



THE SOUFAN CENTER
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

2024



The Soufan Center is an independent non-profit center offering research, analysis, and strategic dialogue on global security challenges and foreign policy issues.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER	4
II.	ABOUT THE CENTER	6
III.	RESEARCH AND INTEL BRIEFS	8
IV.	TSC PROJECTS	14
V.	TSC RESOURCES	16
VI.	TSC EVENTS	18
VII.	GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM 2024	22
VIII.	GLOBAL SUMMIT ON TERRORISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE 2024	26
IX.	POLICY ENGAGEMENT: IN THE UNITED STATES	30
X.	POLICY ENGAGEMENT: GLOBAL	32
XI.	ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT	34
XII.	IN THE NEWS	36
XIII.	TSC TEAM	38
XIV.	TSC BOARD	39

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Ali Soufan, Founder, The Soufan Center

This year ends with the United States, along with many around the world, preparing for a change in administration. A second Donald Trump presidency will contend with an international order that is more fragmented and uncertain in its trajectory. Conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, and Sudan continued without resolution in 2024—millions of civilians continue to suffer amidst brutal fighting and attacks. The international system still faces a multitude of stressors from great power rivalry, violent non-state actors, energy and supply chain disruptions, emerging technologies, and climate change.

Our research over 2024 explored these major trends. The future relationship between the U.S. and China—and how competition and cooperation will impact the broader international order—was a topic our team studied, noting that few states will align all their interests in favor of one direction or another vis-à-vis U.S.-China. We also explored the complicated second-order effects of conflict, with research looking at how the attacks of October 7, 2023, accelerated hate and extremism in a range of national contexts. And we continued our work looking at how illicit actors target cultural heritage for both political and financial gain.

Our team is proud to publish each day an analysis that helps our readership better understand today's complex geopolitical landscape. Through 246 daily IntelBriefs we covered topics shedding light on themes and trends from across the world. Our pieces in 2024 covered the developments from a year filled with global elections—and subsequent election interference and other efforts to erode public trust, especially in the West. Our briefs followed the colossal developments in the Middle East, where the regime of Bashar Al-Assad fell in Syria, where Iran lost considerable influence as its "Axis of Resistance" was dismantled, and where a range of outside powers now vie for influence in a shifting region. We also kept a close eye on diverse topics, including domestic terrorism trends, the misuse of emerging technologies, and efforts to counter hostage-taking in all its forms.

This year was an especially historic one for democracy as 2 billion people went to the polls across the world. Our team worked to keep our readership informed of these momentous elections, launching our new Global Elections Outlooks with analysis and a special look at the security and foreign policy impacts of this historic year. This year was also an important one to watch closely the actions of a range of non-state actors, some of whom have been able to challenge the power of nation states and push back against international norms. Our Violent Non-State Actor Snapshots delve into some of these groups, reminding our readers to keep a close eye on the motivations and aspirations of a diverse range of sub-state actors. Our other projects and resources enhanced an understanding of today's global far-right, the enduring challenges from terrorism, and efforts to prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in conflict.

Ultimately, the host of challenges we explored this year through our research and projects are shared challenges faced across the international community, so our team was honored to convene several global gatherings and events. In May, our sixth annual Global Security Forum brought together over 1,000 participants in Doha for a dialogue on a range of themes shaped by strategic competition and the complexities of interdependence. Our annual convening welcomed heads of state, alongside speakers and attendees from governments, universities, policy centers, the private-sector, and media organizations. In September in New York City, we launched the inaugural Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence, a new annual initiative that seeks to address the "failure of imagination" identified by the 9/11 Commission as a key factor in the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We look forward to welcoming guests again as we continue these important conversations in the years ahead.

The Soufan Center's achievements over the year were all made possible because of the expertise and dedication of our staff and fellows—under the guidance of our Board of Directors. So, as we present our Annual Report for 2024, I end by reflecting on the hard work of the TSC team at the heart of our research, projects, events, and extensive media engagements. I also continue to sincerely thank all our readers, donors, and supporters for another year of trust, support, and friendship.

With all my appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Soufan".

Ali Soufan
Founder
The Soufan Center

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Soufan Center (TSC) is an independent non-profit organization offering research, analysis, and strategic dialogue on foreign policy challenges with a particular focus on global security, conflict prevention and resolution, and the rule of law. Our work is underpinned by an emphasis on prevention, mitigation, and a recognition that human rights and human security perspectives are critical to credible, effective, and sustainable solutions. As a bipartisan organization, TSC fills a niche role by producing objective and innovative analyses and recommendations that shape strategic policy and dialogue and equip governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to act effectively.



2024: Year in Review

530K+ Our website received over **530,000+ page views**

3 We released **3 research publications**

246 We published **246 IntelBriefs**, which received over **380,000+ page views**

6 We hosted 6 events, including the flagship **2024 Global Security Forum** and the inaugural **2024 Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence**.

1700+
We welcomed over 1,700+ in-person attendees at events hosted across the **United States, the United Kingdom, and Qatar**

125K+
Our event streams and recordings received over **125,000+ views**

6000+
Our team published **38 opinion and commentary pieces**. TSC's research, resources, events, and experts received over **6,000+ media mentions**

OUR MISSION

The Soufan Center's mission is to present key decisionmakers and stakeholders – governments, international organizations, the private sector, media, and civil society – with the critical information, analyses, and recommendations needed to prevent and respond to global security challenges.

OUR WORK

The Soufan Center undertakes research and initiatives that cover a broad spectrum of global security threats including armed conflict, terrorism, illicit actors, and geopolitical dynamics, including the impacts on civil society, humanitarian action, and the rule of law. Through our daily IntelBrief, TSC reaches a wide international audience of policymakers, academics, and practitioners with a nuanced and in-depth assessment of important stories that shape our security environment. Through our Research, we provide in-depth analysis and action-oriented recommendations for key actors making policy and on the ground. Our Events allow us to reach a unique global network and diverse audiences to drive changes in policy and practice. Our Projects aim to amplify voices and perspectives from the field and build the capacities and networks critical to delivering comprehensive and effective responses to security challenges. Working closely with a wide range of Media, we are able to share our findings, analyses, and recommendations with an unparalleled audience.

OUR HISTORY

Founded in 2017 by former FBI special agent Ali Soufan, The Soufan Center is an independent, non-partisan, and registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our Team is strengthened by diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, including experience in academia, federal, state, and local government; international organizations; law enforcement; and the military. The Soufan Center organizes the Global Security Forum, an annual international conference bringing together a dynamic group of high level government officials, senior experts, and prominent journalists for innovative exchanges on some of the most pressing international challenges and critical opportunities to prevent and resolve them.

RESEARCH AND INTEL BRIEFS

RESEARCH

The Soufan Center offers original research on leading foreign policy and security challenges. In 2024, our team published three research publications: a TSC Issue Brief on the protection of cultural heritage from illicit actors, a TSC Insight on great power competition, and a TSC Special Report on how the attacks of October 7, 2023, impacted several Western countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy.

IDENTITIES DESTROYED, HISTORIES REVISED: THE TARGETING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND SOFT TARGETS BY ILLICIT ACTORS

January 2024

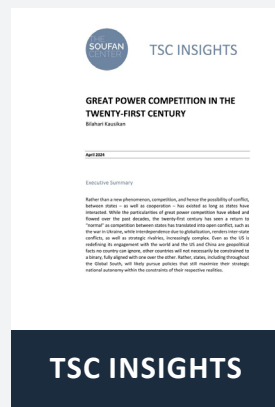
This Issue Brief authored by Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender builds on discussions with experts and practitioners on the protection of cultural heritage and soft targets—an ongoing area of research at The Soufan Center. The targeting of cultural heritage is often linked to other human rights abuses and war crimes. As such, this Issue Brief is part of a broader effort to illuminate and mitigate challenges related to accountability and transitional justice efforts. The Issue Brief aims to address why and how illicit actors target and destroy cultural heritage, examining the financial incentives behind the act and its use for narrative validation and to subjugate communities; the challenges and tensions in protecting cultural heritage and soft targets; responses and good practices to counter this targeting and destruction; and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to strengthen prevention and protection efforts.



GREAT POWER COMPETITION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

April 2024

Written by Singaporean academic, diplomat, and former civil servant Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan, this TSC Insight offers a look at great power competition from a twenty-first century perspective. Rather than viewing great power competition as a new phenomenon, Mr. Kausikan explores how both competition and cooperation have existed for as long as states have interacted. He argues that while the particularities of great power competition have ebbed and flowed over the past decades, the twenty-first century has seen a return to “normal” as competition between states has translated into open conflict, such as the war in Ukraine, while interdependence due to globalization renders interstate conflicts, as well as strategic rivalries, increasingly complex. The TSC Insight highlights that even as the U.S. is redefining its engagement with the world and the U.S. and China are geopolitical facts no country can ignore, other countries will not necessarily be constrained to a binary, fully aligned with one over the other. Rather, states, including many throughout the Global South, will likely pursue policies that still maximize their strategic national autonomy within the constraints of their respective realities.



