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The Use of Social Media for Terrorism¹

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Abstract: *This article goes through the ways in which terrorists have been exploiting social media. It explains how terrorist propaganda litters the internet and how terrorist groups are recruiting new fighters on social media with special interest on Westerners. The article also goes through how the increased encryption of social media platforms has made them ideal for terrorists to use to communicate. Lastly, the article discusses how terrorists have been capitalizing on social media to fulfill their attention-seeking goals. It also brings to light some complementary functions of the dark web to achieve goals that are unattainable on social media. The article ends by suggesting aggressive measures that can be taken by users, governments and social media platforms to bring an end to terrorism on both social media and the dark web.*

Keywords: *Social media, terrorism, cybercrime, cyberterrorism, propaganda*

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1. Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a sharp increase in the use of social media by the world. Facebook boasts of a user base of approximately 2 billion people while Twitter and Instagram are heading towards getting half that number of users. The main reason for the establishment of all these social media networks has been to provide social connections. Facebook is now on an ambitious plan to connect the whole world. It aims at doing this through drones that will supply the internet to hard-to-reach places in third world countries. Social media networks provide many advantages to internet users. They have enabled them to stay in touch with loved ones through better and cheaper means than the traditional telephone. The social media networks have also been used for marketing purposes since they bring together a wide range of consumers. The users have been profiled by the social media platforms and companies can now simply advertise to specific niches of consumers all over the world. Lastly, these platforms have enabled users to get information within the blink of an eye. Traditional media are associated with delays as news moved slowly from one media outlet to another. Today, anything posted on social media gets to other users in near real time.

However, a new set of problems has erupted amidst these positive uses of social media. Terrorist groups have decided to establish themselves and make known their activities through these platforms. They are taking advantage of the interconnectedness of the world right now through such platforms and are using this to further their interests. Attacks have been live streamed to social media users, as they happen, by the terrorists themselves. Recordings of executions and other inhumane acts have been leaked to millions of users on these platforms. Advertisements for recruitment have flooded social media. The blind beliefs of terrorists have been crafted to sound appealing to oblivious social media users. Some users have been wowed by this and have made a dangerous move to join terrorist groups. Social media has also provided a new breeding ground for Muslim extremists through easily accessible materials for radicalization.

In the last few years, the world has witnessed a growing use of social media by terrorists. There have been attacks that were either motivated by social media or their impacts amplified by disseminations on those platforms. In June 2016, former US President Obama acknowledged that an attack done in a gay club in Orlando was caused by online extremism.³ He said that the attacker, who came to be identified as Omar Mateen, was inspired by so-called jihadist material that was found on Twitter, Facebook and other social media networks. Even more chilling were the messages that Mateen had posted on his Facebook account before committing the attack. He said that his attack was in support of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL/DAESH) terrorist group and that the US had to be prepared for even more attacks.⁴ Investigations further revealed that Mateen had multiple Facebook accounts that he used to post comments about ISIL/DAESH. The post before

³ Alan Blinder, Frances Robles, and Richard Pérez-Peña, "Omar Mateen Posted to Facebook Amid Orlando Attack, Lawmaker Says", (17 June 2016), *New York Times*, available at https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/17/us/orlando-shooting.html?_r=0 (accessed 05 June 2017).

⁴ Ibid.

the attack, which was addressed to the US. told its citizens to taste the vengeance of ISIL/DAESH. It was confirmed that Mateen had searched on his phone about the attack that he had committed during the three-hour standoff with the police.⁵ This was most probably to check to what extent the attack had gone viral on the internet.

Shortly after the Orlando attack, there was another social media-influenced terrorist attack in Paris, France. A policeman and his spouse were killed by an extremist called Abballa.⁶ Apparently, Abballa live-streamed a twelve-minute video to Facebook while still inside the policeman's home. He revealed that he committed the heinous act in response to a call from senior ISIL/DAESH leaders to followers in Europe and US.⁷ The followers of ISIL/DAESH had been informed to unleash terror during Ramadan. Facebook quickly took down the video but did not issue any comments about it, saying just that the video was under active investigation. This was however after it had been accessed by many people during the live stream. There then followed claims that Facebook was struggling to stop such kind of crimes from being shared on its network, especially if they were being live streamed.⁸

There have been many other attacks that have been facilitated significantly by multiple social media platforms. Terrorist groups have been using the same media platforms to significantly magnify the impacts of their terrorist acts. Social media has been used to accelerate and multiply acts of terror. It has also transformed and helped evolve terrorism activities.

