Analysis of causes and factors of the spread of takfirism in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to analyse the emergence of takfirism, its spread and its evolution in contemporary Kazakh society. The methodological foundation of the study was provided by general theoretical methods of scientific cognition, and various methods of collecting and systematising information. Among the general scientific methods are the method of theoretical analysis; the historical method of comparing individual religious movements of different periods in Kazakhstan, and the specific scientific and philosophical-religious methods of research. The results have suggested that unfounded takfirism poses a threat to the sustainability of diverse communities in Kazakhstan. The religious, ideological and theological preconditions for takfirism in Kazakhstan were analysed. Noted the diversity of approaches by Muslim scholars to understanding and interpreting the ayats of the Qur'an. Presented aspects of distortion in interpreting the essence of Shariah texts. Noted that the influence of political and social factors is significant. Focuses on some of the socio-psychological aspects of the development of radical attitudes among young people. The qualities inherent in young people that enable them to resist external non-ideological attacks are identified. Illiteracy, poor quality of education and the low culture of some people in Muslim countries are among the key elements. It was noted that the main factor in takfirism in Kazakhstan is the influence of the Salafi-Wahhabi movement. The practical significance of the study is that its content is of interest in developing the worldview of contemporary young people in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The results can be used as a teaching and practical material for students and researchers on contemporary history and religion in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Aggressive mind-set; Salafist Idea; Ideology; Literalism; Extremist Activities.

Introduction

Even if religion is separate from the state, its question remains a complex and political issue nowadays. Unconventional religious movements are actively spreading their ideas in modern society. Their actions and activities to influence the human mind appeal to modern methods. One of the global challenges has been the rise and spread of terrorist threats around the world. Concerning

the problems of Kazakh society, the issue of the emergence among young people of an ideology called takfirism is a radical ideology related to Islam, the meaning of which is to accuse Muslims of disbelief. This is the essential difference between takfirism and other Islamist ideologies. Most terrorists are specifically takfiris (Swinhoe, 2021). The intolerance of the representatives of the ideology towards other people's opinions, their aggressive attitude towards others, and their determination to achieve their purposes by any means are characteristic of all its supporters. It is connected to the fact that the idea of adverse movements has an adverse impact on a person's psychology. And a person who follows it current is dominated by aggression towards the environment. They consider everyone, including relatives and parents, to be misguided and unfaithful, except themselves and supporters of their ideology. Such an aggressive attitude towards others deprives the Salafist representative of the qualities of kindness and compassion (Almasovich & Zhalgas, 2021).

The attitude by a supporter of a non-conventional movement causes socio-religious relations within the country to disintegrate and decline. It, in turn, weakens society and destroys its values, and threatens the security of the state and its future. There are those today who use religion as the main political tool. Studying the preconditions and aspects of a large-scale phenomenon would help prevent it and reduce its damage (Shokhayev, 2017). Based on this, the research analyses the causes of takfiri attitudes and aggression in the country. The main part – the background to the emergence of takfirism can be divided into three main areas. Firstly, there is the theological factor. One of the main factors in the ideology of takfirism in Kazakhstan is a "religious literalist consciousness". Many issues cast a shadow over the future of relations between Muslims, over disagreements among those praying in mosques and the adverse comments they make to each other. Among them is the literalist-based ideology under the slogan "pure monotheism" during the years of independence. It is therefore important to consider religious literalism and its adverse impact on the social consciousness and attitudes of people of faith (Badar & Florijančič, 2021; Tymoshenko, 2022).

The problem of literalism in the realm of religion has been one of the factors that have divided many communities and societies along religious lines over the centuries (Malikova et al., 2018). The study of the subject is urgent due to the increased interest in the religious aspect on the part of the academic community and the lack of understanding of the reasons for the spread of takfirism as a religious phenomenon in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK).

According to a report by the Crisis Group (2016), extremist movements like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda are protagonists in deadly crises and their influence can contribute to the spread of takfirism. Additionally, a study on the youth radicalization situation in Kazakhstan by S. Beisembaev (2016) emphasizes the intertwining of crime with radical ideology as a social phenomenon that requires thorough study and comprehensive analysis.