ACCELERATING HATE: THE IMPACT OF OCTOBER 7 ON TERRORISM AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE WEST

September 2024

The horrific attacks by Hamas on October 7, 2023, fundamentally shifted the security posture of the Middle East, while also having severe humanitarian consequences and ripple effects in countries throughout the globe, including many in the West. This TSC Special Report, co-authored by Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke, Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender, Research Fellow Ms. Clara Broekaert, and Research Fellow Mr. Joseph Shelzi, generously sponsored by the Airey Neave Trust, explored how October 7 impacted several Western countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. The report notes that the events of October 7 have altered security-related challenges, focusing on the impact that October 7 has had on the terrorism threat landscape, demonstrating the spillover effects from the ongoing conflict in Gaza, which has exacerbated existing tensions in many Western countries.



The report explores how extremists of various ideologies have used the events of October 7 to propagate their ideas. The report highlights how terrorists and violent extremists across the ideological spectrum – quite effectively – capitalize on horrific events such as October 7 and the war in Gaza to further their own agendas, including radicalizing individuals, recruiting new members, targeting specific communities, and mainstreaming propaganda. The report concludes that although there has not been a large-scale terrorist attack in the West following the events of October 7, the event has had a vast impact on the terrorism threat landscape beyond the Middle East. Terrorists and violent extremists from across the ideological spectrum – from Salafijihadists to white supremacists to far-left extremists – have utilized the conflict to spread their propaganda, radicalize, recruit new members, and, even if not overtly, inspire violent attacks. Beyond violent incidents and attempted attacks, the events of October 7 and the Israel-Hamas war have also elevated general societal tensions, with extremists and terrorists utilizing the conflict to accelerate polarization, accomplish their own agendas, and mainstream their ideologies. These dynamics, coupled with the war and its likely long-lasting impact, will both exacerbate pre-existing challenges, and create new ones for law enforcement and counterterrorism practitioners.

The Soufan Center publishes hundreds of briefs each year, offering audiences a daily digest of a complex security or geopolitical topic shaping regional and international affairs. In 2024, TSC published 246 daily IntelBriefs, each focusing on a major theme, issue, or trend in global security and international affairs. Our IntelBriefs had an online readership of 380K page views in 2024. This year's IntelBriefs covered a vast range of topics, from developments in the United States, Israel, Palestine, Syria, China, Russia, Iran, Türkiye, sub-Saharan Africa, and Europe—to thematic issues such as global terrorism, domestic extremism, election interference, international migration, gender and security, and global hostage-taking.

2024 marked a year filled with global elections, with a number of decisive elections such as the U.S. presidential election, India's general election, the United Kingdom's general election, and Romania's presidential election, among many others. Global election trends in 2024 highlight a mix of continuity and change, with democracies worldwide facing challenges and opportunities. Rising voter turnout in many regions reflects increasing public engagement, driven by pressing issues like climate change, economic instability, and social justice. However, polarization remains a significant theme, with populist leaders retaining influence in some nations while others see a resurgence of centrist or progressive coalitions. International observers note growing emphasis on election integrity, as transparency and fair practices are key to maintaining public trust amid heightened scrutiny.

In line with global elections, interference by state actors like Russia, China, and Iran have employed sophisticated tactics to sway outcomes and undermine democratic processes in various elections such as the U.S. election, Romanian

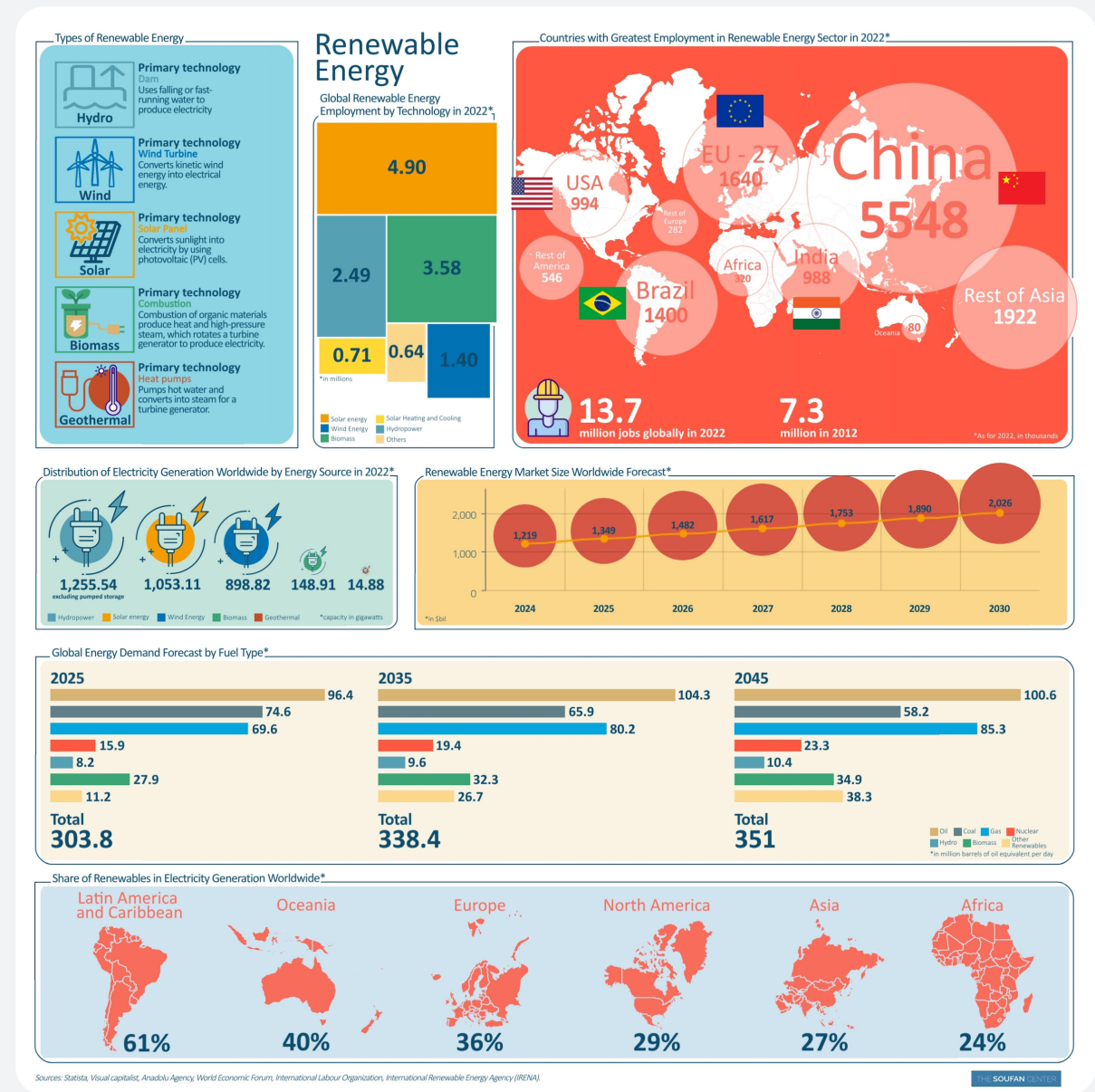
election, Georgian election, and Moldovan election. Russia continues to rely on disinformation campaigns, using social media bots and trolls to amplify divisive narratives and erode trust in electoral systems. China has focused on leveraging its economic influence and cyber capabilities, engaging in targeted campaigns to promote candidates or policies favorable to its strategic interests, particularly in regions where it seeks greater geopolitical sway. Iran, meanwhile, has deployed a mix of cyberattacks and propaganda efforts to destabilize adversarial governments and bolster sympathetic factions. These efforts often exploit existing societal divides, utilizing advanced technologies like artificial intelligence to create convincing fake content and evade detection.

The proliferation of the far-right globally in 2024 reflects a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and political factors. Economic anxiety, driven by inflation, widening socio-economic inequality, and fears of job displacement due to automation and the advancement of artificial intelligence and robotics, has provided fertile ground for far-right movements. Cultural grievances, such as concerns over immigration, national identity, and perceived threats to traditional values, have further fueled their rise. Populist leaders and parties in Europe, the Americas, and parts of Asia have capitalized on these sentiments, promoting nationalist rhetoric and promising to prioritize “native” citizens. Social media and alternative digital platforms have amplified far-right narratives, bypassing traditional gatekeepers and reaching disillusioned voters directly. While these movements face criticism for promoting exclusionary policies and eroding democratic norms, their persistence underscores a broader dissatisfaction with mainstream political systems.

IntelBriefs also covered the role of violent non-state actors in international conflict. In 2024, non-state actors such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the Islamic State and other sub-state groups have played significant roles in shaping regional and global dynamics, often acting as extensions of state influence or pursuing their own agendas. These groups have been central in conflicts across the Middle East, employing tactics ranging from terrorism to armed resistance to political maneuvering. Hamas has remained active in the Israel-Gaza conflict, leveraging both military actions and grassroots support. Though weakened, Hezbollah continues to influence Lebanese politics while acting as a proxy for Iran in broader regional conflicts seen this year in the conflict between Israel and

Hezbollah. In Syria, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham has changed the balance of power, toppling the decades-long Assad regime and gaining control of the country. Other proxy groups, often backed by states like Iran, Russia, or Türkiye, operate in other theaters in the Middle East and parts of Africa, complicating efforts to achieve stability.

In 2024, our infographics covered a wide range of topics, including the Israel-Hamas war and key elections around the globe. Our IntelBriefs were cited by national and international media organizations, including the Washington Post, Bloomberg, Agence France-Presse, the Associated Press, NBC News, Politico, The Guardian, Al-Monitor, Deutsche Welle, the Hill, and others.



