prevex

PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Regional Comparisons

D8 Background study: Cross-regional comparison of 'DOs and DON'Ts' in the EU's PVE Measures: Balkans, Maghreb/ Sahel & Middle East

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List of Acronyms

EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EMYA	Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association
EU	European Union
IcSP	(the EU's) Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IVE	Islamist Violent Extremism
KGB	*Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* (Committee for State Security): the Soviet Union's main security agency from 1954 until 1991 (successor to the NKVD [q.v.])
MENA	the Middle East and North Africa region
MWL	Muslim World League
NKVD	*Narodnyĭ komissariat vnutrennikh del* (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs): the secret police of the Soviet Union from 1934 to 1946
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PREVEX	EU Project: Preventing Violent Extremism in the MENA and the Balkans
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
UAL	United Arab List
UN	United Nations
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VE	Violent Extremism

1. Introduction

The following report presents the research findings of a cross-societal comparison of PREVEX-related regions, with the aim of providing ideas about what has been successful and what has proven detrimental to the EU's preventing violent extremism (PVE) efforts. As per the PREVEX consortium's project architecture, structured comparisons serve as a central pillar for the extrapolation and generation of cross-cutting lessons and policy recommendations concerning PVE. While sporadic, intra-regional, comparative elements are already apparent within three PREVEX regional Policy Briefs – on the Balkans (D5.1), the Maghreb/Sahel (D6.1) and the Middle East (D7.1) – these documents are confined to countries within these respective regions that partly share territorial, societal, and cultural similarities. In contrast, the explicit mandate for the research to be undertaken here under Work Package 8 is to conduct cross-cutting comparisons between these radically different regions – all without losing sight of domestic-specific PVE aspects, the highlighting of which might help to generate ideas for other contexts. The conduct of such cross-regional comparisons is premised upon the methodological prerequisite of being aware, as the comparisons are being conducted, of some wide qualitative differences between the regions compared. The identification of lessons for policymaking will be considerably stronger if one can demonstrate that, despite considerable divergences, certain PVE strategies continue to perform well across the board. The consolidation of such lessons – based on validations from across different cultures, structural contexts, and radically divergent Islamic traditions – provides for an additional measure of confirmation as to their pertinence. The overt attempt of the authors of this study has been to search diligently for such 'across-the-board' lessons.

The report is based on research that was initially amalgamated into four separate background papers, some of which have also been presented at major conferences.[1] In the course of its elaboration, the authors were confronted with the need to conduct further, validating research so as to test and cross-examine their research findings against regional studies that were initially not included within the PREVEX project design. These auxiliary pieces of research, presented in the Annex of this report – concerning Ethiopia and, especially, Israel (given the dramatic recent development of the entry of a declared Islamist party into that country's governing coalition for the first time in its history) – serve as validators to findings by other PREVEX project partners in their respective work packages. This supplementary research also allowed us to venture one step beyond PREVEX's envisaged geographical envelope and to enrich its collective research contribution.

In order to facilitate and simplify its reading, this report is divided into three key parts. Part 2 focuses on **what to do** (affirmatively) in order to promote the EU's PVE efforts. Part 3 focuses on **what not to do** and what ought to be avoided so as not to harm PVE efforts. The Annex provides the auxiliary research mentioned above. The study's conclusion (Part 4) recasts its findings in a succinct manner. It

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[1] Ben-Nun, 'Imported versus Indigenous'.

also provides one key idea for required future research, which the authors feel the EU might wish to positively consider.

2. The 'DOs'

A comparative reading of PREVEX reports D5.1 (Balkans), D6.1 (Maghreb/Sahel), and D7.1 (Middle East), when corroborated against many other PREVEX materials and a wealth of other external sources, reveals one consistent factor contributing to the reduction of IVE, its prevention, and the amelioration of societies that have already been contaminated by it: interventions by advisory bodies, and especially by High Muslim Advisory Councils ('Majlis ash-Shura' – مجلس الشورى). Despite the immense regional, state-structured, 'Madhhab' (referring to the four Sunni Islamic schools of law) and the differences in Islamic heritage between the three regions compared, a key IVE-mitigating factor comes about via the actions undertaken by bodies that engage in consultation – notably (but not exclusively) High Muslim Councils. This is the single lowest common denominator that runs, like a 'red thread', through all the Muslim societies examined by PREVEX's project partners.

As with many issues in the PREVEX Maghreb/Sahel report, it is Morocco that is deemed to have 'developed an ambitions P/CVE agenda, which has set the standard for much of the region' (PREVEX D6.1, p.10). This, in turn, has positively influenced even Mali's highly problematic record – as Morocco has reverted to strengthening local Muslim councils by training imams in the Maliki and Sufi traditions so native to West Africa (PREVEX D6.1, p.9). Work with ministries of Islamic affairs (in both Morocco and Mali), along with the Ulama Councils and the Mohammadian League of Scholars, has had major and long-standing positive consequences, and has even demonstrated the positive ability and potential for cooperation of outsiders with these high clerical authorities.[2] In the Middle East, much the same can be said of the activities of the Al-Azhar Observatory – especially with regard to its curtailing effects over Islamic extremism, as clearly recognized in 2019 by the EU's own counterterrorism coordinator (PREVEX D7.1, p.12).

Perhaps most remarkable, in terms of their efforts to counter Islamic extremism, has been the influence of High Muslim Councils in the Balkans. These have remained steadfast in their faith in the superiority of the local, age-old, Hanafi Ottoman Islamic traditions in this region, as they have insisted on their supremacy over and above any new entry by other non-indigenous Islamic schools – notably, Saudi-backed Hanbali-Wahabi-Salafi ones, also known as 'Para-jamaats' ('parallel communities' – PREVEX D5.1, p.12 n.57). What is most striking in the Balkan case is the way in which a strong state-security apparatus *in combination* with the High Muslim Councils (which continue to insist on the

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[2] See for example the first Regional Conference for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage for Religious Communities (held in Rabat, 3–4 October 2019), organized, with the support of the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, by the American Embassy to Morocco and run by the Ta'aruf ('Knowledge') Research and Training Centre for Interfaith Peacebuilding. See www.culturalheritage.ma/about-us

superiority of their indigenous Hanafi Islamic Balkan tradition) has managed to 'reign in' the hardcore messages of newly arrived Hanbali-Wahabi-Salafis.[3]

Seen through a methodologically inquisitive prism, the existence of such a level of success for any extremism-mitigating measure (in this case, consultation) prompts the immediate question: Why? Why is it that across such divergent regions – with such richly diverse Muslim traditions, and with such different historical trajectories – do Muslim High Councils manage, nevertheless, to perform relatively well (in comparison with other measures) against Islamic extremism? What is it about the act of **consultation**, and councils as bodies promoting such activities, that might explain these recurring successes?

In the following two sub-sections, and before articulating the policy implications that emanate from these parallel findings by all PREVEX partners concerning the power of consultation, two broad possible explanations are provided that help to explain this activity's pivotal role.

2.1 The general power of consultation and councils in Islam – 'Amruhum Shura Baynahum'

The first reason for the success of High Muslim Councils in combating IVE across PREVEX's three designated regions most probably has to do with the simple fact that the principle of consultation ('Shura') is universally recognized as one of the most basic governance principles of any (and all) Muslim societies that can reasonably claim to rest upon true Islamic legal principles ('Sharia'). So central is 'Shura' to Islam that it is virtually the only general governance principle to merit one of the Holy Qur'an's suras being named after it (Sura 42: Consultation – 'Ash-Shura'). The absolute, prerequisite demand for consultation is to be found in Sura 42:38:

> their communal affairs – a consultation among them – وَأَمْرُهُم شُورَىٰ بَيْنَهُم
> Transliterated: 'Amruhum [their affairs: 'am'r – affair in the singular] Shura [a consultation] Baynahum [between them].[4]

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[3] See, for example, the deep report by the Balkan Investigative Research network (BIRN) on this issue, broadcast in a major TV documentary by the TV Justice Channel. *TV Justice Magazine I Episode 107: Bosnian Salafist Preachers Calibrate Message to Growing Audience*, 15 November 2019. www.youtube.com/watch?v=BI3UXMsvmS8

[4] As translated by Muhammad Asad: 'their communal business is to be transacted in consultation among themselves'. Asad, *The Message*, p.746. Similarly, in his masterful study prior to his authorship of Pakistan's modern constitution, Asad translated 'Amruhum Shura Baynahum' as 'their communal business is consultation among themselves'. Sir Abdel Haleem's widely recognized, authoritative new Oxford translation of the Qur'an writes, '... conduct their affairs by mutual consultation'. See Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation*, p.314. The author of these lines prefers Asad's older translation – among other things because of his practical application of this principle as one of the authors of a new constitution for an emerging, modern Islamic state (Pakistan) and due to his promotion of a similar approach when he served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN in 1951–2, as he worked tirelessly in favour of the decolonization of Muslim countries and their transition towards consultatively premised, Sharia-based, good-governance principles.

The moral, religious, and historical power of this Qur'anic 'Nass' can hardly be overstated.[5] When amalgamated with the pattern of behaviour by The Prophet himself, who repeatedly resorted to consultation with his 'Sahaba' (companions), and once this also became the officially designated ruling behaviour of the first four 'Rashidun' ('right-guided') Caliphs, Shura quickly evolved into a Muslim *Suprema Lex*. Notwithstanding its occasional abuse by usurpers, autocratic rulers, and the like, during modern times Shura has remained a foundational principle for many modern Muslim governments.[6] The venerable Ibn Khaldun, being the foremost of all late-medieval Arab scholars (and, some would say, the 'father' of modern sociology) openly alluded to this function of Shura in Islamic societies as stemming from the practice of the early Rashidun – also coupled with the principle that demanded the ruler's humility, in contrast to the pre-Islamic, pagan era of the Jahiliya:

> When Islam appeared on the scene and power was vested in the caliph, the forms of royal authority [e.g. of pre-Islamic traditions] no longer existed … except for advisory and consultative ones … The Prophet used to ask the men around him for advice and to consult them on both general and special (private) matters. In addition, he discussed other very special affairs with Abu Bakr [i.e. the first Rashidun Caliph] … The same relationship as that between Muhammad and Abu Bakr [i.e. consultation] existed between 'Umar and Abu Bakr, and between 'Ali and 'Umar, and 'Uthmin and 'Umar [i.e. all four Rashidun Caliphs].[7]

A lengthy study of the role of consultation in Islam is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to note that the term 'Majlis ash-Shura' is the official title of many parliamentary assemblies of modern Islamic states, such as the Parliaments of Egypt, Pakistan, Bahrain, and Iran ('Majlis ash-Shura Islami' in the case of the last-named state) as well as the Consultative Assemblies of Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar (all countries with king-/sultan-based monarchies). As the renowned historian of Islam, Bernard Lewis, noted,

> [t]he Islamic tradition insists very strongly on … the need for consultation. This is explicitly recommended in the Koran. It is also mentioned very frequently in the traditions of the Prophet. The converse is despotism; in Arabic istibdad … It is regarded

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[5] A 'Nass' is a written, primary divine decree derived directly from a Qur'anic verse, in contrast to other decrees that rely upon either secondary sources (such as Hadith) or upon interpretation. One should note that this 'Nass' concerning the absolute necessity for consultation is strengthened further by a second direct reference to it in the Holy Qur'an at 3:159: '… and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs' (وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَمْر) – Pickthall's translation 1938). Note that the use of the verb 'Shura' (consultation) and the noun 'amr' (affairs of state) is identical here to that of 42:38 ('wa**shawirhum** fee al-**amr**ifa'), thus further enhancing the linguistic consistency (which also engenders a further degree of unequivocalness) of this absolute 'Nass'.

