



Terror Attack, Security & Human Rights

Transcript Webinar **#onattack**

In cooperation with

SINOPRESS



Speakers

Peter Florianschütz, MA, MLS

Chairman of the Committee for European and International Affairs of the Vienna Municipal Council and State Parliament

Dr. Anat Hochberg-Marom

Expert on Global Terrorism & Radicalization, Israel

Prof. Dr. Georg Zanger

well-known Lawyer; President Austrian Chinese Business Association

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Franz Leidenmühler

Head of the Institute for European Law at the Johannes Kepler University Linz

Dr. Franz Piribauer

Alma Mater Harvard School of Public Health

Michael T. Weilguny

IT-Specialist, Manager

Moderators

Mag. Helena Chang

SINOPRESS

Bernhard Müller, BA, MPA

Urban Forum

Impressum:

Urban Forum –

Egon Matzner-Institut für Stadtforschung

Tel.: +43/2622 21132 | Fax.: +43/2622 21388 |

E-Mail: office@urbanforum.at | www.urbanforum.at

Neunkirchner Straße 15/7, 2700 Wiener Neustadt |

ZVR-Zahl: 169347700 |

Foto Titelseite: © Adobe Stock

Transcript

Helena Chang: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen! A warm welcome to the forum on “Terror Attack, Security & Human Rights”! I’m Helena Chang, editor-in-chief of SINOPRESS.

We all know that the terror attack in Vienna on November 2 last year, on the eve of the pandemic lockdown, left a lot of questions unanswered. Such issues as security vs freedom cannot escape the public attention anymore. SINOPRESS, together with Urban Forum, is initiating this forum intending to recall the very terror attack and to bring up the security issues of urban public spaces, as well as those of the coordination of international legal instruments to prevent terrorist acts, the political challenges of cyber security, the social integration vs the religious freedom, and the COVID-19 lockdown vs personal freedom.

We are honored to have six distinguished experts home and abroad as our panelists today. My co-moderator, Secretary General of Urban Forum, Mr. Mag. Bernhard Müller, will give you a brief introduction to each panelist and begin the first round of questions. For the listeners, you are welcome to leave us questions as text messages. Our experts will answer them after the discussion as long as time permits. Thank you!

Bernhard Müller: Thank you very much, Helena. A warm welcome from my side as well. As mentioned, my name is Bernhard Müller. I am the Secretary General of the institute URBAN FORUM. We are an institution for Public Management and Urban Research. I have the honor to start with the first round of questions, but before that I would like to briefly introduce to you the participants of this discussion:

- Dr. Anat Hochberg-Marom – expert on global terrorism & radicalization in Israel
- Welcome also Prof. Dr. Georg Zanger – well-known lawyer in Austria and the president of the Austrian Chinese Business Association (ACBA)
- Dr. Franz Leidenmühler – head of the Institute for European Law at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Upper Austria
- Dr. Franz Piribauer – public health expert, graduated from Harvard School of Public Health
- And last but not least, Michael T. Weilguny – IT-specialist and manager

It’s my pleasure to start with Dr. Anat Hochberg-Marom! Here is my question to you: Austria has been bound for neutrality since 1955. What measures would you suggest that Austria could take to avoid the religious radicalization and further possible terror attacks?

Anat Hochberg-Marom: I am very honored and privileged today to talk about the strategies suggested to Austria in order to avoid religious radicalization and further possible terror attacks.

The deadly attack in Vienna on November 2nd, 2020, has focused the attention of the Austrian government on the threat caused by terrorism. However, it is worth remembering that terrorism is the result of a process of radicalization, which by itself is a highly prominent threat to the stability and security of societies and governments around the globe. Chancellor Sebastian Kurz’s response to the terror attack reflected a firm approach and great determination to combat terrorism and religious radicalization. Stressing that the conflict is not between Christians and Muslims, or between Austrians and migrants. Mr. Kurz correctly focused on a small, militant minority of Islamic extremists and terrorists whose aim is to challenge the political order and to undermine democracy, social integration, and social cohesion in Austria.

