

## **INCITING FROM THE GRAVE**

Some propagandists remain so dangerous that their messages reverberate from beyond the grave. CEP has worked to highlight the scale of the enduring threat posed by some extremist icons, including U.S.-born radical cleric [Anwar al-Awlaki](#). CEP has documented more than [60 U.S. and European extremists](#) who were inspired by Anwar al-Awlaki, even after his death in 2011.

Other major influencers, like [Muslim Brotherhood](#) member and author [Sayyid Qutb](#), have arguably provided the ideological foundation for terrorist groups like [al-Qaeda](#) and [ISIS](#). Al-Qaeda cleric [Abdullah Azzam](#) not only launched the modern foreign fighter jihadist movement, but provided its long-lasting ideological justifications. Since the dawn of the foreign fighter movement in the 1980s, tens of thousands of foreign fighters are estimated to have left their homes to participate in foreign conflicts.

Given the long-lasting impact of these and other major extremist influencers, CEP highlights the dangers posed by the following individuals who, through their writings and sermons, have inspired extremist leaders and terrorist movements around the world.



**Anwar al-Awlaki** (1971-2011), an American Islamist cleric, was a leader and propagandist for [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](#). Al-Awlaki, killed by a drone strike in 2011, was responsible for inspiring a score of terrorist attacks in the United States and Europe. Since his death, al-Awlaki has continued to inspire terrorists through his online videos—including Orlando assailant [Omar Mateen](#)—to carry out terror attacks. CEP has catalogued **more than 60 cases** in which al-Awlaki is believed to have played a key role in radicalizing U.S. and European extremists.

*For more on al-Awlaki, see CEP's [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) report.*

*For more on al-Awlaki's radicalizing influence, see CEP resource [Anwar al-Awlaki's Ties to Extremists](#).*

**Sayyid Qutb** (1906-1966) was an Egyptian author and the lead theologian of the [Muslim Brotherhood](#). Qutb has been called the father of modern Islamic fundamentalism. His extremist beliefs and writings, particularly *Milestones* and *In the Shade of the Quran*, are believed to have inspired the leaders of modern Islamist terror groups, including [al-Qaeda](#) founders Osama bin Laden and [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#).

*For more on Qutb, see CEP's [Sayyid Qutb](#) report.*



**COUNTER  
EXTREMISM  
PROJECT**

**PROPAGANDISTS, RECRUITERS, AND SPOKESPERSONS**

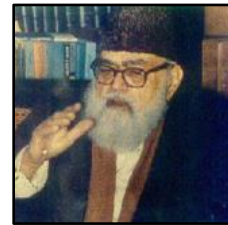


**Abdullah Azzam** (1941-1989) was a Palestinian Islamist preacher who helped establish [al-Qaeda](#),  [Hamas](#), and [Lashkar-e-Taiba](#). Often referred to as the father of both global jihad and the foreign fighter phenomenon, Azzam was instrumental in bringing recruits to Afghanistan in the 1980s. He also served as Osama bin Laden’s mentor, and has influenced such notorious terrorists as [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#) and [Anwar al-Awlaki](#). The 2010 Times Square bomber listed Azzam as an inspiration, as did a 2009 suicide bomber in Afghanistan, who claimed to have targeted a CIA base in order to avenge Azzam’s death.

*For more on Azzam, see CEP’s [Abdullah Azzam](#) report.*

**Abul Ala Maududi** (1903-1979) was an Islamic theologian, author, and the founder of the political Islamist group Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI). Maududi’s Islamist writings helped form the tenets of [Qutbism](#), an ideology that is believed to have inspired numerous violent extremist groups including [al-Qaeda](#) and [ISIS](#).

*For more on Maududi, see CEP’s [Abul Ala Maudui](#) report.*



**Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini** (1902-1989), a Shiite cleric, was an Iranian revolutionary leader, responsible for establishing Iran as the world’s first Islamic republic. Khomeini’s form of Islamism has inspired Shiite Islamic extremist groups and terrorists in Lebanon and Iraq, including [Hezbollah](#), [Asaib Ahl al-Haq](#), the [Badr Organization](#), and [Kata’ib Hezbollah](#).

*For more on Khomeini, see CEP’s [Ruhollah Khomeini](#) report.*