[6] See Asad, *The Principles of State and Government*, p.45.

[7] Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp.200–1. Book I (*Kitab al Ibar*), Ch. 3 'On Dynasties, Royal Authority, the Caliphate, Government Ranks, and all that goes with these things', § 32: 'The ranks of royal and governmental authority and the titles that go with those ranks' n. 450.

as something evil and sinful, and to accuse a ruler of istibdad is practically a call to depose him. [8]

Written as his penultimate contribution in *Foreign Affairs*, four years prior to the outbreak of the so-called 'Arab Spring', one can certainly appreciate Lewis' foresightedness when one considers what happened to Ba'athist Arab states, which typically refrained from applying adequate forms of societal consultation (notably Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Egypt), as opposed to Sharifi monarchies such as Morocco and Jordan that have always maintained a high degree of respect for the principle of Shura-consultation. The resolution of the recent attempted *coup d'état* by Jordanian Prince Hamza – which was achieved remarkably peacefully (when compared with other Middle Eastern upheavals) via a 'consultative process of elders' led by King Abdullah's grand-uncle (and the Hashemite clan's venerated 'elder'), Prince Hassan – speaks for itself.[9]

> **In short:** Within Muslim social environments, the value of consultation is traditionally well respected by the general populace. This derives directly from the Qur'an, as enshrined in the roles of Councils ('Majlis') – be they groups of parliamentary legislators, religious and spiritual bodies, judicial authorities, senior staff councils of armed forces, or economic bodies. The implicit authoritativeness of a decision arrived at by **collective consultation** is always associated with a positive outcome within Muslim societies.

2.2 The power of councils – legitimacy from within as opposed to power from above

As highlighted by PREVEX Report D7.1 regarding PVE strategies in the Middle East, the EU has been confronted with an excruciating dilemma. Through its cooperation with (and, indeed, funding of!) PVE efforts by authoritarian regimes in MENA, these autocratic regimes are further strengthened in their oppressive actions against their own societies – thus betraying the EU's 'normative powers' in the areas of human rights and democratic thinking (PREVEX D7.1, p.7). This conundrum is perhaps most acutely felt in the EU's cooperation with Egypt, whose regime (the 'Egyptian authorities') is accused of having 'little interest in social, economic, or political conditions for radicalization and violence' (PREVEX D7.1, p.13). It is against the backdrop of this dilemma that one must view the emphasis on the need for an enhanced EU focus on supporting, funding, and cooperating with consultative bodies in Muslim societies. For beyond the religious–cultural significance borne by consultation, its crucial importance lies in the fact that it is, after all, the most important **democratic foundation of any Islamic society**.

In one of his last interviews, with Fareed Zakaria on CNN, the late Bernard Lewis explained the vital role that councils and consultation play in Islam:

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[8] Lewis, 'Freedom and Justice'.
[9] On the recent attempted *coup d'état* in Jordan, see Chulov and Safi, 'Phone intercepts'. On Prince Hassan's paramount role in resolving this crisis – to the great benefit of all Jordanians (and some 700,000 Syrian refugees currently residing in that country), and much in line with 'classical' Islamic governance values – see Wilson, 'Prince Hassan's Progress'.

> In the Middle East, and more particularly in Islam, they have their own political traditions and their own cultural traditions and what I think to be very important is that there is a tradition of having bodies in society where **authority comes from within and not from above**. That is the basis of what I would call a 'democratic society' in any meaningful sense of that term.[10]

Over multiple publications and many years of research, Lewis painstakingly unpacked the historical process of how modern Muslim governments in MENA gradually became more and more despotic. While a full exposition of Lewis' arguments is beyond the scope of this policy paper, in a nutshell he argues that this negative development had come about with the onslaught of modernity from the 19th century onwards – and especially with the influence exerted by the legacies of mid-20th-century European fascism. While fascism gradually receded after World War II, the despotic regimes of António Salazar (Portugal) and Francisco Franco (Spain) continued to serve as desirable blueprints for many newly formed MENA states. For the more communist-leaning Ba'ath regimes, Stalinist oppressive state apparatuses were happily adopted.[11] Be it in Pierre Gemayel's Maronite 'Phalanges' (explicitly named after Franco's 1930s 'Falange' forces of the Spanish Civil War) or in the Soviet-leaning Ba'ath parties of Egypt, Syria, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, and Iraq, which modelled their repressive state-surveillance structures after the Soviet NKVD and KGB models, by the 1970s repression had become the 'name of the game' for Middle East regimes.[12] One would be hard pressed not to see the crude similarities between Bashar Assad's current repression of Syria, explicitly backed by Russian armed forces despatched to Latakia by President Vladimir Putin, and his father Hafez Assad's repression and killing of 20,000 Syrians in 27 days in 1982 in Hama – then backed up by Leonid Brezhnev's Soviet regime.[13]

The salience of 'Shura' – or, more precisely, its interpretation as *obligatory* consultation – was crucially highlighted in the UNDP's third Arab Human Development Report on governance in the Arab world.[14] 'The dominant trend in Islamic jurisprudence supports obligatory consultation and freedom' – so wrote the UNDP's Arab and Muslim scholars back in 2004. 'Enlightened Islamic interpretations find that the tools of democracy offer one possible practical arrangement for applying the principle of consultation (al-Shura)'.[15]

At the heart of Islam's insistence upon consultation lies its vision of 'Shura' as God's ordained remedy for weaknesses stemming from human imperfection and fallibility, which often result in errors of judgement. This is especially true with regard to affairs of state ('Amr'), in which leaders'

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[10] Interview of Fareed Zakaria with Bernard Lewis on his CNN programme *GPS*, 2 September 2012, minutes 01:50–02:17. Available at: Bernard Lewis on GPS with Fareed Zakaria - YouTube. Emphasis by current authors.
[11] On the two-pronged influence of fascism and Soviet-style repression over the making of newly formed MENA governments from the 1940s to the 1970s, see 'Modernization and Nazi and Soviet influence' in Lewis, *Faith and Power*, pp.160–2.
[12] On Lebanese political leader Gemayel's modelling of the Phalanges after European fascist movements following his experiences at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, see Fisk, *Pity the Nation*, p.65.
[13] Fisk, 'Freedom, democracy and human rights in Syria'.
[14] United Nations Development Programme, *The Arab Human Development Report 2004*.
[15] Ibid., p.69.

statesmanship errors can result in the mass suffering of entire populations, as opposed to errors committed by individuals whose bad judgement might negatively affect only them or, at most, their immediate family. The higher one rises in the social echelons, the more advantageous the consequences of correct decisions but the more disastrous the consequences of one's errors. This vision of consultation as the prime defence against the fallibility of individual, and especially autocratic, rulers who, through their individual approach to the affairs of state, commit grave errors that harm their collective populations was firmly established by the 'classical' Arabic thinkers. Foremost among these was Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (872–950 AD, died in Damascus), whom Moses Maimonides (the foremost of all Jewish medieval thinkers and the absolute Jewish legal authority to this day) referred to as 'the second teacher' (meaning second only to Aristotle).[16]

In his renowned political treatise, *The Virtuous City* (*al-Madina al-fadila*), Al-Farabi expounded the prevailing logic as to why consultation was so important in government. Overtly borrowing from Plato's *Republic,* he noted that any state requires 'the virtuous [i.e. leaders in statecraft], linguists [scribes, rhetoricians, musicians, poets], assessors [engineers, doctors, accountants, lawyers], warriors [the police and armed forces] and money-makers [merchants, farmers, and purveyors of commodities]'. In theory, said Al-Farabi, all these qualities ought to have amalgamated into a supreme and god-gifted ruler. And this was indeed the case with The Prophet's rule in Medina. Yet, in practice, the rule of Muhammad, being the last of God's prophets, was a 'one-off event' from which human leadership could only (and, indeed, did!) continuously decline. Looking nevertheless to provide for a sound system of Islamic government, Al-Farabi saw the possibility of a group or council of rulers, who could collectively provide for the ruling qualities needed:

> … no human being exists in whom all of these [qualities] have come together. But they do exist dispersed among a group so that one of them gives the goal, the second gives what leads to the goal, the third has excellent persuasion and excellent imaginative evocation, and another the capacity for struggle. So this group all together takes the place of the king, and they are called superior rulers and the possessors of virtues. Their rulership is called the rulership of the virtuous.[17]

Obviously, in order for a state to function properly in this manner, two qualities were required. The first was the idea of collective consultation – of mutual cooperation, coordination, and the updating of information – between the agents and various functionaries of the state. Absent continuous consultation,

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[16] *Alfarabi: The Political Writings*, p.ix. Notably, in a letter to the translator of his *The Guide of the Perplexed* into Hebrew from his native Arabic, Maimonides (the foremost of all Jewish sages) exclaimed, 'I tell you: as for works on logic, one should only study the writings of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi. All his writings are faultlessly excellent. One ought to study and understand them. For he is a great man. Though the works of Ali Ibn Sina [Avicenna] manifest great accuracy and subtle study, they are not as good as the works of Al-Farabi'. See Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, p.lx n.4.

[17] Al-Farabi, *al-Madina al-fadila*, Ch. 28 'on the qualities of the ruler of the virtuous city'. See *Alfarabi: The Political Writings*, p.37 Aphorism #58.

no correct functioning of the state could take place. The second attribute was the notion of meritocracy – that is, that the best-suited individuals be chosen for their respective excellence as per any one of the qualities above. Indeed, this principle of meritocracy became so much a part of Islamic cultures that it famously extended to many non-Muslim servants of the state – be they Janissaries (originally Christians) in the Ottoman Army; Armenian merchants in the service of the Ottoman Sultan for centuries; or, indeed, Jewish physicians such as Maimonides, who served and advised Salah al-Din, the Ayyub ruler, in 12th-century Cairo. At the end of the day, the combination of consultation and meritocracy also imbued Muslim states with qualities of social mobility, most certainly once the rotation of state functionaries between different provinces became standard bureaucratic practice.

