Terrorist Media Strategies and the Educational Gap in the Global South: The Cases of Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and Isis

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A b s t r a c t

This study examines how terrorist organisations in the Global South, specifically Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS, strategically exploit media to extend their influence beyond the battlefield. Drawing on case studies from West Africa, East Africa, and the Middle East, the research demonstrates how these groups use social media campaigns, cinematic propaganda, and local-language videos to recruit youth, spread fear, and legitimise violence. The study situates these phenomena within the frameworks of agenda-setting and framing theory, radicalization pathways, and postcolonial critiques of state fragility. Employing a qualitative comparative methodology, the research combines case study analysis with thematic content analysis of extremist media outputs, global terrorism databases, and scholarly literature. Findings indicate that these media strategies are particularly effective in contexts where educational systems are weak or disrupted, resulting in substantial gaps in media literacy and civic awareness. In such environments, young people often lack the critical tools to interrogate extremist narratives, rendering them vulnerable to propaganda that offers simplistic explanations and a sense of belonging. The study concludes by advocating for education-centered counterterrorism strategies. Recommendations include integrating media and civic literacy into school curricula, expanding teacher training in conflict-affected areas, supporting localized counter-narrative initiatives, and creating safe digital platforms for youth engagement. By reframing classrooms as critical frontlines against radicalization, this research underscores the essential role of education in dismantling the ideological infrastructure that sustains contemporary terrorism.

Background to the Study

In 2023, global terrorism reached unprecedented levels of lethality, with approximately 8,352 fatalities, a 22% increase from the previous year and the highest total since 2017, despite a 23% decrease in the number of incidents, suggesting that attacks have become deadlier on average (Institute for Economics & Peace 5). The Sahel region alone accounted for over 50% of global terrorism-related deaths, registering 3,885 fatalities, a nearly tenfold increase since 2019. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Burkina Faso experienced a 68% rise in terrorism-related deaths, while Nigeria recorded a 34% increase, reaching 565 fatalities (Institute for Economics & Peace 12). These statistics illustrate a stark reality: most contemporary terrorism-related deaths occur in the Global South, particularly in regions characterised by low media and digital literacy (Fleck 23).

In such contexts, non-state actors including Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and regional affiliates of the Islamic State (ISIS) have increasingly weaponised media to recruit, radicalise, and terrorise youth. By harnessing social media platforms, messaging applications, and high-production videos, these groups have expanded the battlefield beyond physical territories, conducting asymmetric warfare on cognitive and psychological frontlines (Bojang Jnr 45). The strategic use of media allows terrorist organisations not only to spread fear and glorify violence but also to legitimise their ideological agendas among vulnerable populations (Fleck 29).

Statement of the Problem

The rise of media-driven terrorism exposes a critical but underexplored dimension of contemporary conflict in the Global South. Groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS have shifted from conventional militancy to sophisticated information warfare, employing digital platforms and local-language content to disseminate extremist ideology, recruit youth, and extend their influence (Institute for Economics & Peace 18). Despite this evolution, many states in the Global South lack robust frameworks for media literacy or education-based counter-radicalisation. Young people, often affected by poverty, political instability, and limited access to critical education, remain highly susceptible to extremist narratives (Fleck 35; Bojang Jnr 51). Traditional counterterrorism policies, largely focused on military intervention, frequently neglect the ideological and psychological dimensions of extremism, particularly the narratives that drive online radicalisation (Institute for Economics & Peace 22).

This study responds to the urgent need to understand and disrupt the informational ecosystems exploited by terrorist organisations. It emphasises the central role of education, particularly media and civic literacy, as a tool to build resilience against ideological subversion (Bojang Jnr 58). Without targeted educational interventions, the Global South risks ongoing exposure to not only physical attacks but also enduring ideological warfare conducted via digital media. While considerable scholarship exists on terrorism in the Global South, research has predominantly focused on physical violence, geopolitical dynamics, and security responses. Less attention has been paid to the strategic use of media as a tool for ideological domination, youth recruitment, and

psychological influence (Fleck 42). Moreover, the connection between weak education systems, low media literacy, and the susceptibility of youth to extremist messaging remains underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating how terrorist media strategies exploit educational deficiencies and by proposing education-based interventions as counter-radicalisation tools (Bojang Jnr 63).

