

## Headlines:

- **Paris Attacks: Hollande Blames Islamic State for 'Act of War'**
- **ICC Cites Evidence of International Forces Abusing Afghanistan Detainees**
- **Russia is a New Front for Militant Islam**

## Details:

### **Paris Attacks: Hollande Blames Islamic State for 'Act of War'**

The near-simultaneous attacks in Paris that killed at least 128 people were an "act of war" organised by the Islamic State (IS) militant group, French President Francois Hollande says. He said the attacks, carried out by eight gunmen and suicide bombers, were "organised and planned from outside". The targets included bars, restaurants, a concert and a high-profile football match. IS claimed the attacks. Several arrests have been made in Belgium, the justice minister says. Mr Hollande imposed a state of emergency, after the worst peacetime attack in France since World War 2. It is also the deadliest in Europe since the 2004 Madrid bombings. Hospital officials now put the number of injured at more than 300. Eighty are in a critical condition. Islamic State released a statement on Saturday saying "eight brothers wearing explosive belts and carrying assault rifles" had carried out the attacks on "carefully chosen" targets, and were a response to France's involvement in the air strikes on IS militants in Syria and Iraq. Shortly before, President Hollande said France had been "attacked in a cowardly shameful and violent way". "So France will be merciless in its response to the Islamic State militants," he said, vowing to "use all means within the law.. on every battleground here and abroad together with our allies". [Source: BBC]

**No one in France is asking the tough questions about Hollande's failure to protect French people. Since the Charlie Hebdo attack in January 2015, France has deployed 10500 troops, and has spent millions of dollars to upgrade security, and the security measures put in place were easily breached. Rather than demanding Hollande's resignation and of the head of the security services, calls are growing for military intervention in Syria.**

### **Russia is a New Front for Militant Islam**

As Russia deepens its involvement in Syria, it risks more than a military quagmire. Its intervention exacerbates a growing domestic threat, one that could destabilize the whole country. A new brand of radical Islam is rising in Russia, fueled by Russian fighters eager to perpetrate acts of terror at home. Even a decade ago, the scope and depth of this emerging terrorist network would have seemed inconceivable. While Russia has suffered its share of domestic terrorism, those crimes were largely perpetrated by Chechen fighters based in the North Caucasus region. When Moscow declared victory in Chechnya in 2009, it suggested that the threat of radical violence had been largely contained. But militant Islam didn't disappear. In fact, the fundamentalist teachings have spread from Chechnya throughout central Russia. They are propagated by Russian imams trained in the Middle East and are finding new audiences among the country's native Muslims, as well as Central Asian migrants in Moscow. Even some younger and seemingly long-assimilated believers are becoming radicalized. Like their counterparts across Europe, they're turning to Internet

videos and social-media messages aimed at arousing anger at Western “crusaders.” This is a real danger for Russia. The country has become a new front in the war against militant Islam, a battle that Europe’s largest Muslim country is largely unprepared to fight. The Russian Foreign Ministry estimates that there are 5,000 people from Russia and the former Soviet Union fighting alongside the Islamic State (independent observers put the number as high as 7,000). Today, Russian is the third-most-popular Islamic State language, after Arabic and English. Russian graffiti reportedly seen in Darayya, Syria, reads: “Today Syria, tomorrow Russia! Chechens and Tatars rise up! Putin, we will pray in your palace!” The Russian authorities appear to be waking to the danger. Putin’s chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov, said many of the Russians who have fought with the Islamic State have returned home, presenting a direct threat. In his speech at the U.N. General Assembly in September, Putin declared that, having “tasted blood” in Syria, fighters will come back to Russia to “continue their evil doings.” But Russia’s security services are used to fighting terrorism in the relatively small, sparsely populated and largely rural North Caucasus. They are not ready to take on radicalizing Tatars and Bashkirs, disaffected Central Asians in large cities and the Islamic State’s growing penetration of their homeland. The task is especially challenging because the new jihad is geographically vast (Russian media outlets have reported arrests of militants as far as Eastern Siberia) and far more urban. As a result, terrorist networks will have an easier time organizing and hiding. Putin has further multiplied the risks of terrorism by casting his lot against Sunnis in Syria, though the overwhelming majority of Russian Muslims are Sunnis. Already, 55 Saudi Wahhabi clerics have called for a jihad against Russia for its military intervention in Syria. [Source: *Washington Post*]

**Russia and the West deliberately choose not to address the root causes of radicalization and that is a) the despicable foreign intervention in Muslim lands b) the intellectual weakness of western ideas.**

### **ICC Cites Evidence of International Forces Abusing Afghanistan Detainees**

U.N. prosecutors said on Thursday they had evidence suggesting international forces in Afghanistan had caused serious harm to detainees by subjecting them to physical and psychological abuse. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been investigating alleged crimes committed since 2003 by all parties to the conflict in Afghanistan, but in previous reports on the status of its inquiry it has been far more circumspect about alleged crimes and the harm caused. In its latest report on the many preliminary examinations it has open, the court's Office of the Prosecutor said U.S. investigations of alleged crimes by its soldiers had not yielded convictions or risen high up the chain of command. The determination marks a significant escalation of the court's long-running investigation and could prove controversial in the U.S., which is not a member of the court and has in the past opposed it vociferously. "The infliction of 'enhanced interrogation' techniques ... would have caused serious physical and psychological injury," prosecutors wrote. They were still trying to determine the gravity and scale of any violations committed by international and U.S. forces, they said. All NATO members contributed to the International Security Assistance Force mission to Afghanistan that ran from 2001 until last year. Forces from the U.S. and other countries remain in the country on a NATO training exercise. [Source: Reuters]

**What after 12 years ICC has finally discovered evidence of Afghan abuse at the hands of the occupiers. But will such revelations bring perpetrators to justice, as the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) between Afghanistan and America absolves US soldiers from prosecution.**