While conventional counterterrorism is focused on identifying and fighting a small number of violent militants, efforts to combat jihadist terrorism must address the much larger and more sophisticated threat posed by radicalization, which extends to the majority non-violent population. Pursuing deradicalization – shifting people away from extreme values and beliefs, and toward more moderate-mainstream perceptions – means engaging in discourse that serves to delegitimize extremist ideologies and narratives and counters their appeal.

At the heart of this approach is the persuasive presentation of a strong alternative framework of values such as community, solidarity, peace, and tolerance, which are shown to be well-founded in longstanding, traditional, moderate-mainstream interpretations of religious and ideological tenets. This forms the basis for promoting a rich discourse that can



counter the hatred and polarization inherent in extremist narratives and strengthen the ability of audiences to resist the attraction of extremist messages.

When dealing with the threat of radicalization and extremism, it is vital to bear in mind that the most fundamental aims are to protect the democratic regime and to strengthen and promote democratic values and actions, which include affording respect and recognition to all minorities, including Muslims. In this context, there is a twofold benefit to be gained from applying the deradicalization approach described above:

First, it enables us to strengthen common interests among different sectors of the population, including disaffected and marginalized groups, and to bolster fundamental values of coexistence, which are the key to upholding democratic values, political freedoms, and basic human rights.

Engaging in this kind of discourse with all segments of the Muslim community, including recent immigrants or refugees as well as those who have been rooted in Austria for several generations, bolsters their sense of belonging to Austrian society, reinforces the idea of sharing a common identity and thus increases the community's social cohesion and its resilience with regards to extremism. Crucially, it provides a solid platform for moderate groups and individuals to make their voice heard, thus strengthening the mainstream, and weakening extremists.

In this context, fostering mutual understanding, recognition and respect is of great social importance, as is ensuring equal access to socioeconomic resources, including education and employment, to promote social integration and social justice. Investing in an intercultural and interreligious dialogue and in educational efforts to promote identification with Austria and Austrian society, are the key. It is worth noting, for example, that only 37 % of Muslims in Austria learned German as their first language, 39 % of Muslim students leave school before age 17 and 68 % of Muslims report having experienced discrimination. Though 88 % say they feel closely connected with the country.

Second, applying this approach enables us to counter extremist tendencies that are characterized by intolerance, xenophobia, or antidemocratic ideas, including both Jihadism and far-right extremism. This can be done using various measures that emphasize the values of coexistence and integration as enshrined in the Austrian constitution and that focus on each target group separately, with the aim of denouncing movements and ideologies. Whether religious or secular, as illegitimate. Examples of this would include presenting fanatic jihadist ideology as inauthentic and as a direct threat to Islam and to Muslims everywhere; and framing right-wing violent extremism and far-right radical rhetoric as posing a real risk to national cohesion and democracy. In this context, it is vital to note the dangers inherent in allowing groups in society, such as the Muslim community, to be defamed and devaluated, as this only increases polarization and furthers alienation from mainstream society, which in turn promotes even greater radicalization. Therefore, it is essential to reinforce democratic values and integrative narratives which focus on equal participation and representation, active involvement, and social cohesion, in order to minimize feelings of rejection, social and political exclusion, and marginalization – the precursors of radicalization.

So, to conclude: When it comes to jihadist extremism and terrorism, the primary challenge is in Austria today is radicalization, which poses a threat both to moderate forms of Islam and to peaceful relations between Muslims and other religious and ethnic communities. In this context, it is highly concerning that in 2017, 61 % of Austrians reported that they viewed coexistence between non-Muslim and Muslims in a negative light.

Thus, it is vital that Austria takes steps to bolster and support the more tolerant and inclusive Islamic mainstream in order to halt the rise of views that veer toward the extremist and uncompromising Islamic doctrines of ISIS and its supporters. At the same time, to protect Austria as a socially cohesive democratic regime, steps must also be taken to counter Anti-Muslim bigotry and right-wing violent extremism, which ultimately leads to even greater polarization and radicalization on both sides. Thank you very much.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you very much, Dr. Hochberg-Marom. My next question is to Prof. Dr. Zanger.

Terrorism is not only rooted in Europe or America these days. It is in Asia, also in China too. For example, the terror attacks done for many years by Muslim extremists in Xinjiang – often in the name of religious freedom. How do you think of the Chinese recent anti-terrorism campaign?

