

Introduction

This month, the 10th anniversary of the relentless Syrian civil war occurs two years after the end of the so-called Islamist State 'caliphate'. It extended through vast territories in Syria and Iraq at its peak, as seen in the map below. However, by March 2019, the Kurdish-led armed group, a vital member of the global coalition against ISIS, succeeded in defeating the terrorist group in its last stronghold, the Syrian town of Baghouz, near the border with Iraq.

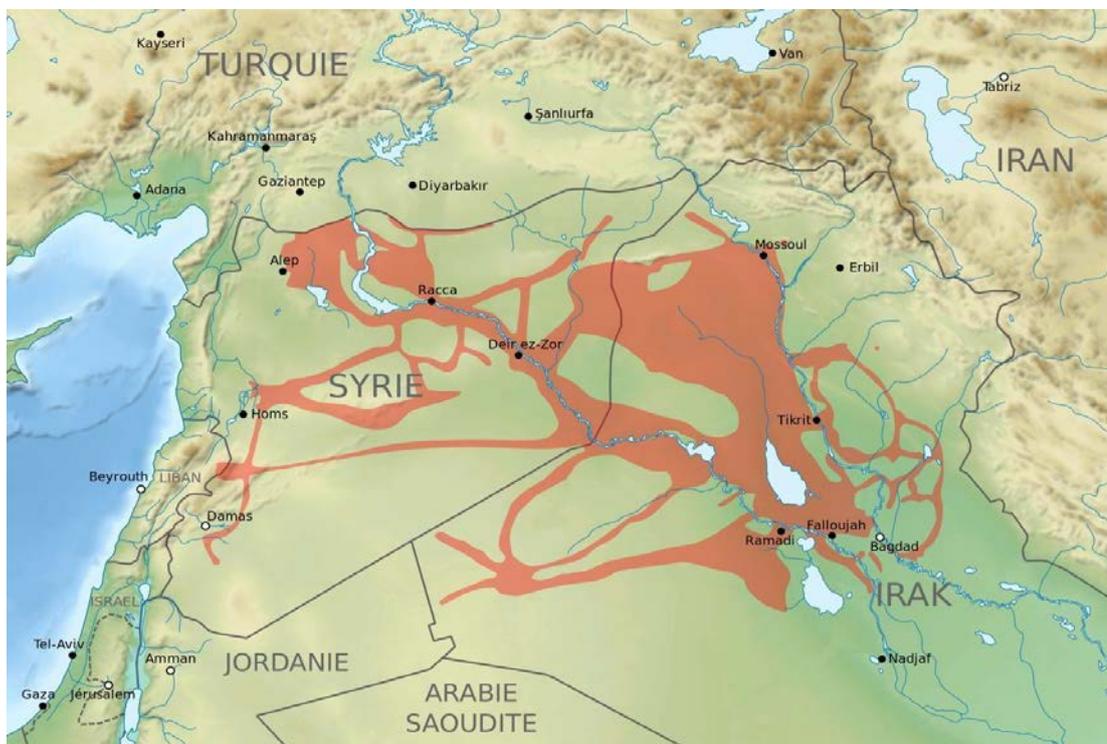


Figure 1. Maximum extent of ISIL's territorial control in Syria and Iraq on 21st May 2015. Source. Sémhur, Flappiefh.

It is estimated that more than 30,000 people from at least 86 countries travelled to Syria and Iraq in late 2015 to join their ranks¹. Regarding the EU, Member States estimate that around 5,000-6,000 foreign terrorist fighters undertook this travel from Europe². These

¹ JASKO, Katarzyna, KRUGLANSKI, Arie W., RIJAL bin Hassan, AHMAD Saiful y GUNARATNA, Rohan, "ISIS: Its History, Ideology, and Psychology", *START, Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives*, 5th december 2018. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73653-2_30-1

² "Ninth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat", *The UN Security Council*, S/2019/612, 31st July 2019. Available at: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/612>

numbers are unprecedented and provide an idea of the power of attraction that ISIS wielded abroad.

Albeit the nosedive of ISIS epitomised an outstanding success for the international community that joined their forces against Islamic terrorism, governments worldwide face a myriad of complex and demanding challenges nowadays. A certain case is considered highly critical among them because of the legal discussions and ethical dilemmas that the situation poses. This is the existence of around 6,902 foreign women and up to 6,577 foreign minors³ endangered in camps in northeast Syria⁴. The number of Europeans held reportedly exceeded 1,000, including 600 children⁵.

