

The Role of the Internet in the Process of Muslims Radicalization in the Western Balkans

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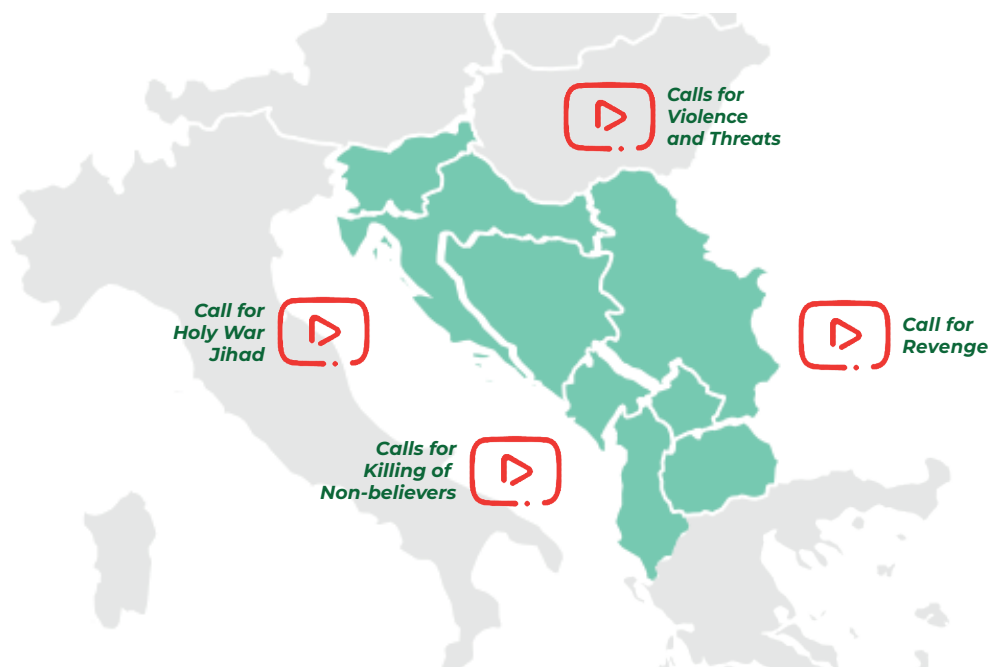
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Abstract: The research subject of this paper is the video material posted on YouTube in Bosnian and Serbian with the intention to radicalize the Muslim population from the Western Balkans. The analyzed video materials with radical messages were classified into two groups. Ones that aim at changing attitudes (cognitive radicalization) and the ones that propagate change in behaviour (engaging in violence, murder, terrorist acts, etc.). Narratives from those two basic groups were divided into subgroups within which their content was analyzed. The research in this paper showed that extreme Muslim radical messages that lead to terrorism expressed in the languages of small nations (in this case in Serbian or Bosnian) could have not only local, but a global, destructive aims, considering the global danger of Muslim radicalism.

Keywords: radicalization, Muslim extremism, the internet, the Western Balkans.

Graphical abstract



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INTRODUCTION

Radicalization is usually defined as a process of adopting ideas which are aimed at serious changes with respect to some established values. Delgaard-Nielsen defines radicalization as a deep aspiration for fundamental socio-political changes. It represents supporting long-term changes in society, which are in conflict with the existing system, or they pose a direct threat to it (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010). Besides the term process which in and of itself means dynamics, the progression of something (in a particular case, convictions, attitudes), the term violence, that is the willingness to commit violence, or initiate violence are included in the definitions of radicalization. Holt and others define radicalization as a process “of ever-increasing extremes in beliefs, feelings and behaviour steered in directions that justify group violence and seek a scapegoat in defending the group” (Holt, Freilich & Chermak, 2017b: 2). Prislán, Cernigoj and Lobnikar (2018) mention the definition given by Wilner and Dubouloz (2010), for whom radicalization is the process where individuals adopt extreme political, social and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where indiscriminate violence is justified to achieve special goals. That is a mental and emotional process which prepares and motivates an individual to continue with violent behaviour (Prislán, Cernigoj & Lobnikar, 2018).

