

Mass Shooting in Copenhagen Shopping Mall

News:

On Sunday 3 July 2022, a well-visited shopping mall in Copenhagen, Field's, formed the stage for a mass shooting during opening hours. A 22-year-old ethnic Danish man entered the mall with a rifle and shot at civilians who were present with families and children. 10 were shot, of whom 3 were killed and several seriously injured. It is still unclear what drove the perpetrator, and the attack has not been marked as terrorism by the Danish authorities, claiming they lack a motive. This, despite several eyewitnesses reporting that he purposefully went after Muslims or foreign-looking people.

Comment:

Authorities and the media have in several statements highlighted that the perpetrator is known in the psychiatric system, to make the public understand that his mental illness was the cause of the attack. A mentally ill person who acted out of the blue, with no motive other than a sick mind. The debate has subsequently mostly been about whether the politicians do enough for the mentally ill and that he has been left in the lurch by the psychiatric system, which is in dire need of more resources.

Danish authorities chose from the outset not to call it a possible terrorist attack, and police chose not to investigate it as a potential terrorist attack, which is otherwise the standard starting point for similar cases. This testifies to the fact that there are different scripts for how attacks in its early stages should be laid out and framed in public, depending on whether the perpetrator is a Muslim or not, as the recent shooting in Norway clearly shows. This maintains the narrative of "Islamic terror" and ensures that the "war on terror" continues to be justified.

The whole concept of terror and the discourse on terror is deeply politicized and firmly linked to the "war on terror", in which Denmark has acted as the tail of the United States. The ongoing attempts of linking violence and terror with Islam and Muslims is a political narrative, which the West continuously nurtures and maintains to legitimize bloody wars of aggression and occupation with civilian casualties in the millions. The same narrative has formed the basis for the past two decades' policy of forced assimilation aimed specifically at Muslims domestically in Denmark, which is nurtured by a systematic demonization, dehumanization, and discrimination of Muslims in media, law, and politics, and at the same time it serves as a blockade in the minds of the citizens in Denmark from considering Islam.

That is why the West, including Denmark, insists on preserving this narrative. And therefore "terror" is used as a political concept as well as in the media and the judicial system selectively and disproportionately directed at Muslim perpetrators. Even in cases where a terrorist act is openly committed by a white, right-wing terrorist, and even when a terrorist conviction has been handed down, extensive studies of global

media coverage show that such attacks are far less often referred to as terrorism, compared to cases where the perpetrator has a Muslim background.

When the very lies and hatred that have been painstakingly sown, fertilized and watered for decades, bear rotten fruit in the form of increasing violence and killings committed by white Westerners against Muslims, the establishment in this and other western countries will do their utmost to avoid the rightful placement of responsibility and the imperatively necessary discussion of what kind of culture, policy and ideology creates hatred and violence.

"The war on terror" is, in itself, the best proof that Western governments, in their efforts to "fight terrorism", were never driven by concern for civilian lives or the security of their own citizens.

The obvious hypocrisy and discrimination in sensational cases of civilian killings certainly also applies in the current case of the attack in Field's shopping mall. This, notwithstanding the details of the case, which remain unclear to the public.

Several eyewitness accounts of people appearing by name, who were present during the attack and had eyes on the perpetrator, and which independently describe a similar pattern in which the perpetrator purposefully targeted "foreigners" or "Muslim-looking" people, should at least lead to this angle being pursued by the media and the public. To reject these first-hand accounts categorically as mere "unconfirmed rumors" is a mysterious approach to testimonies in a case where any motives are so important to the public and to the rightful placement of responsibility and not least to the potential political consequences. This, regardless of the legal aftermath, and whether these first-hand accounts are later confirmed or not.

Mentally ill people can, in their behavior, be characterized and driven by more than their illness. Sick minds are also affected by their surroundings and society. It is mysterious that the discussion about motive or pattern is silenced due to mental illness. Which, in line with the aforementioned discrimination, has certainly not been the case in similar cases, where a mentally ill Muslim was the perpetrator.

These points and the broader perspectives on the whole terrorism-discourse deserve public attention and debate, regardless of the details and outcome of the latest tragic events in Copenhagen.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Ibrahim Atrach**