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Research Guide Series

Suicide Terrorism

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Suicide Terrorism

Suicide terrorism is a highly effective, inexpensive form of attack with little need to invest in its technological development. Suicide terrorists choose their own target and can react to circumstances on the ground, changing their target or their timing in an instant to ensure the maximum damage, destruction and death.

Suicide attacks are used to achieve the goals of terrorist groups, to instil public fear, attract international news coverage, gain support for a cause, and create solidarity or competition between disparate terrorist organisations as well as learning from one another.

What drives someone to kill his or her self specifically in order to wreak havoc and destruction? Is it the ideological, religious, cultural, social or political appeal of suicide attacks that makes individuals choose to place explosives on their bodies and kill themselves? Is there a belief that the death will transport them to paradise? With the incidence of suicide terrorism rising around the world and children being drawn to it, it is important to look at how are suicide terrorists are being recruited. We need to understand the factors that make it possible for suicide terrorism to flourish and the conditions that spur youths to become martyrs by making them think suicide attacks are a good way to die.

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on Suicide Terrorism. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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