Georg Zanger: Since the 1990s, the global spread and intensification of terrorism and extremism has had devastating consequences. Terrorism and extremism threaten people's lives and security, their dignity, their rights to life, health and development.

The fight against terrorism and extremism is a global challenge. Over the years, different countries and regions have taken different measures to prevent and counter terrorism and extremism, based on their respective historical and cultural traditions, their level of social and economic development, and the education and employment levels of their citizens.

The question that arises after 9/11 and the attack on the Bataclan nightclub in Paris is how to effectively combat terrorism:

- Through wars and bombings with 100,000 people sent dead as so-called collateral damage or
- through information, reconnaissance and simultaneous protection against further attacks.

In contrast to the method of area bombing used by the USA and other Western states, as in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and most recently in Syria with hundreds of thousands of „collateral“ deaths, the PRC has chosen a different – more peaceful – path.

The PRC, like other states in the world, must protect itself from the danger of Islamic separatist movements and is particularly at risk because of its geographical location. The northwestern province of Xin Jiang is the center of terror in China and particularly exposed due to the three-country corner of Pakistan and Afghanistan.



In the West, the extent of the weekly terrorist attacks and their consequences in this region is not known. Chinese media do not report about it as populistically as we do, also in order not to encourage copycats. In any case, it is remarkable that the terrorist attacks and the countermeasures are limited to this province, but not to other parts of the country. At any rate, this allows the assumption that it is not a matter of arbitrary human rights violations, but of measures that are necessary from the point of view of the political leadership there. Finally, it is crucial to note that counter-terrorism efforts in China have been successful and there have been no acts of terrorism for about three years, something that Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria have failed to achieve despite years of warfare.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Dr. Zanger, for your insight! Now I'll have the honor to introduce Mr. Peter Florianschütz to you. He is the chairman of the Committee for European and International Affairs of the Vienna Municipal Council and State Parliament. Peter, we know that you are very busy. Thank you for taking time to participate in this discussion!

My question to you, Peter is as follows: Vienna has been ranked the most livable city for more than 10 years in a row, according to a British Survey. Yet, the fatal terrorist attack last year casts some shadow on this wonderful place. How should urban spaces be better protected from the political perspectives?

Peter Florianschütz: It's correct. Vienna is shown in the Mercer study, as one of the most worth living cities in the world and we are very proud of this fact. We put a lot of effort in security policies in Vienna. It is often claimed that Austria is the "island of the blessed". The truth is, many phenomena like this occurred in Vienna, too. We are not outside of the world, Vienna is part of it and things like that, these phenomena, also happened in other main cities like Paris, like London, like Washington, like New York and unfortunately also took place in Vienna. So, we have a lot of challenges to deal with.

Vienna is a social city, and we rely on a tight network of initiatives in social areas. We have a network and a lot of stuff to ensure we can get into a dialogue between the city and the

people – also new citizens that come to us. A network with all these people and the departments involved, is in particular very important to us. We have the opinion that security must be possible without restrictions of personal freedom. A special and competent police department in Vienna is being recruited and strengthened, a network of prevention and deradicalization has been established and social work in critical areas has also been strengthened. So, we have doubled the stuff in social work and that is the reason why we are very optimistic to handle these challenges we focus on.

However, we have to face the danger of political Islam and we have two certain groups that we have to take care of. First, young migrants and young refugees that come to us. Secondly, those young people who live in Vienna – and most of them are born in Vienna but have migrant background. We are worried that they could be left behind. Of course, it is a security problem but mostly, it is a social problem. Still, the public life in Vienna is safe. We rely on an increasing presence of social work and we focus on a worth-living life for everyone. It is important to have both, social security and human rights.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you very much for sharing your valuable views and the ideas for our capital city Vienna, Peter! Today, we are also very glad to have Prof. Franz Leidenmühler with us in this discussion. He is head of the institute for European law at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, the capital city of Upper Austria.

Professor Leidenmühler, thinking from the viewpoint of the Muslim community in Europe, what are some integration problems faced by it? How can governments strengthen the cooperation with each other to investigate the instability and possible radicalization of some Muslims without hurting the basic human rights? How to use legal channels to prevent the recurrence of terrorist attacks in Vienna?