This paper intends to analyse the situation of women and children in Syrian camps who belonged to ISIS, answering the following research questions: 'What steps should the EU Member States take for solving the security, legal and ethical dilemmas deriving from ISIS women and minors detained in Syrian camps?' This question is relevant since there is many women and minors from across the globe who joined, were recruited, were taken or the case of children, born into the group, and seek to be repatriated to their countries of origin.

In order to find an answer to the research question, the paper follows the following structure. Firstly, women's and minors' situation will be explained from different perspectives such as the legal, the political and the ethical ones with arguments favouring and opposing their repatriation to origin countries. Secondly, there will be an examination of the current dynamics of returnees and the current trials in Syria and Iraq. Lastly, the material will be consciously assessed to provide a conclusion in relation to the present

³ COOK, Joana y VALE, Gina. "From Daesh to "Diaspora" II: The Challenges Posed by Women and Minors After the Fall of the Caliphate", *The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence*, July 2019. Available at: <https://icsr.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/ICSR-Feature-From-Daesh-to-%E2%80%98Diaspora%E2%80%99-II-The-Challenges-Posed-by-Women-and-Minors-After-the-Fall-of-the-Caliphate.pdf>

⁴ Due to the lack of official records, these numbers must be considered as being an estimation. Scholars such as Thomas Renard, a researcher at the Brussels based think-tank Egmont Institute, warns that these estimations might be inferior to the real number of cases since not all of them were considered as, for instance, people with-holding dual citizenship. Moreover, the data used for this study leads back to 2019 – a fact that might have altered the validity of the results inasmuch many subsequent escapes from the camps were not considered.

⁵ RENARD, Thomas and COOLSAET, Rik. "From bad to worse: The fate of European foreign fighters and families detained in Syria, one year after the Turkish offensive", *Egmont Security and Policy Brief No. 130*, October 2020. Available at: https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2020/10/SPB130_final.pdf?type=pdf

status of the subject matter under investigation.

Study universe

In order to guarantee an in-depth analysis of the challenges and answers that the European governments have at their disposal, the geographical scope of the research has to be reduced. Therefore, the primary focus lies on EU Member States and the United Kingdom as most of the most updated data collected to this point belongs to a period before the completion of Brexit. The reason is that European countries such as Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, or Belgium were a relevant hotspot of foreign fighters' emission.

On the other hand, there are the camps established by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) across the northeast of Syria to shelter those who had recently lived under ISIS's control or were perceived to be the partners, children, and relatives of male ISIS members. Two of these camps, Al-Hol and Roj, contain most foreign nationals. More than 7,000 children and 3,000 foreign women from about 50 countries in the former⁶ and at least 500 women and 1,200 children the latter⁷.

Finally, the reason to focus this research on women and minors, and thus, excluding men's situation, is that found by Rachel Bryson in the British case⁸. The researcher of the *Tony Blair Institute for Global Change* observed that women regularly took children with them when travelling to join extremist groups abroad whereas men often went alone. Furthermore, in the few instances of female returnees, often, children are present too. Therefore, this suggest that the situation of women and children should be considered from a holistic point of view as their fate is intrinsically intertwined.

⁶ "Syria: Dire Conditions for ISIS Suspects' Families", *Human Rights Watch*, 23rd July 2019. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/23/syria-dire-conditions-isis-suspects-families>

⁷ ELLENBERG, Molly y SPECKHARD, Anne. "Perspective: Can We Repatriate the ISIS Children?", *Homeland Security Today*, 7th July 2020. Available at: <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/perspective-can-we-repatriate-the-isis-children/>

⁸ BRYSON, Raquel. "For Caliph and Country Exploring how British jihadis join a global movement", *Tony Blair Institute for Global Challenge*, London, September 2017. Available at: <https://institute.global/sites/default/files/inline-files/For-Caliph-Country.pdf>

Analysis

On the 26th of February 2021, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the 26-years-old Shamima Begum could not restore her British citizenship, which the government stripped in 2019 under the argument of maintaining the safety and security of UK citizens. She fled Britain as a schoolgirl to join Islamic State in Syria, and due to the court decision, she will not be able to re-enter the UK. While waiting for the verdict, her infant son died in the hospital of the Roj camp. The minor's British citizenship had previously been denied by the government, which ignored the request of Begum's family to bring the baby to the UK⁹.

This case serves to illustrate how women's condition usually affects the life of their children and vice versa. However, this does not conclude ultimately that the international and public consideration of their cases is the same. Issues regarding their role in terrorism, citizenship, human rights, prosecution or repatriation work differently for them as it will be presented in the forthcoming section.