There has been research done in the past few decades on the influence of the Internet on the process of radicalization and forms of extremism that are linked to terrorism (Sivek, 2013; Prodan, 2015; Holt et al., 2017a; Holt et al., 2017b; LaFree, 2017; Scrivens et al., 2018; Bright et al., 2020; Whittaker, 2021). The Internet enables people who have similar extremist ideas, but are physically far apart, to find one another and communicate. The anonymity of communication via the Internet leads to responsibility inhibition – “online disinhibition” (Neumann 2013b: 437).

In the process of radicalization over the Internet, which is done through websites, videos, social networks, etc., it is important to examine the narratives which, from the aspect of Muslim extremism, send messages considering their global impact. Narratives and propaganda in the framework of Muslim radicalism portray basic and simplified interpretations of history and offer solutions. As such, the narratives justify the acts and set goals and ways to reach them (Mahood & Rane, 2017). The integral element of the narrative is propaganda which represents an intentional, systematic attempt to form perception, the manipulation of recognition and directs behaviour to achieve a response which fulfills the desired intention of the propagandist (Jowett & O’Donnell 2012; Mahood & Rane, 2017).

In criminology literature, the role of the Internet in spreading radical narratives in English and the global expanse which the Internet encompasses is examined closely. Papers that examine the role of the Internet in smaller geographical regions and local languages are a neglected research subject (for example, Campana & Ducol, 2015; Conway, 2016).

The research subject of this paper are radical narratives, extremist messages and calls for terrorist acts which can be found on the Internet, on the global network YouTube, in Serbian/Bosnian.

The research of Muslim radicalism that is disseminated via the Internet in the Western Balkan states has been neglected. There is research conducted by Kladničanin (2013) which shows the activity of the Wahhabi movement in the Balkans with a particular emphasis on their activity in the cyber world in Serbia. The research done by Davor Marko (2019),



in which he analyzed messages from a right-wing radical and a Muslim radical from Novi Pazar taken from the Internet in the Serbian language, is also worth mentioning.

METHODOLOGY

The paper analyzes six videos using a qualitative analysis (Mahood & Rane, 2017; Richards, 2017; Macnair & Frank, 2017; Holt et al., 2019; Musial, 2016), which contain messages from the position of Muslim radicalism. In other academic articles, where a qualitative analysis of videos was conducted from the aspect of the Muslim radical position, the number of analyzed contributions was not large and includes ten videos in English (Macnair & Frank, 2017); or seven articles published in the electronic magazine “Dabiq magazine”, also in English (Musial, 2016).

The chosen videos presented in this paper are made in Bosnian or Serbian, although the first one is in Arabic and subtitled into Bosnian or Serbian (the first video) since it is aimed at audiences from that speaking area.

The video material analyzed in this paper is easily accessible (wider public) over YouTube by entering the URL addresses or by searching through key words. Some of the videos are original, meaning that radicals were directly involved when recording them, while the others are compilations which were put together by production houses in which radical ideas were scrutinized and within these videos there are original parts of videos with radical content. All the videos were accessible through YouTube at the moment of finishing this paper.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Videos that are the subject of the analysis are individually shown in this part of the paper.

Video #1

- 1.1. Video title: “Imitation of non-believers”
- 1.2. Link to access the video:
<https://www.facebook.com/dawagradacac/videos/225369115738026/>
- 1.3. Production: Dawa Gradacac
- 1.4. Date of production: May 30th, 2021.
- 1.5. Length: 47 sec.
- 1.6. Language: The video is in Arabic, subtitled into Serbian/Bosnian.
- 1.7. Video description: Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 1.8. First visit to the website in November 2021; number of views up until then was 654; number of shares was 9; number of likes was 21; number of dislikes was 0
- 1.9. Second visit to the website was in December 2022; number of views was 664; number of shares was 12; number of likes was 21.



Video #2

- 2.1. Video Title: “Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoča (Islamska Država)”
- 2.2. Link to access the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-M-mRdCo2d4>
- 2.3. Production: <http://www.putvjernika.com/Abu Zakariya>
- 2.4. Date of Production: Dec 14th, 2010.
- 2.5. Length: 11 minutes and 16 seconds
- 2.6. Language: Bosnian
- 2.7. Video description: Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 2.8. First visit to the website in November 2021; number of views up until then was 290,945; number of likes was 588; number of dislikes was 1.
- 2.9. Second visit to the website was in January 2023; number of views was 305,447; number of likes was 669, number of dislikes was 1.