Franz Leidenmühler: I am a lawyer, and so for me it is important to distinguish between two different aspects: The legal situation on the one hand and the political and social situation on the other. Let us start with the law: In nearly

all EU Member States Islam is a so-called recognized religion, also in Austria. But although Islam is accepted as an equal religion by law, there is still discrimination, in a legal sense but much more in political practice.

We are lacking tolerance in society. Muslim immigrants face discrimination in the labor market (...) they earn less monthly income. We have the debate on the Hijab. In Austria, our current federal government and some local governments are campaigning against political Islam. During the last 10 years, the former discussion about foreigners and migrants – we know that since the 1990s – has been replaced by a discussion about Muslims. And since the rising of ISIS, at least it is connected to a discourse about terrorism.

I think a very important first step should be to split up this discourse – on migration, on Islam, on terrorism. They are not necessarily connected to each other. [...] So, concerning Islam we need acceptance and non-discrimination according to the freedom of religion as a common European value. And acceptance and respect for difference means mutual acceptance and mutual respect by the way. But this should be in both ways: we need an effort by Muslim immigrants to better integrate in the European societies and we need an effort by the European societies to show openness to Muslims.

The second thing is terrorism. Terrorism is a security problem. Here we need to prevent radicalization and we need to cooperate with security agencies.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Professor, very important comments from your side! We will now continue the discussion with Dr. Franz Piribauer – as I mentioned before, he is a public health expert. My question to you, Dr. Piribauer, is: How do fundamental events, such as terroristic attacks, effect the population? And what are the health and psychological consequences for society?

Franz Piribauer: Thank you for the invitation! I will speak from the public health perspective – I am a doctor, and a psychotherapist. I am in pension and so I can say anything I want, without any fear of having problems in Austria. From the public health perspective, it is very



clear: If people are getting killed, it adds up in the public healthcare calculation. This also leads to another topic of today, the pandemic, of course. When you think about the attack in Vienna: there were about 20 hurt victims and several people dead, including their killer. But if you ask me if there is any substantial harm to society, I will say "No"! No, because it is very clear compared to other populations and that is what Prof. Zanger mentioned before: We are living in "heaven" and it is not a daily event that there is the risk to be killed by some sniper or some bomb. It's more likely to die in a car accident in Austria. Sure it was a shock to realize that we are not an island of the blessed, not an island of happy harmony. The attack happened at the beginning of the 2nd lockdown, which has affected everybody who lives in Austria. It affects all of us.

Still, I think the harm and psychological consequences for society are not substantial from such an attack, especially when there is a balanced countermeasure. I think this discussion shows that there is a variety of answers to the topic.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you for openly sharing your view, Dr. Piribauer! Thank you very much! Last but not least, it's my pleasure to ask the IT specialist, Mr. Weilguny a question: Digitalization can make life easier for people in many areas, for example, in the field of mobility. But what dangers do you see if digitalization eventually meets all areas of our lives? Is digitalization enabling governments to restrict human rights in the name of anti-terrorism?

Michael Weilguny: That is a good question and a very difficult question as well. It is dangerous! In both directions.

On the one hand, the state that oversees everything could usurp the human rights. On the other, people might no longer accept the state or monitor the government. A scenario that even the most innovative people like Elen Musk or Mark Zuckerberg warn against. Digitalization could be a bad news, it can be a dangerous tool. The possibilities of digitization in the wrong hands are enormous. Just imagine: You can destroy mobility, you can destroy electricity, control the water, control communication. With algorithms you can influence people. When you have this in your hand, you

can control people. Digitization knows people sometimes better than they know themselves. Pure control, the attacker can control technology and manipulate people. It influences and controls through algorithms.

But it could be a good news, too. Digitalization in good hands can be a fantastic tool to make our lives a lot easier! It can have many advantages for people and their coexistence. It can have an impact on how we live together in the future. In research and development, in particular, digitization can work wonders for mankind. You can use this tool either in a good way or in a bad way. Some countries use it in a good way, like China or Singapore. But when you think about Hungary and its surveillance, it is not that funny.

The trick is to reinforce the good qualities of digitization in order to combat the bad qualities. Mankind must live in a correct way with the possibilities of digitization and its enormous advantages.