The difficult task of understanding the role of women in ISIS

Islamic State-affiliated women's portrayal in media has oscillated between victims taken or duped by their husbands as naive 'jihadi brides,' or active security concerns¹⁰. Both approaches may be accurate. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) alerts that the messages on social media often tapped into a narrative of alleged disrespect shown to Muslim women in Western societies sowing hatred amongst it¹¹. Some also were mesmerised by the idea of getting married to an ISIS fighter. Others were forced by their radicalised family members or sought to escape abusive lives at home.

Due to the great variety of reasons for ISIS affiliation, women's role on these groups remains largely unclear ranging from slaves to perpetrators recruiters, propagandists, and

⁹ CHULOV, Martin, PARVEEN, Nazia y RASOOL, Mohammed. "Shamima Begum: baby son dies in Syrian refugee camp", *The Guardian*, 9th March 2019. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/08/shamima-begum-confusion-after-reports-newborn-son-may-have-died>

¹⁰ COOK, Joana y VALE, Gina. *Op.cit.*

¹¹ "Gender dimensions of the response to returning foreign terrorist fighters", *United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)*, February 2019. Available at: https://eeradicalization.com/up/Feb_2019_CTED_Trends_Report.pdf

supporters¹². Nevertheless, the CTED also notes that women who at first were victims, in some instances, become perpetrators to improve their situation or as a result of indoctrination to radical ideas. Following the same idea, Carola García-Calvo, Principal Investigator of the Program on Violent Radicalisation and Global Terrorism of the Elcano Royal Institute, has warned against underestimating the role of women in the global jihadist movement. "Starting in 2012, the Islamic State makes an explicit appeal to women to mobilise, to unite. It was time to colonise the territory, not only to consolidate the territorial gain but also to expand their project. And women responded", she explains¹³.

It seems evident that governments cannot plan any return if there is no accountability of women's actions undertaken in Syria or Iraq. Nonetheless, national judicial systems face two fundamental challenges. On the one hand, the lack of legislation necessary to prosecute foreign fighters¹⁴. On the other hand, the absence of evidence for women's involvement in the terrorist group¹⁵. Hence, for the purpose of deciding whether to repatriate a woman or not, the main concern of governments is to ensure the necessary tools to effectively assess women's responsibility (if any) for crimes committed under ISIS should due process need to be guaranteed.

Experts have also pointed out that one of the main challenges is what has been called "a black hole of evidence"¹⁶. It was common for active fighters to communicate and boast on social media about their exploits, thereby creating evidence that can be used against them¹⁷. On the contrary, females usually have non-combat roles, making it more difficult to collect evidence in their cases than in one for a male combatant. Besides, as support acts, in the event of being declared guilty, these crimes carry shorter sentences than those related to combat actions. In practice, these constraints would suggest that

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ REQUENA, Pilar. "El regreso de las yihadistas españolas: ¿una amenaza para la seguridad nacional?" RTVE, 23rd November 2019. Available at: <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20191123/regreso-yihadistas-espanolas-amenaza-para-seguridad-nacional/1992434.shtml>

¹⁴ HOFFMAN, Adam y FURLAN, Marta. "Challenges posed by returning foreign fighters", *The George Washington University*, March 2020. Available at: <https://extremism.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2191/f/Challenges%20Posed%20by%20Returning%20Foreign%20Fighters.pdf>

¹⁵ "Women and Children First: Repatriating the Westerners Affiliated with ISIS", *International Crisis Group*, November 2019. Available at: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/208-women-and-children-first.pdf>

¹⁶ PROTO, Lucas. "No hay nada más impopular en Europa que repatriar a miembros del Estado Islámico", *El Confidencial*, 24th March 2021. Available at: https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/2021-03-24/no-hay-nada-mas-impopular-en-europa-que-repatriar-a-miembros-del-estado-islamico_3001943/

¹⁷ GOVIER, Trudy y BOUTLAND, David. "Dilemmas regarding returning ISIS fighters", *Ethics & Global Politics*, 13(2), 1756562, 28th April 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/16544951.2020.1756562>

returning women may face very little, if any¹⁸, time in prison which also acts as a deterrent for governments to repatriate them.