2. The reasons why terrorists are using social media

There are many reasons for terrorists to harness the power of social media to support their activities. It all boils down to the fact that social media platforms have a broader audience than any other type of media. Therefore, they can easily reach out to millions if not billions if they use social media platforms effectively. The following are the discussions of some of the reasons why.

2.1 Spreading terrorist propaganda

Many organizations today use social media to advertise their products and to encourage people to remain loyal to their brands. Terror groups have copied this and have been using it to take their propaganda to the masses and to make them support their activities.⁹ Groups such as ISIL/DAESH

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Lori Hinnant and Elaine Ganley, "Attack that Killed 2 Police Officers in France May Have Been Streamed on Facebook Live", (14 June 2016), *Global News*, available at <http://globalnews.ca/news/2760327/frenchman-who-shot-video-of-fatal-paris-police-stabbing-had-terrorist-past/> (accessed 5 June 2017).

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Mihaela Marcu and Christina Balteanu, "Social Media - A Real Source of Proliferation of International Terrorism," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis: Series Oeconomica*, 16(1) (2014), pp. 162-169, <https://econpapers.repec.org/article/>

have consistently used Twitter to spread their propaganda. They make posts that support their ideologies and possibly attract people to either join or support the group. Most times, they will go on to explain how some countries have committed atrocities against other countries. They will also attack poor countries for supporting the ideologies of these nations. They will claim that their aim is to either bring vengeance or ensure equality. They tailor their messages to focus on bringing societal change to countries that have failed. They claim to establish peace by imposing 'peaceful' religious laws that will ensure that there is justice. A person unaware of the grave attacks that these groups commit with complete disregard for human life might be brainwashed to believe in their propaganda.

These terror groups normally have many accounts to spread their messages. In 2016, Twitter had to bring down over 124,000 user accounts that were linked to ISIL/DAESH or were found to be spreading ISIL/DAESH propaganda. Today, the group still has massive influence online and it seems that they bring up new accounts as quickly as the old ones are blocked.¹⁰ They continually make and post professional quality video advertisements and pictures that always try to convince the audience that the so-called 'jihad' is a worthy cause. On social media accounts, the group portrays its caliphate as an Islamic paradise. ISIL/DAESH has however continuously uploaded gruesome videos of bombings and executions. They have used this to spread terror and fear messages to innocent people. This has also been done to normalize and glorify violence for its followers.

2.2 Recruiting foreign fighters

There have been reports of people leaving their home countries, including the United States, to go to Syria and Iraq to join ISIL/DAESH. It is estimated that ISIL/DAESH has received over 30,000 of these people who have traveled from every corner of the world to live in the Islamic paradise promised by the ISIL/DAESH propaganda videos.¹¹ A lot more have left their homes to join other groups such as Nigeria's Boko Haram. These groups are using social media as a platform to radicalize people and brainwash them with their extremist ideas. The major concern is when these formerly normal people have started going back home. The reason is that most terror groups such as ISIL/DAESH are losing territory and the radicalized fighters are being told to go back home but also assigned other missions. Some are to radicalize more people in their home countries while others are to carry out terrorist attacks. Terror groups are bringing terror to people's doorsteps with their foreign fighters. ISIL/DAESH, in particular, is discouraging people from traveling to Syria, but it is recruiting them on social media platforms.

alujournal/v_3a1_3ay_3a2014_3ai_3a16_3ap_3a14.htm (accessed 5 June 2017).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Recruiters for these terror groups are also hunting for potential followers on social media networks. They are good at determining when a person can easily be brainwashed and radicalized. They have employed a number of tactics to gain as many followers as possible. The initial means of contact involve friend requests, follows and messages on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. From there, the recruiters are able to slip in their radicalization messages slowly to the minds of their targets. It is therefore not necessarily that all followers of terror groups reached out to the group's social media networks and asked to join. There is an army of recruiters for these groups online that is working towards enlisting more people to their caliphates.

