

Bitcoin for Bombs

Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are gaining traction as a source of funding for terrorist groups, such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State. Counterterrorism policies should respond accordingly.

Article by [Guest Blogger for Micah Zenko](#)

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A Bitcoin coin is seen in an illustration picture taken at La Maison du Bitcoin in Paris, France, on June 23, 2017. Reuters/Benoit Tessier

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Bitcoin and other [cryptocurrencies](#)—virtual money—are gaining traction as a source of funding for terrorist groups, such as the self-proclaimed Islamic State. In January 2017, [Islamist militants in Indonesia](#) funded for terrorist activities with money received through Bitcoin, which is currently the most popular cryptocurrency. This was not an isolated incident: the Mujahideen Shura Council—active in the Gaza Strip and considered a foreign terrorist organization by the United States since 2014—also launched a [Bitcoin campaign](#) last year, inviting supporters to donate money for the purchase of weapons. Terrorists are beginning to explore the use of cryptocurrencies, and counterterrorism policies should respond accordingly.

Cryptocurrencies are increasing in popularity because of the anonymity afforded to both sender and recipient. In other words, it is extremely challenging to trace who is sending money to whom and for what purpose. Ironically, there is a completely public ledger, [Blockchain](#), which records every Bitcoin transaction; however, the ledger retains users' anonymity. Considered by some as [“the new frontier in terrorism fundraising,”](#) the use of Bitcoin in particular has grown exponentially over the last

generating more foreign [investment from individuals](#) or [front charities](#)—payments that cryptocurrencies are well-suited to facilitate.

Deterring terrorism financing continues to be a top counterterrorism priority in the [United States](#). In order to deter terrorists from seeking donations in the form of bitcoin or other cryptocurrencies, U.S. policymakers should coordinate with companies in charge of Bitcoin wallets as well as Blockchain administrators to track purchases, exchanges of Bitcoin to other currencies, and transfers of substantial funds to a Bitcoin account. U.S. representatives at the [Financial Action Task Force](#)—an intergovernmental body that combats money laundering and terrorist financing—would be well-poised to do just that. It would also be prudent to develop the ability to flag suspicious Bitcoin addresses, so that authorities can more easily find and prosecute individuals if they engage in terrorist financing or money laundering.

The increasing attention in mainstream media to cryptocurrencies as well as the continued improvements towards perfecting transaction anonymity are generating the perfect storm to usher in a new era of terror finance. If the United States is to deter terror funding in the long run, it should take aggressive action to understand the negative potential uses of cryptocurrencies and form regulations to combat their use by illicit actors.

Voir le lien: <https://www.cfr.org/article/bitcoin-bombs>

A New Tune on Women's Rights in the Arab World

By SHEREEN EL FEKIAUG. 22, 2017



An activist from the NGO Abaad, dressed as a bride and wearing bandages, is symbolically released from a cage in Beirut last week. Activists were celebrating after the Lebanese Parliament abolished a law that shielded rapists from prosecution if they married the victim. CreditPatrick Baz/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

LONDON — “I want to tell you something, so listen to what I say. When a man is talking, a woman should obey. She shouldn't say ‘yes’ and then forget the next day. She should appreciate his value if she wants him to stay.”

So goes the title track of “The Man,” a new album by the Egyptian singer Ramy Sabry. Since its release in June, the song seemed to strike a chord with listeners across the Middle East, amassing more than three million views on YouTube.

This summer, however, legislators in several Arab states appear to have tuned out. Over the past three months, significant legal reforms on women's rights have advanced in a handful of countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Last week, Lebanon's Parliament finally repealed its rape law, which allowed assailants to escape punishment if they wed their victims. Two weeks earlier, Jordan, too, closed its “marry your rapist” loophole, and has also amended an article in its penal code that granted lesser penalties for “fits of fury,” a.k.a. honor killings — none too soon for at least some of the 36 cases of women murdered last year still before the courts.

Tunisia, birthplace of the Arab Spring, has gone farthest on this front. In July, its Parliament passed a landmark legislative package on violence against women. The laws break new ground in the region by stiffening penalties for sexual violence

against minors (including the removal of a “marry your rapist” provision), mandating compensation and follow-up support for survivors, and explicitly recognizing that men and boys, as well as women and girls, can be victims of rape.

When it comes to women’s rights, governments across the region are generally more comfortable with criminalizing violence than they are with protecting freedoms. But last week, President Beji Caid Essebsi of Tunisia announced a significant departure from business as usual by launching a commission on how to put laws on individual liberties and equality into practice for women, including the incendiary topic of equal inheritance between the sexes. He also urged the country’s ministry of justice to repeal the law prohibiting Muslim women from marrying non-Muslim men, one in force across the region and much of the wider Islamic world.

These advances are a welcome victory for the thousands of women’s rights activists who have spent decades trying to galvanize governments into action on these issues. All the same, campaigners sound a note of caution. Whether politicians fully embrace gender equality or not, such legislative maneuvers are expedient for governments that want to appease liberals at home, placate foreign governments critical of their human rights record and distinguish themselves from Islamist rivals who generally follow a far more conservative line.

In any case, passing the laws and applying them are two different matters, in large part because the judges, the police and other officials in charge of enforcing these laws are often conservative themselves.

