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## "Fikr" is Forward Leaning and Potent

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In May, Saudi Arabia launched the Ideological Warfare Center (IWC or [Fikr](#) in Arabic). The IWC is the Kingdom's counter-terrorism information center under the supervision of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's (MBS) Ministry of Defense.

The IWC is staffed with experienced experts from Saudi Arabia. Muslim World League (MWL) Chairman and Saudi clerical scholar and *Fikr* Secretary General Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Bin Abdulkarim al-Issa [explained](#) that the IWC considers: "*Islam to be embracive, loving and all inclusive. The type of Islam that the center seeks to counter is a doctrine that goes beyond logic leading to extremism, hatred, and exclusion.*" Al-Issa is the main figurehead for promoting the 'true' version of Islam, which encourages peace, tolerance, and coexistence. In this initial stage of the IWC's work, the focus upon the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*) is critical by shutting down Qatar's state support for the extremist movement.

*Fikr* is a key to MBS's efforts to expose the ills of extremism and terrorism, especially towards the *Ikhwan* through the use of social media via several languages including Arabic, English, and French. The IWC's efforts to make clear why the *Ikhwan* is such a threat is vindicated by the fact that Qatar now seems to be in a corner regarding its support for the movement which Riyadh designated a terrorist organization in 2014.

The IWC is concentrating on exposing mistakes, allegations, suspicions and deceptive techniques promoted by extremists and terrorists and using Islamic law to counter such menaces. The IWC's messages aim to introduce intellectual initiatives similar to those view articulated by Saudi and non-Saudi agencies for the Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism. The IWC plans to raise the level of Islamic awareness in Muslim and non-Muslim countries to garner more support for the 'real' Islam.

Qatar's error in supporting the *Ikhwan* is being spelled out clearly by IWC. From its very first messages to its growing audience,

the IWC **argued** that the common denominator is that the Muslim Brotherhood and its political agents invaded targeted countries via intellectual and intelligence methods. From this departure point, *Fikr* **explained** that the *Ikhwan* is not only an alliance of conspiracy among some scholar of science and clerics with the aimed at “*national loyalists*”. Importantly, IWC illustrated that the *Ikhwan* sees nation states as illegitimate and instead seeks to establish an Islamic Caliphate Muslim Brotherhood **through** an Islamic revival. Qatar, thus, is the state sponsor of the *Ikhwan*.

IWC also **explained** *Ikhwan* strategies to undermine authority in that the Muslim Brotherhood deals with terrorists and uses conspiracy and deceit to bring success and stability to their own cause. Secret treaties and partnerships **are part of** the *Ikhwan*'s links across the world that emanate from Qatar that the IWC seeks to negate through discourse and discussion. There is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood **convinced** Muslim youth of suicide bombings, political assassinations and mobilized them nationally for a Caliphate State. **Inoculating** youth against extremist thought through various programs and dismantling the means used by terrorist to recruit its followers is one of the primary goals. The IWC's voice is successfully bringing to the forefront Qatar's perfidy not only among its Arab neighbors but beyond through smart messaging.

In the future, IWC seeks to implement new, cutting-edge strategic communication plans against ideological extremism, including promotion of moderation, tolerance, dialogue and understanding values within the context of the belief in diversity.

Now the IWC is using studies and research by creating scientific and intellectual platforms, international forums and research chairs to engage communities in promoting moderate views. Future initiatives of the IWC include a range of counter terrorism strategies: the exchange of intelligence and databases of terrorist organizations among coalition members; media initiatives to communicate counter-radicalization messaging; and the coordination of military support according to each states' capabilities to confront terrorism that threatens the member states. The US, UK, Australia, Germany, France, Canada and Italy support the coordination of these member states, and would potentially benefit from such efforts, receiving increased intelligence and support in countering home-grown or imported terrorism and radicalization.

Overall, the reason why the Saudi Ministry of Defense has been successful is that the IWC distinguishes itself from other counter-narrative centers by producing high-quality content as well as videos that are innovative, educational, genuine, transparent and instructive. These kinds of videos and visual imagery are authentic and show stories that are significantly more powerful and successful than other methods in countering the narrative and ideologies of extremist groups as well as raising awareness among the public across nations, religions, and communities. Simultaneously, the construction of narratives based on accurate research and analysis is vital to IWC's success. With the assistance of the MWL under the direction of Sheikh Dr. al-Issa, *Fikr* is proving itself to be a powerful tool in cyberspace but also influencing opinion shapers and informing the public of the *Ikhwan*'s bent and dangerous ideology.

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