

Research guide on the rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees from North East Syria



Acknowledgements

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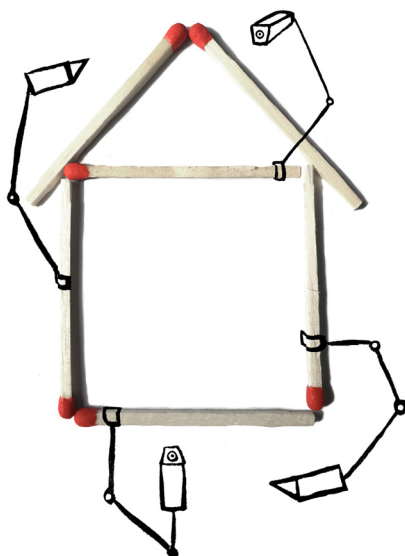
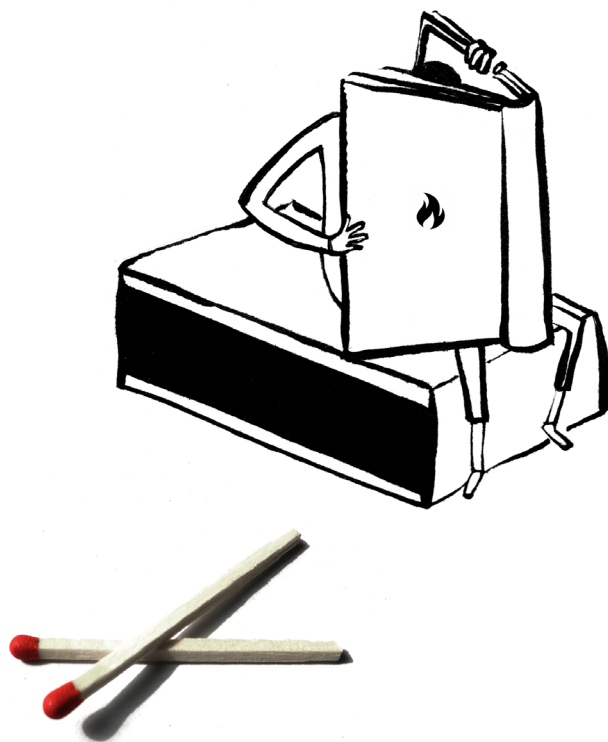


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Introduction

Over 7,000 foreign children¹, who travelled to, were trafficked to or were born in Iraq or Syria to parents who left their home countries to join the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIL), remain detained in inhuman and degrading conditions in camps in North East Syria.² Despite urgent calls to repatriate them to the countries of their nationality³, States' stance on the repatriation of their nationals detained in North East Syria varies significantly.⁴ Notably, approaches to children associated with or affected by the conflict in Syria and Iraq differ starkly from traditional Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) approaches in post-conflict situations. States having often labelled child returnees as a 'national security threat' or 'foreign terrorist fighters' instead of 'children who have been exploited by armed groups'.⁵

This research guide addresses the issue of child returnees, with a focus on their rehabilitation and reintegration. It is the result of a literature review conducted by CRIN, and seeks to present its main findings and offer a list of resources to researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in the UK and abroad.

The resources included in this guide reflect the available research. Their inclusion here should not be understood as an endorsement by CRIN.

1 Save the Children, Speed up repatriations or foreign children could be stuck in North East Syria camps for up to 30 years, warns Save the Children, March 2022, available at: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/speed-repatriations-or-foreign-children-could-be-stuck-north-east-syria-camps-30-years-warns>.

2 United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, *Position of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism on the human rights of adolescents/juveniles being detained in North-East Syria*, 2021, p. 3, available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Terrorism/SR/UNSRCT_Position_human-rights-of-boys-adolescents-2021_final.pdf.

3 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Syria: *UN experts urge 57 States to repatriate women and children from squalid camps*, 8 February 2021, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/02/syria-un-experts-urge-57-states-repatriate-women-and-children-squalid-camps?LangID=E&NewsID=26730>; CRIN and others, *Bringing Children Home: A children's rights approach to returning from ISIL*, 2020, available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a-fadb22e17ba3eddf90c02f/t/5e2eff4dd8d299147ca07280/1580138318883/Child+Returnees+Position+Paper+%28Final+Janv.+2020%29.pdf>.