“You can have the most beautiful laws,” said Khadija Moalla, a Tunisian human rights lawyer, “but if you don’t change the culture, then nothing will change.”

That culture is hard to shift. In communities across the region, family honor still outweighs individual rights, and marriage remains the cornerstone of society, the gateway to adulthood and the only culturally accepted context for sexual life.

“If a woman is raped or has sex before marriage, the future is tough,” said Fadi Zaghmout, a Jordanian author whose best-selling novel, “The Bride of Amman,” explores the unremitting pressure to wed on women and men. “Maybe she can marry a foreign guy, but only a few men here have the mentality of marrying a woman who is not virgin.”

Such notions are widespread. Over the past two years, my colleagues and I have been surveying attitudes toward gender equality in Arab societies, with a close eye on how men, in particular, see the changing roles and rights of women. Interviews with almost 10,000 people aged 18 to 59 in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine reveal that more than three-fifths of men in most of the countries say a woman should tolerate domestic violence to keep the family together.

Although 60 percent or more of men in our survey agreed that honor killings should be criminalized, more than 70 percent in most of the countries also believed that how female relatives dress or act directly affects male honor and that it is a man’s duty to act as their guardian.

Such pervasive attitudes among men are just some of the many obstacles standing in the way of efforts by women’s rights activists to tackle other longstanding laws, such as those that fail to address marital rape or prevent a woman from inheriting an equal share of her family’s wealth, which Tunisia is now about to challenge.

And yet, it's not just men who are propping up the patriarchy; the women in our survey were just as, if not more, conservative on some of these points. For example, nearly half or more of women in Egypt, Morocco and Palestine thought that a rape victim should marry her assailant.

Campaigning on women's rights over generations has shown what it takes to make progressive laws stick in Arab states: political will and public education, for starters. Much of the effort has focused on women and girls. But there is an urgent recognition that new approaches are needed, and they include working more closely with men and boys to help them see gender rights as an opportunity, not a threat.

"We have a real problem of how our young men are being raised and how ideas of masculinity are being constructed," said Salma Nims, the secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women. "Poor education, unemployment, the inability to get married — these issues have become the center of their existence and where honor is an issue."

A handful of civil society groups like Abaad, which led the campaign to abolish Lebanon's rape law (and was a partner in our research), are helping men and boys across the region to come to grips with a changing world. But it's an uphill struggle: Our survey found that younger men in Egypt, Morocco and Palestine are just as or even more conservative on women's rights than older generations, while their female peers are more open-minded than their mothers and grandmothers.

For those inclined to challenge the status quo, Mr. Sabry's song "The Man" has a final word of warning: "The woman who keeps her house, and its secrets, she's perfection. And the woman who accepts her lot will see a quick correction. But the woman who causes problems will find nothing but rejection." Patriarchal pop might still be a hit across the Arab world, but for some at least, such sentiments no longer make for easy listening.

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Voir le lien: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/22/opinion/womens-rights-rape-laws-arab-world.html?mcubz=1>

Russia Today. L'oeil de Moscou débarque sur notre télé par le satellite

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Le président Vladimir Poutine, dans les locaux de la chaîne internationale d'information RT, le bras armé de la propagande russe, à Moscou. | AFP

La chaîne Russia Today (RT), acquise au Kremlin, s'installe à Paris cet automne. Elle prévoit d'embaucher 150 journalistes français. Trois questions à Julien Nocetti, chercheur à l'Ifri, spécialiste de la Russie.

Que cherche la Russie à travers *Russia Today* ?

Depuis sa création en 2005, l'ambition affichée de *RT*, [qui prend directement ses ordres du Kremlin](#), est d'apporter un regard russe sur le monde face aux médias internationaux, type *CNN* et *Jazeera*. Moscou considère *RT* comme une arme dans sa stratégie d'influence : elle a sanctuarisé le budget de la chaîne, au même titre que les entreprises militaro-industrielles.

Pourquoi miser sur la télé française ?

Pour la Russie, deux pays comptent en Europe : la France et l'Allemagne. Le Kremlin veut profiter du fait que [la classe politique et l'opinion publique françaises se divisent](#) pour rallier à sa cause la population sur plusieurs dossiers comme l'Ukraine et la Syrie, surtout depuis la montée des tensions avec l'Occident [sur la Crimée](#).

Va-t-elle y parvenir ?

Avec son site web en français, *RT* se targue déjà d'être le média le plus populaire sur YouTube. Elle n'hésite pas à jouer sur la théorie du complot et la manipulation des faits. La nouvelle chaîne risque d'être regardée par les franges de la population désabusées du traitement médiatique traditionnel.

Chez notre partenaire *Euractiv.fr*: [La propagande russe aura sa chaîne en français d'ici 2018](#)

Les moyens déployés par Moscou pour la création de sa chaîne française paraissent énormes: 150 journalistes embauchés, c'est bien plus que les bureaux français de *CNN* et d'*Al Jazeera*. Au Royaume-Uni, où *RT* s'est déjà implantée, elle est rapidement devenue la troisième chaîne satellitaire du pays.

Voir le lien : <https://www.ouest-france.fr/medias/russia-today-l-oeil-de-moscou-debarque-sur-notre-tele-par-le-satellite-5199932>