Regarding both challenges, in the last few years, an increasing number of European countries have worked on updating their criminal codes with the object of improving the judicial response to women's contribution to terrorist groups. In this way, support acts such as travel with the intent to join a terrorist organisation abroad, to provide or receive terrorist training, and to fund a terrorist organisation are currently considered a crime¹⁹. Among them, in 2015, Spain penalised the displacement to a territory dominated by terrorist groups. Still, Europol has warned that this has not been the case in all EU Member States, a fact that opens up important security gaps on the European continent²⁰.

Finally, remorse shown by some women retained in Al-Hol and Roj camps in contrast with those who still reaffirm their commitment to ISIS or jihadism more broadly should not be disregarded. What resulted from interviews carried out by humanitarian workers and researchers is that many of them claim to be repentant of joining ISIS and display their willingness to face justice in their home countries for the crimes they could have committed²¹. As a matter of fact, reports show how women in the camps that adhered to ISIS' extremist ideology are harassing and threatening those who have neglected their affiliation to the group²². The distinction between radicalised and non-radicalised women could provide the opportunity for a safer repatriation. For instance, after living in these camps for a prolonged time, authorities in the centre have monitored and observed them, gaining knowledge on their personalities and backgrounds. Also, individual assessment has been undertaken by authorities and non-governmental organisations that can help to catalogue and distinguish women's stances²³.

¹⁸ International Crisis Group. *Op.cit.*

¹⁹ HENLEY, Max, LIGER, Quentin, MÖLLER, Carolin, EAGER, James, OVIOU, Yemi, MIRJA, Gutheil. "EU and Member States' policies and laws on persons suspected of terrorism-related crimes". Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union (European Parliament). *Publication Office of the EU*, December 2017. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2861/499667>

²⁰ "European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend report (TE-SAT) 2020", *Europol*, 23rd June 2020. Available at: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>

²¹ Human Rights Watch. *Op. cit.*

²² SPECKHARD, Anne y SHAJKOVCI, Arian. "Who Are the ISIS Fighters in Custody, and How Can They Be Repatriated? – Homeland Security Today", *Homeland Security*, 7th October 2019. Available at: <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/who-are-the-isis-fighters-in-custody-and-how-can-they-be-repatriated/>

²³ International Crisis Group. *Op.cit.*

However, the longer they remain in these camps, the more heightened the risk of recidivism and re-radicalisation. This could be perceived as a missed opportunity for countries to take concerted and necessary action to show their responsibility in global security and well-being by implementing deradicalization and rehabilitation programs to reintegrate these women once again into society. Otherwise, their permanence in the camps represents a latent danger whose outcome is uncertain.

Children: victims or ticking time bomb?

By international standards, there is a consensus that children recruited to non-state armed groups should primarily be regarded as victims, not as perpetrators²⁴. Nonetheless, ISIS children were portrayed several times as a 'ticking time bomb'. The reason is that for many years, the terrorist group has trained and employed them as spies, cooks, bomb-planters, and suicide bombers, raising concerns about their ideological indoctrination. Following this trend, Europol indicates they may pose a "future threat"²⁵.

On this basis, a criterion to determine children's potential menace should be based on age. For instance, Red Cross advocates that the aforementioned situations apply to those minors who are now over 13-14 years old. They were brought by their parents when they joined ISIS or were already living in the territory where the caliphate was proclaimed and thus, quickly integrated into the group's sphere of influence. Though, when it comes to infants and children under 12 years old, it should be assumed that they do not represent a danger for society and bear higher potential for rehabilitation²⁶.

Apart from national security concerns, EU Member States are cautious about repatriating children because article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights refers to the right to family life. Thus, ISIS parents whose child has been repatriated could appeal to this right and ask for repatriation. Indeed, it has been recorded that some women in the Al-Hol camp are hiding orphans or passing them off as their own children, if their

²⁴ "Child Soldiers and other children associated with armed forces and armed groups", *International Red Cross Committee*, Geneva: August 2012. Available at: <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc-002-0824.pdf>

²⁵ "Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2019 (TE-SAT)", *Europol*, 27th June 2019. Available at: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-2019-te-sat>

²⁶ International Red Cross Committee. *Op. cit.*

attachment to a child could hinder national governments from abandoning them. Acknowledging this, most European countries have decided to repatriate orphans solely and/or implemented DNA testing addressed to avoid deceptions²⁷.

Still, even this option might not be available for those born in the caliphate as the only document they possess is an ISIS-issued birth certificate unrecognised by any State's Government²⁸. Neither for those whose parents are nationals of a country that has introduced legislation to refuse the automatic assignment of citizenship to infants born to Islamic State-affiliated parents. These actions leave or could have left hundreds of children statelessness which ultimately means that no country carries any legal responsibility for their fate²⁹.