4 Rights & Security International, *Global Repatriations Tracker*, last updated on 5 July 2022, available at: <https://www.rightsandsecurity.org/action/resources/global-repatriations-tracker>; Adam Hoffman and Marta Furlan, *Challenges posed by returning foreign fighters*, Program on Extremism of The George Washington University, March 2020, pp. 16-20, available at: <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zax-dzs2191/f/Challenges%20Posed%20by%20Returning%20Foreign%20Fighters.pdf>.

5 For example, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), *Children and Counter-terrorism*, 2016, p. 77, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/4dvmtzf2>.

Terminology

In our work on counter-terrorism, we aim to avoid using terms such as ‘terrorism’, ‘extremism’ and ‘radicalisation’ uncritically, as they are contested, lack clear definition, and cannot be separated from the logic of national security law and policy and their impact on children’s rights. Where it is necessary to use these terms in order to refer to their usage by others, we enclose them in quotation marks.

In place of ‘terrorism’, we use the term ‘atrocities by non-state armed groups’ (or ‘atrocities’).

In place of characterising some children as ‘extremist’ or ‘terrorist’, we use the phrase ‘recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups’, which is recognised by international law as a violation of children’s rights.

Finally, when using ‘deradicalisation’ we would like the reader to be mindful of the term’s shortcomings and inherent biases, as discussed below.

For further explanation of our approach and the reasons behind it, please refer to the note on terminology on pages 6-7 of our [Preventing Safeguarding report](#).



International instruments

There are a number of international instruments that offer guidelines on the rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees. While they often lack a high level of detail, they nonetheless make a strong case for authorities to repatriate children and focus on their rehabilitation and reintegration.

UN Security Council

On at least two occasions, the UN Security Council has issued binding⁶ resolutions concerning persons returning from North East Syria and Iraq:

In 2014, it called upon States to ‘develo[p] and implemen[t] [...] rehabilitation and reintegration strategies for returning foreign terrorist fighters.’⁷

In 2017, it emphasised the necessity ‘to develop and implement’ such strategies ‘with respect to [...] children accompanying returning and relocating foreign terrorist fighters’, and highlighted that returnee children ‘require special focus when developing tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategies’, and ‘stresses’ the importance of assisting them, as they ‘may be victims of terrorism.’⁸

In 2018, the Security Council adopted a resolution outlining protections for children affected by armed conflict, including children linked with non-state armed groups, and called for a focus on their reintegration and rehabilitation.⁹

Secretary-General of the UN

In 2019, the Secretary-General of the UN published the *Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to United Nations Listed Terrorist Groups*:

- He stated that ‘[r]ehabilitation and reintegration of children linked with United Nations listed terrorist groups must be prioritized [...]. This includes access to age and gender appropriate services, including mental health and psychosocial support, education and legal assistance.’¹⁰

6 Adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, available [here](#).

7 UN Security Council, Resolution 2178(2014), UN Doc S/RES/2178 (2014), para. 4, available [here](#).

8 UN Security Council, Resolution 2396(2017), UN Doc S/RES/2396 (2017), paras. 30-1, available [here](#).

9 UN Security Council, Resolution 2427 (2018), S/RES/2427 (2018), paras. 21, 26, 37, available at: <http://unscr.com/files/2018/02427.pdf>.

10 UN Secretary-General, *Key Principles for the Protection, Repatriation, Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women and Children with Links to United Nations Listed Terrorist Groups*, 2019, p. 6, available [here](#).

- In the case of children who may be in conflict with the law, he emphasised that '[c]hildren's best interests require prioritization of rehabilitation and reintegration in any contact they have with the law'.¹¹

Council of Europe

In 2020, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe issued a resolution in which it urged Member States to 'take all necessary measures to ensure the effective rehabilitation and (re-)integration of all returnee children'.¹²

Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

In 2018, OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) issued guidelines for States to address the issue of returning 'foreign terrorist fighters' within a human rights framework. The guidelines established that 'States should implement tailored reintegration programmes for returning children, including by assigning mentors and a range of support to enable them to return to their former lives without stigmatization or alienation'.¹³

Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF)

Founded by 30 States, the GCTF is an informal multilateral counter-terrorism platform that brings together policymakers and practitioners. With regard to returning children, the GCTF has put forward a series of good practices, which call States to '[a]pproach rehabilitation and reintegration programming for children through a lens of socialization and education to promote disengagement from violence and prosocial behavior'.¹⁴ According to the GCTF, rehabilitation programmes for child returnees should be aimed at 'supporting reintegration and avoiding recidivism' through 'social support components [...], mental health support, and mentoring and educational elements for children as well as parents and families'. Programmes should also encompass 'critical thinking skills, social intelligence, and empathy' and include families, faith-based, community organisations and education systems.