Researchers R. Harris and A. Kamalov (2021) consider terrorism as a complex socio-political phenomenon, defining its essence and evolutionary mutations. The scholarly writings of B. Richards et al. (2022) consider the takfir used by the Kharijites, comparing the ideology in comparison to other ideologies. M. Verkuyten et al. (2021) and E. Alshech (2014) examine the transformation of political Islam and its impact on global security at the international level. Based on an analysis of the research literature, it can be argued that all of the reviewed authors agree that the unwarranted phenomenon of takfirism poses a danger to the establishment and sustainable functioning of a civilised society.

The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the religious, ideological and theological foundations of takfirism in Kazakhstan. The main objectives include examining the influence of literalism in fostering takfiri attitudes, investigating how specific interpretations of Islamic theology are manipulated by takfiri groups to support extremism, and exploring the links between foreign-sponsored takfiri ideologies and the increasing radicalisation of Kazakh youth. Addressing these under-researched areas will contribute to the development of more effective counter-extremism strategies tailored to Kazakhstan's unique socio-cultural landscape. In addition, the study aims to contribute to efforts to promote moderate Islamic teachings that challenge the theological claims of

takfiris. This in-depth understanding of a key, yet often overlooked, factor in radicalisation is crucial to countering the spread of this pernicious ideology, which poses a significant threat to both security and social harmony.

Materials and Methods

For a full understanding of the subject matter, general theoretical methods of scientific cognition were used as a methodological foundation for the study, and methods for collecting and systematising the information obtained. The methodological foundation for the study is determined by the writings of contemporary theologians, historians, sociologists and political scientists, who examine issues of religious and political ideologies in their works. General scientific methods include theoretical analysis; and synthesis of information sources; among historical methods are chronological and genetic methods, which included a comparison of individual historical and religious events that occurred in different historical periods in the RK. Among the special methods, it is necessary to highlight the methodology of similar studies, which is contained in a comprehensive examination of the characteristics of particular groups in the RK. Particularly noteworthy is the method developed by anthropologist Christoph Wolff for studying extremism, the core of which is the study of the characteristics of takfir, politically unsupported by religious provisions, with a holistic approach based on a ritualistic-social method. Based on this method, the article analyses the activities of the radical Takfiri organisation "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" on the territory of the RK.

The main method of research was theoretical analysis, which uncovered key concepts related to the study, namely: "takfir", "radicalism", "Salafist idea", "ideology", "literalism", "extremist activity" and many others. Synthesis as a method of scientific cognition demonstrated the process of combining the various components of Islam into a unique entity, a system without which real scientific knowledge of the phenomenon of takfirism in Kazakhstan is impossible. Synthesis allowed for the representation of the entire as a unity of knowledge derived from analysis. Through this method, the assumptions and factors of Takfirism have been generalised. The thesis resulting from the synthesis is included in the theory of the entire study, which is enriched and refined to determine the methods of subsequent scientific research.

Using historical methods, the authors considered each phenomenon in the background to the development of Takfirism: its emergence, its development and its possible decline. Historicism as a way of understanding the past, present and possible future requires finding the roots of the origins of the takfiri phenomenon in the past; understanding that there is continuity between periods of its existence and that each period should be evaluated according to its historical characteristics and capacities. The systematisation of the information reviewed in the research required a general understanding of the aspects and conditions of takfirism in the RK, the appropriateness of its approaches and standards of research into the politically unsound causes and factors of the spread of takfirism to obtain the correct knowledge about the ideology; it includes the exclusion of subjective information, one-sidedness and bias in the selection and evaluation of facts that relate to the extremist activities of groups in the RK.

Results and Discussion

Religious literalism promoting takfiri attitudes

It is known that the history of Islam on Kazakh soil is closely connected with the teachings of the Sufi school which focuses on the development of noble qualities such as purification of the self, purification of the heart, moral etiquette, and gnosis (ma'rifat). The teachings of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi held a prominent place and role in the religious outlook of the Kazakh people. Salafi-Wahhabi teachings almost completely refute the teachings of the Sufi school. Its primary doctrine is the affirmation of the uniqueness and unity of God and opposition to shirk. Wahhabis call for adherence to the beliefs and practices of the Salaf al-Salih, the exemplary early Muslims, and the practices of the early generations of Islamic scholars. It can be observed in the book of Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sinan of Medina, which is called Al-Majmug al-Mufid min Aqidat at-Tawheed: "Oh, Muslims, your