The final point as to why consultation has remained so paramount a value for respected Muslim governance has to do with its function as a difference-mitigating and procedural aid once discord or disagreement are at hand. To begin with, disagreement in and of itself – especially when voiced by leaders who genuinely care for their communities – is anything but negative. The Hadith of The Prophet that stated that 'the difference of opinion among the learned within my community [is] a sign of God's mercy' ('ikhtilafu ummati rahma' – إختلافو أمة رحمتون) has long been considered a central tenet of Muslim thought.[18] The way to overcome difference of opinion was asserted by The Prophet himself, who admonished the Muslims to 'follow the largest group' and that '[i]t is your duty to stand by the united community and the majority'.[19] As noted by Muhammad Asad in his introductory study to the drafting of the modern Constitution of Pakistan, 'human ingenuity has not evolved a better method for corporate decisions than the majority principle'.[20] It is through the consecration of the principle of consultation in Islam that a regime also benefits from the attributes of the majority, especially when considering its legislators or judiciaries.

> **In short:** Consultation is the main instrument in Islam that validates the legitimacy of sovereignty and political power as coming from within society, as opposed to having it as a 'descending thesis of government' coming from above. As such, it is the basis *par excellence* for both majority rule in Islam and the management of legitimate differences of opinion, the discussion and 'ironing out' of which often lead to better and more moderated policy choices.

2.3 Application to EU policy

Given its long-standing importance to Islam and its demonstrated success in Morocco, the Balkans, and the Middle East – as per PREVEX's own assessments in D5.1, D6.1, and D7.1, respectively – the EU should significantly increase its participation, support, and cooperation with High Muslim Councils ('Majlis ash-Shura') and other similar bodies with consultative status (for example, Chambers of

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[18] Asad, *The Principles of State and Government*, p.48 n.28.
[19] Ibid., p.50 n.29–30.
[20] Ibid., p.50.

Commerce and professional guilds such as lawyers' Bar Associations and National Medical Associations). It should be noted here that this policy recommendation even applies to the most extreme case of Saudi Arabia, whose Majlis ash-Shura is at the very forefront of deradicalization efforts there.[21] The EU should not shy away from engaging actively with high religious bodies within its neighbouring geographical (and nautical) vicinity, provided that such an engagement is accepted (either officially or, most probably, tacitly) by central regimes. Cooperation with High Muslim Councils will undoubtedly be most welcome in the Balkans and in states that are in line for EU membership – including ones with Muslim majorities (Albania and Kosovo). It will probably be welcomed by some states in the Maghreb/Sahel, and most likely opposed or even blocked by states in MENA. That said, efforts should be made towards a clear and unequivocal, eye-to-eye, respectful dialogue between Europe and these high Muslim bodies.

If and when conducted, such a dialogue should be seen from an EU standpoint as an integral part of the Union's activities in favour of democracy and good-governance – given that by its very nature such an effort aims to increase 'powers from within' Muslim societies. Furthermore, and probably most importantly, if and when it is conducted, such an effort for dialogue, cooperation, and the support of High Muslim Councils should be executed with the highest degree of emotional generosity possible – a generosity that recognizes the time-honoured democratic heritage that these councils represent in the eyes of many Muslims.

3. The 'DON'Ts'

The following section of this report focuses on three negative lessons concerning policy actions that the EU should avoid for the sake of improving, rather than hampering or undercutting, its PVE efforts. Instead of a broad set of such constraints, however, this section begins by distilling, and then reiterating, the key message on 'what not to do' as it emanates from PREVEX Reports D5.1; D6.1; and, especially, D7.1 (Middle East). In line with its central, affirmative policy recommendation in favour of consultation and consultative efforts (Part 2 above), it then draws upon two concrete policy prohibitions that have not been mentioned in other PREVEX reports, and which should be specifically avoided for the sake of increasing the efficacity of the EU's consultation-supportive efforts.

3.1 Avoid the all-out securitization of everything 'Islamic'

If there is one 'red thread' that runs through PREVEX's field reports, it is the pinpointing of the highly contentious EU tendency to securitize much of its approach towards Muslim-majority countries, especially in the Middle East (PREVEX D7.1, pp.5–8). This is coupled with an overt lack of a comprehensive PVE strategy, which in turn has resulted in an uncoordinated approach stemming from 'what the main power players in the region allow' (PREVEX D7.1, p.5). The absence of a coherent

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[21] Farouk and Brown, *Saudi Arabia's Religious Reforms*.

strategy is equally pertinent within the Balkan context (PREVEX D5.1, p.7) – indeed, the EU even lacks a commonly agreed-upon definition of terrorism or VE. Alas, the Union's normative promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law have 'been gradually replaced by a securitization-canted co-operation with key partners' (especially since 2015 – PREVEX D7.1, p.5). The hard proof of this victory for EU securitization logic is evident in the Union's expenditure, with merely 10% of its entire PVE budget being allocated for projects that focus on good governance, democratic development, and sustainability (PREVEX D7.1, p.10). This unbalanced focus on securitization becomes even less convincing given the EU's lack of military resources (in terms of military expenditure and troops on the ground) when compared with the US – especially in the Balkan context (PREVEX D5.1, p.7). Much of the same can be said for the Maghreb/Sahel region, with well over 60% of all project expenditure there being dedicated to 'projects underpinned by a strong securitization narrative' (PREVEX D6.1, p.18).

There seems to be a healthy consensus amongst all PREVEX Consortium regional research outfits that the EU's drive towards a 'securitization of all' approach is negative and counterproductive. This conclusion as to a negative duty to avoid across-the-board securitization, as called for by PREVEX partners, is all well and good provided that one can seriously substantiate a claim for an alternative approach that might yield better results. The EU's shift towards securitization took place as a reaction to the November 2015 bombings in Paris (including the Stade de France and Bataclan Theatre attacks). Given that Islamic terrorism seems not to have abated (and certainly not in France) since then, it is incumbent upon PREVEX partners to muster the resources they have to try to provide an affirmative policy path forward that would complement PREVEX's negative conclusion regarding the EU's securitization of PVE. As a first step towards articulating this EU PVE policy path forward, the authors of this paper have decided to push their research beyond PREVEX's geographical 'envelope' and conduct two pieces of auxiliary research regarding PVE in two countries that have been hit hard by Islamic extremism and that are continuously confronted by vile threats of Islamic terrorism, yet which seemed to have experienced some subsequently positive engagements with their indigenous Islamic communities. These auxiliary studies are extrapolated in the Annex (Ethiopia and Israel), below. A second pillar in this effort, consisting of a feasibility study as to the impacts of the EU's PVE strategies between Paris 2015 and the present, shall be undertaken as a follow-up study (PREVEX D8.2 – forthcoming).

> **In short:** DON'T securitize everything 'Islamic', and avoid viewing everything solely
> through the prism of security-related frameworks.

3.2 Block imported Islamic 'Madhhab' (Wahabism) from entering European spheres

The second 'DON'T' that clearly emerges from PREVEX research, and which is confirmed by a deep and long-standing consensus amongst experts, concerns the **blocking of entry of Hanbali-Wahabism and its interpretations of Islam into European spheres**. This necessity is so obvious – and has been repeated so many times by so many leading experts, including by Bernard Lewis as far back as 2006 – that one wonders why more is not being done to tackle this point.[22] Arguably, it could be related to deep-seated ambiguities that certain Europeans might foster vis-à-vis their own Islamic heritage. That Islam is indigenous to Europe, and has been so for the last 1,400 years (first in Spain and Sicily, later in Eastern Europe and the Balkans) is an undisputed historical fact. Islam's indigeneity to Europe thus long predates the 20th-century arrival of Muslim migrant communities such as Turks in Germany, Algerians in France, or Moroccans in the Netherlands. With PREVEX partners overtly referring to the importance of the tolerance of the Hanafi Madhhab for PVE in the Balkans (PREVEX D5.1, p.3), and the Maliki Madhhab for PVE in the Maghreb/Sahel (PREVEX D6.1, pp.9–10), the call for the curtailment of Hanbali-Wahabism in European spheres emerges as one of the *sine qua non* principles for the successful prevention of IVE.

One possible reason why the calls to block Hanbali-Wahabism from Europe have not succeeded thus far might have to do with its conflation with Hanafi Islam. The simple fact is that European Islam is (and has always been) first and foremost Hanafi in terms of its belonging to one of the four Sunni Islamic legal schools of thought ('Madhhab'). To a lesser extent and since the arrival of North African Muslims in Europe, predominantly after World War II, Europe's Islam has been supplemented by followers of the Maliki Madhhab. Yet what is, and always has been, entirely alien to European Islam is Hanbali-Wahabi Islam – especially in its most extreme and vile form of Salafi-Wahabism. One would be hard pressed to stress this point strongly enough. While Hanafi Islam forms an integral and inseparable part of European history and culture, Hanbali Islam was virtually non-existent on the continent until the last quarter of the 20th century.

As the auxiliary studies to this paper confirm (see Section 5 below), the blocking and even active ousting of Hanbali-Wahabism from Ethiopia (the Islam of which has always been overtly Shafii) and Israel–Palestine (whose Madhhab is 85% Shafii, with the rest Hanafi) has been a highly successful PVE measure. Given the paramount importance of the type of Islamic Madhhab to any given Muslim
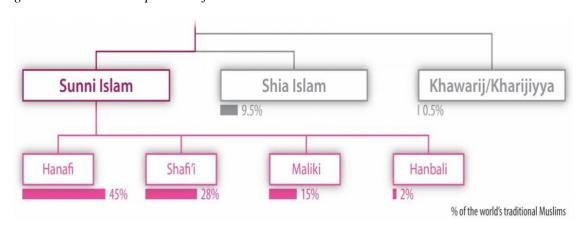
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[22] Having granted the request of Turks in Germany to provide Islamic religious instruction to their children within the country's public-school system, the German authorities refused to allow the use of Turkish textbooks since these had been commissioned by the Turkish Government (which is overtly Hanafi). Instead, Muslim Turkish communities in Germany were coerced to use freely provided Saudi-printed Hanbali textbooks, which has resulted in the Turkish students receiving 'the full Wahabi blast' as opposed to the tolerant form of Turkish Islam. See Lewis, *Faith and Power*, pp.163–4. Germany's formal opening of its own state-funded training programme for imams in 2021 is a commendable and important step in PVE. That said, one wonders why it has taken over 15 years since Bernard Lewis warned against Wahabism in Germany in his Hillsdale College lecture (delivered 16 July 2006, see *Faith and Power*, p.xxi) for the German authorities to appreciate these Wahabi dangers and to take affirmative, legitimate governmental control over what imams learn about Islam in Germany. On the welcome, new state-funded programme to train imams, opening in 2021, see *Agence France Presse*, 'Imams "made in Germany"'.

society's propensity towards IVE, what follows is a short (and unfortunately oversimplified) exploration of what drives Hanbali-Wahabism to be so qualitatively different from the other three Madhhab in Sunni Islam.