Bernhard Müller: Thank you, Michael. I guess digitization is like a double-edged sword for mankind! Thank you all, it was an interesting first round of discussion. Now allow me to hand over to Helena.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Bernhard! Indeed, it was an inspiring first round of discussion! Coming back to our honored panelist from Israel, Dr. Hochberg-Marom - I think just now Bernhard asked you a question on the neutrality of Austria as a state. Now I would like to come to the international arena, as you are an expert on global terrorism. In your opinion, are the geopolitical ramifications and human rights issues inadvertently sometimes taken advantage of by some global terrorist organizations?

Anat Hochberg-Marom: Yes, thank you very much for the question and I will focus on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on terrorism. The global Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world with far reaching social, political and economic consequences. Present security services alike have been forced to adapt as a result of the global pandemic. We have recently witnessed an increase in socioeconomic stress, a high rate of unemployment and failure or inability of the government to act.

Moreover, due to the restrictions in travel movements and lockdown limitations of freedom, there is an increasing internet activity, which is playing a critical role in the dissemination of information about the spread and impact of the disease, and it is anchoring and shaping people's perceptions and behaviour on a global state. People are more easily to manipulate. The fear and isolation caused by the coronavirus has created a fatal fertile ground for individuals in new ethnically and politically motivated groups and various terrorist or extremist organisations around the world, to adapt to the card and present situation to advance the interest in to gain strength. Many groups capitalize and use the pandemic for their political systems. Terrorists, far right extremists, etc. explore the opportunities provided by Covid-19 and the wave of polarisation, hate speech amplified by different dynamics, to promote the views to disseminate militant messages and extra missed narratives, potentially raise additional funds, and take advantage and launch terrorist attacks as we have seen in Vienna.

This shows that there is an increasing movement in cyberspace and social media. The government is focused on the pandemic and its impact. International/national security forces have been redeployed to the protection concerns or to enforce lockdown there, decreasing in anti-terrorist activities in remote regions (both in Africa and the Middle East). According to latest assessments, the growth of terrorism and extremism in conflict zones renders these conflicts bloody harder to resolve. Global terrorist organisations like ISIS continue to post threats around the world. In particular in areas where lockdowns are difficult to enforce, for example in Southeast Asia or in several regions in Sub Saharan Africa.

To sum up, the curve of international terrorist attacks has been flattened. Probably as a result of the travel and movement restrictions, social distancing, lockdown-associated with Covid-19. However, despite the reduction the real threat is here, and it is here to stay. And there is an increase in radicalisation and extremism. With the unsure years ahead, rising poverty and unemployment, combined with frustration and incompetent corrupt regimes, may lead to a pool of potential recruits and a new wave of terrorist attacks.



Helena Chang: You have given us a comprehensive analysis of the terrorism challenge faced by the world due to the pandemic, Dr. Hochberg-Marom, thank you! The looming threat is definitely not to be ignored. I guess lockdown policies are also difficult to reinforce in Europe due to human rights issues. These intricate issues linked together are worth more observations and more panel discussions, I believe!

Dr. Zanger, you mentioned the Chinese region of Xinjiang. Maybe you have also heard of the British lawyer Sir Geoffrey Nice. He boasted his investigation of the situation in Xinjiang, condemning the Chinese government of abuses against Muslims in Xinjiang. From the legal point of view, do you think his allegation is valid, based on evidence? Is the so-called independent tribunal or China Tribunal supported by the British government? What's the relationship of it with the international criminal court?

Georg Zanger: Well, the China Tribunal is one of the non-governmental institutions that critically examines China from a Western perspective. Among other things, it has looked into allegations of non-violent political prisoners in China and investigated what crimes, if any, have been committed by state or state-recognized agencies, organizations or individuals in China.

It is a private body with no official status, similar to an NGO. It has its headquarters in London. The Chairman of the China Tribunal is Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, formerly the lead prosecutor in the trial of Slobodan Milošević at the International Criminal Court. The Tribunal is a political institution run exclusively by avowed opponents of the PRC.

For example, it has dealt with alleged forced organ theft from members of the so-called Falun Gong movement in China and, most recently, alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

The China Tribunal declared the Chinese Communist Party guilty of crimes against humanity. The full opinion was published on 1 March 2020.