TSC Infographic on renewable energy worldwide.

TOP 5 MOST-READ INTEL BRIEFS IN 2024

1



2



3



4



5



Scan the code to subscribe to TSC's daily, weekly, and periodical newsletters for analysis, updates, and announcements sent directly to your inbox.

TSC PROJECTS

The Soufan Center manages a range of projects, many of which support our research. These projects are designed to address global security challenges, promote accountability, and provide actionable insights to inform global policy and practice. Below are highlights from our initiatives in 2024:



The September 10th Project

The Soufan Center's September 10th Project offers vital tools, information, and analysis to address what the 9/11 Commission identified as a "failure of imagination" that led to the tragic events on September 11, 2001. The project includes threat reports, briefs, and events hosted by top counterterrorism experts, such as the annual Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence in New York City. The United States cannot afford to be caught off guard again, and the September 10th Project offers to better understand future threats and responses.



Accountability for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence by Terrorist Actors

The Soufan Center, with the support of the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations, is currently undertaking a project to guide UN member states and the international community toward tangible progress regarding accountability and justice for sexual and gender-based (SGBV) crimes in the context of terrorism. The aim of the project is to map practical avenues for member states and UN entities to further criminal prosecutions, sanctions, blacklisting, and other related accountability mechanisms for SGBV crimes linked to terrorism. The project fits within TSC's broader work on enhancing justice and accountability and working toward ending the relative impunity of war crimes and crimes against humanity, particularly in the context of terrorism. This project will produce a research paper to be released next year. In June 2023, ahead of the Eighth Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, TSC co-hosted a webinar with the UK's UN Mission to highlight justice mechanisms and map relevant prosecutions. Earlier efforts include a December 2022 research brief on Nigeria's response to SGBV under UNSC resolutions and a June 2021 brief on accountability for the Islamic State's genocidal acts against Yazidis in Iraq.

**Sponsored by the
Permanent Mission of
Malta to the United Nation**



Accelerating Hate: The Impact of October 7 on Terrorism and Political Violence

The Soufan Center, with the support of the Airey Neave Trust, undertook a project in 2024 to understand the impact of the October 7 attacks and the subsequent war in the Middle East on five Western countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Italy. Through the evaluation of five case studies, the project examined how terrorist and violent extremist actors capitalized on the conflict for propaganda purposes, radicalization, recruitment, and to inspire others toward violence. From this research, TSC produced a Special Report, launched at TSC's first annual Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence, and also presented the report's findings at an event co-hosted with the Airey Neave Trust in London.

**Supported by
the Airey Neave
Trust**

TSC RESOURCES

In addition to its ongoing projects, The Soufan Center has expanded its portfolio with three new resource products designed to provide timely, actionable insights on critical global issues. These include comprehensive analyses of upcoming global elections, in-depth research on violent far-right extremism, and concise summaries of violent non-state actors, equipping policymakers, researchers, and practitioners with the tools they need to navigate an increasingly complex security landscape.



Global Elections Outlook

The Soufan Center's Global Elections Outlook provides timely analysis on a range of elections taking place throughout the world. In 2024, more than 50 countries – more than half the world's population – held national elections. TSC's Global Elections Outlook provides policy makers, practitioners, and researchers with information about these elections and the potential security and foreign policy implications for different outcomes. At our Global Elections hub, researchers are also able to view relevant research, IntelBriefs, and infographics.

FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS 2024

BACKGROUND

On 17 June, President Emmanuel Macron dissolved the National Assembly and called for snap parliamentary elections following the centrist coalition's significant defeat in the European elections (EPP, AFDL, MoDem, Les Républicains, and Renaissance). The centrist coalition, led by Prime Minister Gabriel Attali, is seen as a high-stakes gamble that risks weakening the party's influence and potentially empowering the far right, who are seen as a credible alternative to the centrist party to counter the political uncertainty ahead of the 2027 European elections. However, the strategy could backfire, potentially allowing a far-right party to gain power in France for the first time since World War II.

The elections, scheduled for 17 June and 7 July, come just before the Paris Olympic Games, and could significantly impact the political landscape. The rise of extremist parties may either create a coalition government or a hung parliament, leading to a period of political uncertainty. Consequently, these elections are among the most significant in recent European history.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

- Emmanuel Macron:** Leader of the centrist Renaissance party, and the sitting president. Heading the centrist coalition of coalition parties.
- Marine Le Pen:** Long-time leader of the far-right National Rally (RN).
- Jordan Bardot:** RN's party president and potential candidate for prime minister.
- Eric Ciampi:** Leader of center-right Les Républicains. Ciampi has allied with RN in key constituencies.
- Jean-Luc Mélenchon:** Head of the far-left France Unitaire (LFI) party.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

New System Questioned: Since Macron's initial announcement, the political landscape in France has been shifting rapidly, with new alliances forming, government coalitions dissolving, and parties struggling to consolidate their positions.

- Reassess Left:** Left-wing parties are united on the National Front (FN), presenting an alternative to both Macron's centrist party and the far-right. FN's rise has been marked by significant gains, though internal conflicts have emerged.
- Far-Right:** Eric Ciampi has shown a willingness to collaborate with the far-right, causing significant outcry and a split within France's mainstream right-wing party, Les Républicains.

France Stability: The election could lead to a fragmented and unstable French parliament, impacting governance and potentially affecting France's role in Europe and global affairs. This is a critical test for the country's political system, which has been marked by frequent changes in leadership.

Policy Impact: The election could have a significant impact on EU politics, especially regarding migration, immigration, national sovereignty, and European Strategic Autonomy.

THE SOUFAN CENTER
ELECTIONS OUTLOOK
UPDATED JUNE 2024

MOZAMBIQUE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2024

BACKGROUND

On October 8, 2024, voters in Mozambique will head to the polls to elect the president and parliamentarians. These are the seventh elections since the country's shift to a multiparty democracy in 1994. The 2024 election is significant as it marks the first time since 1994 that a candidate from the ruling Frelimo party is not running for re-election. The election is being held against a backdrop of significant instability, including an ongoing Islamic State (IS) insurgency in the southern Cabo Delgado province, economic crisis, and widespread poverty.

The candidates are likely to be Daniel Chapo (Frelimo) and Daniel Chipao (RENAMO). Daniel Chipao, Frelimo's leader, is expected to succeed the incumbent President Filipe Nyusi. RENAMO, the country's largest opposition party, is led by Daniel Chipao. RENAMO has made unexpected waves and may include growing support with the public.

The election's credibility is under scrutiny from both opposition parties and international observers, due to recent events and historical patterns of electoral irregularities. The general elections in 2019 were widely criticized and considered by election monitors, including the European Union Election Observation Mission, to be the most openly rigged in the country's history. RENAMO has accused Frelimo of rigging the 2019 election, and the 2024 election is expected to be similarly contentious, with reports of voter intimidation and violence in the capital city, Maputo, and subsequent violent government crackdowns on dissent. In the lead up to the 2024 elections, Human Rights Watch (HRW) has reported an increase in police attacks against journalists and civil society activists, raising further concerns about freedom of expression and election integrity.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

Daniel Chipao (FRELIMO): Chipao is the newly elected president. He is a member of the ruling Frelimo party, which has been in power since 1976. He has a long history of political involvement and is seen as a key figure in the country's political landscape.

Daniel Chipao (RENAMO): Chipao is the leader of the RENAMO party, which has been the largest opposition party since 2019. He has emerged as a significant challenger, focusing on addressing corruption, the ongoing insurgency in the south, and economic issues. He has a long history of political involvement and is seen as a key figure in the country's political landscape.

Ismael Gauthier (RENAMO): Gauthier is the second largest opposition party leader. He has a long history of political involvement and is seen as a key figure in the country's political landscape.

Ismael Gauthier (FRELIMO): Gauthier is the second largest opposition party leader. He has a long history of political involvement and is seen as a key figure in the country's political landscape.

Why You Should Care

Complex Security Landscape: Since 2017, the Cabo Delgado insurgency in Mozambique's northern province has claimed over 4,000 lives and displaced nearly 1.3 million people, according to HRW. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), an Islamic State affiliate, has demonstrated increased operational capacity and geographic reach. It has been involved in kidnapping, extortion, and attacks on oil and gas infrastructure and shipping vessels. The presence of foreign military forces, including the Russian Defense Force (RDF) and the United Arab Emirates' Presidential Guard (UAE PG), has raised international concerns about the use of an increasingly militarized approach, which may lead to more deaths of Mozambicans. In addition, FRELIMO's stance on what is perceived to be an illegitimate election, may result in renewed ASG's propaganda and further radicalization.

Geopolitical Implications: Mozambique's rich natural resources have attracted high levels of international investment, positioning it as a key player in the global energy and mineral markets.

Key Voter Issues

Economic Challenges: Voters are concerned about widespread poverty and economic instability. Campaigns have focused on addressing these issues and renegotiating contracts for public benefit. The IS has sought to exploit economic hardship and has been successful in recruiting fighters to join the insurgency.

Peace & Employment Opportunities: A young population has increased the pressure on job creation. The IS has sought to exploit economic hardship and has been successful in recruiting fighters to join the insurgency.