Video #3

- 3.1 Video Title: “Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatens Americans in Bosnian”
- 3.2 Link to access the video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJxW_kq1slk
- 3.3. Production: unknown, the video was downloaded from YouTube where it came from Radio Television of the Republic of Srpska website and the narratives in it were negatively commented.
- 3.4. Date of Production: June 28th, 2016.
- 3.5. Video length: 2-3 min (2:14)
- 3.6. Language: Bosnian
- 3.7. Short description: The video is in Bosnian, while Keserovic’s narrative is subtitled into Arabic. Jasmin Keserovic, from the village near Zavidovici, threatens the citizens of San Francisco and Las Vegas and calls for the killing of Christians. He is dressed in an army uniform and is holding a Kalashnikov machine gun in his hand. The threats are directed towards Americans, but the messages are directed towards Muslims from the Balkans who live in America. Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 3.8 First visit to the website in November 2021; number of views up until then was 251,133; number of likes was 914; number of dislikes was 0.
- 3.9. Second visit to the website was in January 2023; number of views was 280,887; number of likes was 1.1K.

Video #4

- 4.1. Video title: “Bilal Bosnic – Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah” (a song with radical content)
- 4.2. Link to access the video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_c8fNpD7n14
- 4.3. Production: [putvjernika.com](http://www.putvjernika.com)
- 4.4. Date of production: January 31st, 2011.



- 4.5. Video length: 3:17 min.
- 4.6. Language: Bosnian.
- 4.7. Video description: The video is in the form of a song that praises Jihad and calls Muslims to engage in terrorism. There is a picture shown where a sword and the banner 'Jihad' dominate. Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 4.8. First visit to the website in November 2021; number of views up until then was 66,061; number of likes was 413; number of dislikes was 0.
- 4.9. Second visit to the website was in January 2023; number of views was 72,858; number of likes was 493; number of dislikes was 0.

Video #5

Comment: Videos #4 and #5 are related to the same person, advocate of the narrative

- 5.1. Video title: "Who is Bilal Bosnic, the leader of the Wahhabi movement?"
- 5.2. Link to access the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNa92VLDCd0>
- 5.3. Production: "O Kanal"
- 5.4. Year of production: September 3rd, 2014.
- 5.5. Video length: 3:21 min.
- 5.6. Language: Bosnian
- 5.7. Video description: Bilal Bosnic asks Muslims in BiH to fight alongside with Islamists around the world. There is a flag of the Islamic State (ISIS) in the background, behind him. Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 5.8. First visit to the website in November 2021; number of views up until then was 89,396; number of likes was 156; number of dislikes was 0.
- 5.9. Second visit to the website was in January 2023; number of views was 91,858; number of likes was 168.

This video had 145 comments during the writing of this paper, containing some typical comments of support and criticism. The number of exceptionally positive comment regarding the individual who is the subject of this video is 14. The number of exceptionally negative comments regarding the individual who is the subject of this video is 10.

The examples of some positive comments regarding the individual who is the subject of this video: "Long live!!", "The time will show that he is right", "Great man, but you are just silent", "Our brother". "May Allah reward you!!! May you live a 100 years? Allah Akbar!!!", "He did everything properly, may he be alive and well."

Examples of some negative comments with regard to the narrator who is the subject of this video: "... this man is a murderer. He sent kids to their death", "Why didn't you go to the frontline instead of sending others", "I am a Muslim who prays 5 times a day, fasts, my whole life I have tried to be a good Muslim, but I would fight against this 'Islam' that this man advocates", "Why didn't you send your children to war???", "I ask myself, as an ordinary citizen (of Serbia), who will benefit from Bosnia being a radical Islamic state?", "Why didn't you Bilal first go to the front line instead of sending others?"



Video #6

- 6.1. Video title: “Explosive Prva TV on Islamist Threats”.
- 6.2. Link to access the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBTogyMVEUg>
- 6.3. Production: Maksimovic Zoran Prva TV
- 6.4. Video published: July 5th, 2017.
- 6.5. Video length: 7:20 minutes
- 6.6. Video language: Serbian
- 6.7. Video description: The video shows threats by Muslim extremists whose narrative is that Serbia will become ‘Islamia’ and that Serbs should be killed and there should be revenge for all the injustices that were done towards Muslims in Bosnia, Srebrenica, Kosovo and Sandzak. The verbal comments complement the map of Serbia coloured in black with symbols of the Islamic State. Radical messages are shown in the tables.
- 6.8. First visit to the website in December 2022; number of views up until then was 113, 118; number of likes was 619; number of comments was 442.
- 6.9. Second visit to the website was in January 2023; number of views was 113,214; number of likes was 620; number of comments was 442.