Profiles of young and beautiful women are being used to lure in potential recruits.¹⁰ These accounts are being used to convince a target group of potential members of the 'good' lives that ISIL/DAESH fighters are living in a utopic world located between Syria and Iraq. They are presenting ISIL/DAESH territory in such a positive light that it appears to be the best place to live. It is being showcased as a place where one can live a meaningful and purposeful life in a Islamic state ruled by Islamic laws. They claim that it is a so-called five-star jihad. In 2015, as part of the five-star lifestyle, the group promised its members that it was going to reopen a luxury hotel in Mosul. Other pictures showed ISIL/DAESH girls posing in a fancy BMW while wielding AK-47 rifles.¹²

ISIL/DAESH recruiters are also using messengers to stay in touch with those that want to travel all the way to Syria. There are reports that the recruiters issue brochures detailing the journey to ISIL/DAESH territory, the logistics of getting there, what to carry and where to meet a guide in Turkey. This has prompted the Turkish government to be more vigilant to prevent people from sneaking into Syria through Turkish borders. The New York Times reported in 2015 that half of the members of ISIL/DAESH were foreigners¹³. An estimated 4000 of these were said to be coming from Western countries. The infamous so-called Jihadi John was himself a British Muslim who gained fame when he appeared in execution videos.¹⁴ The group is, therefore, targeting foreigners. It has been said that most of the dangerous radical extremists claiming affiliation with Islam in the group are Western recruits. Most of them join as new Muslim converts searching for adventure and wishing to live in the promised utopia.

The extensive use of social media for recruitment has so far only been witnessed in ISIL/DAESH. Previously, when Al-Qaeda was the most feared terror group, access to information was limited and even recruitment of new members was subject to qualification. Al-Qaeda has more restrictive practices and even turns down new members. The group even has a special rigorous vetting process for foreigners. There are obstacles that it has put in the recruitment process. These are the obstacles

¹² David Sim, "After ISIS: Inside Mosul's Destroyed University and Five-Star Hotel," (20 February 2017), *International Business Times UK*, available at <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/after-isis-inside-mosuls-destroyed-university-five-star-hotel-1604459> (accessed 5 June 2017).

¹³ Chris Hughes, "Almost Half of Western ISIS Jihadists Fighting in Syria and Iraq Have Died", (22 March 2016), *Mirror*, available at <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/half-western-isis-jihadis-been-7609147> (accessed 05 June 2017).

¹⁴ Ibid.

that ISIL/DAESH removed in its more aggressive recruitment strategy that expanded to social media.

2.3 Communicating more effectively

Terrorist groups are also using social media platforms for communication purposes.¹⁵ This is because they are safer than phone calls and text messages. An expose by a former NSA contractor said that the US was actively monitoring phone calls made in multiple countries. The US government was also said to be going through the emails and text messages of its own citizens.¹⁶ This shows that terrorist groups are unlikely to use these types of media because they are actively monitored. It is also easy to locate the senders and receivers of information over such media. Terrorist groups need more secure media. They also need to be able to reach out to many people at a time.

Social media comes as a great solution to all these communication problems. Some platforms promise users end-to-end encryption of messages especially after the US government was found to be snooping into everyone's private messages.¹⁷ Terrorists are using this kind of security assurance to communicate without the fear of being tracked or of having their communications monitored. Several attackers have been found to be in communication with ISIL/DAESH leaders through highly encrypted media such as Telegram. They have used these to get instructions on places to attack and when to do so. Communication about the supply of ammunition and explosives is also done on these platforms.

2.4 Seeking attention

Social media platforms have also played a big role in allowing terror groups to get attention from the world. Before social media, terror groups relied on traditional media to get attention. The problem was that they were not in total control of such media as their stories had to pass through editors before the report aired or was printed. There has however been a long relationship between terrorists and media. Terrorists exploit media to further their messages and goals to a wide audience. Terrorists rely on one thing to gain attention - conducting acts of terrorism and aggression against civilians. For years, they have used this technique.¹⁸ This is because it is significantly difficult for such groups to obtain weapons capable of toppling governments, enabling them to seize power and establish their own rule. They only have enough to spread panic by hurting or killing a few people.

