

## Paper 5 - Terrorism

In society today, it is virtually impossible to avoid the word “terrorism”. No matter which country you are in, on any given day, the news declares that somewhere a “terrorist” is being detained, or a “terror plot” has been uncovered. We live in an age where our children know what terrorism is – where 911 and subsequent attacks are fresh in our minds. This is an age where terrorism and its presence in our everyday lives is becoming the norm. As Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon stated that Terrorism “can affect anyone, anywhere. It targets all ethnic groups, religions, nationalities and civilizations. It attacks humanity itself”<sup>1</sup>. So, as a movement that is called to serve humanity, how do we as The Salvation Army, and as Christians, respond? As the movement whose mandate is to serve “the last, the lost and the least”, is the realm of terrorism and responses to terrorism not one which we have a responsibility to understand? There are some basic points which must be understood in the discussion of terrorism, and of a Christian and Salvation Army response to it.

Acts of terrorism have been taking place since humans began interacting with each other. Arnold Roth, a victim of a terrorist bombing in Israel, says “Terrorism belongs no less to the present and the future to the past”<sup>2</sup>. It is important to note that despite common belief, terrorism is not about the number of victims or the scale of the impact made. Terrorism, as defined by Schmid, is “an anxiety-inspiring method of... violent action, employed by... individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons whereby... the direct targets of violence are not the main targets”<sup>3</sup>. The common misunderstanding that terrorism is about the number of people killed as opposed to the level of anxiety which it invokes can cause society to rank terrorist acts based on the number of fatalities. In reality, the reach of terrorism can (and often does) go far beyond the events of one attack and can invoke terror in people for years to come.

When understood in this way, it becomes clear that, despite recent, more pervasive media attention, terrorism has been an element of life which has been present for a very long time. Jesus himself, through his crucifixion, experienced State Terrorism in a way which set out to invoke fear within the members of society looking on, discouraging them from opposing Ceasar.

There are some basic points which must be understood in the discussion of terrorism, and the Christian’s and The Salvation Army’s response to it.

### 1. Acts of terrorism are not always portrayed truthfully

In understanding the long-reaching history of terrorism, it is important to note

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<sup>1</sup> Ki-Moon, B., Statement to the UN Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008, New York, published in ‘Supporting Victims of Terrorism’ Booklet, United Nations Executive Office of the Secretary-General, New York, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Roth, A., Statement to the UN Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008, New York, published in ‘Supporting Victims of Terrorism’ Booklet, United Nations Executive Office of the Secretary-General, New York, p. 25

<sup>3</sup> Schmid, A., ‘The response problem as a Definition Problem’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, vol. 4, issue 4, 1992, p. 26.

that globalization and developments in technology have made the world a much smaller place. Media in every country now has the capacity to distribute messages across the world in a matter of seconds, making news much more easily accessible for the majority of people in the world. However, this does not mean that every piece of news received is completely truthful and unbiased. Media at all levels can be, and often is, manipulated by governments, stakeholders and politics. As Christians, we must be aware of this and recognize bias and propaganda when it is presented. A failure to do so results in misinformed, confused messages being shared across the world and breeds chaos in what is already a chaotic situation. We must be internationally savvy – aware of what is happening around the world and conscious of the fact that not everything which is presented to us can be believed.

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## 2. Extremist forms of religion often do not represent those religions in their true form

In July 2011, Norwegian, Anders Behring Breivik, a Christian fundamentalist, killed 91 people in an attack on government buildings<sup>4</sup>. Breivik had links to the Norwegian Frp (Foreign Progress Party)<sup>5</sup>, and his manifesto expressed intentions to “seize political and military control of Western European countries and implement a cultural conservative political agenda”. Breivik’s strict Anti-Muslim views appear to be “an attempt to mirror Al Qaeda, exactly in reverse”<sup>6</sup>, said Mr. Thomas Hegghammer, Terrorism Specialist of the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment.