The number of exceptionally positive comments that support the extremist narrative of the video was 15. The number of exceptionally negative comments that do not support the extremist narrative of the video was 15.

The dominant narrative in the comments: Almost everyone in the comments criticizes the narrative from the videos. The prevailing opinion is that the extremist narratives in the video do not represent real Muslims, but apostates. True Islam advocates tolerance and co-existence with other religions. There are opposing comments and disputes between the people commenting.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

All the shown videos contain radical messages of varying intensity which are directed foremost to the public (population) who speak Serbian/Bosnian. Its general characteristic is that they contain messages that trump the rights to manifest religion and tolerance towards those that think differently, or that are of a different religion.

The narratives (messages) shown in the videos can be classified in different ways. The paper first analyzes the narratives that affect the creation of a value system, the attitudes and even emotions of those people to whom they are directed. The second part consists of narratives that stimulate behaviour and actions.

The basis for the research came from the undeniable understanding that radicalization process through which the radicalized person can escalate to more serious forms of radicalism and ultimately (depending on inner and outside factors) become an extremist (to ideologically accept violence, namely to justify undertaking violence), or even a terrorist (to directly organize or take part in violent acts). For the purpose of the analysis, the split



between cognitive radicalization (extremist ideas) and violent radicalization (extremist methods) is significant, which is mentioned by Neumann (2013b: 454), as well as the split with “cognitive radicalization” which consists of extremist beliefs and “behavioral radicalization” which consists of radicalizing behaviour (Neumann 2013a: 873). The split between cognitive (non-violent radicalization) and violent radicalization is also the same (Dzhekova et al., 2017).

NARRATIVES THAT AFFECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF ATTITUDES AND VALUE SYSTEMS

The process of radicalization is typically gradual, long-term and is made up of numerous phases. It starts with a gradual construction of value systems (cultural, ethical, religious, etc.), which means accepting certain attitudes (based on basic human characteristics, personal experience, self-education and community influence), which affect the way of thinking, the viewpoint from which things are observed, events, people and their behaviour, the world around you. The first phase in the process of radicalization in literature is called cognitive opening and implies that a person becomes susceptible to radical ideas at the time of personal crisis (Wiktorowicz, 2005; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008; Holt et al., 2017b; Prislán et al., 2018). Accepted radical ideas are manifested through various indicators. With regard to that, Dzhekova et al., (2017) writes about cognitive indicators which are exhibited on a verbal level (which can be non-violent and violent) and behavioural indicators, which are exhibited in behaviour which can also be non-violent and violent.

By analyzing the data gathered in this research, narratives that can be defined as cognitive-radical, but non-violent, can be clearly observed. These are narratives which, to some degree, advocate departure from widely accepted social, cultural, religious values and norms and hence can be deemed radical, but not extremist since they do not incite violence.

In the narratives that are the subject of the analysis for this research, there are messages (less or more extreme) which affect the construction of certain attitudes which dictate for an individual to view the world from a specific angle. In the presented videos, narratives are clearly observed which, besides belief and value systems, contain religious self-sufficiency, religious exclusivism (religious non-tolerance in the extreme case); the narrative that Muslims are victims (predominantly) of the West; the narrative that all Muslims are brothers (religious internationalism). The mentioned narratives together make up a whole, convictions, and a value and belief system. Mutually united, the mentioned narratives form a consequent framework in shaping a collective identity of those who see themselves as part of a threatened group.

Religious Exclusivism (Non-Tolerance)

Religious exclusivism (religious non-tolerance) is one of the decrees in the radical Islamic narrative. Narratives that advocate religious exclusivism, which are in the videos that are the subject of this analysis, are exhibited on different levels. The lowest level is the religious exclusivism narrative which was in analyzed video #1. In an unequivocal message, it exhibited that a Muslim is not allowed to have any serious relations with a nonbeliever.