11 Ibid., p. 7.

12 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Resolution 2321 (2020), *International obligations concerning the repatriation of children from war and conflict zones*, 30 January 2020, para. 8.2.1., available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/28581/html>. See also, Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development of PACE, Report. International obligations concerning the repatriation of children from war and conflict zones, Doc. 15055, 29 January 2020, available at: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/28498/html>.

13 OSCE/ODIHR, *Guidelines for Addressing the Threats and Challenges of "Foreign Terrorist Fighters" within a Human Rights Framework*, 2018, p. 71, available at: https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/4/7/393503_2.pdf.

14 GCTF, *Good Practices on Addressing the Challenge of Returning Families of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs)*, 2018, Good practice 14, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p83myb6>

Deradicalisation vs. disengagement

The literature shows a consistent tension in the design of reintegration and rehabilitation programmes, between approaches focused on either deradicalisation and disengagement.

While disengagement emphasises behavioural change, deradicalisation focuses on change in beliefs. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, and most programmes feature traits of both.¹⁵

However, the literature has raised a number of concerns with regard to 'deradicalisation':

- 'Deradicalisation' is premised on an oversimplification that it is not supported by evidence: that the adoption of 'radical views' necessarily leads to involvement in 'radical behaviour' and that desistance from violence similarly necessitates the abandonment of such views.¹⁶
- Focusing on changing a person's beliefs may violate the right to freedom of thought.¹⁷
- 'Deradicalisation' may not necessarily be a prerequisite for reintegration. Seemingly, the majority of the persons who were convicted and subsequently released in Europe between the 1960s and 1990s due to their involvement in atrocities committed by IRA, ETA, Red Brigades and RAF did not undergo any formal deradicalisation programme and are no longer involved in atrocities, at least to the same extent.¹⁸ This suggests that reintegration may not necessarily be premised upon prior 'deradicalisation'.
- Research shows that disengagement – not taking part in atrocities – is more achievable than 'deradicalisation' – changing someone's ideology.¹⁹

15 Radicalisation Awareness Network, *RAN issue paper. Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge*, November 2016, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files_en?file=2020-09/issue_paper_foreign_fighter_returnees_reintegration_challenge_112016_en.pdf.

16 Ibid., p.4.

17 Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, Just Security, 6 June 2020, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/71021/rehabilitating-and-reintegrating-child-returnees-from-isis/>.

18 Radicalisation Awareness Network, *RAN issue paper. Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge*, Nov 2016, p. 5, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files_en?file=2020-09/issue_paper_foreign_fighter_returnees_reintegration_challenge_112016_en.pdf.

19 John Horgan, *Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counter-*

Despite these critiques, literature suggesting ‘deradicalisation’ should be left behind when it comes to child returnees is scarce. Although there is recognition that ‘deradicalisation’ should not be the only tool which programmes rely upon, the mainstream narrative in the rehabilitation and reintegration discourse is often uncritical of the inherent shortcomings of deradicalisation-based approaches. Indeed, a number of proposals for the rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees highlight that special attention should be paid to the persistence of extreme ideology.²⁰

Further reading

- **Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis**, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, Just Security, 6 June 2020.
- **Liesbeth van der Heide**, *Ideology matters: why we cannot afford to ignore the role of ideology in dealing with terrorism*, Penal Reform International, 3 April 2018.
- **Liesbeth van der Heide and Jip Geenen**, *Children of the Caliphate. Young IS Returnees and the Reintegration Challenge*, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, August 2017.
- **Radicalisation Awareness Network**, *RAN issue paper. Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge*, November 2016.
- **Faiza Patel**, *Rethinking Radicalization*, Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, 2011.
- **Andrew Silke**, *Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists*, 4(1) CTC Sentinel, 2011.
- **John Horgan**, *Deradicalization or Disengagement? A Process in Need of Clarity and a Counterterrorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation*, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 2008, Vol 2 (4).

rorism Initiative in Need of Evaluation, 2(4) *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 2008, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2s3rwtvb>; Andrew Silke, *Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists*, 4(1) *CTC Sentinel*, 2011, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/yhmr84b8>.