When comparing aspects of IVE in the three regions examined by PREVEX – the Balkans, the Middle East and the Maghreb/Sahel – one must take note of a cardinal fact. Broadly speaking, the Muslim populations of all three regions adhere to the four major and distinct schools of thought concerning their Sunni Islamic jurisprudence ('fiqh' – فقه). As the undisputed bedrock of Sunni Islam, its four religious jurisprudential schools of thought, the Madhhab, continue to serve as the fundamental touchstones for all walks of life – especially regarding religious issues that intertwine with the affairs of state. The four great schools of the Sunna – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, and Hanbali – determine the extent to which their followers can religiously accommodate non-Muslims within their geographical spheres. They also determine the extent to which Islamic jurisprudential thought is allowed to widen its readings of its scriptural origins (Qur'an and Hadith) and adapt these ancient religious texts to modern-day challenges.

While, as we have seen above, two regions (the Balkans and the Maghreb/Sahel) each mostly adhere to one distinct Madhhab (the former being overtly Hanafi and the latter distinctly Maliki), the Middle East is characterized by its propensity for fragmented adoption of all four Madhhab – often with more than one Madhhab prevalent within the same state. Iraq, the birthplace of Hanafi Islam during the 7th–8th century, is also home to a strong Shafii following in its northern Kurdish areas (not to mention among its Shia majority). Egypt, with Islamic jurisprudence's 'epicentre' in Al-Azhar, is also split between Hanafi and Shafii stratums. What is important to notice is that only Saudi Arabia, and a minority of the 'Khaleej' (Gulf states) adhere to the most extreme Hanbali-Wahabi Madhhab. Indeed, in the entire Muslim world – from Senegal to Indonesia, which comprises some 1.5 billion Muslims – less than 3% follow the Hanbali Madhhab (see Image 1 and Map 1).
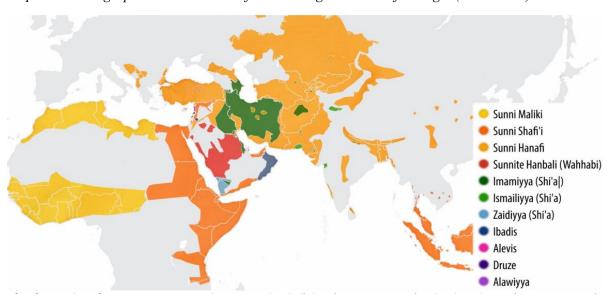
Image 1: The Global Composition of Traditionalist Muslims[23]

% of the world's traditional Muslims

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[23] Immenkamp, *Understanding the branches of Islam*, p. 4.

The importance of Madhhab to current Muslim societies, especially with regard to IVE, simply cannot be overstated. Above and beyond immediate differences of appearance in ritual, which emanate from the variance between schools of thought (such as the placement of the hands during prayer by men), Madhhab itself has a crucial bearing on all walks of life. At the heart of such divergences lies the role of each Madhhab and its sages and sacred traditions in the interpretation of the law of Islam as this emanates from the Qu'ran and from Hadith.

Map 1: The Geographical Distribution of Islamic Legal Schools of Thought ('Maddhab')[24]

Hanafi Islam represents the most versatile and open version of the faith in terms of its tools for textual, legal interpretation. In places where there is no law laid down, or where ancient law requires adaptation, the prevailing attribute of Hanafi jurisprudence is its application of good reasoning coupled with an extensive use of analogy ('qiyas'). The closest resemblance to Hanafi jurisprudence in Western thinking would probably be found in English Common Law, with its 'golden rule' application of the 'common sense' criteria of the 'reasonable individual'. This is then coupled with a rather wide margin of interpretation allocated to Hanafi judges ('Qadi') in comparison with the more restricted margins for judicial nonconformities of the Maliki or Shafiite Madhhab. Back in the day (in 8th-century Arabia), Maliki Islam was most closely associated with the legal traditions and customs of Arabia, which themselves already included the idea of 'ijma' (consensus) whereby the collective agreement of a given body of jurists renders its decisions valid. But it was Shafiite Islam, as articulated by Shafii (Malik Ibn Annas' pupil), that provided for the first time a full-fledged, consistent legal theory for the Sunna.[25]

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[24] Ibid.

[25] For a concise, comprehensive, and very authoritative explanation of the differences between the Madhhab, and their implications, see Khadduri, *War and Peace*, pp.28–38.

Crucially, adaptations of Islamic law via interpretation by reasoning ('ijtihad'), analogy ('qiyas'), or consensus ('ijma') – and the acceptance of disagreements ('ikhtilaf') – are only admissible (to varying degrees) in the 'first' three Madhhab (Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafiite) – with Hanafi Islam being by far the most tolerant and 'softest' of all forms of the Sunna in terms of its interpretative approach to the law. In contrast to all three of these Madhhab, the Hanbali school overtly rejects ijtihad, qiyas, ikhtilaf (difference of opinion), and even the weighty bearing of consensus ('ijma'). The insistence by Hanbali-Wahabi followers upon the overriding and exclusive authority of the 'Salaf' (the pious predecessors: the first three generations of Islam descending from The Prophet), over and above any other source of Islamic reasoning, not only sets them apart from all other Sunni Muslims but also serves as the bedrock for their habitual rejection of all other reasonings *per se*. In many cases, even the mere questioning of the sources that Wahabis claim to validate their version of the so-called 'true traditions' of the Salaf can lead to discord – and, in the worst of cases, to bloodshed.[26]

Of all the issues of concern for the EU regarding PVE, few are more pertinent than the framing of relations between Muslims and non-Muslim when both societies come into mutual contact in geographically mixed or adjacent human habitats. It is here where one sees the crucial importance of Madhhab for the articulation of such relations – from the Muslim perspective. A good place from which to gauge these differences might be the residence of non-Muslims in majority-Muslim countries, and vice versa – of significant Muslim minorities within majority-Christian lands. It is worth noting that states such as Albania or indeed Kosovo (both overtly Hanafi), despite their Muslim majorities, insist on declaring themselves 'multi-confessional' societies.

Beyond Europe, it is Morocco that has set the benchmark in terms of its vision of non-Muslims as indigenous and indispensable parts of its own heritage – above and beyond its being defined as a 'sovereign Muslim State' as rendered in its new constitution, which was validated via referendum and came into force in 2011. Article 2 in the Preamble of the new Constitution of Morocco is a masterfully crafted text of Muslim and non-Muslim coexistence in a land governed by Maliki Islam, whose king's religious authority as head of all believers ('Amir al-Mu'minin') directly derives from his Sharifi lineage of descent from The Prophet. It sees the country's unity as being

> … forged by the convergence of its Arab-Islamist, Berber and Saharan-Hassanic components, nourished and enriched by its African, Andalusian, Hebraic and Mediterranean influences. The pre-eminence accorded to the Muslim religion in the national reference is consistent with the attachment of the Moroccan people to the values of openness, of moderation, of tolerance and of dialog for mutual understanding between all the cultures and the civilizations of the world.[27]
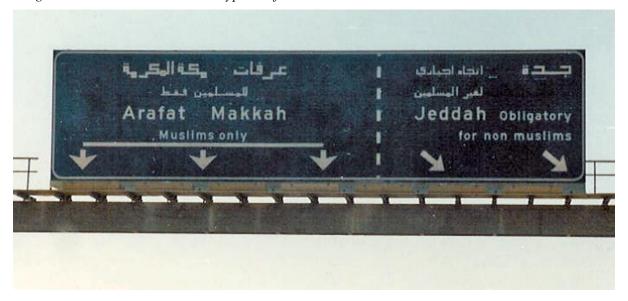
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[26] For an explanation as to how far Hanbali-Wahabism has departed from the long-standing traditions of Hanafi, Maliki, and Shafii Islamic judicial reasonings, see Husain, *The House of Islam*, pp.60–76.

[27] For the text of the 2011 Constitution of Morocco (original in French), see the official website of the Royal Palace, available at www.maroc.ma/en/system/files/documents_page/bo_5964bis_fr_3.pdf. English translation by the Constitution Project at www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011.pdf

As is evident from this Article, non-Muslims – as in Moroccan Jews (the reference being to 'Hebraic' influences) and Christian Spaniards (the reference being to 'Andalusian' and 'Mediterranean' ones) – form an integral part of the Moroccan nation. From this, the reference to 'values of openness, of moderation, of tolerance and of dialog for mutual understanding between all the cultures and the civilizations of the world' is self-explanatory.

In order to understand just how far apart Hanbali-Wahabism stands from attitudes such as those of Morocco or Kosovo, one might wish to consider the Hijaz (i.e. Saudi Arabia) as the holiest of lands for Islam. According to Hanafi jurisprudence, there is absolutely no prohibition on non-Muslims residing in the Hijaz or even entering its holiest sites in Mecca and Medina ('Yathrib') as visitors. Shafiites and Malikis have ruled that only during certain periods of the year (notably Ramadan) should followers of the other Abrahamic faiths (Christians and Jews) be barred from the holy cities.[28]

Image 2: The So-called 'Christian Bypass' of Mecca in Saudi Arabia[29]

Ordinary occidental readers would most probably struggle to identify with any position but that of the Hanafi (who still comprise over 50% of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims) regarding the issue of non-Muslims' residence in the Hijaz. Yet a short exercise in some good-old Islamic analogy ('qiyas') would probably be revealing here. An imaginary wholesale prohibition on the entry of non-Christians into the Vatican City (St Peter's tomb being Christianity's highest *locum sacrum* in line with the Muslim Kaaba in Mecca) during the holy week of Easter ('Semana Santa'), while obviously conservatively retrograde might still be considered within the very broad margins of reason; indeed, this was the exact decree rendered upon the Jews of Rome up until the 18th century. Nonetheless, enforcing a comprehensive prohibition nowadays upon the residence of any non-Christian in Rome would seem repulsive to most.

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[28] Husain, *House of Islam*, p.185.
[29] Image of Junction 80 of the Jeddah–Taif highway, from Lenarz, 'An affront to religious freedom'.

Yet that is exactly what the Hanbali-Wahabis have insisted must apply (and continues to apply to this day – see Image 2) with regard to the entry of non-Muslims into Islam's holy cities in the Hijaz, all year round. Indeed, up until 2004 Saudi Arabia officially excluded the entry of Jews from any country in the world into the kingdom.

Naturally, the application of measures to block (as far as possible) the entry of Hanbali-Wahabism into European spheres should take different forms dependent on the differences in regional specificities between the Balkans, on the one hand, and the Maghreb/Sahel, on the other. Differences in proximity; in the shape of states; in the nature of their sovereignties; and, most importantly, in the fact that Balkan states with Muslim majorities have now entered into EU membership talks as opposed to their counterparts in the Maghreb/Sahel obviously mandate different courses of action for this same policy objective.

> **In short:** DON'T allow the entry of Hanbali-Wahabism into European spheres and insist upon strengthening and supporting the indigenous forms of Islam in each society in proximity of Europe – be they Hanafi traditions in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, Maliki traditions in the Maghreb/Sahel and Egypt, or Shafiite traditions within these areas (notably, in southern Egypt and Palestine).