THE SOUFAN CENTER
ELECTIONS OUTLOOK
UPDATED OCTOBER 2024

VENEZUELAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2024

BACKGROUND

Venezuela's upcoming election on July 28 marks a crucial juncture for the country, which has been under the control of the Bolivarian Movement for the last 23 years. Since 2013, Nicolás Maduro has held the presidency. His second term, which began in January 2023, has been marked by economic collapse and political repression. The Venezuelan economy has contracted by over 70%, with poverty rates reaching over 80% in 2023. The country has also seen a significant loss of population, with over 7.7 million Venezuelans leaving the country since 2015 in the wake of the economic crisis, according to estimates from the High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR).

Maduro's re-election will likely significantly influence the ongoing migration crisis. Increased repression could lead to further migration, while a change in leadership could lead to a more stable political environment. The election will also have significant implications for the relationship between the U.S., China, and Cuba, which have been key players in the region's politics.

KEY INDIVIDUALS

- Nicolás Maduro:** Venezuela's current president, who has held the office since 2013. He is a member of the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV).
- Edmundo González Urdaneta:** A 34-year-old opposition candidate and former diplomat who has become a prominent figure in the opposition movement.
- María Corina Machado:** Despite her resignation, she remains a key figure in the opposition movement and is seen as the most credible leader to succeed Maduro.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

Regional Stability for Operations: The Venezuelan election could lead to a significant political shift if the opposition wins, challenging the 23-year rule of Maduro. This change could alter Venezuela's international relations, particularly its relationship with countries like the U.S., China, and Cuba, which have been key players in the region's politics.

Migration Flows: The election outcome will likely significantly influence the ongoing migration crisis. Increased repression could lead to further migration, while a change in leadership could lead to a more stable political environment.

Sanctions: The United States and the European Union (EU) have imposed sanctions on Venezuela. The re-election of Maduro and other officials could lead to a more stable political environment.

THE SOUFAN CENTER
ELECTIONS OUTLOOK
UPDATED JUNE 2024

ISSUE BRIEF

HOW FAR-RIGHT TERRORISTS CHOOSE THEIR ENEMIES

JACOB WARE AND COLIN P. CLARKE
DECEMBER 2022

THE SOUFAN CENTER

KEY FINDINGS

- Salaf-jihadist groups have looked at terrorist targeting through the lens of the "near enemy" versus "far enemy" paradigm. Prominent jihadis, including Osama bin Laden, frequently debated over which enemy was a priority to attack.
- Unlike Salaf-jihadism, where the near/far distinction has a stronger geographic connotation, far-right targeting appears to be largely symbolic. The "far enemy" is often a more visible outgroup – African-Americans, immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals – while the "near enemy" includes government, the political left, and so-called Jewish "elites," who far-right extremists consider responsible for enabling or promoting the demographic and cultural replacement of white people.
- Far-right extremists who prioritize the "far enemy" are united by their adherence to the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory. As such, "far enemy" attackers couch their attacks in defensive language and attempt to portray themselves as martyrs sacrificing themselves for the sake of white civilization.
- For Western governments and their counterterrorism endeavors, the most important implication of this study is a deeper understanding of how certain factions of the violent far-right movement prioritize certain targets and how to allocate resources and protective measures.
- Recommendations include: Western governments should devote more resources to integrating and protecting minority communities; analyze how Salaf-jihadist targeting preferences evolved over time and seek to determine whether any patterns might be instructive to how far-right terrorists consider the "near enemy versus far enemy" paradigm; and identify how counterterrorism practitioners might influence these debates to degrade cohesion of far-right extremists and their supporting networks.

Mr. Jacob Ware is a research fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. Dr. Colin P. Clarke is a Senior Research Fellow at The Soufan Center and the Director of Research at The Soufan Group.



Violent Far-Right Extremism Outlook

The Soufan Center's work on violent far-right extremism provides comprehensive research and analysis to a range of audiences. On our Violent Far-Right Extremism Outlook hub we showcase existing resources, such as IntelBriefs, infographics, and event videos, including content from past Global Security Forums and the Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence. This work focuses on narratives and propaganda—such as anti-Semitism and Islamophobia—examining current trends within the transnational movement, tools to counter extremist activities, and the broader implications for global security.



Violent Non-State Actor (VNSA) Snapshots

The Soufan Center's Violent Non-State Actor (VNSA) Snapshots provide concise summaries of select non state actors and their organizations worldwide. Each snapshot highlights critical information, including the group's background, leadership, objectives, tactics, and threat level, offering a straightforward understanding of each entity. These briefs are intended for policymakers, researchers, journalists, and others seeking a reliable, quick-reference resource. Additionally, researchers are able to navigate our VNSA hub to find related research, IntelBriefs, infographics and more.

THE HOUSHI MOVEMENT (ANSARALLAH – "SUPPORTERS OF GOD")

PROFILE

The Houthis are a Zaydi Shi'ite armed group from Yemen's Saada province. The group has its roots in a Zaydi revivalist movement called Believing Youth, which was founded in the 1980s. They became an armed insurgency in 2004 after the Yemeni Sunni majority government attempted to arrest their leader, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi. Since 2014, the Houthis have controlled much of northwestern Yemen, including the capital, Sana'a, establishing a parallel government opposed to the internationally recognized Yemeni government. Their main grievances include political exclusion, economic inequality, and foreign interference, particularly by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Known for their prolonged conflict with the Yemeni government and the resulting humanitarian crisis, the Houthis have recently gained attention for attacks on military targets and shipping vessels in the Red Sea, citing the Israel-Gaza conflict as motivation.

GOALS/TARGETS

1. Maintain and expand control in Yemen; gain international recognition.
2. Eliminate foreign interference and Western and regional (Saudi, UAE) influence from Yemen.
3. Protect Zaidi Shiism and counter Saudi Wahhabism, a strict, ultra-conservative interpretation of Sunni Islam.
4. Continue to campaign against Israel following ceasefires.

Targets: The Yemeni government, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Israel, the West (no direct attacks yet), and al-Qaeda.

OPERATIONAL DYNAMICS

Financing: Alleged support from Iran and Hezbollah; taxation in Houthi-controlled areas; illicit shipment of Iranian commodities.

Recruitment Tactics: Offer financial incentives, food, and other perks to impoverished families; recruit children through intimidation or bribery; infuse propaganda into school curricula; force locals to defend; leverage the Israel-Gaza conflict to position themselves as defenders of Palestine.

Terror Tactics/Weaponry:

- Early Phase: Small-scale guerrilla warfare with ambushes, sniping, use of mines, and public executions.
- 2010s: Shift to heavy weaponry stolen from Yemeni government, trained by Iran/Hezbollah in advanced tactics and systems (guided missiles, IEDs); expansion into maritime warfare.
- 2020s: Expanded use of advanced weaponry (anti-ship missiles, drone boats, unmanned underwater vessels); attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea corridor, particularly those linked to Israel.

STRUCTURE

Size: ~200,000 fighters

Leader: Abdul Malik al-Houthi (brother of movement's founder)

Structure: Centralized control led by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, who appoints regional leaders; Supreme Political Council acts as de facto government; maintains a sophisticated military structure with specialized units and clear chains of command; has strong intelligence and internal security apparatus.

Allies: Iran (political, financial, and military support); Russia (provided satellite targeting data for the Houthis to attack commercial shipping); Hezbollah (training, weapons, and logistical assistance); al-Shabaab (reportedly to amplify the Houthi threat to the Bab al-Mandeb global shipping chokepoint); al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) (pause internal conflict to fight against common enemy: the Yemeni government).

THREAT ANALYSIS

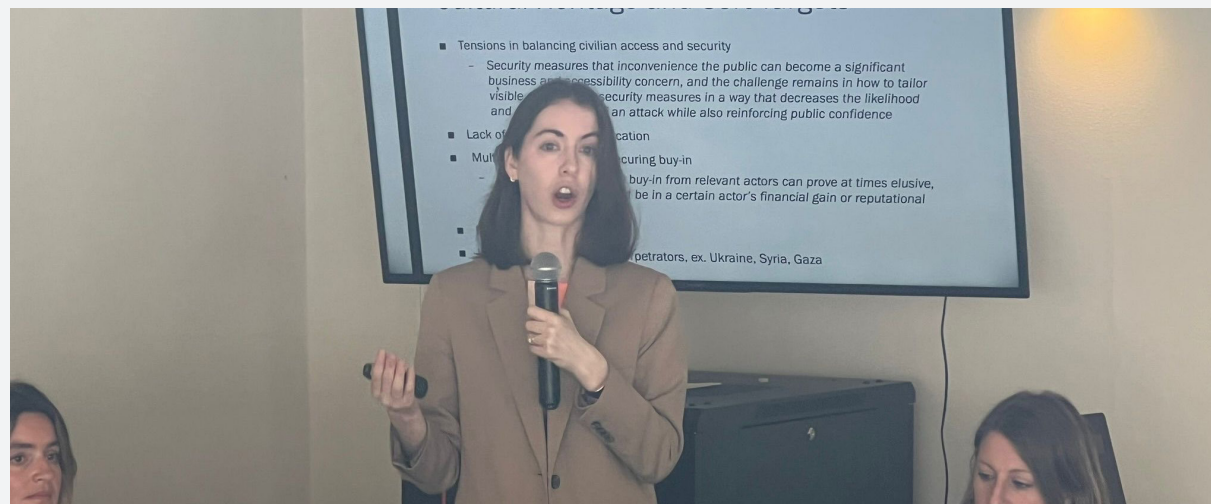
The Houthis present a significant threat due to their growing military strength, exacerbation of Yemen's humanitarian crisis, and ability to disrupt global supply routes. Their maritime activities in the Red Sea, including over 150 attacks on vessels since November 2023, have already cut commercial traffic by almost half, severely impacting regional trade. Their alliance with Iran is especially troubling, as it provides them with resources and expertise to enhance their operations. This

THE SOUFAN CENTER
VIOLENT NON-STATE ACTOR (VNSA) SNAPSHOTS
UPDATED JANUARY 2025

TSC EVENTS

Each year, The Soufan Center hosts events reaching audiences across the globe. In 2024, TSC staff and fellows continued to deliver their expertise into real-world contexts by informing policymakers, governments, civil society, and academics. The Soufan Center hosted hundreds of participants across four events throughout the year. In addition, TSC also hosted over 400 in-person attendees at the inaugural Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence and over 1,000 attendees at the annual flagship Global Security Forum.