It is noteworthy that only those persons requested by anti-China groups were ques-

tioned. The origin and authenticity of the documents provided is doubtful. Without participation in the evidence gathering, without knowledge of the contents of the files, a closer assessment is not possible. The PRC has refused to participate in the anti-Chinese tribunal.

The China Tribunal declared the Chinese Communist Party guilty of crimes against humanity. The full opinion was published on 1st March 2020. It is noteworthy that only those persons requested by anti-China groups were questioned. The origin and authenticity of the documents provided is doubtful. Without participation in the evidence gathering, without knowledge of the contents of the files, a closer assessment is not possible. The People Republic of China has refused to participate in the Anti-Chinese tribunal.

One should know Xinjiang's border with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan requires vigilance against the infiltration of Islamist groups. There have been calls from Uyghur nationalists for the separation of the territory from China and, similar to the IS state, the establishment of an Islamic Republic of East Turkestan. Between 1990 and the end of 2016, separatists, religious extremists and terrorists planned and carried out several thousand terrorist acts such as bombings, assassinations, poisonings, arsons, raids and riots in Xinjiang. Many innocent people were killed, and several hundred police officers died in the line of duty. The material losses incurred were enormous.

The rest of the world hardly heard about such atrocities, because the Chinese media refuse to sensationalize it in the media and especially want to prevent copycats from being activated. However, individual terrorist incidents such as the knife slaughter at Kunming railway station and the pogrom against Han Chinese in Urumqi also became known to us. The fight against the threat of terror and religious fanaticism is carried out exclusively on the PRC's own territory. China does not attack any other country and does not need any pretexts to punish another country. What is notable, however, is that there has not been a single terrorist attack for almost 2 years now. This means that the measures to fight terror and to protect the population have been successful. On the 2nd of November 2020, there was a ter-

rorist attack in Vienna, in which four innocent people were killed. The agitation of the population was understandably enormous. So was the demand for effective counterterrorism, among other things.

There is no doubt that human rights violations occur in China, as in most other countries in the world. However, it is crucial to examine whether the state's conduct is within the framework of legal norms. In order to make a judgement, it is necessary to know the individual cases and to argue based on the facts. It makes no sense to let sweeping prejudices flow into the assessment. After all, this prevents one from understanding Chinese society and, above all, from comprehending how China has managed to become one of the economically leading countries in such a short time.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Professor Zanger, for sharing your view and clarifying some important facts. Concerning the British lawyer Geoffrey Nice, you mentioned the international criminal court. He was once functioning as a member of the international criminal court, right?

Georg Zanger: Yes, he was member of the international court against the crime in former Yugoslavia and he was member of the decision of the punishment against Slobodan Milosevic.

Helena Chang: But does his so-called China Tribunal have anything to do with the international criminal court?

Georg Zanger: No. It was a private court.

Helena Chang: As we were talking about Xinjiang, did you hear about the so-called Re-education camps in Xinjiang?

Georg Zanger: You have different possibilities to fight against terrorism. You can do that like western countries do, but that's how an incredible amount of people died, and you would also cause collateral damage. Education and training in Xinjiang is practiced in accordance with the rule of law in China. It also reflects the ideas and principles of counterterrorism and deradicalization called for by the international community.



Over the past year, there have been several reports in the West of mass imprisonment and genocide-like incidents there. However, there is no evidence whatsoever of the extermination of the Uyghurs through mass extermination. These are obviously deliberate politically motivated reports. The claim about the number of people detained in re-education camps also does not seem to be serious and substantiated. Reports vary from 100.000 to 2 million people. In the absence of official figures, a serious assessment is not possible. The PRC denies such a high number of people but points out that the re-education camps were set up as anti-terrorist measures with a duration of stay of up to one year. The population structure contradicts these Western reports. In Xinjiang, the population is about 45 % Uyghur, who live in peace.

Xinjiang has established vocational education and training centres in accordance with the law to prevent the emergence and spread of terrorism and religious extremism, effectively curbing frequent terrorist incidents, and protected the rights to life, health and development of people of all ethnic groups. According to the Chinese government's official account, the personal freedom of trainees in the education and training centres is protected in accordance with the law. The centres guarantee that the personal dignity of trainees is inviolable and prevent any kind of insult or abuse. They use a home training model that allows trainees to go home regularly and ask for leave to attend to personal matters.