States should consider the medium to long term repercussions of leaving the ISIS children to languish in camps in dangerous situations, facing disease, harsh conditions, witnessing violence and at risk of suffering abuses. According to some authors, being raised in a war zone can be a critical contributing aspect to the decision of adolescents and young adults to join armed groups³⁰. In addition, repeated and direct exposure to conflict characterised by hostility, violence, and unresolved endings produce a toxic environment that thereby challenges the child's capacity to achieve and maintain emotional security, which eventually increase the child's vulnerability to developing psychopathologies³¹. Therefore, their swift repatriation allows treating at-risk children before they develop any major psychosocial or behavioural difficulties. Otherwise, they will be able to pose a more significant threat to Western countries in the future as opposed to their threat now, including the commission of terrorist attacks.

²⁷ International Crisis Group. *Op.cit.*

²⁸ ELLENBERG, Molly y SPECKHARD, Anne. *Op.cit.*

²⁹ "Handbook Children affected by the foreign-fighter phenomenon: Ensuring a child rights-based approach", UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), Available at: https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/ctitf/sites/www.un.org.counterterrorism.ctitf/files/ftf_handbook_web_educated.pdf

³⁰ BRETT, Rachel y SPECHT, Irma. "Young soldiers: why they choose to fight", *International Labour Office*; Boulder, CO.: Ginebra, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1st June 2004. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_116562/lang-en/index.htm

³¹ ELLIS, B. Heidi, CARDELI, Emma, BLOOM, Mia, BRAHMBHATT, Zachary y WEINE, Steven. "Understanding the needs of children returning from formerly ISIS-controlled territories through an emotional security theory lens: Implications for practice", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 109, 104754, November 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104754>

Current trends: limited repatriation and unofficial trials

In Europe, the predominant stance regarding repatriation is the opposition to the return of foreign fighters, regardless of age and gender and the recent resolution of the EU's Parliament which called to allow given repatriation processes. The primary concern among policymakers, scholars, and citizens alike is that returning foreign fighters will pose a significant security risk, through the direct perpetration of terrorist attacks, recruiting others into action, and the logistical and/or material support offered to the perpetration of strikes³². The last decade of intermittent terrorist attacks and a continuous immigration flow have shifted the European public opinion toward the closure of national borders. However, this does not mean that there have been any returnees at all. For instance, Italy repatriates and allows the return of its foreign fighters. Belgium repatriates' children but leaves mothers in the camps, whilst Denmark and Ireland return women and children together³³.

Albeit states might not take the step needed to repatriate them, some foreign fighters and their families have been able to make their way back. Europol publishes the percentages of returns since the beginning of the Syrian conflict³⁴. For instance, the return rate of Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, and Italy have oscillated between 20 % and 30 %, while the Netherlands and Spain have recorded roughly 18 % returning. In contrast, Germany and the UK seem to have experienced the highest proportions of their foreign fighters returning around 33 % and 45 % respectively. These returns include women and minors.

However, numbers also indicate that although women are estimated to have made up 17 % of those foreigners who travelled to join ISIS from Western Europe, they only make up about 8 % of those who are recorded as having returned by July 2019³⁵, an incentive that could stimulate further assistance for eventual repatriations. Some of the factors believed to contribute to the lower rate of return among women are the surrender of their passports to ISIS figures of authority, the fact that they cannot travel without a male guardian and that they are more threatened by smugglers. Consequently, while organised repatriations provide the path to monitoring, prosecuting, and rehabilitating foreign

³² HOFFMAN, Adam y FURLAN, Marta. *Op.cit.*

³³ *Ibidem.*

³⁴ Europol (2019). *Op. cit.*

³⁵ United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate. *Op.cit.*

fighters and relatives, uncontrolled and free returns increase the risks regarding national security as their personal circumstances remain unknown.

In the meantime, as the population in camps increases, making it unbearable, Iraq is bringing thousands of people in controversial court proceedings before the absence of any action of foreign countries to repatriate and prosecute their citizens³⁶. Following its steps, the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria, established after the defeat of ISIS and led by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) has announced that they will also put them on trial³⁷. None of these proceedings should be desirable for European governments. Regarding Iraqis, this country applies the death penalty for a range of offences such as murder, treason, espionage, rape, kidnapping, terrorism, war crimes and drug trafficking. Alone in 2018, 616 foreigners were judged and convicted of Islamic State membership, receiving varied sentences of up to life in prison or even the death penalty³⁸. An astonishing 466 of these were women, 108 minors, and only 42 of these men³⁹.

