

# Homegrown Hate Why White Nationalists and Militant Islamists Are Waging War against the United States

**Sara Kamali**

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In her timely book *Homegrown Hate*, Sara Kamali scrutinizes the identity of White nationalists and militant Islamists, examines their grievances, hatreds, and the acts of terrorism, and lastly asks how these threats can be addressed. Drawing on in-depth interviews with key figures, as well as other primary and secondary source documents, Kamali shows how, despite differences in their motivations and goals, both White nationalists and militant Islamists share a narrative of victimhood, a shattered sense of belonging and alienation, and a perception of self-righteousness while instrumentalizing their theologies to express their disenfranchisement through violence.

*Homegrown Hate* is a book of four parts. The first focuses on the beliefs, world-views and ideologies of White nationalists and militant Islamists, offering a rich outline of their historical backgrounds, organizational structures, and shared methods. Kamali details how *The Fourteen Words* serves as a mission statement for all White nationalists, defining their supremacist beliefs and honing their identities and political aims while perpetuating the need for militancy to prevent the so-called racial annihilation of Whites by people of colour. The book offers an insightful glimpse into the complex and overlapping stories, anti-government sentiments, and strongly interwoven affiliations of White militant nationalists as well as the most impactful ideologies shaping White nationalist discourse, including Christian Identity, Creativity, and Wotanism. The book then offers a comprehensive overview of the political strategies and the complex and intersecting connections and theologies of prominent militant Islamist organizations, including al-Qa'ida and Islamic State (Da'ish), which share a political desire to establish a global caliphate. Key terminology and concepts (e.g., *jāhiliyya*) exploited by militant Islamists to determine who is deserving of loyalty and disavowal and to justify their war as God's command are well described.

In the book's second part, Kamali investigates White nationalist and militant Islamist grievances against the United States. The notion of White genocide is endorsed by the former to justify a narrative of victimhood and displacement and to support a call for a racial holy war, RAHOWA. The chapter sheds light on the role of demographic changes, economic shifts, and gun rights in understanding the grievances of White na-

tionalists and delves further into how antisemitism, antiglobalism, Islamophobia, misogyny, and Queerphobia manifest and intersect within the White nationalist discourse. Interestingly, the role of women in upholding the norms of White nationalism is not sufficiently explored, although women have been key figures in designing a White supremacist system and promoting far-right groups like QAnon.

In her analysis of the layered grievances of militant Islamists, Kamali shows how such narratives are rooted in a specific interpretation of Islam, US foreign policy, the Crusades, and colonialism to justify the need for self-preservation, defence against oppression, and the establishment of a global caliphate. Kamali addresses how the rhetoric adopted by many American presidents has contributed to the image of the US as a “Crusader” in alliance with Zionists, fuelling militant Islamist propaganda. Such propaganda claims that the US and its pro-Zionist allies aim to eradicate Islam and dominate Muslim-majority nations. The book acknowledges that while some of the grievances of militant Islamists regarding American foreign policy could be legitimate, their adopted methods to address such injustices are undemocratic.

The third part of the book explores the legitimization of holy wars (e.g., RAHOWA and jihad) by White nationalists and militant Islamists who distort interpretations of traditional scriptures and theological concepts to fulfil their political ambitions. Kamali illustrates how White nationalists consider racial war essential to stopping White genocide and to establishing a White ethnostate in line with the aims of Fourteen Words. In the same vein, militant Islamists portray the West as a threat to Islam and propose holy war against all who they perceive as non-Muslim to establish a global caliphate. While many White nationalists imagine a White and Christian America inspired by the Founding Fathers’ divine vision and the sacred US constitution, militant Islamists envision a future where the US is part of a global caliphate.

Kamali also illuminates how both movements utilize apocalyptic and violent eschatological visions to justify their terrorism. These grand narratives about the End Times, Kamali argues, offer a sense of belonging and meaning to members of both groups, who believe they play a central role in establishing God’s kingdom through fighting against evil. She explains the role of the internet in bolstering such narratives legitimizing violence and amplifying the voices of militant Islamists and White nationalists. Social media platforms, for instance, are often used to recruit followers and cultivate a sense of community feeding off a narrative of victimhood and hatred towards the “Other.” Questioning the myth of the “lone wolf,” the book highlights the key role of (virtual) communities, transnational ideological connections, and complex psychosocial and political dynamics in explaining the violent actions of an individual.

In the conclusion, Kamali proposes a new approach to counterterrorism by critiquing the current counter-terrorism strategies as bolstering Islamophobia and failing to recognize White nationalism as a legitimate security threat. The framework, named holistic justice, is founded on principles of anti-oppression and em-

pathy and aims at rectifying the systemic inequities (e.g., structural Islamophobia, institutionalized White privilege) underlying the current counterterrorism approaches. This approach, Kamali explains, holds White liberals accountable for using their privilege to enact institutional change and calls on Muslim Americans to organize at a grassroots level and build solidarity with minority groups. While Kamali's holistic justice framework aims at rectifying systemic inequities, the role of empathy in bringing about structural change is not sufficiently explored. Although intergroup empathy might contribute to the formation of critical consciousness, encouraging individuals to reflect on their histories and privileges, it is not clear whether empathy is seen as a precondition for mobilizing for systemic change or an outcome of anti-oppression work.

The book illustrates why strategies to countering extremism are not effective and how they lead to the surveillance of entire Muslim communities, uncovering the complex ways such measures and policies reinforce the injustice and oppression of minority groups. The lack of a federal statute criminalizing domestic terrorism, for instance, works to the benefit of militant White nationalists who cannot be prosecuted as terrorists on a national level unlike militant Islamists. Although racial disparities and injustices targeting people of colour are recognized in the book, the question of how systemic racism impacts the psychosocial circumstances of already vulnerable people who are driven to militancy remains insufficiently addressed.

Overall, *Homegrown Hate* is a valuable up-to-date resource not only for scholars and policymakers but for anyone who is looking to gain an in-depth understanding of current security threats and political violence facing the United States and many other countries around the world. The range and breadth of the complex layers of White nationalism and militant Islamism scrutinized are beyond comparison. The book is a significant contribution to the field—deeply informative and written in an engaging manner.

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