Uyghurs in Xinjiang welcome the government's anti-terror measures. This is not surprising, because they also benefit from the security that has been created. As explained, there have been no terrorist incidents in Xinjiang for almost three years since the establishment of the training camps.

Helena Chang: Thank you very much, Dr. Zanger, for offering eye-opening insights into the Xinjiang issue! Prof. Leidenmühler, you are not only head of the Institute for European law at the Johannes Kepler University Linz, but also a political counsellor in Linz. In your opinion, what obstacles might politicians meet with concerning the issue of terrorism? Concretely, could the Austrian government have done better to counter/prevent the terrorist attack happened in Vienna?

Franz Leidenmühler: Before answering your question, I'd like to add one more sentence to what Mr. Zanger said, as I am also a lawyer. An International criminal tribunal can only be installed by a resolution of the security council, with that in the case of former Yugoslavia or of Rhonda. For 20 years we have the International Criminal Tribunal for the international humanitarian law. Such a private tribunal (China Tribunal) has no legal basis and is bypassing the International Criminal Court. Back to my topic. I see two different levels. The political level for example. As a politician we must fight radicalization, we have to stop that already in Kindergarten and have to go on with that in school. But we have to be honest, that we can never avoid terrorist groups, terrorist cells, or a single person, recalling and recruiting their lonely wolves and making terrorist attacks. Because in most cases it is not a question of integration here in Austria, it is a question of international terroristic networks. So even the best integration work here in Austria cannot avoid terrorist attacks coming from outside. As politicians, therefore, we have to look at the 2nd level, the security level. We have to be honest again, even the best security operators – even policeman stationed at every house corner – cannot prevent all terrorist attacks. Because with an open society, we are vulnerable. Especially in Austria, we rely on better exchange of security information between the States. Austrian security agencies ignored information and warnings from Slovakia. And I think this is the most important point. The security operator has to work together, and they have to take warnings seriously. Here is a lot of potential for improvement.

There is not THE Austrian security agency because we have two or three players connected to different political parties and they are even fighting each other, political fighting, of course. The agency must coordinate with the operators and others states and they have to take information more seriously.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Prof. Leidenmühler. I have been following some of these discussions recently in Austria concerning reconstruction of BVT for example. What you pointed out is really the key to the solution. A combination of responsibility and competence with less political struggle would be ideal, I guess. Thank you again, Prof. Leidenmühler,

Dr. Piribauer, considering the ongoing pandemic in Europe and worldwide: What solution do you see as a public health expert, to solve the dilemma between lockdown policies and mental health of this society?

Franz Piribauer: Yes. On this one single attack in Vienna, you can understand the real public health dilemma. Like my colleagues already said, you could make more interventions, more social work, more integration work, more police, more resources, etc.

But the question is epochal for me. I think, the year 2020 will signal the inevitable ascendancy of China and Asia. Because from my professional background, it is very clear who has mastered this extraordinary, shocking, unpredictable and unpredicted event in a civilized way. I think we will understand this probably in 5 to 10 years from now, understand what was really happening and what is happening in the moment. That is not easy to answer. But a state – even a whole civilization like the European Union – that is nearly liberally developed – they cannot do what China or some Asian nations do. Our nation is a society of fate. We should really look carefully into the mirror and be honest to ourselves – everybody of us and all other societies, and then keep quiet in making judgments who has done his best for his population. It is not a dictatorship like everybody says in arrogance against China. It is the largest democracy in the world. Austria knows how to do it, but we have not been prepared. Most of the people will be surprised, what public health people could be up to. But nobody was listening, except China and other Asian societies, so they have been better prepared.

The second point is: the state is very clear about all these dealings with the vaccines. If I would have been in charge at the EU level, it is very clear that you would have to go for a save option first. Not make experiments with 1 billion people with unprepared new ideas about how vaccines can function. The Chinese did the right thing, they choose the most secure vaccine development, which is a so-called "inactivated or complete vaccines". That is the most secure way to do it. If the world would have followed this, we would have really seen a light at the end of the tunnel. But of course, the world would not follow a Chinese model with the so-called inactivated vac-



cines. This is a really hard task for the world, but if we followed, we would have already safe vaccines.

