

ICSR is pleased to announce the launch of 'The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West: Evolution and Western Policies' by Dr Lorenzo Vidino, which is the latest in its paper series, *Developments in Radicalisation and Political Violence*.

Since the recent revolts in the Middle East began, there has been much debate about the position of the Muslim Brotherhood and its role in the future of the Arab world. But the Muslim Brotherhood also has a long-standing and substantial presence in the West. Vidino's paper explores the various Western incarnations of the movement, discussing their ideology, tactics and strategies and how they differ based on their geographical location.

[Click here to download the paper.](#)

### **An informal but wide-reaching movement**

Vidino describes how the Muslim Brotherhood operates as a movement in almost every Western country, but without the existence of a formal membership or command and control structure. Instead, it is linked by historical, financial, personal, organisational and ideological ties to the Brotherhood and other Islamic revivalist organisations, such as Turkey's Milli Görüş and South Asia's Jamaat-e-Islami. Despite sharing a similar ideological worldview and vision for the future, each of these groups act independently of one another, and this is based primarily upon the political environment in which they operate.

### **Bulwark against violent extremism or a challenge to secular democracy?**

The paper also provides a detailed analysis of the current debate within Western governments and among analysts about the level of engagement that both civil society and politicians should have with Western Brotherhood groups. Distinguishing between 'optimists' and 'pessimists', Vidino shows how deeply divided views on the Brotherhood in the West currently are.

Optimists see non-violent Islamists such as the Western Brotherhood as a religiously conservative yet moderate force that can favour integration and constitute an effective bulwark against al-Qaeda.

The pessimists, however, accuse Western Brothers of trying to implement a long-term strategy to undermine and weaken a number of the core pillars of Western society such as secularism and freedom of religion, and replace it with an Islamist state.

Vidino's extensive field work has found that Western governments swing erratically from one position to the other, often unable to craft coherent policies.

### **About the Author**

Dr Lorenzo Vidino is an academic and security expert who specialises in Islamism and political violence

in Europe and North America.

This paper is based on his new book, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (Columbia University Press, 2010), the first extensive academic work on how the Muslim Brotherhood movement operates in the Europe and the United States.

Currently a visiting fellow at the RAND Corporation in Washington DC, Vidino previously held fellowships at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, the U.S. Institute of Peace, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. He has testified before the U.S. Congress and consults with governments, law firms, think tanks and media in several countries. A native of Milan, Italy, he holds a law degree from the University of Milan Law School and a Ph.D. in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

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