

Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC)

Two decades of the global ‘war on terror’ = war of terror

Since 2001 the so-called global War on Terror has been a perpetual, boundless terror campaign against people resisting oppressive regimes by whatever means. More broadly it has demonised and persecuted entire groups as suspect communities. This terror campaign has been sanitised as self-defence and has been mis-represented as a response to the 9/11 attack.

In reality this campaign has extended prior racist-imperialist agendas: Western domination, collusion with oppressive regimes and global resource extraction. Since the late 1990s the neoconservative lobby group, Project for the New American Century, had raised an imperative for the US to press its global advantage after the Cold War. According to the Project’s 2000 report, *Rebuilding America's Defences*, the US should "promote American global leadership" to reshape the world by any means including military ones.

Meanwhile the FBI defined terrorism along vague lines encompassing a broad range of political activities. The UK formally did so in the Terrorism Act 2000, initially aimed at UK migrant communities sympathetic to resistance to oppressive regimes from which they had fled. All this generated new demonologies to supplement or replace weaker ones (such as the ‘Communist threat’ and the ‘war on drugs’).

The 9/11 attack became a convenient pretext for implementing those agendas as a global ‘defence’ campaign and for removing legal protections from ‘suspects’. In his mid-September 2001 speeches, George Bush announced a ‘war on terror’, which would be ‘a new and different war: the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century’. Indeed, it redefined war so that the entire world would become a perpetual battlefield against a vaguely defined ‘terrorism’.

The UK’s New Labour government helped persuade the European Union and the UN to adopt legal sanctions serving that US-UK ‘counter-terror’ agenda. Regimes worldwide readily labelled their political opponents as ‘terrorists’ and exaggerated violent threats in order to gain ‘counter-terror’ funds from Western sponsors, following the US-UK precedent.

Consequently the ‘war on terror’ has served to restore a world system of domination by the sole superpower the US and its allies. Means include: imposing regime change, pre-emptive strikes and full-spectrum dominance; suppressing national liberation movements; criminalising migrant communities and refugees; demonising Muslims; anti-terrorism laws suspending *habeas corpus* and authorising house arrests, secret courts, extensive surveillance, etc.. Meanwhile a politics of fear has been supported by the corporate mass media under the cover of ‘national security’.

All this has been designed to protect a exploitative system rather than to protect the public from violence (which of course it failed to do). Great injustices have been perpetrated against individuals and communities worldwide. This terror campaign will continue unless and until mass resistance curbs it.

To know more, see these websites

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