Aim and Objectives of the Study
The study aims to examine how terrorist organisations in the Global South use media to exploit educational gaps and radicalise youth, and to explore education-based strategies to counter these influences. Specifically, the study seeks to,
1. Analyse the media strategies used by terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS in the Global South.
2. Examine the role of digital platforms, including videos, social media, and messaging applications, in shaping terrorist recruitment and propaganda.
3. Explore how poor media literacy and inadequate civic education contribute to the susceptibility of youth to extremist ideologies.
4. Propose education-focused interventions and counter-narrative strategies aimed at reducing radicalisation and enhancing ideological resilience.

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored in an interdisciplinary framework combining Media Theory, Radicalisation Theory, and Postcolonial Security Theory to examine how terrorist organisations in the Global South exploit media and educational gaps.

Media Theory
Agenda-Setting and Framing Agenda-setting and framing concepts explain how information is constructed to shape public perception. As McCombs and Shaw argue, the media may not tell people what to think, but it tells them what to think about (180). Terrorist groups exploit this principle to dominate the information space, portraying themselves as powerful, victimised, or divinely sanctioned. Through stylised videos, emotionally charged narratives, and storytelling, they frame conflicts to elicit fear, sympathy, or allegiance, particularly among youth (McCombs and Shaw 180).

Radicalisation Theory
Cognitive Openings and Identity Crisis Radicalisation theory highlights how individuals become susceptible to extremist ideologies during cognitive or identity crises. The cognitive-opening model by McCauley and Moskalenko suggests that youth facing poverty, corruption, or social exclusion may be drawn to extremist narratives that offer simplistic explanations, belonging, and purpose (418). Terrorist media leverages these vulnerabilities, filling gaps left by weak or absent state institutions.

Postcolonial Security Theory
Informational Asymmetry and State Fragility Postcolonial security theory contextualises the structural conditions enabling non-state actors to control the media space. Many

postcolonial states are characterised by fragile institutions, unequal access to information, and education systems are still influenced by colonial legacies. As Mbembe observes, these conditions limit the state's capacity to assert epistemic or ideological authority, creating a vacuum that terrorist organisations exploit through ideologically driven media campaigns (66). These theories illuminate how media, individual vulnerabilities, and structural weaknesses interact, enabling terrorist organisations to recruit, radicalise, and exert influence across the Global South.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative comparative approach, combining case study analysis with thematic content analysis to examine how terrorist organisations in the Global South—specifically Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS, use media as a tool of modern warfare and recruitment. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of each group's strategies while highlighting how educational gaps contribute to youth susceptibility.

Case Selection

The three groups were selected due to their prominence in the *Global Terrorism Index*, extensive use of digital propaganda, and operational focus on recruiting youth in regions with documented educational vulnerabilities (Institute for Economics & Peace 14). By examining Boko Haram in West Africa, Al-Shabaab in East Africa, and ISIS in the Middle East and beyond, the study provides comparative insights across diverse cultural and geopolitical contexts.

Data Sources

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources:
   a. Primary sources: Official terrorist videos, social media posts, and recruitment pamphlets obtained from reputable open-source intelligence platforms and archived materials.
   b. Secondary sources: Peer-reviewed articles, policy reports, and global terrorism datasets, including those from UNESCO, the Global Terrorism Database, and prior qualitative studies on extremist media.

Analytical Framework

The study employs thematic content analysis to identify recurring narrative devices, symbols, and framing strategies in terrorist media. Analysis is guided by:
   a. Media theory principles of agenda-setting and framing (McCombs and Shaw 178)
   b. Radicalisation pathways, such as cognitive openings and identity crises (McCauley and Moskalenko 420)
   c. Postcolonial critiques of state fragility, which contextualise why extremist narratives resonate locally (Mbembe 107)

The analysis also emphasises how these narratives exploit educational gaps, particularly the absence of critical media literacy and civic education, creating fertile ground for radical ideologies to take hold (Syamsurrijal, Nurmandi, and Jubba 105).

Literature Review

The intersection of media, terrorism, and youth radicalisation in the Global South has received increasing scholarly attention, yet several critical aspects remain underexplored. This review synthesises key contributions while highlighting persistent gaps.

