

How can we protect democracy from Islamic extremism?

Written by Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh on 24 February 2016



The best way to safeguard democracy against extremism is to provide the insights that empower policymakers to make informed decisions, argues Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh.

Recent violent incidents in Europe and the wider world by Daesh (Isis) have raised many questions regarding Islam and how it relates to the global rise in extremism.

The Intercultural Centre (ICC) is a UK-registered charity whose aim is to bring cultures together and tackle issues that hamper integration. As the founding member of this charity, I believe the only way to preserve the values of a democratic society is to empower those in a position of influence to make informed decisions, and to educate the public on these important issues through detailed examination of the roots and the cause of extremism.

In recognition of the enormity of the dangers posed by extremist ideology, the ICC has organised a series of events to address the challenges posed by extremist ideology to democracy.

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In an event in the European Parliament event taking place on 1 March, I will discuss the dangers posed by extremist ideology, which are based on false interpretations of the Quran. I will also propose ways to counter the effects of extremism on our multicultural society.

For many years, I have warned the West about dangers posed to our society by religious fanaticism. This is why I have advised, on numerous occasions, those in positions of influence about the dangers posed by fanatical regimes. In fact, I have expended a great deal of effort pushing for human rights reform within fundamentalist regimes such as in Iran.

For example, by speaking against stoning as a form of punishment in Iran, and showing there is no relation between Islam and stoning, the Iranian government finally removed stoning from the its penal code in 2011.

To support my efforts, I have recently published a book entitled 'New Researches on the Quran'. This discloses important new facts that will improve our efforts to counter extremism by countering a number of misconceptions about Islam.

At the European Parliament event, I will use the book to throw light on some of the important principles that go to the heart of the phrase Islam itself. I will also address some of the common misconceptions about Islam's attitudes towards topics including human rights, women's rights and Jihad.

In reality, our defences against extremism are only as strong as the decisions that policymakers take. I hope that events such as this will help us work together and preserve the western values of freedom and democracy that we so greatly cherish.

The event "How to protect our society from Islamic extremism" will take place on 1 March 15.00 in Room PHS 7C050 and will be hosted by MEP Tunne Kelam

About the author

Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh is an Iranian religious scholar and researcher

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