3.3 Consult 'elders' and avoid funding youth projects that lack proven PVE impact

The final 'DON'T' to emerge from PREVEX's contemporary research concerns the EU's PVE funding priorities, and the Union's tendency to overfund youth programmes at the expense of 'harder' dialogue programmes with more senior members of Muslim societies (for example, High Muslim Councils). This primary focus on youth projects has been the signal trait of the EU's PVE funding priorities in the Middle East and the Maghreb/Sahel, somewhat in contrast to its work in the Balkans. As data on its Middle East expenditure clearly shows, almost half of all the Union's funding of societal-cohesion programmes (45% to be exact) is allocated to youth projects (PREVEX D7.1, pp.8–10, Figure 3). Comparable funding trends are also visible in the EU's work in the Maghreb/Sahel. The crucial problem with financing youth programmes as a means towards PVE is that there is no proven evidence that they have any impact. As PREVEX scholars have observed regarding the EU's funding of youth programmes in Tunisia, while much effort goes into youth education and development as activities supportive of the Union's PVE agenda, 'there is a lack of a convincing theory of change and assessment tools to back up this claim' (PREVEX D6.1, p.15). Similar disappointing conclusions are drawn vis-à-vis the EU's work in Niger (PREVEX D6.1, p.12). Given the Union's sensitive relationships with autocratic regimes in the Middle East, youth programmes have become the 'lowest-common-denominator go-to' that can immediately be agreed on for implementation (PREVEX D7.1, p.10).

In contrast to such youth-focused initiatives, the authors of this report are entirely convinced that 'dialogue programmes' – also known as strategic and consultative 'talk-shops' – are arguably *the*

most important tool to apply in conditions in which faith-based societies are experiencing violent ruptures based on religiously generated ideology. Sceptics, in turn, who scorn so-called 'soft' inter-faith dialogue efforts in favour of 'harder' securitized measures, would do well to seriously consider Europe's own historical record in relation to its hardest of faith-based conflicts: that in Northern Ireland. Nowhere were harder security measures applied more brutally, and with more bloodshed, than in Derry, West Belfast, and County Armagh from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. The resulting physical and mental decimation of Northern Irish communities – and their respective, collective traumas – should remain as a stark warning to all securitization pundits who believe solely in 'hard measures'. Conversely, one should remember the great success story that inter-faith dialogue and strategic 'talk-shops' brought about in the Province from 1991 onwards under efforts within the framework of the Community Relations Council.[30] At the end of the day, it was inter-faith dialogue in that period that laid the groundwork for the 1998 'Good Friday Agreement' – not the other way around. Indeed, the faith-based premises of this treaty are aptly present in the very name.

If much of PVE work is premised upon intra-faith discussions and inter-faith dialogue and 'talk-shops', then the long-standing and commonly accepted successful criteria for 'talk-shops' as such should be equally applied to the EU's PVE efforts in all of its three neighbouring regions: the Balkans, the Maghreb, and the Middle East. The 'golden' rule of all dialogue projects is not *What?* but *Who?* A dialogue's success depends first and foremost on it being conducted between the 'people who matter' – that is, with agents in society whose evolved thinking could affect the grassroots masses. This principle, which was as much derived from the success of Northern Ireland's inter-faith dialogue as it was vindicated by the raw failure of the Israeli–Palestinian Oslo Peace Accord's People 2 People (P2P) Annex, was crystalized in Lederach's societal 'pyramid' (see Image 3), which continues to serve as a key tool for both EU and UN policies.
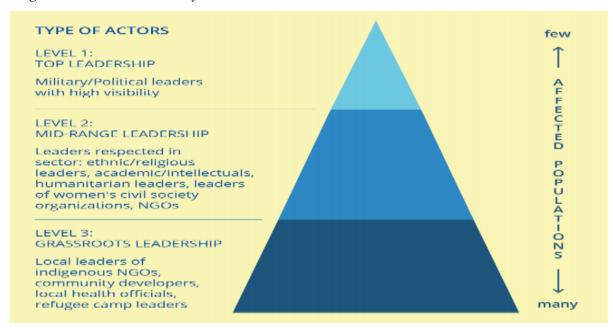
The broadly held convention on 'what works' in such societal efforts under conditions of faith-based tensions, and especially when Level 1 leaderships are blocked from moving forward (as is the case in the Middle East and much of the Maghreb/Sahel), concerns the objective of working with Level 2 mid-leadership echelons, which are the ones most able to instigate societal change. Notably, grassroots efforts are most effective when change has already been instigated at Level 1 or in support of Level 2 efforts aimed at moving forward Level 1 leadership. Seen from this perspective, the EU's above-mentioned 45% focus on youth projects – which, by any standard, must be considered under the rubric of 'grassroots' work, as per Level 3 of Lederach's 'pyramid' – is distinctly misplaced. The EU must try to shift its PVE efforts to the Level 2 tier.

The second point that requires the EU's attention (on what *not* to do) regards the question of to whom one talks *within* Level 2 of Lederach's 'pyramid'.

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[30] Fitzduff, *Beyond Violence*.

Image 3: Lederach's Societal Pyramid[31]

Beyond the explicit admission by EU project partners that their social-cohesion work with young people carries 'no evidence that our approach has any impact on preventing violent extremism' (PREVEX D7.1, p.9) lies the specific characteristics of the youth groups targeted for funding, as explicitly raised by PREVEX researchers:

> A number of the implementing organizations acknowledged that a certain level of social capital, education, and language skill was required [in order] to be recruited and participate in their funding programmes. The question is thus, first, if those most at risk of being radicalized are those actually being targeted by the EU's projects[32]

To put it bluntly, there is a latent sentiment amongst EU implementing partners that the young people targeted by EU programs is not actually radicalized, leading to a condition in which these EU projects largely 'preach to the converted'. Thus, not only is the direction of the EU's PVE efforts under the social-cohesion funds misplaced (being aimed at Lederach's Level 3 rather than its correct target: Level 2) but also, many of the participants in these 45% of efforts (youth projects) are in any case less susceptible to IVE.

The authors of this paper wish to alert readers to the fact that this second type of implementation error, of 'preaching to the converted' in the manner of the societal segments targeted by EU societal-cohesion dialogues and youth projects, was in all probability *the* most crucial misstep committed in the

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[31] See *EU-UNEP Toolbox for Addressing Climate-Fragility Risks*, financed by the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) 2017–2021, p.11. Available from the United Nations Environmental Program Post Conflict Assessment Unit's webpage at postconflict.unep.ch/Climate_Change_and_Security/CFRA_Toolbox.pdf Image 3 adapted from the original outline of this 'pyramid' in Lederach, *Building Peace*, p.39.
[32] PREVEX D7.1, p.9.

implementation of the Oslo Accords P2P efforts between 1993 and 2002.[33] Subsequent research, which compared Northern Ireland's success with Israel–Palestine's failure at the level of inter-faith tension-reduction efforts, has confirmed this point. While in Northern Ireland, a deliberate effort was made to go 'beyond the converted' and explicitly reach out also to religious extremists (such as Unionist leader Ian Paisley at the time), in Israel–Palestine the thought of engaging either Islamists or fanatical Jewish religious settler groups was actively frowned upon by the project implementors.[34]

> **In short:** Instead of focusing EU PVE funding on youth groups (grassroots Level 3), it would be better to reach out to older, mid-level leadership groups that are harder to reach yet whose engagement might yield more PVE impact for the EU.

4. Conclusion

As the research in this report suggests, one major element that could contribute to widening the efficacy of the EU's PVE efforts in MENA and the Balkans would be an enhanced focus on increasing the faculties and potencies of consultation ('Shura') in these areas. As the research conducted by PREVEX partners confirms, this fundamental value, which is universally shared by all Muslim societies, is the single most important antidote to authoritarianism and the strongest force available to bring about what Bernard Lewis termed 'power from within as opposed to power from above'. The residual positive effects of 'Shura' have also been confirmed by the auxiliary research conducted by the authors of this report under Work Package 8 in Ethiopia and in Israel. Consultation, and the efforts to support it, breeds both moderation and an enhanced sense of responsibility of leaderships towards their constituents. Ultimately, it also leads to an enhanced vision of coexistence by Muslims with non-Muslims.

Conversely, the single most detrimental factor working against the EU's PVE efforts concerns Hanbali-Wahabi-Salafism and its entry into European regional spheres. In all the societies examined by PREVEX partners, as well as those observed in the auxiliary research conducted here – without exception(!) – the entry of Wahabi-Salafism implied a distinct potential towards extremization, fundamentalism, and an eventual resort to violence. One simply cannot stress this point strongly enough. The single most important PVE action that the EU can take, for the sake both of its own citizens and those of the Muslim societies in its immediate regional vicinities, would be to block the negative and poisonous influences that this secretive and retrograde Madhhab carries. To be sure, there is not a single Muslim society in the EU's immediate vicinity that indigenously and traditionally adheres to the Hanbali-Wahabi Madhhab – all Europe's direct Islamic neighbours espouse the relatively tolerant

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[33] See the results of the major evaluation of P2P funded by the Ford Foundation and conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) between 2002 and 2004. See also Atieh et al., *Peace in the Middle East*.
[34] Mitchell, *When Peace Fails*.

Hanafi, Maliki, or Shafiite Sunni Madhhab. The EU should redouble its efforts to ensure that things remain this way, and block Hanbali-Wahabi importations.

A final point concerns further required research, as this stems from the findings presented here. One across-the-board pattern that seems to emerge from all PREVEX research concerns the nexus between the sentiment of Muslim indigenousness and the ability of given societies to resist the entry or importation of foreign and non-indigenous Islamic elements. The examples of Morocco, of Ethiopia, and of Palestine are cases in point. By relying heavily on their 'native' Islamic roots and by stressing, and indeed celebrating, their own indigenous Islamic heritages, these societies seem to have largely succeeded in fending off the extremism that has attempted to penetrate them from Hanbali-Wahabi-Salafi elements.

This observation lends itself to a possible PVE hypothesis, which ought to be explored further in subsequent EU research. This hypothesis postulates that societies that are sufficiently confident about their own Islamic indigenous heritage might become more immune to corruption and co-optation by foreign or imported Islamic extremizing elements. In this regard, one interesting research exercise might well be to conduct a serious and extensive mapping exercise across all the EU's immediate Muslim regional vicinities and inquire as to which Islamic and Madhhab elements come to define, articulate, and truly represent each and every one of those Muslim societies. It is the conviction of this report's authors that such a mapping exercise, when conducted in a participatory manner and in consultation ('Shura') with major stakeholders within these respective Muslim societies, might further contribute to the EU's PVE efforts.

Annex. Auxiliary research: Islamism in adjacent non-Muslim societies: Ethiopia and Israel

Derived from three background studies conducted between 2020 and 2021 in the run-up to this report's publication, this Annex presents parts of a longer auxiliary research project providing further validation to this report's main 'DO' (Consultation – 'Shura') and 'DON'T' (Avoid all-out securitization) policy guidelines. The reasoning behind the inclusion here of these extra studies regarding PVE in Ethiopia and Israel is threefold.