Islam is useless until you declare war against the Sufi school and destroy it. Fight them before you fight the Jews and the fire-worshippers" (Richards et al., 2022). These words demonstrate how aggressively the authors refer to the Sufi school. It is not just about Sufism. In addition, they deny the Maturidi School and accuse it of heresy. The Maturidi School is characterized by its reliance on the Qur'an and its emphasis on the absolute omnipotence of God while allowing for a minimum of human freedom. It is categorically forbidden to listen to preachers and specialists in the field, and it is considered a sin. It is a standpoint common to all Salafist groups. As a result, riots of Salafist poisoned citizens are known to be occurring in mosques and other religious circles in the country nowadays. They accuse of heresy both the teachings of Sufism and its strands and the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the RK, which adheres to the teachings of the conventional Hanafi School, which is one of the four major Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence, and the Maturidi School. Events in the western regions confirm this. The bloody events of 2011-2012 in Taraz, Atyrau and Aktobe can be considered a direct consequence of Salafi ideology and the "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" community, a splinter movement of the "Muslim Brotherhood" (Moussalli, 2016).

In the Islamic world, the phenomenon of literalism has resulted in many conflicts and disagreements. The main feature of the Kharijites who rebelled against the government during the time of Hadhrat Ali was that they accepted and understood the ayats of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet only in a literal sense, like the modern Salafis. They did not accept the explanations given considering the purposes of Shariah and the features of the Arabic language. They explicitly understood the Qur'anic ayat "Arbitration belongs only to God..." and explained that people should not resort to arbitration under any circumstances (Moussalli, 2016). Due to a political disagreement between Hadhrat Ali and Mugawiya, Mugawiya sent a message to the then-ruler of Egypt, Amr ibn al-Ghas, and Hadhrat Ali decided that Abu Musa al-Ashkari should go to arbitration. The decision of the two companions to go to arbitration is considered heresy by them. A literal understanding of the above ayah contradicts real-life situations and other ayahs in the Qur'an. For example, in the Qur'an, in surah an-Nisa, Allah Almighty calls on spouses who are in disagreement to come to a mutually beneficial solution by seeking arbitration from each side. The Prophet has judged the companions many times on the terms of Shariah. Disagreements among Muslims over the literalist views of the Kharijites have resulted in the bloodshed of thousands of Muslims who believe in one God. Hadhrat Ali had to kill about four thousand Kharijites to stop their rebellion in that century (Richards et al., 2022).

The manifestation of literalist consciousness in Kazakhstan can be observed in the representatives of the Salafist-Takfirist movement in the Atyrau region. The representatives always stick to their position, even if there is nothing to argue against. It reminds of a Qur'anic ayat: "If they are told to follow the ayats of Allah, they will say – We follow the way of our ancestors, – even if their ancestors did not understand or find the right way" (Moussalli, 2016). It is not possible to get such an arrogant man to accept the truth. Further, adverse character qualities prevent them from fully grasping the meaning and content of the text. As a result, he only understands the external meaning and develops the wrong opinion. Thus, it can be concluded that literalism is one of the issues that result in aggressive and radical attitudes in the RK. There were several propagandists of Salafist ideology, carriers of the literalist mindset, who contributed to the spread and development of radical religious views in Kazakhstan through their sermons and lectures. They are Dilmurat Makhamadov, Daryn Mubarov, Nazratulla Abdulkadirov from Tajikistan, Oktam Zaurbekov, Abduhalil Abdujabbarov, Zainullin Rinat and others.

For example, A. Abdujabbarov is known for his unique radical takfiri views. He engaged in propaganda work in the cities of Uralsk and Atyrau, where he brought hundreds of young people to form a radical opinion. He was particularly influential among the Takfiri "al-Taqua" community, now called "Dar al-Salam" in Atyrau. Later he fled to Saudi Arabia. There in 2015, he was arrested by the aforementioned security services in the country for his takfiri opinions. He was returned to Kazakhstan in 2017 and in August 2018 was sentenced to eight years in prison for the propaganda of extremist ideas. D. Makhamadov was convicted of eight years in prison in 2019 by the Al-Farabi District Court of Shymkent for extremist activities (Alinejad & Abdollahi, 2021). There is disagreement among Muslim scholars about the understanding and interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an. The

Qur'an – a book sent down by Allah in Arabic. Based on this ayat, Ahl as-Sunnah Wal Jama'a scholars believe that the ayats of the Qur'an should be understood according to the rules of the Arabic language within Shariah. It is not without reason that Allah Almighty says that the Qur'an was sent down in Arabic. There are many words and phrases in Arabic that are interchangeable. For example, there is a verse that says: "The Judaizers say that God's hands are tied, but their hands are tied..." (Harris & Kamalov, 2021).