In video #1 “Imitation of Non-believers”, the message in Arabic, subtitled into Bosnian/Serbian is unequivocal: “A Muslim is not allowed to be friends with non-believers, is not allowed to be in the company of a non-believer, is not allowed to make way for a non-believer, is not allowed to greet them first ... Whoever does that has committed a great sin”.

In this narrative, the world is divided into ‘us’, in this case Muslims, and ‘others’, non-Muslims, with whom we are not allowed to be friends, whom we should avoid. Considering that the quoted message is declared in Arabic, it undeniably carries a powerful message for all of those that are seeking to adopt “real Islam”.

In our research, messages of religious exclusivism have also appeared in a higher degree of radicalization than in the first case.

In video #5, “Bilal Bosnic, the Leader of the Wahhabi Movement”, instructs: “Everyone who doesn’t accept Allah’s system creates mess on this planet.”

Hence, while the narrative in the first video is directed at an individual level (who you should associate with, who you should be and not be friends with), Bilal Bosnic in video #5 sends a stronger message which is directed at the values within the community, “Everyone who doesn’t accept Allah’s system creates mess on this planet.” This can be interpreted as a hidden message for action: “If someone engages in mess on this planet, that person should be prevented in that.”

There is an even stronger radical message in relation to religious exclusivism in video #2 which clandestinely favours war for attaining religious domination.

In video #2, which is titled “Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca, Islamic State”, puts forth the narrative: “If all people adopted Islam, there wouldn’t be any wars”.

This narrative supports the idea that it is justified to wage wars in order to force everyone to adopt Islam.

Religious exclusivism is a decree pointed out in literature that deals with this problem. In narratives that circulate online, the extremists’ interpretation of Islam and Jihad are offered as a remedy for all the hardships that Muslim face in the West (Macnair & Frank, 2017).

Muslims as Victims of the West

Historical injustices against Muslims are typical narratives, whereby the Crusades, the bombing of Arabs by the West and traitor Arab governments who are against their people and religion are particularly mentioned (Mahood & Rane, 2017). In online propaganda narratives, the objectively terrible state of young Muslims in Western Europe is emphasized, and this is shown as a part of a bigger picture of war against Islam, thus the growing frustration of Muslims in Europe and further (Postel, 2013; Macnair & Frank, 2017).

Production house of the Islamic State (IS), al-Hayat, when describing the suffering of Muslims around the world as a justification for its activities among others has stated the persecution of Muslims in Bosnia during the civil war with the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The paper quoted here mentions that recruitment of young people from the Balkans was one of the most important priorities of radical propaganda of the Islamic State (Macnair & Frank, 2017).



One of the narratives that was often reiterated in our research in different variations, and in different videos, is that the Muslims were always victims, foremost of Christians from the West, but also other non-believers, such as Serbs.

Video #2, titled “Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca (Islamic State)” mentions “the humiliation and injustice of the Western world done upon Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and all around the world.” In video #6, injustices against Muslims done by Serbs are explicitly mentioned.

All Muslims are Brothers – Muslim Religious Internationalism

Studies conducted on violent Jihadists have shown that solidarity with other Muslims is usually the last phase in the process of radicalization. It is manifested on an internal level by sharing convictions, religious worldviews and on an external level by intensifying mutual communication, electronic and physical, changes in attire, adopting symbols, etc. (Holt et al., 2017b).

In the scope of the globalization process and development of the Internet, the principle that all Muslims are brothers and that they should all help each other, even by taking part in wars, has gained importance. One of the leading electronic magazines of the Islamic State “Dabiq”, which is published not only in Arabic, but also in English, French and German, has strongly advocated this principle that aimed to establish a globally collective Muslim identity, by putting forth its interpretations of Islam and calling upon Muslims from Western European states to join the war being fought in Syria (Macnair & Frank, 2018).

In videos that are the subject of this analysis, there is a prevailing narrative that Muslims around the world are brothers. A powerful message is being spread that Muslims in Bosnia or in Serbia are closer to Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula, or from Asia, than to their neighbour, or friend from school or class that is of a different religion and speaks the same language. This principle appears in different forms in videos #2, #4 and #5.

For example, in video #4 Bilal Bosnic calls upon all Muslims around the world in a song (he addresses them with ‘brothers’): “Let America and all other foes know that all Muslims are Taliban”.

Narratives aimed at creating convictions, attitudes, models of desirable (or the only appropriate) way of thinking are shown in Table 1.