First, it provides some relevant lessons for PREVEX's key research mandate – PVE – from two countries that fall squarely within the EU's geographical scope yet which have not been covered as such in research conducted by PREVEX partners. With Palestinian Islamism (notably *within* Israel) absent from PREVEX Report D7.1 and with the Horn of Africa being central to the EU-African Security Cooperation Framework although formally beyond PREVEX's remit,[35] these auxiliary studies provide helpful extra research coverage.

Second, as these auxiliary studies demonstrate, there are vitally important lessons to be learnt from both the Ethiopian and Israeli–Palestinian cases regarding the potential of PVE when states decide to undertake serious efforts towards the inclusion of 'indigenous Islamism', coupled with the deliberate avoidance of 'all-out securitization'.

Third is the lesson of the conduct of security, which emerges from both cases. In tandem with their overt efforts to include loyal Islamist elements within their own societies, both Ethiopia and Israel have taken some of the harshest measures against Islamic terrorism of any country. Both states have repeatedly embarked upon major cross-border operations (and even full-scale wars) against neighbouring Islamic-controlled territories – in Hamas-led Gaza and, in Somalia, against Al-Shabab – when these have threatened their societies. They have not shunned extreme measures such as targeted assassinations and aerial bombardment, and have both resorted to radical internal-security measures – including administrative detention absent court orders, mass electronic surveillance, and even alleged sporadic resort to the usage of interrogation under torture in extreme cases ('ticking-bomb scenarios') – despite the overt international illegality of such measures.

Referencing in brief the background study's methodological sub-chapter, the justification for including the cases of Ethiopia and Israel stems from several structural similarities. Both are majoritarian non-Muslim countries that are home to substantial Muslim minorities. Both border majority-Muslim countries, some of whose leaderships resort to IVE. Both countries have been confronted with armed attacks by state and non-state actors within their territory and on their borders. Both carry the legacies of ancient Abrahamic monotheistic faiths (Judaism for Israel, Ethiopian

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[35] On the inclusion of the Horn of Africa as part of the EU's areas of interest when it comes to the security concerns inherent to PVE, see EU Parliament Resolution A9-0129/2020, *EU-African security cooperation in the Sahel region, West Africa and the Horn of Africa*, adopted 16 September 2020. Available at www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0213_EN.html

Christian Orthodoxy for Ethiopia) that chronologically preceded the arrival of Islam, making their histories laden with both positive and negative attitudes towards the latter. Both countries are vital to Islam's own history – with Ethiopia receiving the first 'Hijra' and Jerusalem being the recognized site of The Prophet's Night Journey (Holy Qur'an Sura 17 – 'Al-Isra' – الإسراء), associating all Muslims with the city. Lastly, both draw from ancient and strong dualistic heritages of Muslim–non-Muslim relations, which alternate between poles of coexistence and conflict.

Ethiopia – Habashi Islam and the onslaught of Saudi Hanbali-Wahabism

Between 1991 and 2013, Ethiopia saw a clash between the representatives of its indigenous 'Habashi' Islam and newly arrived Wahabi clerics who sought to overthrow this long-standing native stratum of Islam in the country.[36] Traditionally housed under the officially recognized auspices of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), Habashi Islam – which is as old as the religion itself – has traditionally always adhered to the Shafiite Madhhab despite Saudi Arabia's geographical proximity and the existence of strong Wahabi influences both to the north in Sudan and, especially, to the south in Somalia. With the fall of Mengistu Haile Mariam's Derg dictatorship in 1991,[37] under whose Marxist rule the open worship of virtually any religion (especially Islam) had been scorned, a genuine flourishing of Islamic thought, education, and positive community life emerged.[38] In tandem with the re-emergence of native Ethiopian 'Habashi' Islamism, a rival fanatic Wahabi-Salafi stratum began to make headway in the country, directly challenging the long-standing authority of the EIASC. The year 1995 saw the first major violent clashes between the Ethiopian Government and the Wahabi Islamists, alongside the attempted murder of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa at the OAU Summit meeting that year – instigated, as it turns out, by Egyptian home-grown militants rather than Sudanese Islamic groups operating across Ethiopia's northern border, as Egypt initially claimed.[39] In a somewhat indiscriminate and sweeping reaction against all Islamic factions, the institutions of the tolerant Ethiopian 'Habashi Islam' as well as those of the Wahabis were forcibly shut down by the Ethiopian security forces, along with much of their vibrant published output.[40] This shutdown also curtailed all activities of the moderate Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association (EMYA), whose key protagonists, Idris Muhammad and Hassan Taju, would later play a vital part in Ethiopia's PVE efforts.[41]

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[36] Østebø and Shemsedin, 'The Intellectualist movement in Ethiopia'.
[37] The Derg was a committee of low-ranking officers and enlisted soldiers that took power following the 1974 overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie's government.
[38] Østebø, 'The Question of Becoming', pp.416–46, at 417.
[39] Ibrahim, 'Egyptian Group Says It Tried to Kill Mubarak'.
[40] Østebø, 'Ethiopian Muslims and the discourse', pp.225–49, at 228. See also Østebø and Shemsedin, 'The Intellectualist movement in Ethiopia', p.3.
[41] Østebø and Shemsedin, 'The Intellectualist movement in Ethiopia', p.4.

With governmental clampdown in the public sphere in full swing, the period from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s saw a shift of the arena of internal Islamic contention to within mosques, into which governmental forces were more reluctant to enter than other premises in the public sphere and which were also not entirely under the control of the EIASC.[42] And it was here, within the mosques, that the two main Ethiopian Islamic traditions – the Al-Ahbash and the Ethiopian–Saudi backed Wahhabiyya – clashed in full force. As Kabha and Erlich pertinently note, *both* strata traced their origins back to the very ancient cradle of Ethiopian Islam – the city of Harar.[43] Backed financially and logistically by the Muslim World League (MWL: the central international Saudi-backed body spreading Wahabism across the Muslim world), the balance seemed to be shifting strongly towards Wahabism – as seen clearly through the strong linguistic push for the adoption of Arabic for prayer and learning rather than local vernacular languages: Amharic and, to a lesser extent, Tigrinya.[44] The final part of the context relevant for this report concerns the period between 9/11 and 2013. During this time, not only did the Al-Ahbash wage a full-scale onslaught against the Wahhabiyya but this was also backed in full by the EIASC and the Ethiopian Government, which was now engaged in an all-out cross-border war with Wahabi-backed Islamic militants in neighbouring Somalia. Indeed, between 2006 and 2009 this war brought about Ethiopia's large-scale military occupation of Somalia (including its capital, Mogadishu).[45] By 2013, the Wahhabiyya had by and large been subjugated in Ethiopia.[46]

The Al-Ahbash's Religious Victory as Derived from Ethiopia's Indigenous Islamic History

In tandem with the Ethiopian Government's clampdown, a crucial factor in bringing about native 'Habashi' Islam's successful overcoming of Wahabi challenges in Ethiopia has to do with Islamic history and relevant legal concepts emanating therefrom – specifically within the Ethiopian context. In all probability, the crucial factor that has contributed perhaps more than anything else to Ethiopia's PVE success was the age-old debt that Islam knowingly owes to Ethiopian Christianity – namely, the 7th-century offer of asylum, protection, and life-saving welcome that the Christian Ethiopian king accorded to Muhammad's first followers upon their flight from persecution from Mecca, across the Red Sea, to Ethiopia in what has been universally referred to as 'the first Hijra'. As is well known, between 615 and 617 AD, as the pagan leadership of Mecca began persecuting Muhammad's followers due to their monotheistic beliefs, a prominent group of The Prophet's 'Sahaba' (companions) fled to Ethiopia. Having received them at the Christian Court of King Ashama (commonly referred to in Arabic as Al-Najashi – his name stemming from the Greek word 'negus': ruler), the Ethiopian king refused the gifted requests from Mecca to turn this group of believers over into the hands of their tormentors. Thereupon,

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[42] Ibid., p.3.

[43] Kabha and Erlich, 'Al-Ahbash and Wahhabiyya', pp.519–38, at 527–30.

[44] Erlich, *Saudi Arabia & Ethiopia*, pp.190–2, noting that '[t]he spread of Arabic in Ethiopia was a major aim of the MWL'.

[45] Erlich, *Islam & Christianity*, Ch. 7 'Ethiopia and Somalia 1991-2009', pp.157–92.

[46] Østebø and Shemsedin, 'The Intellectualist movement in Ethiopia', p.6.

the Najashi granted lands and permanent residence rights and welcome to these first Muslim incomers to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia's asylum and protection of the first Muslims has remained the most powerful force for good in Christian–Muslim relations in the Horn of Africa to this day. Following the Najashi's actions in favour of his followers, The Prophet famously uttered the Hadith, 'Leave the Abyssinians alone, so long as they do not take on the offensive'. As Haggai Erlich, a renowned expert on this issue, stressed in his study for the US Institute for Peace in 1994, '[t]his Hadith became over time a long-enduring legacy'.[47] Indeed, as Majid Khadduri pertinently stressed in the dedicated chapter in his seminal study *War and Peace in the Law of Islam*, Ethiopia represented the only full example of neutrality in terms of the Islamic Law of Nations ('Siyar'), being neither part of the 'Dar al-Islam' (House of Islam) nor part of the 'Dar al-Harb' (House of War) but holding the unique status of 'Dar al-Hiyad' (House of Neutrality).[48]

The EIASC, the Al-Ahbash, Ethiopia's government, and the redeeming power of consultation ('Shura')

A key feature of Habashi Islam's prevailing over the Wahabi challenge between the 1990s and 2013 was its explicit reliance on the heritage inherent to the Najashi's legacy. His distinctly moral act of human hospitality accorded to persecuted refugees, which helped give birth to Islam, stands in stark contrast to any attempt to overthrow the benevolent asylum giver. Indeed, the only real opponents of this narrative are Hanbali-Wahabi extremists who have sought to supplant Ethiopian Islam's coexistence with Christianity with an alternative narrative of supremacy to it – as if Ethiopia was part not of the Dar al-Hiyad but rather of the Dar al-Islam (and, hence, should be governed by Islam either directly or as a tributary). This marginal view – which is largely based on fringe and fictitious Arab traditions, and which stresses an alleged conversion of the Najashi to Islam (which would have rendered Ethiopia a 'Muslim land') – has been widely refuted by eminent scholars such as Sir Ernest Wallis Budge and, especially, Majid Khadduri, not to mention the strident objections that this view has habitually faced from the majority of Ethiopians and the country's Christian Orthodox establishment.[49] But far more importantly, it was the EIASC – Ethiopia's highest 'Shura' council and the supreme Islamic institution of the state – that wholeheartedly endorsed the Najashi's Christian legacy, and vehemently opposed any Islamic-conversion overtones coming from the Wahhabiyya. And to be sure, the EIASC did not adopt any half-hearted or ambiguous terminology. On the contrary, it was clear, crisp, and unequivocal about its vision of Ethiopian Islam, about the latter's indigenousness to Ethiopia,