Social Media as a Recruitment Platform

Terrorist groups in the Global South have increasingly leveraged social media as a primary vehicle for recruitment, radicalisation, and ideological propagation. Badawy and Ferrara's quantitative analysis of 1.9 million ISIS tweets demonstrates that extremist content spreads like a social contagion, with theological messaging, recruitment videos, and propaganda narratives triggering radicalisation among online audiences (Badawy and Ferrara 4; Ferrara 3). This process is amplified by algorithmic recommendation systems that increase exposure to extremist content, creating digital echo chambers in which vulnerable youth are repeatedly exposed to radical messaging.

Similarly, Boko Haram utilises multilingual platforms, particularly YouTube and Hausa-language videos, to bypass state-controlled media and reach a regional audience that may lack alternative sources of information (Zenn 3). Their media strategies are deliberately tailored to resonate with local grievances, including poverty, political marginalisation, and social exclusion, which enhances the appeal of extremist ideologies. Social media allows these groups to portray themselves as powerful, divinely ordained, or defenders of local communities, thus legitimising their actions and creating emotional bonds with potential recruits. These findings directly support the study's objective of analysing the strategies employed by terrorist groups to engage and radicalise youth through digital media.

Mobile Technologies in Africa

The rapid proliferation of mobile phones and increasing internet access across Africa has dramatically transformed the ways in which extremist organisations communicate, recruit, and influence populations. Carmody's comparative study of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram demonstrates that while mobile technology enhances connectivity and social interaction, it simultaneously provides new avenues for extremist messaging, enabling groups to exploit pre-existing societal tensions and grievances (Besenyo and Sinko 73).

Mobile devices, particularly smartphones, allow for rapid and discreet dissemination of propaganda via encrypted messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Signal. These platforms enable extremist groups to bypass state surveillance and formal media channels, reaching youth populations in remote and under-served areas where access to education and civic information is limited. The content shared can range from recruitment appeals and religious sermons to video footage glorifying attacks, creating an immersive and emotionally compelling narrative environment that can appeal to feelings of injustice, marginalisation, and identity crises among young people.

Moreover, mobile technologies facilitate peer-to-peer radicalisation. Encrypted messaging apps allow extremist networks to create intimate, trust-based digital communities in which members reinforce each other's ideological beliefs and social identities. Young people in areas with fragile state institutions and weak educational systems are particularly susceptible, as these networks often provide a sense of belonging, purpose, and recognition absent from their offline environments.

Mobile technologies also intersect with algorithmic content amplification on social media platforms, where videos and posts can be recommended automatically to users based on viewing history and engagement patterns. This mechanism increases the likelihood that vulnerable youth will encounter extremist narratives multiple times, normalising radical ideologies and accelerating the radicalisation process. In addition, mobile technology enables multi-lingual and culturally tailored messaging, enhancing the resonance of extremist content. Boko Haram, for instance, produces videos in Hausa, Fulfulde, and other local languages, ensuring that their narratives reach diverse ethnic and linguistic communities, including those with low literacy rates. Al-Shabaab similarly adapts content in Somali and Swahili, targeting both local populations and diasporic communities abroad.

Mobile technologies in Africa are not merely communication tools; they constitute critical infrastructures of modern terrorism, allowing groups like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab to operate beyond physical borders and leverage digital channels to exploit educational deficits. The widespread use of mobile devices underscores the urgency of integrating digital literacy and critical thinking into educational curricula, aligning with the study's objective of examining how technology mediates recruitment and propaganda strategies in regions with vulnerable youth populations.

Digital Literacy and Counter-Radicalisation

Empirical studies from Indonesia and Lebanon underscore the vital role of digital literacy in mitigating the influence of extremist messaging. Syamsurrijal, Nurmandi, and Jubba (5) demonstrate that government-supported social media literacy campaigns in Indonesia strengthened public resilience against online radicalisation by teaching students to critically assess sources, recognise manipulative content, and understand the strategies used by extremist groups to attract followers. Such programs enhanced the capacity of young people to question the credibility of online narratives, thereby reducing the likelihood of ideological susceptibility.