In Kaduna, Nigeria, Christian militant group Akhwat Akwop began their most recent warning letter with “Greetings in the name of our lord and savior Jesus Christ”, ending with “Akwat Akwop reminds all that eternal vigilance in Christ Jesus is the price we pay for our freedom”<sup>7</sup>. The group issues ultimatums to other terrorist groups, stating that if they do not desist from their actions in a specifically stated number of days, they will declare “open season” on and murder members of the opposing groups, in the name of Jesus<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Goodman, D. & Mala, E., ‘91 Dead in Right-Wing Christian Extremist’s Shooting and Bomb Attack’, *The Reader-Supported News*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, <http://www.readersupportednews.org/news-section2/355-europe/6723-91-dead-in-right-wing-christian-extremists-shooting-and-bomb-attack>

<sup>5</sup> Sehgal, U., ‘The Christian Extremist Suspect in Norway’s Massacre’, *The Atlantic Wire*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, <http://www.theatlanticwire.com/global/2011/07/christian-fundamentalist-charged-death-toll-norway-soars-past-90/40321/>

<sup>6</sup> Erlanger, S. & Shane, S., ‘Oslo Suspect wrote of fear of Islam and Plan for war’, *The New York Times*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2011, accessed 19<sup>th</sup> September 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/world/europe/24oslo.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>7</sup> Saharareporters, ‘Christian Militants in Southern Kaduna Threaten Fulani Herdsmen, Give Seven Days Evacuation Notice’, *Sahara Reporters*, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012, <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/christian-militants-southern-kaduna-threaten-fulani-herdsmen-give-seven-days-evacuation-no>

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Akhwat Akwop, published 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012, <http://www.naijapals.com/modules/naijapals/nigeria/topic.111642.0.html>

Disturbingly, these two examples are not isolated cases. Extremist Christian terrorist groups have existed and been in operation for hundreds of years. As Christians, it is saddening and frightening to hear of people who have taken the name of our religion and morphed it into something which can intentionally harm others. Extremist Christianity does not represent the Christianity which many of us follow. This fact is true not only of Christianity, but of other religions also. Yet despite this fact, media and governments regularly misrepresent followers of some religions, implying that those who undertake actions justified by an extremist view represent the entirety of that religion. For example, following the recent release of an Anti-Islam film across the world, protests took place in many cities around the world, some of which became violent. While it is true that these events took place and that the behaviour of some was unacceptable and unjustifiable, it is important that the situation is considered from all points of view, and not simply taken at face value. It is evident that many forms of media used this opportunity to capitalize on pre-existing misunderstandings of the Muslim faith. Again, while this argument is not designed to justify the actions of the violent and extremist individuals, we as Salvationists must be careful not to demonize an entire religion by the acts of some, in the same way that we would hope that others would not demonize our entire religion by the acts of some. We need to be aware of this misrepresentation and ask questions about what we hear not just about Islam, but also about other religions. In accepting biased statements about other religions as fact, we perpetuate a form of hatred and exclusion against which we as Christians are fighting.

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### 3. Be prepared

It is vital that, as an organization which exists in 124 countries, we as The Salvation Army are prepared for the fact that we could easily become the target of certain terrorist acts. As an organization which prides itself and operates on the basis that we are visible and present in society, we are susceptible to dangers which we have, thankfully, not yet experienced on a large scale. As individuals and leaders of Corps and centers, it is our responsibility to be aware of the dangers which could encroach upon us, as well as to remain informed about what is occurring around the world. The Salvation Army must take a more internationally strategic, proactive approach to the possibility of becoming a target of terrorist action and this approach must be enforced on an international scale to ensure the safety of our troops.

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### 4. Be prepared to help

The Salvation Army across the world is known for its ability to react to disasters, including terrorist attacks, in a timely and effective manner. Examples of this include the organization's response to the 911 Terror Attacks in 2001, following which The Salvation Army arrived at the New York scene within half an hour of the first plane hitting the Twin Towers<sup>9</sup>. The Salvation

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<sup>9</sup> The Milwaukee Courier, 'Ten Years Later: The Salvation Army's response to the 911 Attacks', *The Milwaukee Courier*, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2011, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012,

Army provided both short and long-term assistance to survivors and victims' families who were at the attack scenes in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, and served over 59,000 in a long-term assistance capacity<sup>10</sup>. Similarly, when a Bali nightclub was bombed in October 2002, The Salvation Army was immediately on hand, providing both short and long-term assistance to victims and their families<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, Salvationists were available in the airports of nearby countries to counsel survivors who had been vacationing in Bali<sup>12</sup> upon their return.