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[47] Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, p.9.
[48] Khadduri, *War and Peace*, pp.253–8, at 258. For a full exposition of the sources concerning the Najashi's offer of asylum to the early Muslims, see Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Middle East*, pp.3–19.
[49] Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia & Abyssinia*, Vol. I, p.273. See also Khadduri, *War and Peace*, p.256 n.10, which unequivocally accepts Budge's view as to the lack of any conversion to Islam by the Najashi and his bishops.

and about the 'foreignness' and imported nature of the Najashi's Muslim-conversion discourse. Indeed, one of the key steps taken by the EIASC, in cooperation with other native Ethiopian Islamic bodies, was to co-opt Muslim Ethiopian clerics and request their authorship of serious Islamic religious texts that would counter the Wahabi allegations. Key protagonists in this effort were Idris Muhammad and Hassan Taju, whose Ethiopian Muslim Youth Association (EMYA) was closed down by the government in 1995. As extremists from the Wahabi movement in Ethiopia began referring to other Muslims as apostates, and as their usage of the word 'takfir' (apostasy) grew, Taju had – already by 2002 – published his major study refuting the Salafists and demanding a return to the native 'Habashi' Islam.[50] Indeed, an overview of 'Ustaz' (Teacher) Hassan Taju's own career trajectory confirms his role as a key voice for the EIASC. In 2018, he was nominated as Ethiopia's ambassador to Senegal (and Mauritania).[51] Recently, Ambassador Hassan Taju has presented his letters of credence to the Amir of Kuwait, stressing that

> Ethiopia is a country synonymous with justice and freedom from persecution alluding to the country's history of welcoming the Muslim refugees where they got sanctuary, enjoyed peace, security, and freedom of worship during the First Hijra.[52]

In 2021, the Najashi's legacy seems as pertinent as ever – despite the intervening 1,400 years since the so-called 'first Hijra'.

Israel – Palestinian Islamism enters the Israeli government, breaking a 70-year old taboo

In May 2021, as yet another full-scale war unfolded between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, there occurred a watershed moment in Israeli history. For the first time in the Jewish state's 73-year existence, an avowedly Arab party (the United Arab List – UAL), representing Islamic constituents of the Palestinian minority in Israel, officially joined the country's governing coalition. Never before has the state's Jewish electorate in parliament (the 'Knesset') accepted the entry of any Arab party into such a coalition. Moreover, even when such a move was contemplated in the past, the idea was to have left-wing secular (and former communist) Arab parties join centre-left Israeli governments. Prior to 2021, the very idea that a declaratively Islamist party – the ideological 'father' of which was the late Sheikh Abdullah Nimar Darwish (1948–2017), a one-time disciple of the Muslim Brotherhood's founder Hassan al-Banna – would join any Israeli government would have seemed anathema. That it should do

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[50] Terje Østebø, 'The Question of Becoming', p.423. See also Taju, *Takfir: Errors and Corrections*.
[51] See *Official Twitter account of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, 10 November 2109*. Available at twitter.com/mfaethiopia/status/1193469875915767813?lang=en
[52] 'Ambassador Hassen Taju Presents His Letter Of Credence To The Amir Of Kuwait', Fana Broadcasting Corporation, 25 May 2021. Available at
www.fanabc.com/english/ambassador-hassen-taju-presents-his-letter-of-credence-to-the-amir-of-kuwait

so as part of a distinctly right-wing administration – whose openly religious Jewish prime minister (another first in Israel's history) had served previously as the head of the country's settler-movement council in the occupied territories, and who had openly declared the idea of a Palestinian state to be unacceptable – would have seemed absurd.[53]

Further, it was Dr Mansour Abbas – the leader of the UAL in the Knesset, who now serves as the Deputy Minister of Arab Affairs in the Israeli prime minister's office and as chairman of the legislators' Special Committee on Arab Society Affairs – who visited a synagogue in Lod, in central Israel, that had been burnt down during the recent Jewish–Arab clashes that erupted due to Israel's violent actions in Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque.[54] Indeed, the overwhelmingly positive and moderating affect that the UAL has exerted over Israel's governmental policies has recently been confirmed by the country's renewed warming of diplomatic relations with Jordan (discussed below). With such a degree of moderation and the UAL's unwavering push towards Muslim–Jewish coexistence in the Holy Land, and given the vile terrorism launched (and openly advocated) by other Palestinian Islamist organizations (notably Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Gaza), the question naturally arises as to the Arab List's fundamental departure from these Islamist groups. The UAL's absolute insistence on the obligation to pursue peace, and to cooperate and coexist with Israel's Jews while remaining utterly faithful to its Palestinian Islamic world view, seems perplexing to say the least. Yet, a keen study of the UAL's own Islamic rationale, which has stipulated its unequivocal belief in a peaceful vision of Islam, and its insistence on governmental participation as a Muslim minority is revealing. As such, it merits further consideration by this PREVEX study.

Palestinian Islam and the shared Islamic–Jewish Heritage of Jerusalem

Few places in the world speak to all Muslims, both religiously and emotionally, as much as Jerusalem's Haram al-Sharif ('Noble Sanctuary'). With its iconic 1,300-year-old golden and silver domes, suspended over its wide esplanade, Islam's third most sacred shrine is revered by millions. Yet, in its very essence, the Haram is first and foremost *Palestinian*. In as much as Mecca is distinctly identified with the Hashemite Quraysh, Medina with Arabia's first Islamic constitution, Zawiya Nasiriya's Sufism with Morocco's town of Tamegroute in the Dra'a Valley, and Karbala with Hassan's and Hussein's Iraqi Shia, so Jerusalem denotes primarily a Palestinian Islam that is distinctly Shafii in terms of its Sunni Madhhab. Remove Jerusalem from the gaze of Muslims worldwide, and their Islamic identity would still remain intact; one would be hard pressed, however, to imagine the *Palestinian* psyche as in any way divorced from the Haram.[55] Palestinians' attachment to Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem is inextricably

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[53] Lis, 'Israel's Lapid to EU's Top Diplomats'.
[54] 'Israeli forces attack Al-Aqsa protesters'. For Abbas' courageous visit to the burned synagogue in Lod – in the face of harsh, internal Arab criticism of this humane act – see Tov, 'Islamist Leader Faces Ire Over Visit to Burned Synagogue'.
[55] Nusseibeh, *Once Upon A Country*, pp.11–12.

linked to its mention in the Qur'an, in Sura 17 ('Al-Isra' – The Night Journey), where it is referred to as 'the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed' – those blessed surroundings being explicitly and universally recognized as those of the former Jewish Temple.[56] The Al-Aqsa Mosque's construction, directly after the Holy Land's Muslim conquest by Caliph Umar ibn Al-Khattab in 638, is widely accepted as authentic by leading archaeological experts.[57]

In contrast with the 7th century's contemporaneous Christian sources (first amongst these being Bishop Sofronius' account), which describe a bloody and violent Muslim conquest of Christian Byzantine Jerusalem, today's archaeological consensus stresses the Muslim invaders' extreme tolerance in comparison with virtually all other conquests of the Holy Land.[58] What is seen in Islam as Christianity's faulty view of Jesus as a 'son of god' resonated strongly with the Qur'an's 'Jerusalemite' sura, which stressed that God 'has no child nor partner in His rule' (Qur'an 17:111). In contrast, Al-Isra's clear invocation of God's giving of the Torah to Moses, his victory over Pharaoh, and his exodus out of Egypt (including the parting of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptians in it) are all clearly stated .[59] Most important of all, Israel/Palestine was indeed first promised by God to Moses and the Israelites. The four textual references to Israel in Al-Isra;[60] the habitual references to Beit al Muqadas (بيت المقدس – Beit Hamikdash – בית המיקדש) as being always identified with the Jewish temple in Jerusalem; and the long-standing tradition holding that while in Mecca, The Prophet insisted on praying in the direction of Jerusalem before changing that to Mecca when he undertook the Hijra to Medina all attest to Islam's enduring attachment to the Judaic legacy.[61] Indeed, it is this attachment that explains Caliph Umar's renewal of the Jewish presence in Jerusalem after over 500 years of Roman and Byzantine rule, during which Jews were forbidden from residing in the Holy City.[62] Calling upon 70 Jewish families from Tiberias to return to the city and help in the maintenance of the Haram, it was Umar who, as the second Caliph, allowed the construction of the very first synagogue in the city – dated to approximately 638

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[56] See Oxford's new translation of the Qur'an by Sir Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation*, p.175 n. b.

[57] Avni, *The Byzantine–Islamic Transition in Palestine*, pp.132–3 (with all references to the sources there); see also Figure 3.8 on p.133 for an architectural plan of the Haram during this early Islamic period.

[58] Nir Hasson: 'Contrary to their cruel image, the Muslims were in fact tolerant conquerors: A new and all-encompassing archaeological survey uncovers the fact that the conquest of the Holy Land by the Muslims around 640 AD was one of the most calm and enlightened takeovers, in contrast to the habitual historical sources which speak of blood and suffering', in *Haaretz Weekend Science Supplement*, 6 December 2014 [in Hebrew]. Available at www.haaretz.co.il/science/.premium-1.2504709

[59] Al-Isra (Sura 17:2): 'We had also given Moses the Scripture, and made it a guide for the Children of Israel' (Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation*, p.175). On Pharaoh's drowning, see Al-Isra 17:103, stating that in retaliation for the Egyptian king's desire to annihilate Moses and the Israelites, 'We drowned him and those with him' (Ibid., p.181).

[60] For example, Al-Isra 17:104: 'We told the Children of Israel, "Live in the land and when the promise of the Hereafter is fulfilled, We shall bring you to the assembly of all people"' (Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation*, p.181).

[61] Shoemaker, *The Death of a Prophet*, pp: 197-266.

[62] Avni, *The Byzantine–Islamic Transition in Palestine*, p.137: 'Jews had been excluded from permanent residence in Jerusalem in the late Roman period, and this restriction was maintained in the Byzantine period'.

AD, some 500 years after the exile of 132 AD.[63] In short, the historical irony is that it was thanks to Muslim rule that Jews were allowed to return to live and worship in Jerusalem.

Israel's Islamist movement and Abdalla Nimer Darwish's deep legacy of religious tolerance

Much of this Quranic Muslim–Jewish legacy was well known to Sheikh Abdalla Nimer Darwish as he began his long journey towards membership of the 'establishment' and the remarkable growth of the Islamist movement in Israel. The crucial time in this respect was that following the 1967 ('Six-Day') war, and were marked by the outright denial of Palestinians' very existence by Israelis – as famously encapsulated in the words of the then Israeli prime minister, Golda Meir, who stressed to the *Sunday Times* in 1969 that 'there were no such thing as Palestinians … they did not exist'.[64] Entering Nablus' Sharia school that year, and graduating in 1971, Darwish returned from the occupied West Bank to his native Kfar Qasem in Israel and became a teacher there in 1971. All through the 1970s, he gradually widened the circles of Islamism from Kfar Qasem to its surrounding villages and, eventually, across the whole of Israel. Heavily influenced by Sayed Kutab's Muslim Brotherhood writings and their focus on 'Dawa' (the active promotion of the Islamic message), by the late 1970s the Islamist movement in Israel was already a force to be reckoned with.[65] The year 1980 would mark a watershed in the evolvement of Darwish's Islamist thinking. Marginally implicated in a military spin-off organization involving some of his pupils, he was sentenced to three years of imprisonment.