¹⁵ Marcu and Balteanu, "Social Media - A Real Source of Proliferation of International Terrorism".

¹⁶ Micahel Munger, "Review: No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U.S. Surveillance State," *The Independent Review*, 19(4) (2015), pp. 605-609, available at <http://www.independent.org/publications/tir/article.asp?id=1053> (accessed 5 June 2017).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Austin T. Turk, "Sociology of Terrorism," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004), pp. 271-286, available at <http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110510> (accessed 05 June 2017).

After committing such acts, they normally want their intentions to be amplified and spread to a wide audience. Traditionally, these included newspapers, TV and radio stations.

For long, these media have been used by terrorists to convey messages.¹⁹ Even today, if a terrorist attack happens, mass media organizations will scramble to cover it and they will repeat it over and over. This is what terrorists rely on to remain relevant; the trauma that they cause to be broadcasted repeatedly to a global audience. They have been relying on publicity to thrive.²⁰ Social media has now given terrorist groups control over what the public perceives them to be. They no longer have to rely on getting attention from traditional but scrutinized mass media. With social media, groups like ISIL/DAESH are making periodic releases showing their members training, executing people and even committing terrorist attacks. They are getting their content to the world in an unfiltered way.

The use of social media has however been occasioned with some challenges. Social media is not entirely secure, even for terrorists who want to protect the anonymity of their members, supporters and especially financiers. Several planned attacks have been thwarted after law enforcement agencies gathered intelligence from social media before the execution of attacks. Some wealthy financiers of terrorist groups have been exposed as well. There have been many information 'leaks' from social media thus making it inadequate to fully support terrorist activities. Therefore, terrorists have been looking for a more secure platform that, among many other things, is completely sealed and is very difficult to compromise the anonymity of the parties involved. Therefore, they have adopted the dark web to fill the gaps present in social media platforms.

3. Use of the dark web by terrorists

Governments have been increasing surveillance efforts over telephone systems and social media. Twitter is currently banning hundreds of thousands of accounts that could be linked with terrorist groups. Facebook has been taking down execution videos right after they are posted by terrorists. Security agencies have been trying to get back entries to some social media accounts to identify the owners. This has prompted terrorist groups to seek safer and anonymous alternatives to continue communicating and transacting. Terrorists have evolved with all these new concerns and are now exploiting the power of the dark web. They are using it to complement their activities on other platforms. They are using social media for recruit and spreading their propaganda to the world and the dark web for more secretive communication and transactions. The in-depth discussions below explain more on how the dark web is used by terrorists.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Christopher H. Sterling, "Book Review: Terror Post 9/11 and the Media", *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 88(3) (2011), pp. 683-684.

3.1 Planning attacks

When terrorists plan to attack, they are cautious to ensure that information does not leak out. If information concerning their planned attacks gets to law enforcement agencies, there is a high likelihood that the attacks will be thwarted. For some reasons, such as ease of identification and tracking on social media, they try to plan on other more secure platforms. Thus, they have turned to the power of anonymity of the dark web. The dark web has highly secure platforms through which terrorists can make their plans. It is riddled with encryptions that make it significantly hard for law enforcement agencies to track down the IP addresses used by its users.

Though it was not originally meant for this purpose, the dark web has seen many other illegal activities being conducted through it. In 2015, after years of tracking, law enforcement agencies were able to crack down and arrest the leader of the largest drug syndicate on the dark web. The leader managed an online shop called The Silkroad where people would buy drugs and have them delivered at their doorstep.²¹ In this context, the most important components of this online drug trade are the ordering and delivery mechanisms. They were totally secure and reliable. This means that terrorists are probably using the same type of mechanisms to plan terror attacks. They probably have their own sites on the dark web where members can log in to receive briefings concerning attacks. The French Interior Minister said in 2016 that the masterminds of terrorist attacks in Europe used the deep web to communicate through highly-encrypted messages and using anonymous identities.²² The delivery system of Silkroad also shows that it is possible that these terrorists have reliable ways of getting armament and explosives to their members in other countries. The Silkroad had an efficient delivery network that even got drugs to children through mailboxes.²³ It is, therefore, possible that terrorists have their own dark web delivery systems.