The Salvation Army is capable of providing such services in such an immediate fashion because of the local nature of our Corps and Centers. While many aid organizations require invitations into disaster sites following some form of attack, The Salvation Army is often already present in that community, and therefore does not require access to be granted. As The Salvation Army at large, we must be prepared to listen to those local centers, as no-one is better equipped to respond than those who know the area, the people and the context.

There is much still to be done in regards to assistance to victims of terrorism. In 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon stated that "the needs of victims of terrorism have for far too long gone unrecognized and unmet"<sup>13</sup>, and in an effort to rectify this, invited terrorism experts, governments and civil society to take part in the Secretary-General's Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism<sup>14</sup>. At this event, Secretary-General Moon called on the international community, and specifically civil society (of which The Salvation Army is a part) to "carry these discussions forward in order to build adequate systems of support and solidarity with victims of terrorism"<sup>15</sup>. We as The Salvation Army must continue to take part in these discussions both on an international and a local level as the people whom this issue affects are the very people whom we are called to serve. To minister to peoples souls while ignoring this very real element of their lives is not only ignorant, but has the ability to negate any other work we do with them. Discussions of the issue of terrorism can no longer be something that we shy away from – we must look for answers to the difficult questions and be willing to share these answers with those with whom we come into contact.

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The Salvation Army must take a big-picture, proactive approach (as explored in Paper 2 of this series) to preventing terrorism to the best of our ability. In recent days, The United Nations has recognised the importance of engaging

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<http://milwaukeecourieronline.com/index.php/2011/09/10/ten-years-later-the-salvation-armys-response-to-the-911-attacks/>

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> The Bali Advertiser, 'Where the money went', *The Bali Advertiser*, 2003, accessed 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012, <http://www.baliadvertiser.biz/articles/greenspeak/2003/money.html>

<sup>12</sup> Kim, S., 'Bali seen as another 911', *Disaster News Network*, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2002, accessed 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012, <http://www.disasternews.net/news/article.php?articleid=3017&printthis=1>

<sup>13</sup> Ki-Moon, B., *op. cit.*, p. 1

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* p. 1

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. ii

civil society (of which The Salvation Army is a part) in the prevention of terrorist acts, and is encouraging Non-Government Organizations to assist where possible through NGO-Public-International Community Partnerships<sup>16</sup>. As a truly multi-national organization, we have the capacity to engage in a very practical and significant way – however we must first raise our hand in order to be a part of this movement.

Terrorism is an arena in which The Salvation Army can and must serve the last, the lost and the least. In order to do that in the most effective manner, we must be strategic about both the dangers which a terrorism-savvy world can present to us, and the way in which we will serve those who are affected by terrorist acts. The Salvation Army, like any Army, needs a soldiery who is informed, ready and willing to act in any situation. We need a soldiery who is prepared to think ahead of time, to plan and to act with vigour and passion. We need thinking Salvationists.

#### **So what can I do?...**

- Stay up to date with current world issues. Each day, read a reputable news source from front to back, or subscribe to an email update that will send you an email each morning with summaries of current issues. Foreign Policy, CNN and Stratfor are good examples of these.
- Speak to your Divisional or Territorial Emergency Services Department and ask them how your area reacts to emergency events. Discuss with them the best way in which you can assist both during emergency-time, and non-emergency times.
- Engage in discussion on issues that you don't know about. Listen to the various points of view, ask questions and keep an open mind.
- Speak to leadership in your Division or Territory about how they are prepared for acts of terrorism. Some territories implement Emergency Awareness Systems. The Salvation Army may already be working towards the same goal; in which case, come alongside those already working and see what you have to offer.
- Write to Political leaders – challenging, encouraging and questioning their policies and actions if you feel that such actions are necessary.

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<sup>16</sup> The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, 'Countering Terrorism Financing' Event, held at The United Nations Headquarters, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012.