In contrast, research from Lebanon highlights the vulnerability created by gaps in digital and media literacy. Melki (8) found that schools in Beirut lacking structured media and digital curricula were more prone to the influence of extremist messages, as students were often unable to critically interrogate the content they encountered on social media platforms or encrypted messaging apps. Without the skills to analyse the framing, motives, or context of online content, youth are exposed to persuasive propaganda that exploits emotional and identity-based vulnerabilities. Digital literacy initiatives are most

effective when combined with critical thinking and civic education, creating a holistic educational approach that addresses both the cognitive and ethical dimensions of media engagement. Such interventions equip youth with tools to identify recruitment tactics, resist manipulation, and engage constructively with information in digital spaces. Programs that integrate discussions of ethics, governance, and social responsibility alongside media literacy, such as simulated fact-checking exercises or critical media workshops—have shown promise in reinforcing resilience against extremist narratives (Fleck).

Furthermore, literature emphasises the importance of community involvement and teacher training in sustaining these initiatives. Educators play a critical role in guiding students to question online content and engage with alternative narratives. In regions affected by conflict or educational disruption, well-trained teachers can provide mentorship and contextualised guidance, bridging gaps left by weak formal institutions and countering the appeal of extremist networks (Bojang Jnr).

Collectively, these findings highlight that the lack of media literacy is not merely an educational gap but a strategic vulnerability that terrorist organisations exploit. By linking poor digital literacy to increased susceptibility to radicalisation, this literature directly supports the study's objective of examining how educational deficiencies contribute to youth vulnerability, and it reinforces the need for integrated, education-focused counter-radicalisation strategies in the Global South.

Framing and Youth Identity in African Contexts

Research by Mohamed (296) demonstrates that extremist media in Kenya often frames youth as "dangerous" or "other," simultaneously legitimising radicalisation and justifying securitised state responses. This framing creates a dual effect: it positions young people as both targets and tools of broader ideological narratives, while also reinforcing a sense of marginalisation and exclusion. When youth perceive themselves as alienated from social, political, or economic structures, extremist narratives exploit these perceptions by offering alternative identities grounded in belonging, purpose, and moral significance.

Extremist organisations strategically employ moral-emotional framing to shape perceptions of legitimacy, injustice, and victimhood. For example, narratives may portray state institutions as corrupt or oppressive, foreign powers as invaders, or local grievances as systemic injustices that must be rectified through radical action. By linking personal or community frustrations to broader ideological causes, these narratives create cognitive and emotional openings for recruitment, particularly among youth who lack access to critical civic education or spaces for political expression (Mohamed 298; Fleck).

The process of identity construction is further reinforced by social and peer networks that amplify extremist frames. Online platforms and mobile communication channels allow youth to observe and emulate narratives that valorise martyrdom, heroism, or resistance,

embedding these ideals into personal and collective identities. In fragile educational contexts, where curricula are often minimal, inconsistent, or authoritarian, young people are less equipped to interrogate the framing of events or the motivations behind media messages (UNESCO 44). As a result, extremist propaganda not only fills informational gaps but also becomes a primary lens through which youth interpret their social reality.

Understanding the interaction between framing and youth identity is essential to the study's objectives. By analysing how extremist narratives manipulate perceptions of legitimacy, belonging, and grievance, this research highlights the ways in which media strategies intersect with social identity formation to facilitate radicalisation. It also underscores the necessity of educational interventions that combine media literacy, critical thinking, and civic education to help youth recognise manipulative framing, contextualise social grievances, and resist ideological coercion. By addressing the cognitive and emotional dimensions of identity construction, education can serve as a critical countermeasure against the persuasive power of extremist media.

Educational Interventions in Practice

Practical initiatives across the Global South have highlighted the potential of education as a proactive tool against extremist influence. In Kenya, Teachers Against Violent Extremism (TAVE) exemplifies a school-based programme that integrates media literacy into religious, civic, and business curricula. By equipping students with skills to critically evaluate online content, recognise recruitment tactics, and interrogate extremist narratives, TAVE directly addresses the cognitive vulnerabilities exploited by groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab (Okeowo). Beyond content evaluation, these interventions also focus on developing critical thinking and civic competencies, enabling students to contextualise social grievances and understand the manipulative framing used by extremist organisations. By linking theoretical knowledge with practical exercises, students learn to question simplistic ideological explanations, resist peer or social pressure, and engage in constructive problem-solving within their communities.

Similar approaches have been adopted elsewhere. In Indonesia, government-supported media literacy campaigns have demonstrated measurable increases in resilience to online radicalisation, showing that structured educational programmes can counteract extremist messaging (Syamsurrijal, Nurmandi, and Jubba 5). In Lebanon, the Media & Digital Literacy Academy has identified schools lacking media and digital curricula as particularly vulnerable to extremist influence, reinforcing the importance of integrated educational strategies (Melki 8).

