

Franchise Terrorism 2.0: The ISIS Caliphate Goes Viral through Social Media

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The comprehensive military response by the international community to counter the forces of the Islamic State corresponded to the immediate and steady decline of their grasp on territory in Iraq and Syria as well as strategic communication and online propaganda activities. However, the group's 'virtual Caliphate' has been rebounding, and today, it is very much alive with a fierce spirit of resilience. Following in the footsteps of al-Qaeda, ISIS is taking franchise terrorism to new heights, using social media platforms the way they have never been used before. This paper examines the potential of social media in terms of being a platform for extremist groups, particularly ISIS, to further their objectives. It also addresses the mechanisms which have been used by the global technology giants to disallow their technologies being used for sinister purposes, and whether those initiatives have achieved the desired results. Technology is the driving force of human progress and the future of civilisation; however, channelling technology for malign purposes such as furthering extremist goals is radically endangering the advancement of human society and altering the trajectory of the global future.

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