It is a verse that has a metaphorical meaning. But Ibn Taymiyya and his followers deny the existence of "majaz" along with "haqiqah" in the Qur'an. Thus, they do not consider the specific usage of the Arabs, saying that all the ayats of the Qur'an should be understood only in the literal sense. Scholars who understand and interpret figuratively are accused of heresy. The superficial mastery of Shariah principles and purposes and illiteracy must be emphasised here. A person who fails to learn them in the circumstances established by Islamic scholars will not simply go astray, but will confuse others. Historically, when Ibn Abbas had an academic debate with a group of Kharijites, about 4,000 of them are said to have changed their minds. It could be argued that their main shortcomings were illiteracy and superficial awareness (Harris & Kamalov, 2021).

Radical interpretations of theology

Another important religious-spiritual reason is the fact that the holy places of Islam – the cities of Mecca and Medina – are under the control of the government, which protects the Salafi-Wahhabi ideology. The average Muslim is known to have a pure love for Mecca and Medina. It is this spiritual passion that results in an uncontrollable perception of radical information and preaching emanating from there. They think that scholars and connoisseurs of the sacred lands cannot be wrong. The emergence of genuinely atheistic attitudes and actions leading to ridda in Muslim society is a factor in the development of takfiri sentiments. The rise in anti-religious sentiments among Muslims and the fact that the materials in the media do not consider the demands of society have resulted in takfirist attitudes among youth. It resulted in them developing an aggressive and radical mindset. The indifference of some scholars and clergymen to these phenomena and their untimely assessment resulted in a narrow perspective of youth with poor eyesight (Lounnas, 2020).

The shortage of clerics who follow the middle way in Muslim societies has allowed youth to follow in the footsteps of foreign religious leaders. It is human nature to follow the example of others and strive to be like them. It is well-known that not all leaders preaching across the ocean are sincere. An example of this is the Tunisian Muaz Garzalawi, the longtime leader of the "Caliphate Troops" who performed terrorist attacks in 2011-2012 in western Kazakhstan (Harris & Kamalov, 2021). Mention should be given to Abu Munzir al-Shinkiti, who gave the radical religious youth of Kazakhstan a fatwa to organise a militia against the authorities. It implies that the members of this group read the Qur'an but do not understand its meaning and make mistakes. Secondly, political and social aspect has an impact. It can be stated that the armed conflict between Hadhrat Ali ibn Abu Talib and Mughawiyah ibn Abu Sufyan over the question of who was worthy of the Caliphate, i.e. power, was a major political factor in history. As a result of these conflicts, the Kharijites emerged. They had their demands and attitudes towards the leader. The caliphs of the time, in their view, were unworthy of power. In their opinion, the fact that both parties appeal to a third party for arbitration is contrary to the principles of religion and the requirements of faith (Verkuyten et al., 2021).

Social injustice in some Muslim countries, the problem of unemployment due to weak power and other social problems haunt members of society seeking justice, seeking self-care from preachers of various destructive religious sects (Alshech, 2014). The information part should be mentioned. Takfiri preachers have a very high information capacity. For example, if one search the Internet for information on a particular religious issue, hundreds of radical websites and resources will appear. In fact, in the current political arena, a pragmatic principle prevails. Admittedly, the fracturing of the Muslim community and the instability in the country serve the interests of some political parties. In most cases, these political parties organise the emergence of various groups and movements, if necessary. For example, historians know that in the 18th century, the Wahhabi movement was gaining strength using British troops. Experts say that the emergence of Qur'anists in India, a group

that rejects the Sunnah and claims to accept only the Qur'an, is a straightforward cause of the British colonisers (Moussalli, 2016).

Converted citizens are sometimes subjected to undue persecution by the authorities or society in their country. It may cause them to feel resentment and revenge. The oppressor's side is considered guilty. The opinions of Sayyid Qutb's Egyptian organisation "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah", which came after torture and hardship in prison, are a case in point. Then they begin to consider different ways and means of taking revenge. Admittedly, it is natural for someone with a religious understanding and position to justify the actions from this perspective. Consequently, oppressors are seen as criminals, rather than just apostates and unbelievers. Unemployment and the difficult economic situation are upsetting citizens and pushing them towards radical and aggressive thinking. The reason is that they strive for social justice and believe that the state should employ young people. They think that anyone indifferent to the problem has failed to do their duty and take care of their minds. It, in turn, evokes their takfiri opinions (Mazruga, 2019).

