

## **Abstract**

**This thesis deals with the phenomenon of Central Asian foreign fighters in Syria, 2011–2017. It analyzes their radicalization, recruitment, and travel patterns. Special emphasis is placed on tracking the home states’ responses, including elements of de-radicalization and counter-radicalization. The thesis has found that there is arguably no single factor explaining the Central Asian fighters’ radicalization; nor is there a typical profile of a Central Asian fighter. Available data suggest that radicalization and extremist recruitment most often occur in Russia. Furthermore, the analysis of travel patterns has shown that the majority of Central Asian fighters traveled to Syria either indirectly via multiple countries (again, most often Russia) or directly from their country of origin, and then crossed the border from Turkey. The thesis concludes that all five Central Asian states have adopted policies to address the perceived security threat of returning foreign fighters, whereas the hard, restrictive and punitive approach has been prevalent all across the region.**