

# Dispelling the ‘Few Extremists’ Myth – the Muslim World Is Overcome with Hate

By David French — December 7, 2015

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It is simply false to declare that jihadists represent the “tiny few extremists” who sully the reputation of an otherwise peace-loving and tolerant Muslim faith. In reality, the truth is far more troubling — that jihadists represent the natural and inevitable outgrowth of a faith that is given over to hate on a massive scale, with hundreds of millions of believers holding views that Americans would rightly find revolting. Not all Muslims are hateful, of course, but so many are that it’s not remotely surprising that the world is wracked by wave after wave of jihadist violence.

To understand the Muslim edifice of hate, imagine it as a pyramid — with broadly-shared bigotry at the bottom, followed by stair steps of escalating radicalism — culminating in jihadist armies that in some instances represent a greater share of their respective populations than does the active-duty military in the United States.

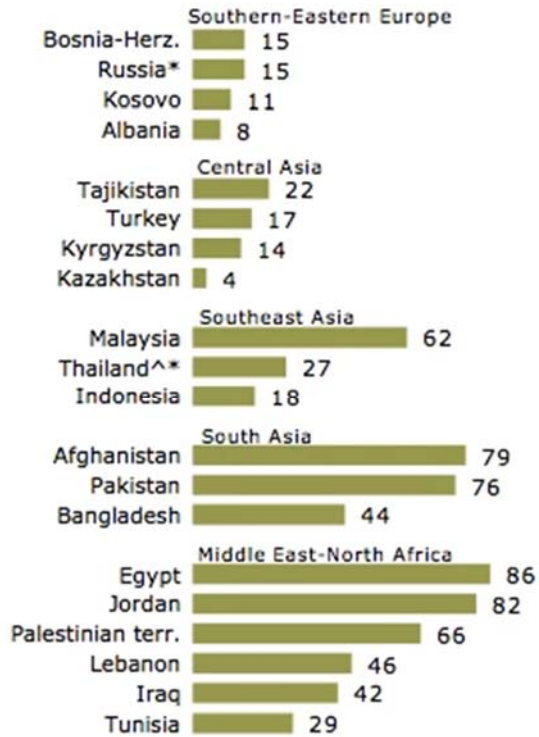
The base of the pyramid, the most broadly held hatred in the Islamic world, is anti-Semitism, with staggering numbers of Muslims expressing anti-Jewish views. In 2014, the Anti-Defamation League released the results of polling 53,100 people in 102 countries for evidence of anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs. The numbers from the majority-Muslim world are difficult to believe for those steeped in politically correct rhetoric about Islam. A full [74 percent of North African and Middle Eastern residents registered anti-Semitic beliefs](#), including 92 percent of Iraqis, a whopping 69 percent of relatively secular Turks, and 74 percent of Saudis.

The trend toward Muslim anti-Semitism continues even when Muslim nations are far removed from the Arab–Israeli conflict. A solid majority — 61 percent — of majority-Muslim Malays harbor anti-Semitic attitudes, while only 13 percent of neighboring majority-Buddhist Thais are anti-Jewish.

The next level of the pyramid is Muslim commitment to deadly Islamic supremacy. In multiple Muslim nations, [overwhelming majorities of Muslims support the death penalty for apostasy or blasphemy](#). Collectively, this means that hundreds of millions of men and women support capital punishment for the exercise of the basic human rights of freedom of expression and free exercise of religion:

## Death Penalty for Leaving Islam

Among Muslims who say sharia should be the law of the land, % who favor the death penalty for converts



Based on Muslims who favor making sharia the law of the land.

\*Based on Muslims who favor making sharia the law in Muslim areas.

^Interviews conducted with Muslims in five southern provinces only.

Results for Azerbaijan not shown due to small sample size.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q79a and Q92b.

Moving beyond Islamic supremacy to the next step of the pyramid, enormous numbers of Muslims are terrorist sympathizers. It is still stunning to see how popular Osama bin Laden was early last decade, and even as his popularity plunged (as he grew weaker and more isolated), his public approval remained disturbingly high:

## Confidence in Osama bin Laden

									<i>Pct point change</i>	
	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	03-11	10-11
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Palest. ter.	72	--	--	57	--	52	--	34	-38	--
Indonesia	59	36	35	41	37	25	25	26	-33	+1
Egypt	--	--	27	18	19	23	19	22	--	+3
Jordan	56	61	24	20	19	28	14	13	-43	-1
Turkey	15	6	4	5	3	2	3	3	-12	0
Lebanon	19	4	--	2	2	4	0	1	-18	+1
Nigeria	45	--	61	52	58	54	48	--	--	--
Pakistan*	46	52	38	38	34	18	18	--	--	--

Based on Muslims only.