Nowadays, some groups are used to blaspheming all groups that disagree with them. Thus, they try to justify punishing their opponents or spilling their blood. It is evident in the case of the current ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) group in the Middle East (Ostash, 2021). They accuse their opponents and dissidents of blasphemy to legitimise war with almost all dissenting parties. All the world's states, political systems, education and health systems are considered to be wrong. Thirdly, a socio-psychological factor is the distance of young people from an environment of faith and a correct worldview. Growing up in an environment with a positive upbringing, the younger generation avoids aggressive, radical and fanatical ideas. On the contrary, if one lives in an adverse environment, one will inevitably have adverse effects. Thus, it is known to be influenced greatly by the environment in which a person lives and the family upbringing (Proroković, 2021).

Illiteracy, poor quality education and low culture in Muslim countries have resulted in a lack of understanding of religion and unconscious conversion. Religious values govern the soul and consciousness of humanity. If one does not accept such values intelligently and consciously, one can make a serious mistake. The dangers include the development of young people's views and opinions without considering the previous generation. Analysis and self-understanding of religious texts are a prerequisite for the emergence of the phenomenon of Takfirism. The reason for this is that teenagers often confuse the main principles and orientations of religion with its minor branches. Some texts are not understood for their intended purpose but only for their external meaning. However, their interest and religious aspirations may be high. But it is not enough to understand the principles and purposes of religion (Verkuyten et al., 2021).

Takfiri ideologies from abroad influencing Kazakh youth

On the example of the activity of the radical takfiri organisation, "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" on the territory of the RK, the prerequisites for the spread of the ideology of takfirism will be analysed. Originally a peaceful organisation called the "Muslim Society" was founded in Egypt in the 1970s, later called "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah". It was established by a young Egyptian, Ali Ismail, a graduate of Al-Azhar University. Shukri Mustafa, a member of the "Muslim Brotherhood" whom Ali met in Abu Zaabal Prison, has resigned from the "Muslim Brotherhood" and joined the "Muslim Society". After Sayyid Qutb's radical views were condemned by Muslim theologians (Ali Ismail and Shukri Mustafa read "Milestones along the Way"), the founder left the Muslim society and Shukri Mustafa became its new leader. In 1976, the number of members of the community, whom the police regarded as innocent marginalised and outcasts, reached 2000 (Proroković, 2021).

In the same year, the Egyptian authorities received complaints from people whose relatives had joined the organisation and severed all ties with their families. Some members of the "Society" who had resigned from the association were declared traitors and infidels by Shukri Mustafa. He sent his followers to gather the infidels and expel them. The police intervened and arrested 40 members of the society. The leader of the "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" movement, which emerged in the last century, Shukri Mustafa, was known in his student days for his radical-aggressive opinions and actions and

found followers. Therewith, all takfiri groups see themselves as the only group that understands and adheres to the religion according to the Qur'an and Sunnah as the companions and tabiginis. Such faith is more attractive to ordinary believers. Therefore, by memorising one or two of these principles, growing a beard and shortening the bottom of their trousers, they technically become religious people. In recent centuries, the number of scholars and sages in the field of sharia and theology who can make people follow their word and stop people with a single word is dwindling. Young people who turn to religion are more likely to follow people who do not have a deep knowledge of science and consider themselves scientists (Proroković, 2021).

History has known cases in which one outcome of an excess became the cause of an excess of the opposite nature (Tsvietkov, 2021). For example, the emergence of the Kharijites led to the emergence of the Murjee group, while the Jabri group resulted in the emergence of the Kadarites. There is a tendency to take Shariah matters lightly and distort it. Sometimes some experts and scholars state that the groups the Qur'an describes as infidels cannot be called infidels. The indifference to the fundamentals of Islam in society seems to have pushed some religiously observant young people to the other side of the scales. In particular, this results in their radical understanding and implementation of the takfir concept (Harris & Kamalov, 2021). In response to repressive measures by the Egyptian police, members of "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" began to use violence in the mid-1970s. In 1977, members of "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" committed attacks on nightclubs in Cairo. Five leaders of the organisation, including Mustafa Shukra, were executed in March 1978. The organisation was then dissolved and some former members joined "Egyptian Islamic Jihad". "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" was declared a right-wing extremist by a court in 2014 and its activities were banned in Kazakhstan. The organisation is listed as a terrorist organisation by the United States, China, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and many other countries (Mazruga, 2019).