Through these events, TSC facilitated discussions on a range of global security issues, from the impact of the October 7 attacks on political violence in the West, to academic discussions on the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, as well as important but neglected topics like the destruction and theft of cultural heritage. These conversations engaged a wide range of global stakeholders and audiences representing governments, international organizations, think tanks, the private sector, and the media. TSC staff and fellows also participated in several dozen events and conferences as speakers, lecturers, moderators, and participants.



TSC Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender

Cultural Heritage as a Human Right

May 23-25, 2024
Florence, Italy

From May 23-25, 2024, The Soufan Center co-organized an international human rights conference in Florence, Italy, with Gonzaga University School of Law, Gonzaga in Florence, and Cultural Heritage Partners PLLC on the theme ‘Cultural Heritage as a Human Right.’ Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender presented her TSC Issue Brief, *Identities Destroyed, Histories Revised: The Targeting of Cultural Heritage and Soft Targets by Illicit Actors*, highlighting the importance of security actors in combatting the illicit trade of antiquities and destruction of cultural heritage. Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke also spoke on the importance of connecting local events within the larger global geopolitical context, including how attacks on cultural heritage not only adversely impact local communities but also the international community and international law. Mr. Didier Bouakaze-Khan, Senior Antiquities and Cultural Heritage Consultant with The Soufan Group, presented on how terrorist actors participate in the illicit antiquities trade.

Investigating and Prosecuting the Destruction of Cultural Property Linked Terrorism

June 12, 2024
New York, NY



TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan (right)

On June 12, 2024, The Soufan Center co-organized an event in New York with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Permanent Missions of Norway and France to the United Nations. The event explored how actors investigate and prosecute the destruction, looting, and illicit trade of cultural property linked to terrorism. Founder Mr. Ali Soufan delivered opening remarks for the event and emphasized the need to end terrorists’ impunity for this crime and other human rights abuses. Ms. Michaela Millender was a speaker at the event and presented on international accountability mechanisms and prosecutions for the destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist actors, including trafficking in antiquities. Her presentation was based on her TSC Issue Brief *Identities Destroyed, Histories Revised: The Targeting of Cultural Heritage and Soft Targets by Illicit Actors*.

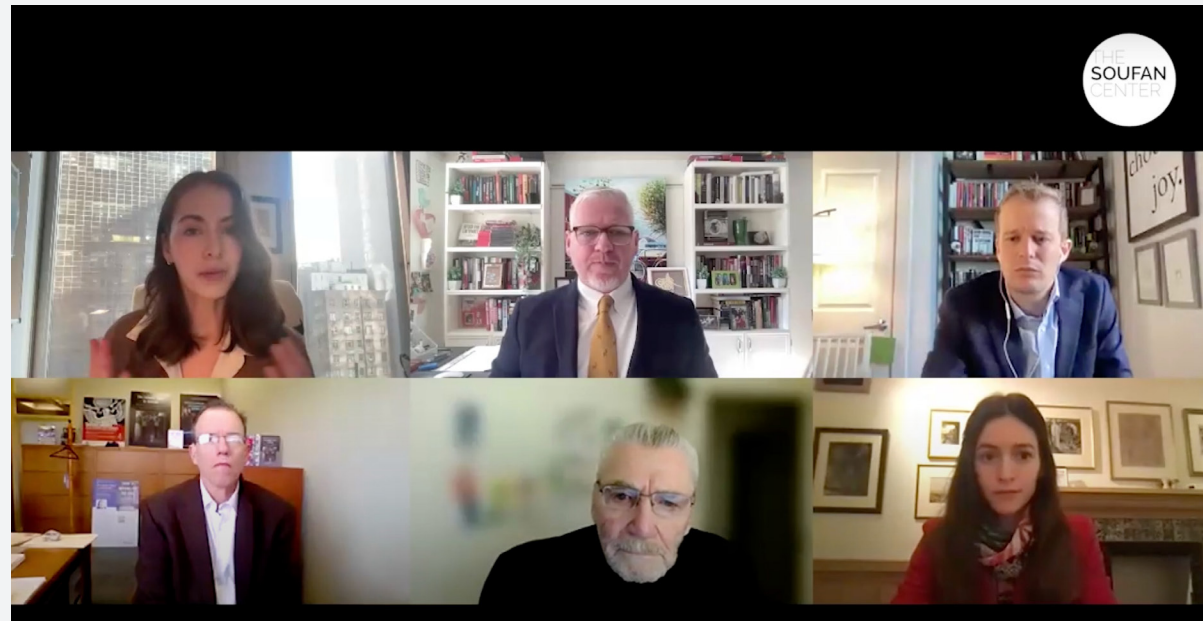
The Impact of the October 7, 2023, Hamas Attacks: Implications for the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France and Italy’s Terrorist Threat Landscape

October 22, 2024
London, United Kingdom

On October 22, 2024, The Soufan Center co-hosted an event on ‘The Impact of the October 7, 2023, Hamas Attacks: Implications for the UK, the US, Germany, France, and Italy’s Terrorist Threat Landscape.’ Held at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London, and hosted in cooperation with the Airey Neave Trust, the event explored the impacts of the October 7 attacks on several Western countries, specifically the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. The TSC team – TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan, Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke, Research Fellow Ms. Clara Broekaert, and Research Fellow Mr. Joseph Shelzi – along with Dr. Timothy Wilson, Trustee at the Airey Neave Trust, briefed on the findings and conclusions of TSC’s Special Report *Accelerating Hate: The Impact of October 7 on Terrorism and Political Violence in the West*, published with the support of the Airey Neave Trust.



TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan (center)



TSC Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender (top left), TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke (top center), Mr. Jacob Ware (top right), Dr. Michael Kenney (bottom left), Mr. Brian Jenkins (bottom center), Dr. Julia Ebner (bottom right).

TSC Webinar: Political Violence and the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election

October 30, 2024
Virtual Event

Ahead of the 2024 U.S. presidential election, The Soufan Center hosted a webinar on October 30, 2024, to examine the threat of political violence in the United States. The event explored the risks posed by domestic terrorism, societal polarization, and the exploitation of disinformation by violent extremists and state actors to influence the democratic process and incite violence. As polarization deepens nearly four years after the Capitol insurrection, vulnerable communities—such as immigrants, Jewish and Muslim groups, LGBTQ+ individuals, government officials, and law enforcement—face heightened threats. Extremist groups, including white supremacists, militias, and neo-Nazis, have intensified their efforts to spread disinformation, recruit members, and embed their narratives into mainstream political discourse. These groups are also leveraging geopolitical crises, such as the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, to radicalize individuals and amplify public anxieties about the election. Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender provided opening remarks, alongside Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke, who moderated the event. Mr. Brian Jenkins of the RAND Corporation, Dr. Julia Ebner from the University of Oxford, Dr. Michael Kenney from the University of Pittsburgh, and Mr. Jacob Ware from the Council on Foreign Relations joined as panelists.



Scan the code to subscribe to TSC's daily, weekly, and periodical newsletters for analysis, updates, and announcements sent directly to your inbox.

GSF 2024

GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM

The sixth annual Global Security Forum, themed ‘Strategic Competition: The Complexity of Interdependence,’ brought together over 1,000 in-person participants in Doha—along with over 20,000 online participants and attracted more than 100,000 online views of the event’s recordings. The event addressed pressing global security challenges, examining them through the lens of strategic competition and the complex web of global interdependence. This year’s forum convened heads of state, senior officials from law enforcement, NGOs, international organizations, academia, media, and the private sector to explore the security risks, challenges, and opportunities emerging from the interconnectedness of today’s world.

Panels, fireside discussions, and high-level remarks centered on urgent issues such as the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and the destabilizing ripple effects throughout the region and beyond, the rising threat of terrorism in Central Asia, Africa, and the broader Middle East, and the escalating danger posed by the interconnected nature of many of these challenges. The forum also addressed how these security challenges are compounded by other global crises, including climate change, food insecurity, sexual and gender-based violence, poor governance, the abuse of emerging technologies, and global supply chain disruption. By linking these issues, participants emphasized the need for collaborative solutions to mitigate the risks of a rapidly evolving, inextricably linked global landscape of threats.