Table 1. *Narratives Which Affect the Creation of Attitudes*

Main messages	Video number in this paper	Video Title	Message content
Religious exclusivism (non-tolerance)	1	“Imitation of Non-Believers”	“A Muslim is not allowed to be friends with a non-believers, is not allowed to be in the company of a non-believer, is not allowed to make way for a non-believer, is not allowed to greet them first ... Whoever does that has committed a great sin.”
	5	“Who is Bilal Bosnic... the Leader of the Wahhabi Movement”	“Everyone who doesn't accept Allah's system creates idleness on this planet.”
Muslims as Victims of Injustice	2	“Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca (Islamic State)”	“If all people adopted Islam, there wouldn't be any wars.”
	2	“Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca (Islamic State)”	“Humiliation and injustices from the Western world towards Muslims ... the injustice done upon Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and all around the world.”
All Muslims are Brothers – Muslim Religious Internationalism	4	“Bilal Bosnic – Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah” (a song with radical content)	Muslims of Palestine give their lives as martyrs ... The song calls upon all Muslims worldwide (he uses ‘brothers’ to address them) ... “Let America and all other foes know that all Muslims are Taliban.”
	2	“Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca (Islamic State)”	“I am convinced that all people will adopt Allah's faith.”
	5	“Who is Bilal Bosnic... the Leader of the Wahhabi Movement”	Call on Muslims from BiH to fight alongside Islamists around the world ... Talks about wars that have to be fought for Islam, about America and its politics of hate...

NARRATIVES THAT ENCOURAGE BEHAVIOUR

The second group of narratives that are the subject of this research encourages behaviour and actions. Individuals who have, as a rule (but not always) adopted radical attitudes, prejudices, beliefs or are indoctrinated with negative emotions or hate towards people who are different from them are able to, depending on their inner state of conscience and emotions or external encouragement, undertake certain activities or actions towards the objects of their negative emotions.

Individuals that have incited violence, the killing of non-believers and terrorism in the video material that is a part of this research, have acted either from the position of deep convictions in the righteousness of their views, or from the position of great hatred. They are completely aware of the things they advocate, hence there is a link in them between



deep radical convictions (cognitive radicalization), and (or) strong negative emotions of hatred and explicit messages for using violence (extremist methods). The bearers of these narratives that are part of this research cannot be categorized as ill-advised, accidentally squalid situational offenders, juveniles, young and immature individuals who in practice appear from time to time as perpetrators of terrorist acts.

As for the samples that were part of this research, the following narratives were observed from this group: threats, calls for revenge and violence, calls for the holy war – Jihad, calls for aggression against Christians in general, against citizens of America and Serbia, narratives regarding weapons that can be used in reaching the holy goal.

Calls for Violence and Threats as Narratives to Provoke Action

There was a significant number of threats presented in the video material that was the subject of this analysis (videos #2, #3, #5 and #6). Some threats were delivered in a symbolic form.

For example, in video #2: “Allah’s army will enter Rome” ... “Allah’s law will rule this world”. “Between us and those that fight against Allah is a sword until judgement day ... Who does not adopt Islam will experience eternal hell”. In video number 5: “One of the goals is for Vatican to become a Muslim place”.

Some threats were direct and brutal. In video #3, shot in San Francisco, Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatens Americans in Bosnian. The threat is clear and direct and is a call for killing Christians.

An evidently clear, unequivocal threat is in video #6. “Serbia will be Islamia” (between the words “will be” and “Islamia” you can hear a loud gunshot) ... “In the name of Allah, we didn’t forget Serb non-believers”. The sentence is complemented with a video of a soldier in uniform who is shooting from a heavy machinegun. “In the name of Allah, we haven’t forgotten the Balkans. We have a long-time unsettled score with you which you will pay with your blood”.

The narratives in the videos #3 and #6 are supported by videos from war-torn regions where you can see fighters in uniform shooting from heavy machineguns.

Calls for Revenge

Calls for revenge can be observed in the videos containing Muslim radicalism. Literature cites numerous calls for Muslims to get revenge against Christians for all the injustices done by them (Mahood & Rane, 2017). Calls for revenge against all Christians are observed in videos #2 and #3 in our research.

A call for revenge against Serbs is seen in video #6. “Get revenge (against Serbs) for all the injustices that were done towards Muslims in Bosnia, Srebrenica, Kosovo and Sandzak.”