The ending of lockdowns can only come true by vaccines. But especially Austria is now in a dilemma. Nobody really knows what is right and what we are doing, so the lobbies are fighting against each other about their vaccines. That's an epochal 2021 and 2022 experience.

Helena Chang: Thank you, Dr. Piribauer. This dilemma of lockdown policies has obviously impact on mental health at different levels. And it will remain so, for long, if the problems you mentioned are not actively solved. Thank you for reminding us of it!

Now, allow me to come to Mr. Florianschütz. I know besides being chairman of the Committee for European and National Affairs of the Viennese Municipal Council and State Parliament, you have also immense experience with the media and the cultural world. Would you share some of your observation about the relationship between national security and freedom of speech for media?

Peter Florianschütz: First of all, I'd like to say that I totally agree with Dr. Zanger. When we talk about human rights or human rights issues, we have to recognise, remember and be aware of the concrete situation and the concrete history in other parts of the world. And that is a challenge!

To your question: Freedom of speech and protection of freedom expression are very important in Austria. I think we must balance it. On the one hand, freedom of expression is important for an open society and it is important for our culture as well. That is what makes it a living city. On the other hand, social security and other values are also very important for a good society. National security and freedom of expression should not be in conflict. We should put them together. It is a narrow path. There is a gap between what people want to do and the real human rights approach in the political area. I would think it is possible to have freedom of speech as well as this balance.

Helena Chang: Thank you very much, Mr. Florianschütz! Human rights issue is definitely

an intricate one. If the concept is purely individually-orientated or also socially, culturally and politically, deserves more discussion. Dr. Zanger once talked about it in a very inspiring fashion. I hope the human world can afford to find time to probe deeper into it in the future.

At the same time, as we are living in the digital age already, our big challenges also include cyber security. Mr. Michel Weilguny, the social networking platforms sometimes fall victims to spreading radical messages, which now and then lead to fatal and bloody actions. How should software companies coordinate better with governments – or vice versa – to undertake more preventive measures against possible terrorist deeds?

Michael Weilguny: The software already does, and the software companies work together with the government or governmental organizations for their own protection. If they do not follow, they will be banned and they will be blocked by the government. It's important that they work very closely together. There are two types of social network activities and social media terrorism.

The first occurs very slowly. It is a long-term slow radicalization. People with racism background, fundamentalists, religiously motivated... People get reinforced with conspiracy theories. People repeat a lie so often that they will believe it finally at some point. They are building a bubble and start to form opinions, forming groups with people working together. And very slowly people are finding themselves in difficult and strange situations.

Also, like Prof. Franz Leidenmühler said, it is a very good surveillance situation. You want to see what people are doing, you have to watch them and monitor them. The software is able to do that, but the software works together with humans and in the end, human failure happens. I think it is due to human failure and not digital software failure.

Another much more dangerous thing that occurs in social media is the spontaneous events that happen. These events are more dangerous and difficult to control in countries with little schooling or educational experience. They often raise mass hysteria, which spontaneously turns into lynching or mass violence, etc. Reminiscent of medieval me-

thods such as witch-burning, witch-chasing, witch-hunting.

For Example, one person is committing a crime and not even knowing about it, but the mass media is spreading the news and calling out for self-justice. This effects people, and this happens very fast like an impulse, and you cannot obtain this by surveillance. People get involved, those who have never been noticed before. They suddenly become active and they are not watched by governmental institutions. These events are much more dangerous. You can only handle this by educating people.

It is all about education! It is much more important than a digital software.

Helena Chang: Absolutely! Thank you very much, Mr. Weilguny! One thing: what's the situation in Austria right now between the software companies and the government?

Michael Weilguny: They work together and if they do not, the government will filter and observe the social media networks and watch what is happening there. They also watch people from the Darknet – They know the people and the government is watching them permanently. They cannot hide in the Darknet, that's not a save space. In the end, it is all about communication between these governmental institutions.

Helena Chang: Thank you very much again, Mr. Weilguny, for letting the cat out of the bag! Thank you all very much for all your expertise!

Bernhard Müller: Thank you very much, distinguished guests, for your interesting and valuable insights! This is the 1st cooperation between SINOPRESS and URBAN FORUM. Thank you for your participation. We are looking forward to further projects.

Thank you again! Have a nice day!