

**Special meeting of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee on  
“Using of Information and Communications Technology for Counter  
Messaging Purposes”**

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A Speech Delivered**

**By:  
Dr. Mahmoud Nagah Ahmad Khalaf  
Al-Azhar Observer in Foreign Languages**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk to you today.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Terrorism is one of the most awful disasters striking the world nowadays. Its negative and damaging consequences befall most of the world’s nations and peoples irrespective of their religions, ethnicities, races, or nationalities. It is at that point that I can quote part of Al-Azhar Grand Imam’s speech delivered to the Opening Session of the Muslim Council of Elders in which he has emphasized “that terrorism is not the outcome of any heavenly-revealed religion and that terrorists today mistakenly believe that terrorism is a philosophy of life for the sake of which death and suicide become something easy.” That is why we find terrorists today, in fulfillment of their elusive and misleading goals, efficiently making use of all the advanced means of information and Communications Technology including the Internet and the Social Media Websites to lure youth into their traps.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Internet and the Social Media Websites are the most widely spread means used by the terrorists groups to transmit their messages and to recruit youth and encourage them to adopt their misguided and deviant thoughts and ideologies. It is noteworthy to mention that many experts believe that the Internet and (the Social Media Websites) are in many ways ideal arenas for activity by terrorist group.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Here arises a very important question, that is, “How can we combat terrorism and violence through the ICTs?”

Please, allow me to offer answer to this question in light of the very important initiative of Al-Azhar Observer in Foreign Languages, established in 2015, as practical attempt to counter messaging for terrorist purposes.

Firmly believing that ideas cannot be countered except by ideas and that ideologies cannot be countered except by ideologies, Al-Azhar Institution in Egypt decided to establish the Observer for the sake of countering messaging for terrorist purposes. I believe that this Observer is one of the most useful instruments in this context. It is a multi-lingual electronic unit in nine foreign languages, namely; English, French, German, Spanish, Urdu, Persian, Chinese, Turkey, and African Languages.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Al-Azhar Observer carries out its due mission of countering messaging for terrorist purposes at different levels, as follows: -

- 1- Tracking all the news of the terrorist groups which is electronically published, locally and internationally, including (TV channels, news, websites, etc.);

- 2- Monitoring the latest issues and publications of the international research and academic centers concerned with the extremist groups and movements;
- 3- Following up the statements and publications of the terrorist groups such as ISIS's *Dabiq*, *Rumyah* (both published in English), *Al-Waqar* and *Al-Naba'a* (both published in Arabic), *Al-Shabab's Amka*; *Al-Nusra Front's Al-Resalah*, etc.,
- 4- Answering all of these allegations and republishing them electronically on the Facebook, Twitter and other electronic websites and applications; and
- 5- Launching Electronic Awareness Campaigns in different languages to protect youths from falling prey to the deviant thoughts.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In fulfillment of its mission of countering messaging purposes, Al-Azhar Observer made detailed and comprehensive analysis for most of the magazines and articles published by terrorist groups and organizations.

The following list includes the primary issues addressed by the Observer, including but not limited to, *Takfir* (declaring others disbelievers); *Al-Khilafah Al-Islamiyyah* (Islamic Caliphate); *Sabi Al-Nisaa'* (Slavery of Women); *Al-Riddah* (Apostasy); and *Dar Al-Islam* and *Dar Al-Harb* (The Abode of Islam and the Abode of War).

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Here emerges the key role of Al-Azhar Observer in countering these terrorist messages. Having answered all of these terrorist allegations and misconceptions, the Observer re-transmits them electronically in the nine different languages. In order to get its messages across, the Observer takes into account the fact that answers and replies should be made simple, concise, precise and to the point in order to ensure that the youth will easily follow, remember and understand them.

As you know that, the youths might not be concerned with reading detailed academic articles.

One of the most important activities of the Observer is that it had launched two Outreach Campaigns for the sake of countering messaging purposes, i.e. the first was under the title of “*They Allege & We Reply*” and it was designated to correcting the terrorists’ misguided and deviant thoughts and ideas, while the second was under the title of the “*Concept of Jihad*” and it addressed the misunderstood thoughts propagated by terrorist groups and organizations on the concept of Jihad.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

In fact, both campaigns launched by the Observer have gained a widespread popularity among social media outlets and wide press coverage when launched. They were concurrently launched on the Observer’s website and Facebook and Twitter pages. But allow me, to shed more light on the second campaign which focuses on correcting the *Concept of Jihad* as a representative example. The primary purpose of this campaign was to present the correct concept of Jihad to all people, with special focus on youth.

Allow me please to offer you an example of how this work functions and performs. ISIS’ terrorists falsely claim that Muslims are allowed to destroy Churches. The answer offered by the Observer came as follows:

**“Prophet Muhammad granted the Christians of *Najran* the right to keep their places of worship, such as chapels and churches, and allowed them to venerate their priests and monks. He (PBUH) stated in his covenant to them that no church of theirs shall be demolished not a clergyman of theirs be religiously abused.”**

## **Ladies and gentlemen,**

In conclusion, the Observer, based on considerable experience, suggests the following points as the best solutions for countering messaging for terrorist purposes: -

- Furthering cooperation and exchanging information among international governments and bodies concerned with this topic
- Passing laws and legislations by means of which authorities of the Internet and the Social Media Websites can monitor any terrorist website and refer it to authorities in charge, taking into account the fact that the interest of the entire society is to be given precedence to that of the individual
- Holding regular meetings to which youths of different cultures and religions are invited for the sake of exchanging viewpoints on the best measures to be taken for combating all different kinds of terrorism.
- Launching international electronic outreach campaigns with the aim of answering all the allegations of the terrorist groups and organizations