²⁰ Liesbeth van der Heide, *Ideology matters: why we cannot afford to ignore the role of ideology in dealing with terrorism*, Penal Reform International, 3 April 2018, available at: <https://www.penalreform.org/blog/ideology-matters-why-we-cannot-afford-to-ignore/>; Liesbeth van der Heide and Jip Geenen, *Children of the Caliphate. Young IS Returnees and the Reintegration Challenge*, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, August 2017, available at: <https://icct.nl/app/uploads/2017/08/ICCT-vanderHeide-Geenen-Children-of-the-Caliphate-1.pdf>.

Reintegration and rehabilitation of child returnees in practice

Although reintegration and rehabilitation programmes focused on children recruited and used by non-state armed groups are scant, a number of States that have repatriated children from Syria have put in place programmes aiming at their reintegration and rehabilitation:

- Having repatriated 490 children²¹, **Kazakhstan** leads international efforts and its model has been considered ‘highly successful and aspirational’. The country uses 17 rehabilitation and reintegration centres, which centralise children’s support from mental health professionals, religious scholars, lawyers, healthcare workers, and teachers in order to transition to life in the country. Children stay in a centre for around a month, are given Kazakh birth certificates, and receive individual learning to be able to begin formal education upon their departure.²²
- **Denmark** uses the ‘Aarhus model’, which focuses on ‘on practical and psychological, but not ideological, interventions for’ returnees and is one of the ‘best-known’ amongst the reintegration and rehabilitation programmes.²³ The model involves cooperation between police, social workers and religious groups, provides for specialised psychological counselling and assigns young people returning to the country with trained mentors.²⁴
- In **Belgium**, upon arrival, children are taken to a paediatric hospital, where their medical, psychosocial, education and outpatient care needs are assessed. Family members spend time with them there until they are released in their community, where they benefit from specific services.²⁵

21 Rights & Security International, *Global Repatriations Tracker*, last updated on 5 July 2022, available at: <https://www.rightsandsecurity.org/action/resources/global-repatriations-tracker>.

22 Save the Children International, *When am I Going to Start to Live? The urgent need to repatriate foreign children trapped in Al Hol and Roj Camps*, 2021, p. 37, available at: https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/when_am_i_going_to_start_to_live_final_0.pdf/.

23 Jonathan Hall QC, *The Terrorism Acts in 2019. Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the Operation of the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006*, March 2021, para. 8.22, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972261/THE_TERRORISM_ACTS_IN_2019_REPORT_Accessible.pdf.

24 David Crouch and Jon Henley, *A way home for jihadis: Denmark’s radical approach to Islamic extremism*, *The Guardian*, 23 February 2015, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/ycxfdcwh>.

25 Save the Children International, *When am I Going to Start to Live? The urgent need to repatriate*

- In **Finland**, the returnee policy adopted in 2017 requires that the central government, municipal authorities and CSOs work together to ensure sufficient support for the reintegration of returnees into Finnish society. The policy's aim is to provide children with systematic and long-term support on a case-by-case basis, relying on cooperation between authorities.²⁶
- In **Germany**, reintegration and rehabilitation services are coordinated through a case manager who oversees the cooperation of various structures like youth welfare, offices, schools, employment agencies. Returnees are supervised to assess their reintegration.²⁷
- In 2020, **North Macedonia** adopted a reintegration programme which involves different national institutions, creates multidisciplinary teams, allows for civil society engagement, and addresses the psychosocial needs of child returnees. Although the plan may face challenges regarding institutional capacities and coordination, experts on the repatriation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of family members from North East Syria have praised it as 'ambitious and well-designed'.²⁸

Nevertheless, the biggest barrier that these programmes and research on the reintegration and rehabilitation of child returnees face is the lack of information and evidence available on their effectiveness.

Although some assessments have taken place, research evaluating reintegration and rehabilitation programmes is generally lacking.²⁹ Moreover, although 'reducing recidivism' is often the goal of reintegration programmes, the lack of sufficient data on this subject prevents an objective assessment of programmes' success.³⁰

For example, the UK's Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation commissioned a 'survey of deradicalisation, disengagement and reintegration programmes (both voluntary and compulsory) in 10 countries'.³¹

foreign children trapped in Al Hol and Roj Camps, 2021, p. 37, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/f5kvwcb4>.