The speakers of the 2024 Global Security Forum hailed from a range of backgrounds, with sometimes opposing perspectives, enriching discussions on security issues and proposed solutions to pressing challenges. His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, inaugurated the forum and highlighted the importance of Qatar’s role in mediating conflicts globally, including its diplomatic efforts in the war between Hamas and Israel. His Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of Rwanda, also joined the Forum. He described his belief in Africa as a geopolitical player in its own right, rather than a battlefield on which the strategic competition between the

West and China plays out. The Prime Minister of Iraq, His Excellency Mohammed Shia Al Sudani, used the Forum as an opportunity to highlight how Iraq is rebuilding its economy and security through fighting the longstanding issues of corruption and poverty in the country. We also heard from officials from Singapore, the Maldives, Togo, Nigeria, Indonesia, Greece, Armenia, Canada, and the United States.

We heard different perspectives on the Hamas-Israel conflict, such as during the panel ‘The Implications of the Gaza War and October 7’ which featured experts from across the region and world. The topic of hostage-taking was raised in numerous talks and Ambassador Roger Carstens, Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs at the U.S. Department of State explained the work of bringing hostages home. Ms. Liz Hirsh Naftali described the tragic experiences of her family in Israel, including the abduction of her young niece during the October 7 Hamas attack. Since the return of her niece following a hostage deal brokered by international parties including Qatar, Ms. Naftali continues to advocate for all the remaining hostages internationally. “It is clear to me that their diplomacy [Qatar], their efforts, is what brought Abigail and 109 women and children home at the end of November 2023,” she shared.

Representatives of international organizations, including His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union, and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at the United Nations, also joined this year’s forum. Similar to remarks made by Rwandan President His Excellency Paul Kagame, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat highlighted the importance of avoiding turning Africa into a geostrategic battleground of global powers. He also called on the international community for more assistance with counterterrorism on the African continent, an issue that continues to claim lives, especially in the central Sahel region. Under-Secretary Mr. Griffiths underscored how many current conflicts with an unacceptable humanitarian toll have become protracted.



H.E. Sheikh
Mohammed bin
Abdulrahman
Al-Thani



H.E. Paul Kagame
(right on screen),
Mr. Steve Clemons
(left on stage)

The Global Security Forum offered numerous opportunities to strengthen transnational cooperation, bringing stakeholders together during side events with themes such as countering and preventing violent extremism, conflict resolution-focused diplomacy, and dealing with issues such as hostage taking.

The 2024 Global Security Forum was hosted by The Soufan Center (TSC) and the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS). TSC and QIASS worked together with various partners to deliver the 2024 edition of the Global Security Forum, including the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Defense One, The Soufan Group, and New America. The forum also featured an invite-only side event hosted in collaboration with CTED's Global Research Network.



H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi



Mr. Wadah Khanfar (left), Dr. Ilan Pappé (right)



Ambassador J. Peter Pham



Dr. Julie Sunday



Mr. Paul Abbate



H.E. K. Shanmugam



Mr. John Miller (left), Ms. Christine Abizaid (right)



Mr. Martin Griffiths



H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat



Ms. Rebecca Weiner



H.E. Robert Dussey



From left to right: Dr. Lyla Kohistany, H.E. Hekmat Karzai, Mr. Wassim Nasr, Dr. Adejoké Babington-Ashaye, Ms. Naureen Chowdhury Fink



Ms. Helen Zhang

GSTPV 2024

GLOBAL SUMMIT ON TERRORISM & POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The inaugural Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence took place on September 12 and 13 at the Perelman Performing Arts Center at Ground Zero in New York City, drawing over 12,000 online viewers and over 400 in-person attendees from government, law enforcement, first responder services, the intelligence community, international organizations, media, academia, and the non-profit sector, as well as human rights advocates and survivors of terrorism. The summit addressed a range of pressing issues in the fight against terrorism and political violence through panels, fireside discussions, and high-level remarks. Topics included justice and accountability, the ripple effects of the October 7 attack on terrorism trends, Iran's "Axis of Resistance," domestic terrorism, election security, hostage-taking, the global Salafi-jihadist movement, recruitment and radicalization, counterterrorism strategies, and emerging technologies.

The event marked the official launch of the annual Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence, an initiative of The Soufan Center's September 10th Project. This new initiative seeks to address the "failure of imagination" identified by the 9/11 Commission as a key factor in the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Through a combination of threat reports, expert briefs, and high-level discussions, the project provides critical tools, analysis, and insights to support efforts in preventing terrorism and mitigating political violence.

The Summit's keynote address was delivered by Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, who highlighted the shifting nature of terrorism in the United States. He emphasized the growing threat from lone offenders and small extremist groups, rather than large foreign terrorist organizations, an insight that sadly played out on New Year's Day in New Orleans, Louisiana following an ISIS-inspired terrorist attack that killed fourteen people and

injured dozens more. Secretary Mayorkas also stressed the importance of government and community collaboration to prevent violence, enhance intelligence-sharing, and support local law enforcement, citing the success of the Department of Homeland Security's violence-prevention programs and multidisciplinary teams that intervene before violence escalates.

Other high-level officials involved in counterterrorism, justice, and policymaking also participated. Dr. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, U.S. Homeland Security Advisor to the White House, reflected on the evolution of terrorism and counterterrorism since 9/11, noting the changing nature of global and domestic threats, including decentralized terrorist networks and rising incidents of domestic extremism. The Honorable Lisa Monaco, Deputy Attorney General at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), highlighted the DOJ's commitment to combating terrorism, addressing foreign election interference, and responding to threats against public officials. She emphasized ongoing efforts to investigate the October 7 Hamas attacks and protect U.S. democracy from adversaries like Russia and Iran, while vowing to hold accountable those who target public servants. Assistant Attorney General for National Security, Matthew Olsen, spoke about the rise of domestic terrorism, cyber threats, and foreign election interference, stressing that the threat landscape has become more complex with the blending of domestic and international terrorism.

The inaugural summit also sought to amplify the voices of victims and survivors of terrorism, as well as advocates working for justice. Mr. John P. O'Neill Jr., the son of Mr. John Patrick O'Neill, an FBI counterterrorism expert who investigated major attacks in the 1990s and died during the September 11 attacks while helping others evacuate, shared his perspective.

Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) also spoke on the importance of civil justice for terrorism victims, particularly through the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), which allows victims to seek accountability from perpetrators and their enablers. He praised the leadership of 9/11 advocates Brett Eagleson, Terry Strada, and Tim Brown, who were also in attendance. The family of Edan Alexander, held hostage by Hamas in Gaza since the October 7 attacks, also spoke to the gathering. In a powerful statement, Edan's father, Mr. Adi Alexander, emphasized the need for the U.S. and other international actors, including countries like Qatar, Türkiye, and Egypt, to pressure both Israel and Hamas to secure the hostages' release and called for sustained diplomatic efforts, stressing that every day without a deal increases the risk to Edan and other hostages.

Various panels were held featuring experts from academia, think tanks, and international organizations. A panel on the use of emerging technologies in terrorism discussed threats such as 3D-printed firearms, the abuse of cryptocurrencies, artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial systems, or drones, and encrypted messaging applications and social media platforms. Another panel on the October 7 attack and its ripple effects focused on the novel combination of terrorist and military tactics employed by Hamas, as well as the sophisticated information warfare strategies used. A panel on the drivers of terrorism and radicalization highlighted the need for more resources for prevention efforts, noting that only about 2% of counterterrorism budgets are allocated to prevention. The panel also discussed how issues like identity, belonging, mental health, and social media intersect with radicalization.

The 2024 Global Summit on Terrorism and Political Violence was hosted by The Soufan Center, which partnered with various organizations, including the Tribeca Film Festival and the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. The summit featured a range of side events, developed in collaboration with TSC's partners. A special screening of *Against All Enemies* (2023), organized in partnership with the Tribeca Film Festival, was followed by a fireside chat between Mr. Charlie Sadoff, Director and Producer of *Against All Enemies*, and Colonel (Ret.) Keith Pellegrini, Partner at McChrystal Group, with opening remarks by Mr. Ali Soufan. Additionally, a side event with the 9/11 Memorial & Museum included a private, curated tour of the museum for all registered participants.

THE SOUFAN CENTER
GLOBAL SUMMIT
ON TERRORISM AND
POLITICAL VIOLENCE



The Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas



From left to right: Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen, Mr. John Miller, Ms. Christine Abizaid



From left to right: Mr. Brian Dodwell, Professor Chuck Freilich, Mr. Rami Khouri, Mr. Barak Ravid, Professor Assaf Moghadam



Commissioner (Ret.) William Bratton



Mr. Dexter Filkins



Professor Karen Greenberg, The Honorable Matthew G. Olsen



Dr. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall



From left to right: Mr. Mark Mazzetti, Dr. Kenneth Katzman, Dr. Matthew Levitt, Mr. Phillip Smyth, Mr. Marc Polymeropoulos



Mr. Adam Ciralsky, Ambassador Roger Carstens



The Honorable Lisa Monaco

UNITED STATES POLICY ENGAGEMENT



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke (center)

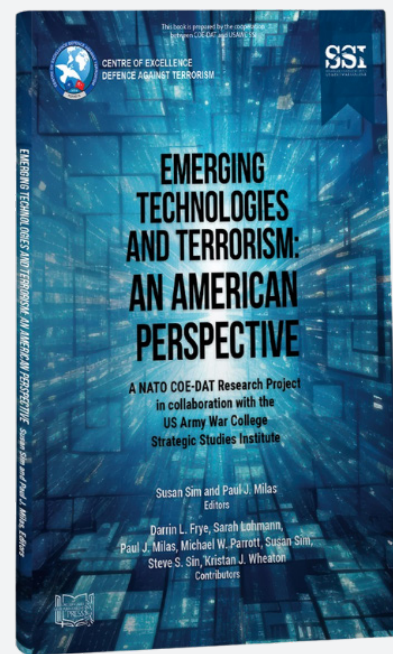
Over 2024, TSC engaged with national stakeholders to address critical issues impacting the United States, including the role of emerging technologies in terrorism, the rising threat of political violence, the evolution of far-right extremism and domestic terrorism, and the importance of strategic communications and countering disinformation in combating extremist narratives. In 2024, TSC shared expertise with U.S. government agencies, with fellow think-tanks and research institutes, and other communities across the country.