3.2 Funding and business transactions

Terrorist groups receive funding from many sources. Some of these sources are people that have been tricked into believing the terrorist propaganda. There is a dark web page called “Fund the Islamic Struggle without Leaving a Trace” where people can go and anonymously donate for the so-called *jihad*. There have been rumors that some oil-rich countries in the Middle East and Asia have also been key funders of these extremist terror groups claiming affiliation with Islam.²⁴ Large terrorist groups also run businesses in order to make money to help them stay solvent. Some terror groups are in control of areas with resources such as oil that they can sell it for cheap to get funds to buy weapons or compensate their fighters.

²¹ Zaklina Spalevic and Marija Ilic, “The Use of Dark Web for the Purpose of Illegal Activity Spreading”, *Ekonomika* 63(1) (2017), pp. 73-82.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Dimitrios Stergiou, “ISIS Political Economy: Financing a Terror State,” *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 19(2) (2016), pp.189-207, available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2781384 (access 05 June 2017).

Terrorists also do kidnappings and requests for payment of ransom money. Others are in charge of drug shipping channels and make insanely huge amounts of money to allow the movement of drugs. They are also contracted by wealthy investors for assassinations or to destabilize competitors. Lastly, they sell body organs harvested from captives and antiquities stolen from the cities that they take over.²⁵ All these activities require money to be moved in a secure and hard-to-trace way. There is an anonymous currency available on the dark web called Bitcoin. It was heavily used for the drug trade on Silkroad and it is still being used for these kinds of terrorist dealings. Transactions made via Bitcoins are hard to trace and thus do not often put the identities of the senders of the money at risk.²⁶

3.3 Acquiring weaponry and fake passports

The dark web is a hive of illegal activities. There are dark web stores that specialize in selling and supplying guns, ammunition, and explosives. Investigations into the Paris attacks of 2015 showed that the weapons that were used in the shooting were bought from a dark web store. The supplier was identified as a German citizen operating on the dark web with the username DW Guns. This is only one of the many instances where terrorists have bought guns from the dark web. In 2016, former US President Barrack Obama said that terrorists had bought radioactive isotopes from dark web brokers.²⁷ He was worried that they could release the radioactive material over populated places using drones. Terrorists are also using the dark web to buy fake passports. There are dark web brokers that readily make and deliver fake passports for people wishing to illegally enter countries such as the US and UK.²⁸ The transactions are done online, powered by Bitcoin. The brokers also have reliable delivery mechanisms to ensure that the passports get to the terrorists.

4. Conclusion

This article has done an in-depth analysis on the ways that social media is being exploited by terrorists to achieve their goals. It has explained how the world is now interconnected by social media, allowing information to flow faster with less control than it used to through traditional media. The article has also shown how this interconnectedness and fast flow of information could be used by terrorists. It has given a background of two terrorist attacks that caught the attention of the world that were in one way or another facilitated by social media. In one of the attacks, a former US president acknowledged that it was due to the radicalization of the perpetrator on social media. The other attack was even more chilling since the perpetrator streamed a 12-minute video clip on

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Spalevic and Ilic, "The use of dark web for the purpose of illegal activity spreading."

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

YouTube after the attack. The article has brought to light most of the ways through which social media is being used by terrorists. It has explained how terrorists are using social media to spread their propaganda. They have been using it to spread their ideologies in sugar-coated advertisements aimed at deluding people into believing in their cause.

This article has also detailed how social media is being used extensively to recruit new fighters into terrorist groups. ISIL/DAESH is one of the groups that is capitalizing on Facebook and Twitter to reach out to vulnerable people and enticing them into joining the caliphate. It has repeatedly called on all 'true' believers of Islam to join it and remarkably many people have traveled to Syria to join ISIL/DAESH. Their recruitment strategy is working since reports show that 40% of ISIL/DAESH militants are foreigners. Social media is also being used for communication. This is because phone calls and text messages are easily monitored while, at the same time, social media platforms are becoming harder for law enforcement agencies to keep an eye on due to end-to-end encryption of messages.