26 Ministry of the Interior of Finland, *Children and adults returning from Syria*, last accessed on 16 August 2022, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/36546kre>.

27 Save the Children International, *When am I Going to Start to Live? The urgent need to repatriate foreign children trapped in Al Hol and Roj Camps*, 2021, p. 37, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/f5kvwcb4>.

28 Eric Rosand, Heidi Ellis and Stevan Weine, *Repatriating ISIS Family Members: A North Macedonia Model?*, Just Security, 14 September 2020, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/72420/repatriating-isis-family-members-a-north-macedonian-model/>.

29 Andrew Silke, *Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists*, 4(1) CTC Sentinel, 2011, available at: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/disengagement-or-deradicalization-a-look-at-prison-programs-for-jailed-terrorists/>.

30 Radicalisation Awareness Network, *RAN issue paper. Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge*, November 2016, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/system/files_en?file=2020-09/issue_paper_foreign_fighter_returnees_reintegration_challenge_112016_en.pdf.

31 Jonathan Hall QC, *The Terrorism Acts in 2019. Report of the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation on the Operation of the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006*, March 2021, para. 8.22, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/972261/THE_TERRORISM_ACTS_IN_2019_REPORT_Accessible.pdf. The countries were Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, USA, and Uzbekistan.

While highlighting the Danish Aarhus model, as well as Kazakhstan's efforts, he acknowledged that:

“Little is reported or known about the effectiveness of the programmes dealing with deradicalization/disengagement/reintegration. Many of them are in their infancy, and the programmes will not achieve instant results, but the greatest challenge must be to prove that they contribute to a reduced terror threat or that the paucity or reduction of terror attacks are due to the success of any of these programmes.”³²

However, other scholars have noted that ‘[w]hile the rehabilitation and reintegration programs implemented in Kazakhstan and Kosovo have not yet produced significant results, there have not been any major security consequences of repatriation in those countries.’³³

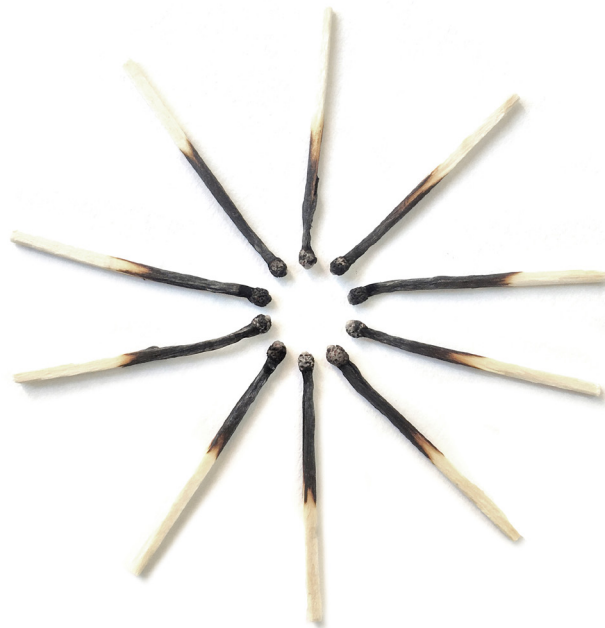
Further reading

- **UN Secretary-General's ISIL reports.**
- **Rights & Security International, Global Repatriations Tracker,** last updated on 5 July 2022.
- **Save the Children International, When am I Going to Start to Live? The urgent need to repatriate foreign children trapped in Al Hol and Roj Camps, 2021.**
- **Carlota Rigotti and Júlia Zomignani Barboza, Unfolding the case of returnees: How the European Union and its member States are addressing the return of foreign fighters and their families,** 103 *International Review of the Red Cross*, 681, 2021.
- **William B. Farrell, Rustam Burnashev, Rustam Azizi, and Bakhtiyar Babadjanov, Processes of Reintegrating Central Asian Returnees from Syria and Iraq,** 498 *United States Institute of Peace*, July 2021.
- **Eric Rosand, Heidi Ellis and Stevan Weine, Repatriating ISIS Family Members: A North Macedonia Model?,** *Just Security*, 14 September 2020.