In February, Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke joined the American Foreign Policy Council for a conference bringing together U.S. and foreign scholars in Washington D.C. Addressing the topic ‘The United States and the War of Ideas,’ Dr. Clarke spoke on the importance of strategic communications, countering disinformation, and crafting effective counternarratives against jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

To further the discussion on counterterrorism strategies in the U.S., Dr. Clarke and Senior Fellow Ambassador Nathan Sales joined the Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. to discuss ‘The future of U.S. counterterrorism policy’ in December. Dr. Clarke spoke at length of the threat posed by ISIS-K, particularly after a year which saw the group focus more on conducting external operations. More than twenty-three years after 9/11, terrorist actors continue to proliferate and evolve, threatening the United States and its allies across the world. But Washington is prone to

drastic swings in the threat of terrorism—exaggerating it immediately after a major attack while otherwise neglecting it. This conference addressed those policy shortcomings by offering an in-depth look at the future of terrorism.

On a similar note, Senior Research Fellow Ms. Susan Sim and her co-authors published a book in April with the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute and NATO’s Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT) titled *Emerging Technologies and Terrorism: An American Perspective*. This publication examines the potential for terrorists to exploit emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, augmented reality, biotechnology, and nanotechnology. It highlights the urgent need for collaboration among governments, industries, and academia to develop ethical frameworks and regulations to address these evolving threats. As NATO emphasizes national responsibility and collective strength in combating terrorism, the book raises critical questions: Can regulatory measures keep pace with innovation? Will industries prioritize ethics over profit? This work serves as a vital resource for understanding and addressing the challenges posed by technology-driven threats in an era of rapid geopolitical and technological change.



Book cover *Emerging Technologies and Terrorism: An American Perspective* (USAWC Press, 2024)



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke (third from left)

TSC further contributed to the discussion on technology and terrorism in August, when Dr. Clarke joined the American Foreign Policy Council for an event titled ‘Radicalization, Counter-radicalization, and AI.’ Rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are transforming the economy, politics, and culture. From a security perspective, new technologies are also changing the way that extremists radicalize, organize, and communicate. This webinar explored how AI can drive radicalization today, as well as how it can amplify extremist messaging. “This isn’t hypothetical anymore, we’ve got use cases,” noted Dr. Clarke in sharing how violent and extremist actors have already adopted these new technologies.

In the summer of 2024, U.S. audiences were particularly interested in the topic of political violence following the assassination attempt of former President Donald Trump. In July, Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender joined a panel titled ‘Former U.S. President Donald Trump Assassination Attempt and its Impact on November Elections,’ hosted by VOA Africa, to discuss this topic in-depth. The live event was hosted by Voice of America’s Ignatius Annor and also included Declan Galvin, the Managing Director of Exigent Risk Advisory, a Nairobi-based strategic risk advisory consulting firm. The discussion focused on the latest developments following the assassination attempt on former President Trump, and the implications ahead of the November 5 presidential elections. “These two incidents represent an increased threat against politicians in the United States, against political figures, against law enforcement,” she said during the event.

On the topic of political violence, Ms. Millender also joined the World Affairs Council on October 17 and 18 to discuss ‘Trends in the Violent Far-Right Extremist Movement.’ Ms. Millender gave two presentations on violent far-right extremism for the World Affairs Council chapters in both Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her talks focused on the shifting landscape of far-right extremism nearly four years after the events of January 6, 2021, and its future impact both in the U.S. and globally. She also examined the current trends within the violent far-right, including increasing instances of political violence, as well as the future outlook for the movement in the years to come. “The violent far right has always been very adept at adapting new technologies. They were very early adopters to the Internet, and specifically computers before most Americans ever had one. As a result, they’ve been able to capitalize on these new technologies and export their ideologies and tactics around the world,” she explained.



TSC Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender (left at podium)

GLOBAL POLICY ENGAGEMENT



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke

The Soufan Center continues to contribute its work and insights to global conversations on peace and security. Our work follows trends and developments globally, and TSC's experts were invited to share their perspectives at a range of international events and dialogues over 2024. This year, our team continued to engage in multilateral discussions, offering our research findings and insights to international organizations and forums. At this year's Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke presented on the global terrorism landscape and the threat posed by Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), in particular, with a focus on how the group was leveraging new and emerging technologies to improve its ability to recruit and radicalize followers and supporters.

Our team also continued its engagement with the United Nations community. TSC Research Fellow Ms. Stephanie Foggett spoke at the event 'Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations: Building Global Solidarity,' co-hosted by Canada, Belgium, and Argentina on the margins of the 56th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland. The side event highlighted the issue of state hostage-taking and how states are aligning around the issue through the Canada-led initiative on arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations. Ms. Foggett also joined a roundtable discussion on the issue hosted by the United States Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, sharing findings from TSC's continued work on hostage-taking in all its forms.

Over 2024, TSC—as a founding member of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate's (CTED) Global Research Network (GRN)—continued its engagement with the research community through its annual partnership of a workshop at the Global Security Forum. This year, CTED's panel focused on 'Africa and the Global Counterterrorism Agenda' and CTED also held a side event at this year's forum in Doha. TSC also co-organized an event in New York with CTED, alongside the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Permanent Missions of Norway and France to the United Nations. The event explored investigating and prosecuting the destruction, looting, and illicit trade of cultural property linked to terrorism—a key theme in TSC's research and events over 2024.



TSC Research Fellow Ms. Stephanie Foggett (fourth from right)



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke



TSC Senior Research Fellow Ms. Susan Sim (left), TSC Research Fellow Ms. Stephanie Foggett (right)



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke (center)



TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan (right)

TSC's staff and fellows continued their engagement with NATO's Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT), located in Ankara, Türkiye. Dr. Clarke participated in this year's 'Combined Terrorism Expert Conference & Defence Against Terrorism – Executive Level Seminar,' presenting on the future terrorism landscape. Senior Research Fellow Ms. Susan Sim and Ms. Stephanie Foggett joined this year's residential course on 'Efficient Crisis Management to Mitigate the Effects of Terrorist Activities,' which explored the intersection between counter terrorism and crisis management, understanding acts of terrorism as a type of crisis and with implications for the crisis management process.

TSC experts joined conversations in Europe on shared security challenges. In cooperation with the Airey Neave

Trust in the United Kingdom, TSC co-hosted an event at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in London sharing findings from its recent report on the impacts of the October 7, 2023, attacks on several Western countries, specifically the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy. Dr. Clarke joined the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), based in The Hague, for an event discussing—and cautioning against—the use administrative measures as counter-terrorism strategy. Dr. Clarke also delivered a keynote address on the topic 'A New Wave of Terrorism Against the West?' at an event hosted by the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy (AIES), in cooperation with Donau University Krems and the Landesverteidigungsakademie Österreich, in Vienna, Austria.

TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan participated in two events in Singapore in 2024. He spoke at a Spotlight Series event on 'Global Trends that Threaten Plural Societies,' organized by Humanity Matters. The dialogue focused on a range of topics, including current trends in terrorism, the dissolution of the Jemaah Islamiyah group, and specific developments in terrorism which could affect Singapore. Mr. Soufan and Senior Research Fellow Dr. Julie Chernov Hwang also delivered talks this year at the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the Rajaratnam School for International Studies in Singapore.

In a year shaped by enduring crises and major geopolitical events, TSC's experts were invited to offer knowledge and insights on several global events as they unfolded. Dr. Colin P. Clarke joined two events hosted by Wikistrat to explore the developments in the Middle East. One event looked at the multiple scenarios for what could unfold once the hostilities in Gaza come to an end, asking what "the day after" could look like. The other reflected on the aftermath of the killing of Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah and the impact on the political landscape in Lebanon and beyond. With Foreign Policy, Dr. Clarke joined an event analyzing the terrorist attack at a concert venue in Moscow, Russia, which killed over 130 people and was attributed to Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISIS-K)

TSC also engaged with international stakeholders in the private sector, including technology and communications companies working to counter online harms and disinformation, as well as enhance efforts for trust and safety online.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Julie Chernov Hwang (center)

In 2024, TSC researchers and experts continued to collaborate closely with academic communities around the world on a range of security issues including terrorism innovation, radicalization, and the targeting of cultural heritage by illicit actors. At the start of the year, Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke joined the Institute of Government and Public Policy at the University of East London for its second annual Counter Terrorism Conference. Dr. Clarke spoke to the changing tactics employed by terrorist organizations, focusing on technological advancements, ideological evolution, and geopolitical dynamics as drivers of change.