This article has also identified that terrorists are using social media to seek attention. It has explained the relationship between terrorism and media, tracing back this relationship to traditional media and explained how social media has given terrorists a new avenue with which to gain attention. Terrorists are using it to show its fighters brandishing weapons, to stream attacks, to showcase the 'paradise' that fighters are living in and to show gruesome executions. Lastly, this article has explained how other online services have been used to complement social media, explaining a few ways that terrorists are using the dark web. It has gone through how it is being used to plan attacks, get funding, conduct transactions and acquire weapons.

This article ends with some recommendations on how the exploitation of social media by terrorists can be controlled. These are:

a) Algorithms to take down terrorist-related materials from social media

The exploitation of social media by terrorists can be stopped through a few collaborative measures done by users, social media platforms, and governments. One of the measures that could be taken is to encourage social media companies to build algorithms to identify terrorist propaganda posts and remove them immediately from all platforms. Social media companies have been spending a lot of resources on developing algorithms to mine data from users. However, they have not been doing the same to come up with algorithms to mine for terrorist related posts and videos. With the right amount of pressure from both users and governments, these platforms can come up with tools that can be used to detect terrorist propaganda, remove the posts and suspend the associated accounts.²⁹

²⁹ Paulina Wu, "Impossible to Regulate? Social Media, Terrorists, and the Role for the U.N.," *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 16(1) (2015), pp. 281-311. <http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=690&context=cjil> (accessed 05 June 2017).

Three lawsuits have already been filed by some victims of terrorist acts against multiple social networks for allowing terrorist material on their platforms that contained the murder of their friends and family. The suits have had one thing in common – they are asking why social media platforms have not put in a tenth of the efforts that they use for advertising towards barring terrorists from posting some sensitive material.³⁰ There are emerging fingerprinting technologies that can be used to flag video clips related to terrorism. These technologies could be embedded into the codes for uploading videos so as to prevent the uploading of all terrorism-related material.³⁰ The advent of artificial intelligence has made it easier for systems to think on their own. AI and machine learning should be incorporated into the sharing, uploading or publishing functionalities of all social media to flag any terrorist-related material.³¹

There have been successful implementations of other technologies that were used to hunt for any child pornography on the internet. A tool called PhotoDNA detected any material that contained child pornography and it was a turning point in the war against the same.³² This tool was used a decade ago and with the current technologies today, it should be easy to come up with an analysis tool to take down any terrorism-related material. This might prevent terrorists from littering social media with their advertisements and videos of executions or attacks.

b) Encouraging users not to share terrorism-related material

Another measure that can be taken is for users to be encouraged not to share any material that they may come across related to terrorism. When groups such as ISIL/DAESH upload their videos on social media, they go viral because of the users, who share these videos with other users who send the clips to many other people. Governments and social media platforms should warn people against such actions since they give the desired attention and fame to terrorist groups. The platforms could come up with an account suspension rule for all accounts found to have shared terrorist-related material. Governments could come up with regulatory frameworks to hold users accountable for their actions on social media. The government could make it a crime to share videos from terrorists as this is against the good of the public. Users should be encouraged to report such videos so that the social media platforms can take them down easily. This will greatly reduce the number of people who get access to material from terrorist groups and in turn, this will take attention and relevance from the terrorists.

³⁰ Gabriel Weimann, “Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web”, *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10 (3) (2016), at <http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/issue/view/58> (accessed 05 June 2017).
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³¹ Wu, “Impossible to regulate? Social media, terrorists, and the role for the U.N.”.

³² Weimann, *Terrorist Migration to the Dark Web*.

c) Indexing the dark web

Lastly, since this article highlighted the use of the dark web by terrorists, there is one sure way that this can be prevented. The dark web should be indexed, at the very least, to identify the sites that operate in it. Most of these sites have been promoting terrorism either by selling weapons and fake passports or by providing very secure platforms for terrorists to communicate. Indexing of the dark web will help authorities know these sites and effectively shut them. DARPA, an American defense research agency, claims that it has a tool that can be used to kill terrorism activity on the dark web. The agency developed a tool called MEMEX that was used to monitor human trafficking on the dark web. It was effective against hunting down all human trafficking dark sites and can be used again to bring down terrorism-related sites as well.

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