32 Ibid.

33 Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg, *Perspective: Can We Repatriate the ISIS Children?*, 3(3) *Horizon Insights*, 21, 2020, p. 31, available at: <https://behorizon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Horizon-Insights-2020-3.pdf#page=21>.

- **Sofia Koller et al.**, 'Children and Adolescents' in Issue Paper: Reintegration of Returnees from Syria and Iraq, German Council on Foreign Relations, 2020.
- **Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg**, Perspective: Can We Repatriate the ISIS Children?, 3(3) Horizon Insights, 21, 2020.
- **Manfred Nowak**, 'Children deprived of liberty on national security grounds', The United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, 2019.
- **Jan Ilhan Kizilhan**, Providing Psychosocial Care to Child Soldiers Living in Post-IS Iraq, ICCT Research Paper, 2019.
- **Ahmad Saiful Rijal Bin Hassan**, Denmark's De-radicalisation Programme for Returning Foreign Terrorist Fighters, 11(3) Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, 13, March 2019.
- **David Crouch and Jon Henley**, A way home for jihadis: Denmark's radical approach to Islamic extremism, The Guardian, 23 February 2015.
- **Radicalisation Awareness Network**, RAN issue paper. Foreign fighter returnees & the reintegration challenge, November 2016.
- **Andrew Silke**, Disengagement or Deradicalization: A Look at Prison Programs for Jailed Terrorists, 4(1) CTC Sentinel, 2011.



Academic proposals for rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees

Academic proposals from child psychology/psychiatry scholars that focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of child returnees are scarce. Against this background, some experts suggest that proposals could be informed by ‘Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration programs implemented with child soldiers in Africa and elsewhere’, as well as by ‘programs designed to help youth leave gangs’.³⁴

This review has found that the only ‘evidence-based framework for thinking about rehabilitation and reintegration’ of child returnees is the Rehabilitation and Reintegration Intervention Framework (RRIF) developed in 2020 by Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis.³⁵

While noting that the ‘specific developmental trajectories of ISIS returnees’ are yet to be studied, the authors took Theresa Betancourt’s findings with regards to the successful rehabilitation of child soldiers from Sierra Leone as their starting point.³⁶ They reviewed 31 ‘prior studies in the areas of refugee children, war-impacted children, child criminal gang members, child victims of maltreatment, and child victims of sex trafficking’, as they found that ‘children’s exposure to trauma and adversity’ in these areas ‘overlapped significantly with that experienced by child returnees’.³⁷

34 Ibid., p. 30.

35 Stevan Weine et al., *Rapid Review to Inform the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Returnees from the Islamic State*, 86(1) *Annals of Global Health*, 64, 2020, available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7304453/pdf/agh-86-1-2835.pdf>; Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, *Just Security*, 6 June 2020, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/71021/rehabilitating-and-reintegrating-child-returnees-from-isis/>.

36 Theresa Betancourt et al., *Sierra Leone’s former child soldiers: a longitudinal study of risk, protective factors, and mental health*, 49(6) *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 606, 2010, available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3157024/>.

37 Stevan Weine et al., *Rapid Review to Inform the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Returnees from the Islamic State*, 86(1) *Annals of Global Health*, 64, 2020, available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7304453/pdf/agh-86-1-2835.pdf>; Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, *Just Security*, 6 June 2020, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/71021/rehabilitating-and-reintegrating-child-returnees-from-isis/>.

As shown below, the RRIF pursues five primary goals across five levels of social interaction, while also identifying risk and protective factors³⁸:

	Promoting Individual Mental Health and Well-Being	Promoting Family Support	Promoting Educational Success	Promoting Community Support	Improving Structural Conditions and Protecting Public Safety
RISK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma exposure • Displacement stressors • Alcohol or drug use • Health problems • Development delays • Violence behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent mental health/ health problems • Family separation and conflict • Domestic violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning problems • Bullying • Discrimination • Language barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigma, discrimination, humiliation and hostility • Social isolation/ detachment • Poverty and unemployment • Acculturation stressors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strenuous repatriation • Economic hardship • Lack of education and employment • Inequitable access to resources • Motivation to seek revenge • Exposure to VE • Criminality
PROTECTIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to services • Family support • Belief systems • Hope and optimism • Social and emotional intelligence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious faith and support • Family acceptance, cohesion, adaptability • Family responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School attendance and engagement • Teacher support • Peer friendships and support • Recreational activities • School safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community welcoming and awareness • Social support • Outside mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate housing • Parental employment • Job training and employment • Financial stability • Safe environment • Positive engagement with the state • Political activism • Civic engagement