TSC Senior Research Fellow Mr. Wassim Nasr joined the conversation surrounding evolving tactics of terrorist groups by participating in a discussion 'Jihadist Militancy in the Sahel: State of the Art and Prospective Scenarios' hosted by the George Washington University Program on Extremism. The discussion explored the state of jihadist organizations in the Sahel, explanations for why they have substantially grown in size, range of action, capabilities and impact, and offered assessments of the different plausible scenarios in the region for the future. In a summer talk at the Rajaratnam School for International Studies in Singapore, TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Julie Chernov Hwang explored how Indonesians and Filipinos join Islamist extremist groups and the varying levels of commitment, from high-risk activities like terrorism to lower-risk roles like preaching. Drawing on over 150 interviews with 97

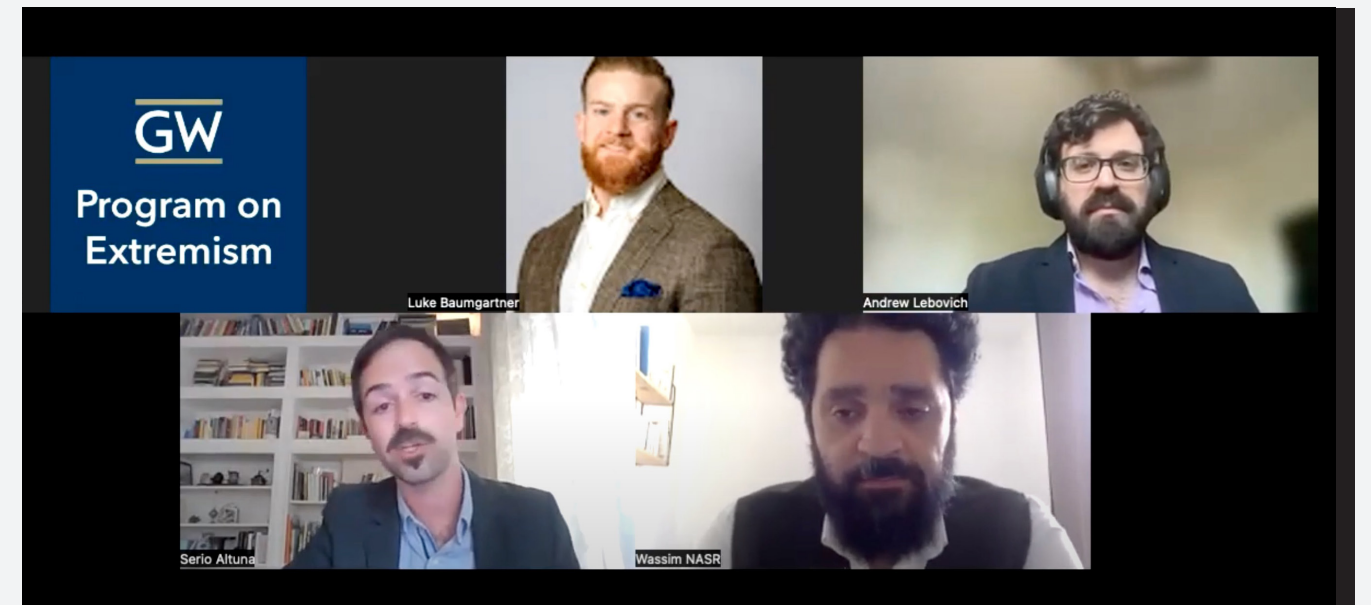
Indonesian extremists, she emphasized that joining such groups is shaped by both personal networks and individual motivations.

Similarly, TSC Founder Mr. Ali Soufan delivered the keynote lecture at the 16th Annual Terrorism Analyst Training Course organized by the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. Mr. Soufan's lecture offered an update on the evolving global terrorism threat, focusing on ongoing conflicts and the activities of major jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. He also addressed the rise of right-wing extremism and its security implications, concluding with policy recommendations for counterterrorism and counter-extremism strategies.

Over the summer, TSC Research Analyst Ms. Michaela Millender presented on her TSC Issue Brief, *Identities Destroyed, Histories Revised: The Targeting of Cultural Heritage and Soft Targets by Illicit Actors*, at the Gonzaga University School of Law in Florence, Italy, alongside Dr. Colin P. Clarke. Ms. Millender also spoke with students at New York University's (NYU) Center for Global Affairs on working in the field of international affairs and foreign policy. In September, Dr. Clarke briefed a classified conference at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physical Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Maryland, where he spoke about great power competition in the Middle East.



TSC Founder
Mr. Ali Soufan



TSC Senior Research Fellow Mr. Wassim Nasr (bottom right)

TSC IN THE NEWS

The Soufan Center continued to engage with national and international news organizations over 2024. Our experts offered their expertise, commentary, and analysis on a range of topics including geopolitics, global terrorism, international security, human rights, and technology. TSC experts were featured by a range of news and media organizations including the New York Times, the Washington Post, NPR, NBC News, BBC News, the Guardian, AP, AFP, and Reuters.

Our experts delivered hundreds of interviews and reached a global audience of millions through their continued engagements with media organizations. TSC also connected with its global audience through dedicated social media channels, and in 2024 TSC content generated millions of impressions. TSC's research projects, events, and experts were mentioned in over 6,000 media pieces in newspapers, online news outlets, and broadcasts. News outlets from around the world picked up on TSC analysis, including from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Qatar, India, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Germany, Australia, Saudi Arabia, and Spain.



TSC Senior Fellow Mr. Kenneth Katzman with Al Jazeera English



TSC team opinion and commentary pieces with Foreign Affairs, Defense One, The Hill, Global Observatory, and New York Times

VIDEO & TELEVISION

TSC's experts offered live television and video interviews to a range of national and international media outlets and are featured regularly by outlets including MSNBC, CNN, Al Jazeera English, CBS News, and BBC News, among others. Our experts offered insights on breaking news developments, as well as providing commentary on investigations and other news stories. TSC's experts spoke on topics including Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, disinformation and national security, instability across the Sahel, global elections, Islamic State terror attacks, the conflicts in the Middle East, and a range of other topics.

OPINION & COMMENTARY

TSC experts authored 38 opinion and commentary pieces in prominent media outlets and policy institutes, including the New York Times, Foreign Policy, Los Angeles Times, Politico, Foreign Affairs, the Guardian, Lawfare, the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, and Defense One – among others. Topics covered this year included domestic terrorism, instability in the Sahel, the wars in the Middle East, and great power competition. In partnership with Defense One, TSC experts authored several pieces on the major themes and topics covered at this year's Global Security Forum.

PODCASTS & RADIO

The TSC team offered more in-depth insights through interviews with radio stations and podcasts. Our experts joined entities—including BBC Radio, NPR, Orion Policy Institute, Foreign Policy Research Institute, The World, and Backstory with Dana Lewis among others—to discuss the latest developments and emerging trendlines on security, foreign policy, and global elections.



TSC Senior Fellow Ambassador Nathan Sales with BBC News



TSC Research Fellow Ms. Clara Broekaert with CNN



TSC Senior Research Fellow Dr. Colin P. Clarke with MSNBC

THE SOUFAN CENTER TEAM



ADEJOKÉ BABINGTON-ASHAYE
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



RICHARD BARRETT
SENIOR FELLOW



CLARA BROEKAERT
RESEARCH ANALYST



COLIN P. CLARKE
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



JULIE CHERNOV HWANG
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



JESSICA DAVIS
SENIOR VISITING FELLOW



CARLOS FERNANDEZ
SENIOR FELLOW



STEPHANIE FOGGETT
RESEARCH FELLOW



KAREN J. GREENBERG
SENIOR VISITING FELLOW



KENNETH KATZMAN
SENIOR FELLOW



LYLA KOHISTANY
SENIOR FELLOW



NIKKIE LYUBARSKY
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



MICHAELA MILLENDER
RESEARCH ANALYST



VINA NADJIBULLA
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



WASSIM NASR
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



ERIC ROSAND
SENIOR VISITING FELLOW



NATHAN SALES
SENIOR FELLOW



MOHAMED EL SHAWESH
DIGITAL MEDIA COORDINATOR



CHAD C. SERENA
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



SUSAN SIM
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW



JOSEPH SHELZI
RESEARCH FELLOW



ALI SOUFAN
FOUNDER



MEREDITH STRICKER
SENIOR FELLOW



GABRIELLA TEJEDA
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



ANOUSHKA VARMA
RESEARCH ASSISTANT



LUCAS WEBBER
SENIOR FELLOW



STEPHEN WHITE
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW

THE SOUFAN CENTER BOARD



ALI SOUFAN
DIRECTOR



LORI WACHS
DIRECTOR



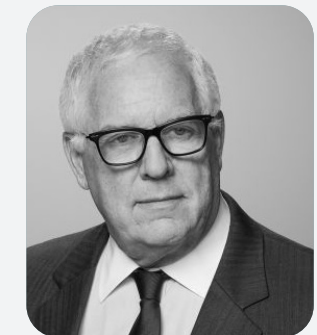
EDWARD STROZ
DIRECTOR



COL. CHRISTOPHER P. COSTA (RET.)
DIRECTOR



CARLOS FERNANDEZ
DIRECTOR



JOHN MILLER
DIRECTOR



HEIDI FINK
TREASURER



STEPHANIE FOGGETT
SECRETARY



THE
SOUFAN
CENTER