To summarise the above, it can be concluded that the specifics of takfirism in Kazakhstan should be considered from a practical standpoint. His actual purpose is simple – to establish destabilisation. Therefore, according to the operating principle of all sectarian groups of any religion, the main objective of takfirism is to isolate a small mass of people from society and establish closed communities. At these closed meetings, "fans" deliberately create an illusory perception of the world around them with an uncompromising separation of white and black, with no halftones. It systematically establishes a potential conflict situation. Therewith, Kazakh tactics explicitly considered the Kazakh specificity of Islam, i.e. the specificity not of Islam itself but of the national Ummah. According to Islam, almost all Kazakhs are Muslims, except those who have consciously adopted another religion or are convinced atheists, of whom there are very few in Kazakhstan, then the ideological justification for the choice is obvious. part of the religion. It is virtually impossible to exclude Muslims from a society based on orthodox Islamic teachings. The takfiri have identified prayer as the main criterion for a believer. Although, according to the traditional canons of Islam, it is sufficient to recite the shahadatas and consider oneself a Muslim to accept Islam.

An examination of scientific and religious sources has demonstrated that there are virtually no scientific works devoted to the spread of takfirism in the RK. Notably, that in today's scientific information space, many scholars from various countries are devoting attention to the phenomenon of Takfirism. One such scientific work was a research paper by S.Z. Shushtari and M.R. Hafeznia (2020). The study of the phenomenon of takfirism is linked through close links to the socio-political and economic issues occurring in the world. According to the authors, accusations of religious disloyalty serve to preserve authentic Islamic teachings, which has resonance in the authors' study. The research covers politically motivated and disloyal accusations of treason by representatives of various radical groups whose main purpose is to remove rivals from power and seize power fairly, which in some respects resonates with the authors' research on the subject. Using the phenomenon of takfirism, the medieval theologian Ibn Taymi and other representatives of the radical groups, the Kharijites have been analysed in detail, and the common and varied aspects of using the term under study have been identified. It has resulted in the spread of various extremist concepts that contradict the teachings and ethics of Islam, and the emergence of various extremist groups whose members band together and spread the teachings of takfirism to their opponents. The radicalism of one group

or another determines the necessity of accusations and attitudes towards jihad. The most radical groups are defined by the practice of total disbelief.

Several academic studies by publicists have addressed the issue of combating recruitment practices by extremists and terrorist organisations (Robinson, 2017; Yerekesheva & Knutson, 2020). For Islamic fundamentalists, for example, the Internet is becoming the most convenient and accessible means of expressing aggression. Attempts to block websites, forums or social media groups have only a temporary positive effect in the fight against takfiriism. The promotion of extremism and terrorist organisations in virtual space (namely, social media on the internet) has far surpassed print media and classic topical websites. Their advantages are increased numbers, the possibility of personal and secure communication at a distance between recruiter and recruit, and a faster response time to changes in the content of the message compared to classic Internet resources. The younger generation now trusts information on social media more than they trust TV, newspapers or conventional Internet websites (Bevz, 2018). Islamic radicals and their professional recruits adapt quickly. The authors of the research agree that currently, the most widely used recruiting tools for takfiri ideology are special pages (groups) on social networks or websites dedicated to Islam. They are well-designed and have versions in Kazakh, Russian, Arabic and English. These Internet resources are divided into several sections with seemingly peaceful themes and radical interpretations of the Qur'an, the holy book for all Muslims. As you browse the website, a "window" constantly appears on the screen inviting you to ask a question or a problem to a theologian, an imam or to find a religious counsellor.

B. Richards et al. (2022) and C. Ellis (2021) discuss particular provisions of Islamic political and legal thought that can be used to justify extremism. Extremism in the name of Islam has had an enormous impact on the political life of many countries and entire regions of the world since the mid-1990s. Of particular interest is the position of the major international collegiate centres of contemporary Muslim legal thought operating at the level of the entire Muslim world. For example, the Qur'anic comparison between terrorism and theft is repeated in several documents, the most important of which is the Academy of Islamic Law (Fiqh) of the Islamic Conference. The definition of terrorism was established by a resolution adopted in 2003 at the 14th session of that conference. Refers to unlawful acts of aggression, intimidation or threats, whether material or moral, by any State, group or person, against any person through their religion, life, honour, sanity or property, or in any form of propaganda.