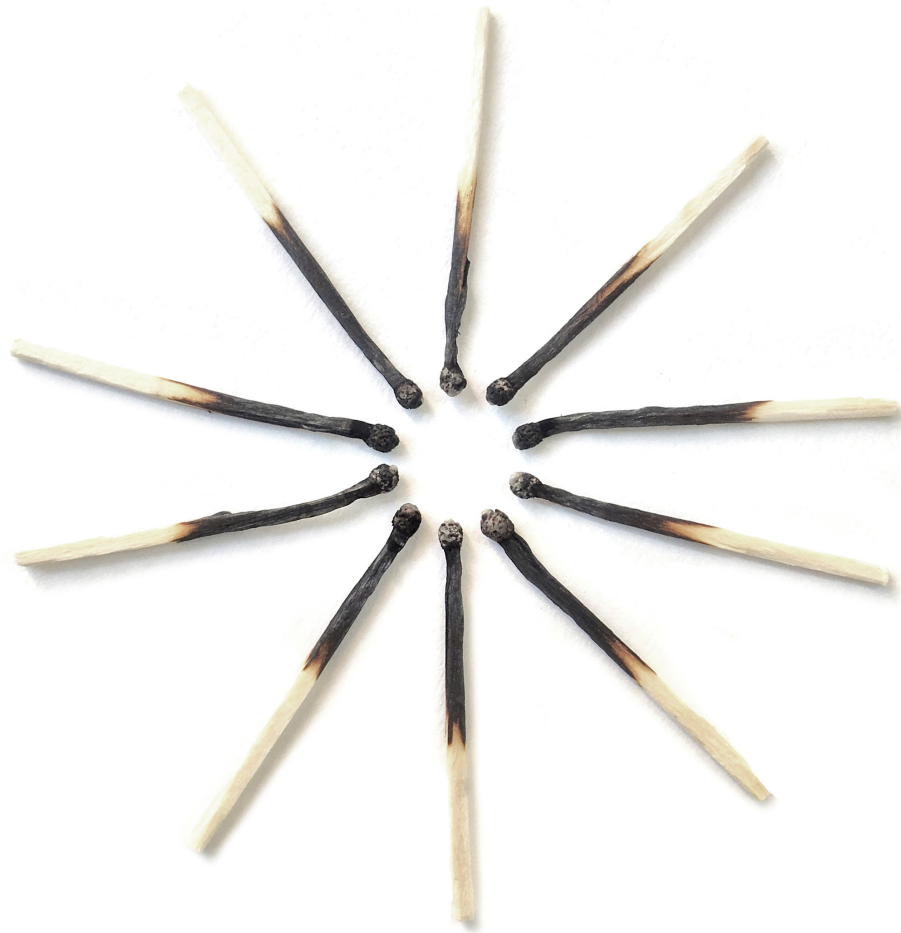
While acknowledging that no model may work for all child returnees, the authors argue that ‘programs based on the existing evidence from relevant prior work should be at least as successful as programs designed to support other child populations affected by severe trauma and adversity’. Otherwise, they claim, it will mean that child returnees ‘are somehow different than other child populations exposed to severe trauma and adversity’.³⁹

Further reading

- **Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis**, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, Just Security, 6 June 2020.
- **Stevan Weine et al.**, *Rapid Review to Inform the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Returnees from the Islamic State*, 86(1) *Annals of Global Health*, 64, 2020.
- **Anne Speckhard and Molly Ellenberg**, *Perspective: Can We Repatriate the ISIS Children?*, 3(3) *Horizon Insights*, 21, 2020.

38 Stevan Weine et al., *Rapid Review to Inform the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Returnees from the Islamic State*, 86(1) *Annals of Global Health*, 64, 2020, Fig. 2, available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7304453/figure/F2/>.

39 Stevan Weine and Heidi Ellis, *Rehabilitating and Reintegrating Child Returnees from ISIS*, Just Security, 6 June 2020, available at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/71021/rehabilitating-and-reintegrating-child-returnees-from-isis/>.



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