Pakistan will be included as part of the spring 2011 Pew Global Attitudes survey, but the fieldwork for the survey is still underway.

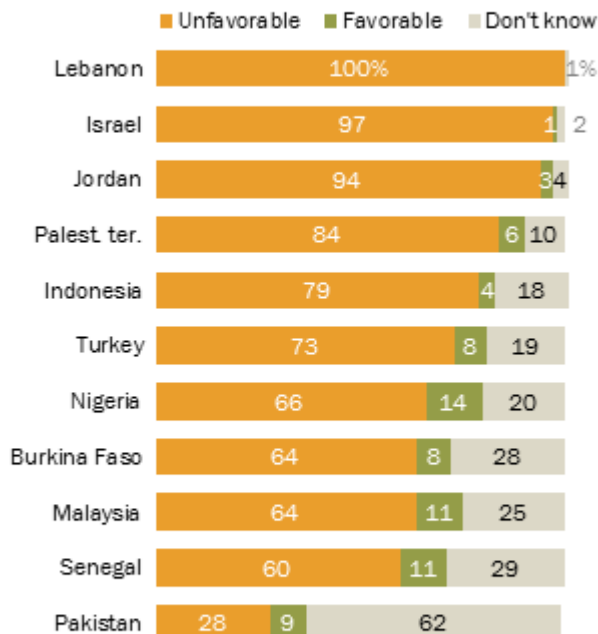
Conducted March 21 - April 12, 2011.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q48e.

But what about ISIS — the world's most savage and deadly terror organization? The latest polling data show that while a majority of Muslims reject ISIS, extrapolating from the populations of polled countries alone shows that roughly 50 million people express sympathy for a terrorist army that burns prisoners alive, throws gay men from buildings, and beheads political opponents. In Pakistan a horrifying 72 percent couldn't bring themselves to express an unfavorable view of ISIS:

## Views of ISIS Overwhelmingly Negative

Do you have a \_\_\_ opinion of the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS?



Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%.

Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q12n.

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But sympathy for terror is different from active support, and here's where the numbers are difficult to pin down. I know of no reliable database that shows how many Muslims give to jihadist charities, spread jihadist propaganda on social media, support radical preachers, or otherwise take concrete actions to advance the terrorists' cause. We do know, for example, that anti-Israel terrorism is so popular in Saudi Arabia that a [telethon once raised \\$100 million to support the 2002 intifada](#). Shows of support included this charming scene:

"A 6-year-old boy, with a plastic gun slung over his shoulder and fake explosives strapped around his waist, walked into a donation center and made a symbolic donation of plastic explosives, according to *Al Watan* daily."

It is from this fertile soil that jihadists grow. And here the numbers decisively belie the "few extremists" rhetoric. In Iran alone, the Revolutionary Guard represents a proportionate share of the population similar to the combined strength of the active-duty Army and Marines here in the United States. Between Boko Haram, the Al-Nusra front, ISIS, Hezbollah, Hamas, al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Yemeni militias, Libyan militias, and many others, the number of active jihadists numbers in the hundreds of thousands; some estimates indicate that 100,00 are fighting in Syria alone.

To give a sense of proportion, the United States is a nation that honors military service, respects its veterans, and engages in a massive military recruiting effort that includes offering soldiers generous salaries, pensions, benefits, and the best military equipment in the world. Even then, only about 0.4 percent of the American population engages in active-duty military service at any given time. Jihadists, by contrast, have low life expectancies, second-rate gear, low salaries, and often have to break domestic laws and journey across battlefields to join terrorist insurgencies, but still they join. In Britain, for example, [more Muslims join ISIS than join the British army](#).

Simply put, America's leaders actively deceive the American people about the sheer scale of Muslim hatred and commitment to jihad. Rather than tell us the truth, the Obama administration and the media aristocracy constantly lecture Americans about discrimination, apparently believing that only their scolding keeps the great redneck masses at bay.

Telling us the truth won't send Americans on an anti-Muslim killing spree. Instead, it will make us no more radical than Egypt's president, who briefly made headlines earlier this year after calling for a "revolution" in Islam and decrying faith traditions that he admitted had been "[sacralized over the centuries](#)." Telling the truth can demonstrate the scale of the problem and at least begin the process of convincing the American people that there is no quick fix, that the defense of the nation will require courage and resolve over the long term.

Islam has a problem. It is Muslims' responsibility to reform their own faith. It is America's responsibility to defend itself and its citizens. Neither goal is advanced by telling convenient, politically correct lies. After 14 years of war, can we finally tell the truth?

— *David French is a staff writer at National Review, an attorney, and a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.*