Extremists in the guise of Muslims must be held accountable for their crimes and sins according to the law of the country where they commit the evil or international law but according to Sharia law (Dzhansarayeva et al., 2014). Otherwise, the cited concept of suppressing deviations from its recommendations is an effective recipe for fighting terrorism under the banner of Islam: the perpetrators of terrorist acts must be stopped, their instigators and mentors must be combated. In other words, terrorists should not apply Sharia law but should be targeted. The subject matter of the authors' research deals with legal responsibility for extremism and terrorism. The work could be a supplement to further study of the phenomenon of takfirism in the territory of the RK, when considering the consequences of the activities of radical takfiri organisations.

The studies by M. Berndt and T. Kolind (2021), N. Salama and N. Chikudate (2021) and G. Makhmudova et al. (2023) examine the development of radical ideologies in Islam and their impact on the activities of terrorist and extremist organisations. In the countries of Central Asia, the spread of Islam among the population continues apace, and a kind of religious "renaissance" is occurring. Researchers note that states are implementing several urgent measures to combat radical religious ideologies. Based on the contributions of the above-mentioned authors, the most common extremist and terrorist organisations operating on the world stage, and in Central Asia in particular, were examined. Based on the research material, one of the radical Takfiri organisations listed in the articles was chosen, "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah", which was examined in more detail in the authors' study. In particular, the affiliation of the radical Takfiri organisation "Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah" in the RK was examined.

To summarise the entire study, the main purpose at present is to counteract the already established extremist organisations in the RK, whose ideology is based on the teachings of Islam. It is necessary from a societal perspective to establish alternative ways of expressing and realising the personal demands of the younger generation in a socially acceptable way. As far as the political-legal sense is concerned, it is about increasing the legal self-confidence of the population of Kazakhstan. Guiding the dialogical consciousness of the individual to develop positive dialogical communication with different people (including people who cause extremism), the development of positive manifestations (finding an alternative to extremism, the possibility of religious-philosophical choice, channelling the psychological characteristics of the individual in a positive sense) can help reduce inter-confessional conflicts in the RK. The state should have a mechanism for developing its policy and ideology in the field of law, education and professional training. It will prevent the profound spread of radical religious ideologies based on the phenomenon of takfirism, will help eliminate adverse perceptions of Islam, and will modernise the approach to religion and religious education in the RK.

Conclusions

A comprehensive analysis of scholarly sources and religious texts concludes that the politically unfounded causes and factors of the spread of takfirism threaten the development and stable functioning of society in Kazakhstan. There are several possible scenarios for the further development of the Takfiri trend, which largely depends on global and local socio-political conditions within the state. The first is the rise of extremist and terrorist sentiments, and their groundless accusations of disbelief. Another reason is the emergence of radical groups that reproach their allies with takfirism. Evidently, bans and sanctions alone cannot stop the spread of the Takfiri phenomenon in Kazakhstan. A theological remedy must therefore be sought to stop this pervasive religious and socio-political phenomenon.

In addition to the aspects mentioned above, there may be other reasons for the spread of takfirism. A process of aggression against national interests in the country adversely affects the national and conventional religious knowledge and values of the Kazakh people, which have not been interrupted for centuries and have preserved the country. The research suggests that the teachings of Ibn Abdul Wahhab, who lived on the Arabian Peninsula in the eighteenth century, are the main religious factor that resulted in the phenomenon of takfirism in Kazakh society. The adverse impact of this man's teachings should therefore be of concern both in the RK and in the international community.

As a result of systematic research, many specialists in the scientific field agree with this conclusion. In addition, the study divides the premises of the Takfiri phenomenon into three main areas: religious and theological, political and social and socio-psychological. It is crucial that the state, non-governmental organizations and industry professionals in these areas work with young people and the country in a new way.

The issues raised are relevant for future studies, which should be continued as part of the analysis of the spread of takfirism in the RK. Further research could be based on the development of a comprehensive study designed to develop informative methodologies based on the positive aspects of Islam. It would allow ideologically disarming the propagandists of takfirism in the information space and help stop young people from being "drawn" into the activities of extremist and terrorist organisations on the territory of the RK.

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