Concerning the upcoming trials in Syria, the Kurdish authorities do not constitute a recognised international legal entity. This, in turn, increases concerns regarding its legal capability to prosecute and open the aforementioned legal processes.

In summary, while no repatriation is taking place, EU Member States fail to provide justice to their nationals at home. In this way, the governments are denying them some fundamental rights such as the opportunity to defend oneself in a court of law, the right to be taken promptly before a judge or an equivalent authority to order their release and have a trial within a reasonable time. All of them are considered central to the proper functioning of the justice system. As the philosophers Govier and Boutland remark, a country knowingly leaving its citizens exposed to the dubious judicial treatment provided by a third country is neglecting its duties⁴⁰.

³⁶ RENARD, Thomas y COOLSAET, Rik. "From bad to worse: The fate of European foreign fighters and families detained in Syria, one year after the Turkish offensive", *EGMONT Royal Institute for International Relations, Security Policy Brief*, October 2020. Available at: https://www.egmontinstitute.be/content/uploads/2020/10/SPB130_final.pdf?type=pdf

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ CEBRIÁN, Pilar. "They left to join ISIS. Now Europe is leaving their citizens to die in Iraq", *Foreign Policy*, 15th September 2019. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/15/they-left-to-join-isis-now-europe-is-leaving-their-citizens-to-die-in-iraq/>

³⁹ COOK, Joana y VALE, Gina. *Op.cit.*

⁴⁰ GOVIER, Trudy y BOUTLAND, David. "Dilemmas regarding returning ISIS fighters", *Ethics & Global*

Conclusions and proposals

As explained in the introduction, this paper sought to provide an answer to the question: 'What steps should the EU Member States take for solving the security, legal and ethical dilemmas deriving from ISIS women and minors detained in Syrian camps?' It is a significant challenge to provide a solution to this dilemma as a wide range of impasses influence the path which can be taken, yet what is ethically correct and the politically desire rarely coincide.

Ideally, the best government response would be to repatriate all their nationals to be brought to a court of justice or integrated into a rehabilitation program. However, this is unlikely to happen. Right-wing ideologies are spreading in the European continent, characterised by xenophobic and anti-immigration speeches⁴¹. As a result, the possibility of the realisation of an attack that happens to be carried out by a repatriated subject is a chance that no politician would like to face. Furthermore, Europeans have witnessed with fear how vans colliding with pedestrians, a student beheading his professor, and stabbings taking place on streets and on the metro. Public opinion wavers every time these events are on television and media because they see this happening to ordinary people which stirs emotive sentiment. Hence, complete rejection of these repatriations taking place is understandable.

However, governments should not be swayed by public opinion and should not be dictated by fear and terror. Among their responsibilities is to provide solutions to current problems and challenges, to forecast the future and avoid potential dangers and threats. Thus, realistically, the least that it is expected is that they do not bury their head in the sand waiting for this problem to die down, giving this is unlikely to happen. While EU Member States do not act and address the situation properly, thousands of people remain in the Al-Hoj and Roj camps risking being radicalised and sowing the seeds of hatred against the country that abandoned them. The more significant hazard is not the individual but the collective, living in harsh conditions and exposure to violence, diseases, and death. Thus, the question is not one young boy being a ticking time bomb or a woman, a

Politics, 13(2), 1756562, 28th April 2020. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/16544951.2020.1756562>

⁴¹ BAYRAKLI, Enes y HAFEZ, Farid. "European Islamophobia Report 2019", *Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA)*, Turkey, 2020. Available at: https://www.islamophobiaeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/EIR_2019.pdf

future terrorist. The threat is submerged in the camps as a whole.

Humans have an instinct to survive, and these families will endure impossible conditions to do it. Should we not act now, we might regret it in the coming future. As emphasised by the journalist and writer, Pilar Cebrián, the delay on the repatriation “may be the preparation for the 2030 caliphate”⁴².

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⁴² POLIDURA, Andrea. “Pilar Cebrián: “Demorar la repatriación de los yihadistas europeos puede ser la preparación del próximo califato en 2030”, *Atalayar*, 5th April 2021. Available at: <https://atalayar.com/content/pilar-cebri%C3%A1n-%E2%80%9Cdemorar-la-repatriaci%C3%B3n-de-los-yihadistas-europeos-puede-ser-la-preparaci%C3%B3n>