Call for Holy Way, Jihad

The call for holy way, Jihad, is one of the most encountered narratives with which Muslim radicals call for action (Deliso, 2007). The call for holy war, Jihad, in essence encompasses all other narratives and implies a call for war, call for killing of non-believers, call for terrorism.



In video #4, Bilal Bosnic, in the song “Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah” glorifies Jihad and calls on Muslims to engage in terrorism. “Allah and Jihad are salvation for Muslims”. In the song he calls Muslims to sacrifice in order to reach heaven. The call for “holy war” which implies going to a real war in Syria is observed in video #5.

Calls for Killing Non-believers

One of the direct calls for action is the call for killing non-believers. That sort of calls, even if not delivered in a direct way, but delivered publicly, regardless if it is via the Internet, or some other way, can lead to serious consequences.

Video #3 shows Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatening Americans in Bosnian, “Rise, Muslim, kill Christians and their slaves in their cities and in their countries! Place explosives under their cars, in their homes and in their offices! Kill them with snipers and silencers! Kill them in any way you can, Muslims! Kill them in any way possible, even with a knife! Don’t differentiate between a soldier and a civilian (Author’s comment: Says it twice). In video #6 Bilal Bosnic orders: “to kill non-believers with dynamite around the chest”. Besides the common calls for killing Christians, non-believers, video #6 contains a specific call for killing Serbs.

The ways, means, tools and weapons for killing non-believers (including Serbs) are mentioned: explosives under cars, houses, offices.

“Kill them with snipers, with anything, even with knives (video #3); with dynamite around the chest (video #4); from a heavy machinegun mounted on a car (video #6)”. See Table #2.

Table 2. Narratives That Provoke Aggressive Behaviour

Main messages	Video number in this paper	Video Title	Message content
Calls for Violence and Threats	2	“Abu Omar Khadab – Gornja Maoca (Islamic State)”	“Allah’s army will enter Rome” ... “Allah’s law will rule this world”... “Between us and those that fight against Allah is a sword until judgement day”... “Who does not adopt Islam will experience eternal hell.”
	3	“Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatens Americans in Bosnian”	Video recorded in San Francisco, contains a call for killing Christians and presents an apparent threatening message.
	5	“Who is Bilal Bosnic... the Leader of the Wahhabi Movement”	One of the goals is for Vatican to become a Muslim place.
	6	Explosive (Prva TV) on Islamist Threats	Serbia will be Islamia (there are loud gunshots between the words “will be” and “Islamia”)... “In the name of Allah, we haven’t forgotten Serb non-believers”. The sentence is complemented with a soldier in uniform who is shooting from a heavy machinegun. “In the name of Allah, we haven’t forgotten the Balkans. We have a long-standing and unresolved feud which you will pay with your own blood.”



Main messages	Video number in this paper	Video Title	Message content
Call for Revenge	6	Explosive (Prva TV) on Islamist Threats	Get revenge (on Serbs) for all the injustices that were done towards Muslims in Bosnia, Srebrenica, Kosovo and Sandzak.
Call for Holy War, Jihad	4	“Bilal Bosnic – Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah” (a song with radical content)	Glorifies Jihad and calls Muslims to engage in terrorism, Allah and Jihad as salvation for Muslims. Calls Muslims to sacrifice in order to go to heaven.
	5	“Who is Bilal Bosnic... the Leader of the Wahhabi Movement”	Calls on young people in BiH to join the armed groups of terrorist organizations of the Islamic State, who he has directly recruited, as he says, in BiH and Italy.
Call for Killing of Non-believers	3	“Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatens Americans in Bosnian”	“Rise, Muslims, kill Christians and their slaves in their cities and in their countries! Place explosives under their cars, in their homes and in their offices! Kill them with snipers and silencers! Kill them in any way you can, Muslims! Kill them in any way possible, even with a knife! Don't differentiate between a soldier and a civilian, yes, don't differentiate between a soldier and a civilian”
	4	“Bilal Bosnic – Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah”	To kill non-believers with dynamite around the chest.
Direct Aggression Towards Serbs	6	Explosive (Prva TV) on Islamist Threats	Serbs should be killed.
	3	“Jasmin Keserovic from BiH threatens Americans in Bosnian”	Explosives under cars, houses, offices. Kill them with snipers, anything, even knives...
Means, weapons which can be used in attaining the holy goal (war, Jihad)	4	“Bilal Bosnic – Dzihad Dzihad Ja Allah” (a song with radical content)	With dynamite around the chest.
	6	Explosive (Prva TV) on Islamist Threats	Footage of gunshots from heavy machineguns are shown in the context of uttering threats towards Serbs and a call for revenge.

