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FORSKARKOLLEGIET



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The Double-Edged Sword of Democracy: How Democracy and Resilience are used in the European Union's External Action against Terrorism in the Middle East

In its 2016 Global Strategy, the EU vows to fight terrorism with roots in the Middle East, seen as threatening European security. One approach devised to do so is to promote democracy, in order to establish resilient societies, less prone to foster terrorism. Strengthening democracy and thus resilience, the EU argues, would help weeding out the root causes of terrorism in the Middle East. However, research shows that fighting terrorism is difficult, risking dangerous backlashes. The EU is wary of this, emphasising that its policies should not exacerbate division. Many hazards are involved in fighting terrorism by promoting democracy. For instance, while consolidated democracies traditionally have been characterized by stability and security, which ostensibly prevent terrorism, the process of democratization is generally unstable and insecure, possibly giving rise to terrorist groupings. Research also shows that it is unclear what “democracy” means in EU democracy-promotion; partners understand “democracy” very differently. This may aggravate tension, as the EU democracy-promotion might be seen as infusing Western, liberal values, diametrically opposed to local values, something which may spur violence. What is more, the concept of resilience and its relation to democracy remains unclear, both theoretically and in EU policy.

Fighting terrorism by promoting democracy and resilience is thus far from straightforward. Given the unclarities and possible hazards involved, this article analyses crucial aspects of how the work to counteract terrorism by promoting democracy and resilience is carried out by the EU in practice, based on in-depth interviews with EU-representatives.

Tid: 16 december 2021, 19:00 (CET)

Plats: Zoom. Länk och seminarietext erhålles vid anmälan.

Anmälan: till sfi@medelhavsinstitutet.se