Upon his release from jail in 1983, the entire Israeli Islamist movement embarked on a new path with Darwish as its head. Shifting radically against the use of violence as such, he began to fervently promote the three principles that would later become the hallmarks of his followers in the movement's 'Southern Faction'. These were a strong respect for Israel's law, a strong belief in Islam's transformative message when it is carried forward peacefully ('Slat al Salam': the 'obligatory custom of peace'), and his insistence on active participation in Israel's political institutions – despite their control by the country's Jewish majority. In 1989, under Darwish's leadership, Israel's Islamist party (then still united) participated for the first time in Israeli municipal elections – and won a fair number of mayorships in Arab-Muslim localities.[66] Seven years later, 1996 saw another watershed moment in this Islamist party's history as Darwish decided for the first time to participate in Israel's national elections to the Knesset. Upon the party's subsequent entry into the Israeli Parliament, a serious 'northern' rival grouping led by Darwish's pupils Raed Salah (Mayor of Um al Fahem) and Kamal

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[63] On the formal rehibition of Jews to remain in Jerusalem during the entire Byzantine period, and the erection of the first Synagogue since the exile by the city's first Muslim conquerors see: Avni, *The Byzantine–Islamic Transition in Palestine* p: 137.
[64] Soussi, 'The mixed legacy of Golda Meir'.
[65] Prof. Itzchak Weisman, Editor's introduction in Darwish, *Islam is the Solution*, p.8 [in Hebrew]. English translations of Darwish's sermons corroborated against their Arabic originals (available on the internet) by the authors. All translations into English by the authors.
[66] Ibid., p.11.

Khatib from Kafr Qana (both graduates of the harsh Islamic college in Hebron) broke off from Darwish and established their own Islamist party (the so-called 'Northern Faction'), which refuses to recognize Israel and has, additionally, participated in terrorist attacks.

As painful as this schism was for Darwish, and notwithstanding the endless efforts that he took to try and mend it up to the very last days of his life, this 'parting of the rivers' was fundamentally ideological in character and at heart had to do with the religious, legal status of the land of Israel. From Darwish's Islamist point of view, a holy land such as Palestine could indeed be partitioned between the houses of Islam and of Judaism (a 'revealed' religion in Islam, which professes an identical unity of God) – were that to come about via a treaty. In the event, that treaty took the form of the 1993 Oslo Accords, which Darwish not only supported wholeheartedly but also instructed his members of the Knesset on all occasions to vote in favour of. In that same spirit, Darwish was an ardent supporter of, and took active part in, the 2001 'Geneva Accords' while remaining a stern supporter of the two-state solution until his death. Jews had full rights to their religious sites (especially the Western Wall), provided that they accepted Muslim sovereignty on the Haram.[67] In contrast to this view, Darwish's pupils from the north – Salah and Khatib – refused to accept Jewish sovereignty anywhere in the Holy Land, as they insisted that the only possible form of Muslim–Jewish coexistence that there could be, would be for Jews to accept subjugation under Muslim rule. That perspective eventually led Salah and others to participate in terrorist activities and spend time in Israeli jails on multiple charges regarding infringement of the state's national-security laws.

Darwish's absolute insistence on Islam's message of peace (under his understanding and that of his followers) received ample validation in his sermons and writings. To begin with, there was his relationship with his Shafiite Madhhab, which is a distinct national characteristic of *Palestinian* Islam. Ijtihad (differences of Islamic opinion) and the striving for consensus (ijma) were the bedrocks of his Islamist thinking, which starkly rejected any fanatical, retrograde Hanbali-Wahabi notions related to Salafist stagnation.[68] 'I shall forever recall the sacred words of Shafii who taught us the art of the illustrious dialogue, the constructive exchange of ideas, the instructive debate and learning, insisting that "I shall not argue with any man without wishing that justice be with him"'.[69] To this, one must add the many references to beloved Sufi teachers whom Darwish quoted – something that any Wahabi-Salafi would abhor.[70]

His Islamist movement believed strongly in 'inter-cultural dialogue which the Noble Quran views as an absolute decree when it stated: "Argue with them in the most courteous way"'.[71] In his sermon on Counsel and Consultation ('Shura'), and against the Wahabi-Salafis' fanaticism, Darwish asserted, 'We

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[67] Ibid., p.13.
[68] Ibid., p.17.
[69] Darwish, 'Counsel and Consultation', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.130.
[70] See Darwish's reference to Egyptian Sufi thinker Do al Noun's six principles on ibid., pp.56–7.
[71] Darwish, 'Islam is the Solution', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.41. Darwish is here quoting Qur'an 16:125 (Haleem, *The Qur'an: A new translation*, p.174).

hereby declare before all the extremists … we shall remain humane Muslims, enlightened and law abiding even if that angers you … all those with the sickness of terrorism in their minds shall not divert us from our peaceful ways'.[72] Admitting to his own mistake when, during its early days, his Islamist movement had resorted to violence, Darwish openly confessed that '[d]uring the 1980s we failed in breaking the law and resorting to violence. We did not sufficiently understand the Islamic principles and our emotions were stronger than our intellect. I do not exonerate any one of us from that deficiency'.[73] From this experience, Darwish arrived at his ardent objection to violence and, especially, to Salafist extremism, which leads to terrorism:

> I propose not to fear the Salafists or violent extremism … We, as human, cultured, law abiding citizens, we believe in and in the value of the worthy principles, in the value of human relations and in the absolute sanctity of true peace. If this enlightened way enrages the extremists and the terrorists, then let them go drink sea-water. This is our stance against hostile blood-thirsty terrorists.[74]

Last but not least, there was Darwish's vision of the meaning of democracy under Islam. His Islamist movement's entire struggle was, in his words, aimed at 'achieving its liberty, the liberty of its Palestinian people, and the construction of a democratic 'Shura'-based regime of obligatory consultation'.[75]

Islamist support in government for enhancing Israeli–Jordanian diplomatic relations

Read alongside Darwish's texts, the entry into coalition government of Israel's 'Southern' Islamist movement under the leadership of Dr Mansour Abbas (himself a long-standing close disciple of Sheikh Darwish) seems less perplexing. Indeed, a cross-referencing of Abbas' speech on election night, which opened the evening news and featured his direct Arabic quotations from the Holy Qur'an (followed by his fluent Hebrew translations thereof), reveals the extent to which he has reproduced, almost verbatim, Darwish's vision. His reference to humanity's universal origin – 'out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another' – rekindles Darwish's own quotation of this Qur'anic passage.[76] In his presentation of his own persona as 'a man of the Islamic Movement, … a proud Arab and Muslim, a citizen of the state of Israel', Abbas again used, almost verbatim, Darwish's own definition.[77] While some voices in Israel (mostly from the fanatic Israeli

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[72] Darwish, 'Counsel and Consultation', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.126.
[73] Ibid., p.123.
[74] Ibid., p.129.
[75] Darwish, 'The 'Umma's Unity', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.114.
[76] See 'Text of Mansour Abbas's speech'. See also the speech on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSemTYd-Ahw. For Darwish's reference to Holy Qur'an Surat Al-Hujurat ('The Apartments') 49:13, see Darwish, 'Islam is the Solution', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.47.
[77] Darwish, 'Until We Meet Again', in *Islam is the Solution*, p.142: 'we say openly and clearly, in a sharp manner and in a language which cannot be misinterpreted, and which has no nuance: we are human beings, Muslims, Arabs, Palestinians, who are living in the land of our fathers and our forefathers, the state of Israel.'

religious-settler extreme right) have set out to discredit Abbas' Islamism – claiming that its rhetoric hides other, more violent, intentions – the long-standing consistency of Darwish's and now Abbas' messages put their arguments to scorn. If anything, the issue has been one of Israeli and international security-service failures to heed Darwish's own warning about Wahabi-Salafist extremists. So crude was this Salafi menace to Palestinian Shafii-Sufi Islam that it even threatened to topple Hamas in Gaza as it waged all-out war on that Palestinian militant group.[78]

Meanwhile, Mansour Abbas has not wasted any time. Stressing the right to life of all inhabitants of the Middle East, he has been instrumental in Israel's rapprochement with Jordan following Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's secret visit to King Abdullah's Hashemite palace,[79] and the official follow-up visit by Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid.[80] In turn, and against the backdrop of the acute water shortage afflicting Jordan (partly due to its hosting of some 700,000 Syrian refugees), Israel agreed to more than double its water supply to its drought-threatened eastern neighbour while quadrupling Jordan's free export quota of agricultural produce to the West Bank and Israel – from US$160 million per annum up to $700 million – so as to begin providing agricultural jobs for these Syrians.[81]

Two traits are key to any understanding of Israel's Islamist PVE potential and its implications for PREVEX. The first concerns the role of consultation – 'Shura'. Pursuant to Sheikh Darwish's vision and its reliance on Shura's obligatory status, the UAL exhibits distinct traits of Islamic democratic values in terms of its adherence to the resolutions of its own Shura Council. As much as Mansour Abbas, UAL's leader, desired its entry into the governing coalition, the extent and lengths to which he went to convince the party's Shura Council attests to its democratic functioning. Controlled by Sheikh Hamed Abu Daabas (who is more opposed to participation), Abbas' political manoeuvring within the Shura Council in line with its female vice-chair, Iman Khatib-Yasin, very much attests to its to democratic credentials. The second trait has to do with the UAL's absolutist view on the sanctity of human life – any life, Muslim or otherwise. The lengths to which the party has gone to help mend Israeli–Jordanian relations, which previous Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu harmed, and its insistence on the humanitarian value of Israel's increased water supply to Jordan (in an area where water can signal the difference between life and death) speaks loudly as to the UAL's peaceful vision. The fact that the Israeli Government decided to immediately start pumping the extra water to Jordan rather than waiting for treaty issues to be concluded, despite the fanatical extreme right wing's accusation that the administration was 'selling out' Israel's water for free, only attests to the correctness of this measure.[82] It seems that it was partly due to Abbas' own communications (as a deputy minister in the Israeli prime minister's office) with Jordanian counterparts and Islamic factions there that helped to secure this

[78] Abuheweila and Kershner, 'ISIS Declares War on Hamas'. See also Clarke, 'How Salafism's Rise Threatens Gaza'.
[79] Lis and Khoury, 'Israel's Bennett Secretly Met Jordan's King Abdullah'.
[80] Akour, 'Israeli, Jordanian leaders meet'.
[81] 'Jordan, Israel agree to water deal'.
[82] Kraus, 'At the Expense of Israel'.

immediate Israeli action, rather than waiting out the hot summer pending the resolution of all treaty issues.[83]

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[83] Author's interview, via encrypted Zoom, with confidential Israeli sources, Friday 9 July 2021, 07:30 hours.

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