HOW BIG IS THE ACTUAL INFLUENCE OF RADICAL PROPAGANDA OVER THE INTERNET?

Literature poses the question how big the actual influence of videos with radical content is. Some authors believe that there is not any credible evidence about the influence of the Internet on radicalization (reading extremist narratives is not the same as adopting these narratives). Others state that this influence is significant and point out an example: the electronic magazine “Inspire”, published by the Islamic State, was read by seven out of ten



terrorists who carried out the attacks in London. Some others indicate that there are few exact studies which corroborate a direct link (Conway, 2016).

This paper endeavoured to establish how extensive the reach of videos with radical messages is by relating the production dates of videos, with the view count of those videos. The first viewing of these videos (videos #1 to #5) was in November 2021, while the second viewing was in January 2023. The view count and the number of likes for these videos were recorded both times. The exception was video #6 where the difference between the first and second viewing was one month. Table #3 clearly shows that the videos are constantly being viewed. The number of views is not impressive, but it is always on the rise, which shows that there are always individuals interested in this topic. Having in mind that these videos are in Serbian/Bosnian, it is not insignificant that the number of visits for these videos is in tens of thousands or around three hundred thousand. The number of likes indicates that a certain number of visitors weren't indifferent and had a need to strongly show their attitude towards the video. The number of visits for video #6 deserves attention. The video was posted on YouTube in July 2017. It was first visited in December 2022 and the second time in mid-January 2023. During a one-month period, this video had 96 views (this being over 5 years after production).

Videos #5 and #6 had the comments section enabled. Video #5 has 91, 858 views and 145 comments. Video #6 has 113,214 views and 442 comments. It is worth mentioning that in the comments there are those that unambiguously condemn radical messages, but also those that explicitly support them, which offers information that should not be underestimated.

Table 3. *Date of Video Production and View Count*

	Video #1 Production: May 2021		Video #2 Production: Dec. 14, 2010		Video #3 Production: June 2016		Video #4 Jan. 2011		Video #5 Sept. 2014		Video #6 July 2017	
Visit	Nov. 2021.	Jan. 2023.	Nov. 2021.	Jan. 2023.	Nov. 2021.	Jan. 2023.	Nov. 2021.	Jan. 2023.	Nov. 2021.	Jan. 2023.	Dec. 2022.	Jan. 2023.
View Count	654	664	290,945	305,447	251,133	280,887	66,061	72,858	89,396	91,858	113,118	113,214
Number of Shares	9	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Likes	21	21	588	669	914	1.1K	413	493	156	168	619	620

CONCLUSIONS

Muslim radicalism is a security problem on a global scale considering its tendency to spread from one region to other parts of the world. Therefore, the academic and security community should not ignore the spread of radical and extremist narrative over the Internet in “small languages” and “peripheral regions”.

The academic and security community can contribute by studying the narratives and processes of radicalization that are spread over the Internet and outside of it (each in its own realm) and based on that, contribute by drawing up strategic projects and measures of pre-



vention and deradicalization. It is very important to make a list of radicalization indicators (Dzhekova et al., 2017); a general list and a special list (characteristic for specific regions and particular categories of individuals) and spread it over the Internet, the school and community systems, especially within the susceptible categories.

The research in this paper showed that extreme Muslim radical messages that lead to terrorism expressed in the languages of small nations (in this case in Serbian or Bosnian) could have a global, destructive impact, considering the global danger of Muslim radicalism (for example, the narrative from video number 3; narratives shown in tables 2 and 3). Video messages left on the Internet are accessible to an interested audience regardless of the date they were posted (as shown in Table 3). They could influence the attitudes of the audience in terms of acceptance or criticism. This also applies to the radical narratives presented in this work, which is clearly seen from the visitors' comments regarding videos number 5 and 6.

The academic and security community should analyze not only radical narratives from the Internet but audience reactions to them (comments, likes, dislikes, etc.).

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