

# Oman laws and institutions a bulwark against extremism



**Dr Saud Mohammed al Farsi**

The writer is blogger and PhD in nuclear law

OMAN IS LEAST EXPOSED TO TERRORISM, REVEALS THE GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX (GTI), DEVELOPED BY INTERNATIONAL THINK TANK THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND PEACE

The UN designated February 12 of each year as the International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism in 2022. The day is also celebrated in Oman, which is considered as an icon of peace in the world in terms of being free from acts of violence, and combating all types of extremism, violence and terrorism.

Oman is least exposed to terrorism, reveals the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), developed by international think tank the Institute of Economics and Peace. It continued to score zero.

Oman's achievement came as a result of serious and systematic work at all levels and through various government and private institutions and through building a tight and efficient legislative system that is not only concerned with combating terrorist organisations, but also aimed at "drying up" the sources of terrorist financing.

The laws to combat terrorism went through many stages and continued to develop and modernise in line with global developments and best international practices.

Oman criminalised terrorist

acts under Article 132 of the Omani Penal Code - repealed - which was issued in 1974, and continued to do so in the Anti-Terrorism Law issued in 2007. The Anti-Terrorism Law has become the basic nucleus of the fight against terrorism in Oman. Moreover, the law provided that the National Counter-Terrorism Committee shall be reconstituted by a decision of the National Security Council and shall operate under its supervision.

As part of its efforts to dry up the sources of terror funds, the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism Law was issued in 2010. One of the most important provisions of that law was the establishment of the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, to be the competent authority to set public policies and issue guidelines. The Committee, in coordination with the National Counter-Terrorism Committee, is responsible for the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council

Resolutions on the Consolidated Lists for the Freezing of Funds of Designated Persons and Entities.

In addition, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) was established under the Royal Oman Police. The FIU is responsible to receive reports and information from financial institutions, non-financial businesses and professions, non-profit associations and bodies, and others on transactions suspected of relating to the proceeds of crime or terrorism.

The abovementioned law also obliges the competent regulatory authorities, including the Central Bank of Oman, the Capital Market Authority, the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and the Ministry of Social Development to regulate the sectors in a way that ensures that these sectors are not exploited to commit money laundering and terror funding.

In response to international developments, Oman issued a new law to combat money

laundering and terrorist financing in 2016. By this law, the FIU was transformed into a national financial information centre with legal personality and financial and administrative independence.

Oman has not neglected to criminalise acts that may lead to terrorism using technology. The Cyber Crimes Law criminalises anyone who establishes a website for a terrorist organisation, uses the computer network or



Women hold a placard during a demonstration called "Not in my name" of Italian muslims against terrorism, in downtown Rome

information technology for terrorist operations and other violent acts.

Oman has signed and acceded to many conventions and treaties including the GCC Convention on Combating Terrorism, the Convention of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on Combating International Terrorism, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the Arab Convention for the Suppression of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism. A very recent example of the Sultanate of Oman's efforts on the international level is its accession to the International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism which was promulgated by Royal Decree No 61/2022.

To conclude, the efforts mentioned in this article are a very small part of the great and continuous efforts carried out by the various authorities in Oman to protect the nation from extremism or terrorism. Oman will always and forever remain a global centre of peace.