These interventions underscore the importance of context-sensitive and locally relevant curricula. In conflict-affected regions or areas with weak state institutions, schools often represent one of the few stable sources of information and socialisation for youth. Incorporating civic education alongside media literacy ensures that young people not only recognise extremist propaganda but also develop an understanding of democratic principles, human rights, and responsible civic engagement. This dual approach fosters

ideological resilience, making it less likely that youth will accept extremist narratives at face value or seek belonging through radical groups. By demonstrating the practical effectiveness of educational interventions, this literature highlights the study's objective: to identify strategies that mitigate youth vulnerability to extremist media and strengthen community resilience. Programs that combine digital literacy, critical thinking, and civic engagement provide a blueprint for scalable and sustainable counter-radicalisation strategies in the Global South, where educational gaps often intersect with the socio-political vulnerabilities exploited by terrorist organisations.

Research Gap
Despite the growing scholarship on terrorism, media strategies, and youth radicalisation in the Global South, several critical gaps remain. Existing studies often focus on individual groups or regions, neglecting the comparative analysis of media strategies across contexts. The role of algorithm-driven content on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok in exposing youth to extremist messaging is also underexplored. Moreover, while media literacy programmes exist, their integration with civic education and their scalability in conflict-affected or under-resourced areas remain insufficiently examined. The table below summarises these research gaps, outlines the key variables involved, and links them to the study's objectives, providing a clear framework for understanding where further investigation is needed.

Table 1: Research Gaps with a brief explanation of variables

Research Gap	Description	Variable(s) Involved	Relevance to Study Objectives
Comparative analyses of media strategies	Limited cross-regional studies on how Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS deploy media differently or similarly.	Type of terrorist media strategy; Regional context	Supports the objective of analysing media strategies used by terrorist groups to recruit youth.
Algorithm-driven content	The influence of platform algorithms (e.g., YouTube, TikTok, Facebook) on exposure to extremist content is underexplored.	Algorithmic amplification; User engagement	Links to the objective of examining how digital platforms mediate recruitment and propaganda.
Integration of media literacy with civic education	Existing programmes rarely combine digital literacy with civic knowledge, limiting the development of critical thinking and ideological resilience.	Media literacy; Civic education	Addresses the objective of exploring how educational gaps contribute to youth susceptibility to extremist messaging.
Scalability of educational interventions	Limited research on the long-term sustainability and adaptation of literacy-based counter-radicalisation programmes in conflict-affected or under-resourced areas.	Program reach; Implementation feasibility	Informs the objective of identifying practical, education-based countermeasures against radicalisation.
Contextual vulnerabilities	Weak formal education systems, underfunded schools, and socio-political instability create fertile ground for extremist messaging.	Education quality; Socio-political context	Reinforces the focus on educational gaps as a factor that increases youth vulnerability to terrorist media.

Discussion

Boko Haram: Fear, Martyrdom, and Local Media Voids

Boko Haram's media strategy is closely tied to local educational and informational gaps, enabling the group to extend its influence far beyond physical territory. The 2014 Chibok schoolgirls' kidnapping illustrates how acts of terror are deliberately staged as media spectacles, with videos circulated through Hausa-speaking satellite channels and shared via Bluetooth in local markets (Zenn 3; Onuoha 6). These visual narratives depict the victims performing religious rituals or reciting the Shahada, reinforcing the group's ideological legitimacy while simultaneously instilling fear. In Northern Nigeria, where literacy rates remain below 50% for girls and civic education curricula are weak or inconsistently implemented (UNESCO 44), such messaging encounters minimal resistance. Consequently, youth are exposed to extremist framing without the analytical skills necessary to critically evaluate these narratives, highlighting the intersection between low educational attainment and susceptibility to radicalisation.

