070
North Africa ²	12'871
Middle East ³	12'091
Asia	9'907
Subsaharan Africa	8'491
Remaining Europe	4'362
Germany	3'530
Italy	3'208
France	2'592
Portugal	716
Other (no specification)	650
America and Carribean	461
Spain	395
Oceania	(33)
Total Muslims in 2017	356'323

¹ Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia

² Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia

³ Irak, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE, Yemen

Table 4: Nationality of Muslims in Switzerland (cumulative 2013-2017) (Source: Federal Statistical Office)

		Muslims in Switzerland	Muslims in the German Region	Muslims in the French Region	Muslims in the Italian Region
Total		379'748	288'981	84'226	6'326
Gender	Male	202'287	153'635	45'180	3'359
	Female	177'461	135'346	39'046	2'968
Age	15-24	78'805	60'193	17'376	1'191
	25-44	180'699	138'528	39'285	2'786
	45-64	101'851	78'073	23'486	2'033
	65 and up	18'593	14'186	4'079	316
Citizenship	Switzerland	134'619	97'540	34'564	2'440
	EU28 and EFTA	18'534	12'886	5'261	376
	Other European Countries	171'845	143'758	25'636	2'354
	Other Countries	53'505	33'953	18'412	1'111
	Citizenship Unknown	(1'198)	(843)	(354)	X
Migration Status	Swiss Citizen without Migration Background	(7'479)	(4'635)	(2'758)	(85)
	Swiss Citizen with Migration Background	126'719	92'601	31'692	2'355
	Foreign Citizen (First Generation)	219'681	169'341	46'512	3'704
	Foreign Citizen (Second or Higher Generation)	23'525	20'831	2'523	158
	Migration Background Unknown	(23'18)	(15'73)	(7'44)	X
Employment Status	Employed	222'850	177'635	42'300	2'788
	Unemployed	30'254	19'116	10'472	650
	Non-Employed	126'644	92'229	31'454	2'889
Employment Category	Top Management	7'650	6'479	1'076	91
	Freelance and Equivalent Professions	(899)	(479)	(419)	X
	Self-Employed	12'255	8'771	3'240	238
	Academic Professions	10'920	6'633	4'121	159
	Lower- / Middle-Management	45'401	36'436	8'369	571
	Skilled Non-Manual Jobs	35'467	29'136	5'963	350
	Skilled Manual Jobs	22'796	19'739	2'808	235
	Unskilled Employees	49'036	38'318	9'916	774
	Apprenticeship	14'817	11'972	2'649	189
	Unknown	23'589	19'672	3'739	165
	Non-Employed & Unemployed	156'898	111'345	41'926	3'538
Level of Education	Primary School	197'181	149'554	44'020	3'497
	Secondary School	129'422	104'605	23'028	1'716
	University / Higher Vocational Education	53'145	34'822	17'179	1'113

Table 5: Socio-Demographics of Muslims in Switzerland (Source: Federal Statistical Office)

ABOUT THE ICT

Founded in 1996, the International Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT) is one of the leading academic institutes for counter-terrorism in the world, facilitating international cooperation in the global struggle against terrorism. ICT is an independent think tank providing expertise in terrorism, counter-terrorism, homeland security, threat vulnerability and risk assessment, intelligence analysis and national security and defense policy.

ICT is a non-profit organization located at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, Israel which relies exclusively on private donations and revenue from events, projects and programs.