Al-Shabaab: Digital Sophistication in Fragile States

Al-Shabaab demonstrates a more outward-facing and digitally sophisticated approach, leveraging Somalia's fragile state infrastructure to conduct transnational campaigns. The group employs English- and Swahili-language Twitter posts, videos, and other multimedia content to present itself as a defender against Western occupation, targeting both local and diasporic youth seeking identity, belonging, or purpose (Anderson and McKnight 17; Gilroy 28). These materials often coincide with attacks, amplifying psychological impact and international attention. Somalia's prolonged conflict has left over four million children out of school (UNICEF 2), a structural void that contributes to the population's vulnerability. The absence of robust civic education and critical media literacy programs means that youth are particularly susceptible to narratives that frame them as part of a transnational struggle, often linking personal grievances to collective ideological causes.

ISIS: Cinematic Propaganda and Global Reach

ISIS transformed extremist media by employing near-Hollywood production techniques, including high-definition footage, slow-motion executions, drone shots of battlefields, and nasheeds (religious hymns) to glorify violence and martyrdom (Winter 16). Videos were disseminated through encrypted messaging apps such as Telegram and further amplified via algorithmically driven platforms like TikTok (Badawy and Ferrara 4). Unlike Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab, ISIS explicitly targeted disaffected youth beyond Iraq and Syria, reaching North Africa, Nigeria, and Southeast Asia (Neumann 879). In many of these regions, formal civic education is minimal or authoritarian, focusing on rote nationalism rather than critical engagement (UNESCO 98). This creates a fertile environment for algorithmically amplified extremist content, leaving youth ill-equipped to question the moral or political legitimacy of the narratives presented.

Education as the Missing Armour

Across all three cases, a consistent pattern emerges: terrorist organisations exploit gaps in civic and media education to fill ideological voids. Where curricula fail to teach students to critically analyse media content, understand political processes, or engage civically, extremist messaging encounters minimal resistance (Syamsurrijal, Nurmandi, and Jubba 105). Integrating digital literacy with civic education can disrupt the ideological ecosystem that allows terrorist media campaigns to thrive. Education not only equips youth with critical thinking skills but also fosters resilience against recruitment and radicalisation, effectively serving as a frontline defence against the cognitive dimension of asymmetric warfare.

This review underscores that terrorist organisations in the Global South do not rely solely on physical violence; they strategically weaponise media to influence perceptions, recruit vulnerable youth, and legitimise their ideological agendas. Social media, mobile technologies, and high-production videos enable these groups to operate across borders and amplify their narratives in ways that exploit educational deficiencies (UNESCO 23). Addressing these gaps through targeted educational interventions, particularly those

integrating media literacy and civic engagement, is essential for building resilience among youth and countering the ideological influence of extremist organisations in conflict-affected regions.

Conclusion

The weaponisation of media by terrorist organisations in the Global South illustrates how modern conflict has shifted from conventional physical battlefields to psychological and ideological arenas. These groups have effectively exploited digital platforms to infiltrate classrooms, homes, and the minds of young people. As this study demonstrates, countering terrorism requires more than military or security responses; it necessitates intellectual and educational strategies. Without equipping youth with the skills to critically interrogate the media they encounter, efforts to counter violent extremism will remain reactive and incomplete. Contemporary warfare extends beyond territorial control; it occurs on timelines, social media platforms, and within the cognitive spaces of vulnerable populations. Addressing these challenges demands integrated interventions that combine media literacy, civic awareness, and targeted educational programming.

Recommendations

The study recommends the need to,

1. Integrate Media Literacy into National Curricula: Ministries of Education in conflict-affected states should embed media literacy into primary and secondary education syllabi. This should include practical training in identifying propaganda, understanding recommendation algorithms, and analysing media framing.

2. Embed Civic Education with Digital Awareness: Civic education programmes should be updated to teach democratic values, human rights, and pluralism alongside digital citizenship. Such integration empowers youth to critically assess online narratives and resist extremist messaging framed as acts of resistance or justice.

3. Support Localised Educational Interventions: NGOs and civil society organisations should design counter-narrative programmes tailored to specific cultural and linguistic contexts, utilising local languages and relatable symbols to challenge extremist messaging effectively (Anderson and McKnight 24).

4. Fund Teacher Training in Conflict Zones: Educators should receive training in both media literacy and trauma-informed pedagogy, enabling them to engage at-risk students who may be susceptible to radical ideologies (UNESCO 30).

5. Establish Safe Digital Platforms for Youth Engagement: Governments and technology companies should collaborate to create online spaces where young people can discuss identity, faith, and politics constructively and nonviolently. Such platforms can undermine the influence of extremist forums and foster resilience.

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